

A MONTHLY HEALTHLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS COUNCIL OF AMERICA

Tips to Find & Maintain Friendships

It's never too late to find and improve friendships! To be sure, you can expand your network of friends for as long as you live.

Here are just some of the options available for staying connected:

Reframe social engagements. Instead of rolling your eyes and viewing social engagements as an obligation, reframe the situation and view it as an opportunity to meet new people and strengthen existing friendships. Pursue social activities, like wine tastings, lecture programs or traveling with friends.

Make friends while improving your health. Join a walking or biking club, take a fitness class or sign up for a healthy cooking class.

Sign up for an intriguing class or workshop. What better way to find friends than being in a class (photography, art, graphic design, etc.) that you have a mutual interest in!

Show interest and support. Be inquisitive and ask questions—it's one of the best ways to show you care and are interested in maintaining friendships.



Get Connected

Strong Social Connections Are a Key to a Happy, Healthy Life

Turns out, you really do get by with a little help from your friends! Mounting research confirms that having a solid social network and close friends boosts your health and well-being by leaps and bounds. Here's what the science is saying.

Friends help you...

Stay mentally sharp. Maintaining healthy friendships can actually help keep your brain healthy. A major public health study involving more than 116,000 participants found that people with strong relationships had less mental decline. Moreover, a Harvard School of Public Health study found that older adults with strong marriages, friends and social integration experienced delayed memory loss when compared to their isolated counterparts.

Relieve and reduce stress. Many experts believe that social isolation may create a chronically stressful condition within your body that accelerates aging. On the other hand, researchers find that people with strong social connections have less stress-related health problems, lower risk of mental illness and faster recovery from trauma or illness. A landmark UCLA study found that women with a close circle of friends released more oxytocin—a hormone that has a calming, feel-good effect on your body.

Maintain a healthy sense of identity. Friends help you tap into your true self and potential. Good friends and family can also encourage and support you in healthy lifestyle habits.

Feel happier and healthier. Researchers have found that those with strong social connections are happier and healthier overall. One 2009 study found that individuals with the fewest friendships were those most likely to be dealing with depression, anxiety and heart disease.



Core Values

Why You Should Focus on Your Mid-Section

Years ago, sit-ups and crunches ruled as the supreme way

you probably hear much more chatter around building

core muscles is not only the key to a slimmer, more toned

core muscles, but it's also the key to a stronger, more resilient

core. A strong, resilient core, you're

strong core also equates to a strong back,

and more toned—something almost all of us seek!

What is Your Core?

In simple terms, your core is your entire mid-section (think your body minus your arms and legs). The major muscles of your core reside in your abdomen and mid and lower back.

Why is a Strong Core Important?

Makes everyday tasks easier. Dressing, twisting, bending, reaching, lifting, carrying—through your core. You may not pay any attention

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through your core. You may not pay any attention

or if you're at a desk all day, a strong core will help

Whether your job requires a lot of lifting or twisting

or if you're at a desk all day, a strong core will help

Makes you more effective at your job.

Whether your job requires a lot of lifting or twisting or if you're at a desk all day, a strong core will help

core muscles contribute to slouching, and if you're sitting all

strong core, on the other hand, will help you maintain good posture.

Helps you avoid injury and pain.

With a strong, resilient core, you're strong core also equates to a strong back,

and more toned—something almost all of us seek!

And of course, working

on your core strength

can help you

look sleeker

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The Plank

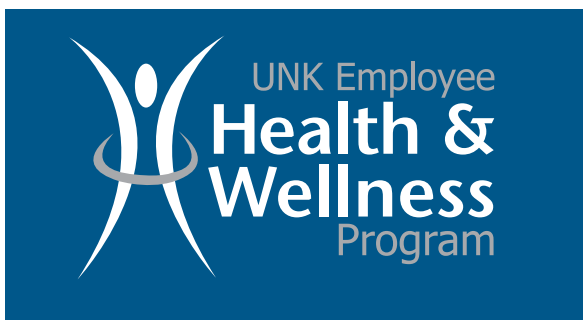
Lie down on your stomach. Lift your body off the floor with your forearms (elbows at 90° degrees) and your toes. Keep your body in a straight position (without arching your back) and hold for as long as you can (30 seconds to one minute are good goals). Rest and repeat a few times.

The V

Lie on your back and slowly bend at the waist as you extend your legs and arms into the air to form a V. Hold this position for as long as you can. Rest and repeat.

Outstretched Arm Raises

Lie on your stomach with your arms outstretched and your palms facing one another. Slowly lift one arm a few inches off the floor, keeping it straight without rotating the shoulders and keeping your head and torso still. Hold the position for a few seconds, then lower the arm back down, moving to the other arm. Aim for a few sets of 10.



IN THIS ISSUE

- Eat Your Way Out of a Cold?
- Get Healthier in 10 Minutes or Less
- Why Your Mid-Section Matters
- The 5 Best Home Cures for a Tummy Ache



I DID YOU KNOW?

22% CORNELL UNIVERSITY'S FOOD AND BRAND LAB FOUND THAT PEOPLE ATE **22 PERCENT LESS** IF THEY PUT THEIR FOOD ON A **10-INCH PLATE** INSTEAD OF A **12-INCH ONE**.

200 calories SOME RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT THOSE WHO ATE AT A FAST-FOOD OR FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT CONSUMED AN AVERAGE OF **200 ADDITIONAL CALORIES A DAY**.

30 seconds PRACTICING CORE EXERCISES LIKE THE PLANK, EVEN FOR AS LITTLE AS **30 SECONDS A DAY** CAN DO WONDERS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR MID-SECTION.

Enrich Your Network

It's never too late to build and enrich your network of friends or reconnect with old friends. Here are some tips that will help you get there:

Take the first step. Don't wait for friends to invite you to gatherings or to lunch—get on the phone and do it yourself! Make an effort to make time with friends. You'll find that after you take that initial first step, they'll reciprocate.

Don't offer judgment or advice unless you're asked. If a friend wants your thoughts on something he/she will ask. If you offer unsolicited advice, your friend will probably take offense and assume that you are judging them.

Try to avoid "one-upping". One-upping is when a friend will tell you a story or antidote and then you proceed to top or "one-up" their story. Instead of trying to out-do your friends, simply listen to what they're saying and ask follow-up questions to show you're interested.

Take it easy on social media. An occasional posting or update that includes your friend(s) is usually perfectly acceptable, but your friends may get annoyed or offended if you're constantly sharing their pictures and information on social media sites.

What's In a Number?

BEST CHOICE

\$10



An average cost for a **pound of coffee**. If you drink one cup per day, the pound should get you through the month.

\$63



If you grab your coffee every day **from a coffee shop**, you'll likely spend this much (at least). This doesn't include the extra cost of donuts or pastries if you happen to grab those too.