

# HEALTHY LIFESTYLES *Health Hub*

## SOCIAL WELLNESS: WHY IT MATTERS

Human beings are social creatures with social needs. While everyone's social battery looks different, one thing is certain: we need regular human interaction for a healthy mind and a healthy body.

COVID-19 affected all of us differently, but one of the most common social stressors of the virus has been loneliness. Two years of social isolation did a lot of damage, not only to our mental health, but to our physical health as well.

Loneliness has been linked to physical conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease, inflammation, and obesity—as well as mental conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and cognitive decline. Making time to take care of our social health is just as important as physical activity for our overall wellbeing.

Sometimes, the idea of socializing can be exhausting. On top of our work and home obligations, our physical and mental wellness needs, socializing feels like just one more thing on your plate. We totally understand the overwhelmed feelings, so we have included tips and tricks to make socializing easier and more manageable.





# HOW TO BE SOCIAL



## Social Activities for Introverts

1. **Socialize online.** Physical interaction is important, but if it feels overwhelming, you can use social media to socialize. Just remember, keep it positive and be safe.
2. **Take a class.** Whether it be art, photography, coding, or exercise, learn a new skill in a classroom setting. It will help put you in control of your interactions while also helping you get out of your comfort zone.
3. **Join a club.** Book club, knitting club, hiking club. Whatever your interests, joining a small club allows you to meet people with similar hobbies without having to search them out.

## Social Activities for Extroverts

1. **Throw a party.** You can check off socializing and family time by throwing a party where everyone can be involved. Try inviting someone new and expanding your social circle.
2. **Try a new activity.** Go dancing or hiking, or try an exercise class. You can get some physical movement in while also making new friends.
3. **Challenge yourself.** Try to talk to one new person a day. You might meet your new best friend while chatting as you finish your grocery shopping.

## Getting Out of Your Comfort Zone

Everyone prefers their comfort zone because it is where we know exactly what to expect and are rarely disappointed. But our comfort zone is not a place of growth, and part of filling our social battery means growing and learning with people. Even if you're an extrovert, it can be hard to put yourself out there and meet new people. When we introduce new people into our lives, we expose ourselves to potential rejection and disappointment, but we also open doors to creativity, adaptability, new perspectives, character growth, and confidence. A recent Harvard study found that at least 36% of all Americans are lonely and for young adults that percentage increases to 61%. You are not alone in wanting to find and make connections but sometimes you have to get out of your comfort zone and be the one to make the first introduction.

# Activities to meet people around Salt Lake City



Recreation centers around the county host a variety of activities and classes on topics ranging from exercise to photography to baking, and even sport teams. [Find something new](#) to explore and meet new friends.



Hiking is a great way to get to know some new people. Try joining a [hiking group](#) to get out and meet new likeminded friends.



[UtahAgenda](#) updates its website daily to show all the local activities going on. This is a great resource to use as their website has everything from concert series and local festivals to food trucks, comedy clubs and more. [Find something new and interesting to try](#) and get out there and meet some new friends.



The [library](#) can be a great place to meet fellow booklovers, especially because libraries hold many events throughout the summer.



Enjoy a [free concert](#) at Brigham Young Historic Park. These hour-long concerts are held every Friday night at 7:30pm during the summer and are appropriate for all ages.



Salt Lake County has done a wonderful job in creating an easy-to-use [arts and culture website](#). Check here to see all the upcoming theater, dance, and music performances, plus so much more. All are in one place, and you can order tickets right from the website.



Enjoy [yoga in the Red Butte Garden](#) on Thursdays from 5:30 to 6:30pm. Reservations are required so make sure to sign up early. If yoga is not your thing try [meditation or floral arrangements](#) instead.