



EXECUTIVE VITALITY™: REAL EXECUTIVES HAVE FRIENDS

Your Executive Vitality™ is positively affected by the sheer act of having friends in your life. Conversely, constant working, feeling stressed, and thinking you have no time for friendships has a negative impact on both your mental and your physical health.

[Social ties are good for your health.](#) The Stanford University health and wellness resource sums up the executive's dilemma well:

Studies indicate that "social capital" is one of the biggest predictors for health, happiness, and longevity. The problem: we often do not recognize the importance of social connection. Our culture values hard work, success, and wealth, so it's no surprise some of us do not set aside enough time for social ties when we think security lies in material things rather than other people.

You can find a lot of research that reinforces the idea that friendships are good for your mental and physical health. Here's a great [Mayo Clinic article](#) about discovering the connection between health and friendship. The article states that friends can boost your happiness and reduce your stress, help you cope with traumas, and encourage you to change or avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits. Also see [What Are Friends For? A Longer Life](#), which describes a study of 736 Swedish men that showed that having friends was more impactful on cardiac health than not smoking.

If you are socially isolated and/or your work keeps getting in the way of fully living your life, what can you do? Here are a few ideas to build your social connections:

- Get involved in a group that focuses on your interests. If you love to dance, consider taking lessons. If you love to read, join a book club. If you love to cycle, join a bike club.
- Check out [Meetup.com](#). Their mission is to "revitalize community and help people around the world self-organize."
- Join a faith-based community. Get involved in their activities.
- Volunteer with organizations you are committed to and meet others who hold similar values to yours.
- Re-connect with that friend you have been meaning to call.

Do you have good friends or even one good friend you can rely on? What can you do to re-balance the hard work you do with the social engagement that will keep you healthy and happy?