

BOOST YOUR MOOD & HEALTH



The POWER of SOCIAL WELLNESS

We all know the importance of physical health – eating right, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep. But what about social health? It turns out, our connections to others play a surprisingly powerful role in our overall well-being, impacting both our mental and physical health.

The Science of Connection

Loneliness is a growing epidemic. According to a 2023 poll by the American Psychiatric Association, one-third of adults in the US experience loneliness at least weekly. This lack of social connection isn't just a feeling – it has a significant impact on our health.

Studies show strong social ties are linked to a range of benefits:

- **Reduced Stress and Anxiety**
 Social support offers a safety net, helping us regulate stress hormones and cope with challenges. Sharing our burdens with loved ones provides perspective and emotional release.
- **Improved Mood and Resilience**
 Positive social interactions trigger the release of feel-good chemicals like dopamine and oxytocin, boosting mood and self-esteem. Strong social networks provide a support system during difficult times, making us more resilient.
- **Physical Health Benefits**
 Social connections have been linked to lower blood pressure, a stronger immune system, and even a reduced risk of heart disease.

On the other hand, social isolation and loneliness can have detrimental effects:

- **Mental Health Struggles**
 Loneliness is a major risk factor for depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues. Lack of social validation can lead to negative self-talk and low self-esteem.
- **Increased Stress Vulnerability**
 Without a social support system, individuals become more susceptible to the negative effects of stress, which can further worsen mental and physical health.





Boost your social circle

We can cultivate social wellness.

Here are some ways to strengthen your social connections:

Build Your Connections at Work

Skip the urge to eat lunch at your desk. Turn lunch into a social connection by eating in the breakroom or common area.

Join a Club or Group

Find activities that interest you and connect with others who share your passions.

Volunteer

Giving back to your community is a great way to meet new people and feel connected.

Nurture Existing Relationships

Make time for loved ones, even if it's just a phone call or virtual chat.

Connect with a Pet

Social wellness isn't limited to human interaction!

Reconnect with Old Friends

Reach out to people you haven't seen in a while. Sending a quick email, private message on social media, or dropping a card in the mail are great ways to initiate contact.



Social connections are not just a feel-good extra

Social connections are an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. By prioritizing your social wellness, you're investing in your overall well-being –mentally and physically.

Combating Loneliness

The American Psychiatric Association's 2023 poll participants report easing feelings of loneliness by these means:

- 50% find a distraction (like TV, podcasts or social media)
- 41% go for a walk
- 38% reach out to friends or family
- 31% connect to a pet
- 31% exercise
- 26% eat more than usual
- 13% use drugs or alcohol
- 9% connect to a therapist or counselor
- 6% volunteer

Sources:
American Psychiatric Association (psychiatry.org)
National Institutes of Health (nih.gov)

