

VitaMin

Vital health information in a minute

Spending time with friends is time well spent



Buddies. Pals. BFF's. Whatever you call them, having good friends is good for more than just companionship. Friends can help reduce stress, improve your health and make you feel better about yourself. And, friends can be an invaluable support system.

Making new friends

Maybe you're new to town. Or just had a baby. Or just lost a parent. Whatever your situation, it's always good to meet new people – especially ones who share common interests. Here's how:

- Support groups – Find a group of people who share similar interests or are going through the same challenges as you.
- Community events – Chances are your town hosts lots of public activities, like sporting events, theater shows and political events. And many are free.
- Volunteering – Pass out meals at a soup kitchen. Read to children at a school. Visit people in the nursing home. You'll connect with people and meet other volunteers who share your interests.

Active friendships

Friends make great exercise buddies. Why not team up with a friend and find ways to be active? You can help motivate each other and keep each other company. Here are a few fun activities to do with a pal:

- Go on a bike ride
- If you're a new parent, partner up with another mom or dad and stroll your babies around the neighborhood
- Sign up together for yoga or kickboxing
- Walk up and down the sidelines at your kids' soccer game together
- Pick up a sport that needs a partner, like tennis, racquetball or squash
- Start a walking group together

Sources:

<http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content//SMA-3716/SMA-3716.pdf>
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/PlayHard/makefamilytimeanactivetime.htm>

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