

A 10-STEP CHECKLIST

to Make and Keep New Friends

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Making friends isn't always easy, but it doesn't have to be difficult either. **Nearly everyone could use a few more friends.** This is a big thing to have in common with others. In theory, making friends should be easy. With a little trial and error, your social life can take a turn for the better.

Use this checklist to increase the odds of making and keeping new friends:

___ **Assume familiarity.** Formality is a barrier to friendship and emotional intimacy. You know that incredibly charismatic person that makes you feel like you've known him for 10 years, even though he's only spoken to you once? One way to accomplish that same effect is to act "as if." Act as if you've known someone for ages.

- **You'll dramatically speed up the friendship process by assuming familiarity.**
Talk to a casual acquaintance or stranger the way you would a good friend.
Note the results.

___ **Take the lead.** The biggest complaint most single and married people have is boredom. You can quickly make new friends by reaching out and offering the opportunity to spend time together. It's not a date, so there's no reason to be nervous. It can be as simple as, "Want to grab lunch together?" A few, simple offers like this each week will change your life.

___ **Smile.** Is there anything more friendly and welcoming than a smile? Who wants to be friends with someone that rarely smiles? Smiling is like honey to a fly. Let people know you're friendly and approachable by smiling regularly. Be known as the person that's always happy.

___ **Maintain the friendships you already have.** It's easier to maintain a friendship than it is to build a new one from scratch. Try to avoid allowing a week to go by without making contact. **A quick call or text message can do a lot to preserve a friendship.**

___ **Have meaningful conversations.** Most people don't enjoy shallow conversations. It might be nice to chat about the weather with a stranger in line at the grocery store, but you won't create meaningful friendships without meaningful conversation. Open yourself up to deeper conversations.

___ **Share meaningful experiences.** Going to a movie together is fine, but you can do better. Imagine if you shared a trip to a local cave or took a rock climbing class together. You'll still remember the cave in 10 years, but probably not the movie.

- Make a list of activities you've always wanted to try and places you've always wanted to visit. Find someone to do them with you.

___ **Drop those friendships that aren't working.** Being friends with someone doesn't mean you must be friends forever. It takes time to fully know someone. Sometimes you won't like what you find. Avoid spending time on friendships that aren't worth the time. Make room for a new friendship.

___ **Look to friends of friends.** If you like your friends, you'll probably like their friends, too. At least you have something in common – a mutual friend! New friends might be closer than you think.

___ **Make your friends feel special.** We all long to be important to someone. Make your friends a priority, and they'll do the same for you. Show them that you need them and are there for them.

___ **Be patient.**

Good friendships take time to grow. Most people are on guard when you first meet them. It will take time to show that you have good intentions. Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither are good friendships.