

How to Make Good Friends As An Adult



It can be hard to develop lasting friendships in adulthood, but it's possible—and so worth it.

One of the strangest aspects of adulthood—one that no one seems to warn you about when you're younger—is that it can be hard to make friends as a grownup. Sure, you may be friendly with parents from play group. But then one day your children may realize they have nothing in common and you drift apart.

While you might still be BFFs with your high school friends and college buddies, it often feels like adult friendships have a built-in expiration date. However, that doesn't have to be the case. Try these tips for developing lasting friendships as an adult.



The logo for 'myMood MATTERS' features a stylized green leaf icon above the text. 'myMood' is written in a green, cursive font, and 'MATTERS' is in a blue, bold, sans-serif font.

1 Don't discount casual acquaintances.

Making small talk while waiting in line at the grocery store or chatting with the person sitting next to you at the DMV can plant the seeds of a friendship. A 2014 study showed that simple friendliness—even just exchanging pleasantries with the folks around you—can actually make you happier.

2 Don't seek out a “twin.”

One of the mistakes adults make when looking for friends is searching for someone who is just like them, says Shasta Nelson, author of *Frientimacy: How to Deepen Friendships for Lifelong Health and Happiness*. Just because someone is single while you're happily married, or is an avid runner while you're a professional couch potato, doesn't mean that you have nothing in common. If you both share a love of volunteering, fine dining or reading, that can be enough to build a lasting friendship. Keep an open mind and find someone who shares your sense of humor, makes you feel happy and maybe even challenges you to try something new.

3 Be a good listener.

Good listeners make good friends, because people like being paid attention to and heard. A 2016 study found that increasing your likability can be as easy as listening to someone and simply asking them to tell you more.

Good listening doesn't just mean nodding your head occasionally, it requires actually following the conversation, asking questions and offering a thoughtful reply.

4 Reconnect with old friends.

Remember that song about making new friends but keeping the old? There's some scientific truth to it. A study in *Organization Science* revealed that reconnecting with old friends is particularly rewarding for people. “Reconnected friends can quickly recapture much of the trust they previously built, while offering each other a dash of novelty drawn from whatever they've been up to in the meantime,” according to the study's authors.

5 Open up.

While it may be challenging to share intimate details with new people, sharing something personal can make others feel trusted and build the relationship. This isn't an excuse to share TMI about your upcoming bunion surgery. Instead, open up about your dislike of the gym lighting or share a story of funny family drama. Look for the sharing “sweet spot,” finding just the right amount of personal info to help grow the friendship.

6 Prioritize friendship.

Once you make plans with someone, follow through. Don't be the person who is always saying, “Oh, we should get together sometime!” Pick a date, put it on the calendar and don't cancel except in emergencies. According to licensed psychotherapist Annie Wright, prioritizing friendship is a key part of making new friends, as it proves that you value the other person's time and their friendship.

7 Try not to worry about it so much.

Nelson says that most people replace their friends every seven years or so for most of their lives. Basically, this friendship carousel is a normal part of life.