

How Many Friends Do You Need?

There's no "right" number of friends you should have, but research says most people have between 3 and 5 close friends.

Friendship is necessary, but it can feel challenging to find people who really "get" you. What's more, what you need from your friends might change as your life circumstances change.

Add in a culture where the number of friends you have is shown on your social channels and it can feel intimidating not to know exactly how many friends you're "supposed" to have.

How many friends should I have?

How many "real" friends a person has varies a lot, and it usually changes through the course of your life. Some people have higher social needs than others, which means they may want to have a greater number of friends. Those who value their alone time may need fewer friends, and that's OK too.

In general, based on [2021 survey data](#), the average person in America has between 3 and 5 close friends. According to this survey:

- almost half (49%) report having 3 or fewer close friends
- over one-third (36%) report having between 4 and 9 close friends
- 13% say they have 10 or more close friends
- 12% say they have no close friends

Your number of friends might depend on many factors, including:

- your age
- marital status

- occupation
- cultural background
- gender
- where you live location

For example, the survey found that 76% of young adults have a friend they've known since childhood, versus 60% of seniors. It also found that young women (29%) are slightly more likely than young men (22%) to rely on friendships for support.

And the differences also extend to ethnicity, with 58% of Black Americans, 56% of Hispanic Americans, and 49% of white Americans reporting they are very or completely satisfied with how many friends.

Numbers aside, [the type of friendships](#) you have and the quality of those relationships tend to matter most later in life.

"The quality of friendships — to a person getting older — becomes more important than the number of friends they have," says [Colleen Wenner](#), a Clinical Director in Florida.

Why do we need friends?

Humans are social by nature and friendships bring us many health and wellness benefits, including:

- bringing joy and happiness
- decreasing [loneliness](#)
- elevating your self-confidence
- helping you [cope with stress](#)

In short, good friends are good for you.

A [2020 study Trusted Source](#) of 422 women (ages 31 to 77) found that being someone's best friend related to higher life satisfaction. Feeling like you belong to a group increased life satisfaction, too.

The same study also found that more frequent visits with friends, plus how satisfied you are with your number of friends, were significant predictors of life satisfaction.

Why do friends make our lives better? According to [Kara Nassour](#), LPC, NCC, in Austin, Texas, it's because humans are naturally a very social species.

"We evolved to survive in groups of close friends and family," explains Nassour — and, therefore, "a lack of friends increases our risks for [anxiety](#), [depression](#), [trauma](#), and other mental illnesses."

Tips for finding more friends

Finding friends can be challenging for many reasons, but rest assured you can find your people. Here are a few [tips to help you make friends](#).

1. Be authentic

When making friends, you may feel inclined to mold yourself to meet others' interests — but being inauthentic won't result in true friendship.

On the contrary, "the best way to connect with others is by being yourself," says Wenner. "You don't have to be perfect, but you do have to be genuine."

2. Stay present

It's natural to get distracted by your thoughts or worries in social situations,

especially when trying to make new friends and overthinking, well... everything.

It's essential to pause and [bring yourself back to the moment](#) to keep yourself open to connecting. Wenner shares how "if you stay present, then you won't get so caught up in your head that you miss out on opportunities to meet people who might become friends."

3. Know your interests

What are you doing when you feel your best? By knowing what lights you up, you set yourself up to meet more like-minded people.

"It's much easier to get along with someone who shares your interests than with someone who doesn't," says Wenner. "Take the initiative to discover what interests you, pursue it, and then the friendships will naturally follow."

4. Embrace awkwardness

Making friends can feel...[awkward](#). But Nassour suggests not to be put off by a little awkwardness.

"It takes more than twenty hours of shared time for a friendly acquaintance to become a good friend," says Nassour. "You will have to get through the awkward stages before you start feeling a real sense of [trust and comfort](#)."

5. Get out there

To make friends, put yourself in places where you can meet new people.

You might try taking up a new hobby or visiting somewhere you haven't been before. By getting out there (especially if it's out of your comfort zone), you

can learn more about yourself and what is important to you, including friendships.

Let's recap

How many friends does the average person have? The consensus is that it varies — and for a good reason. You are not average, but so much more.

If you are trying to make new friends or assess your current friendships, try starting with yourself. Consider what you need to feel fulfilled. Ask yourself:

- What interests me?
- What is holding me back from being authentic?
- Where do I really want to end up?

Go deep so that your friendships can go deeper.
