

# 7 ways volunteering can improve your life

Volunteering our resources, time and knowledge not only benefits the community but is also good for our health.

If you haven't volunteered before, or just aren't sure where to start – have a look at [Go Volunteer](#).

The following Medibank article talks about way in which volunteering can enhance your life.



There's no better feeling than giving back to the community. Whether it's helping somebody less fortunate than you, spending time with animals or working to make the world a better place, whatever small difference you can make is incredibly valuable.

## 1. Be part of your community

Volunteering is a great way to become more connected to your community, being involved in its fabric in a meaningful and productive way. A study from the University of Minnesota also found that volunteering can help build your sense of engagement and trust in your relationships with others in your community.

## 2. Make new friends

Getting involved in a cause you care about is a great opportunity to step outside your comfort zone and meet new people with shared interests and passions. Often, these are people who you might not otherwise find yourself in contact with. This can lead to new friendships and a broader social support network that can become an enriching part of your life. Volunteering with friends and family can also help strengthen existing relationships by working together towards a shared goal.

## 3. Boost your happiness

Many studies have shown that helping others makes you feel good. A study at the [London School of Economics](#) found that the more people volunteered, the happier they were. The [OECD Better Life Index](#) suggests that people who volunteer tend to feel more satisfied with their lives. Volunteering is a fun and easy way to explore your interests and passions, at the same time as giving you the mood-boosting good vibes of contributing to the world.

#### **4. Learn new skills**

You might find a volunteer role that helps you consolidate skills you already have, or you might gain valuable experience and training in something completely different. Learning something new is a great way to enrich your life and feel inspired and motivated.

If you're starting out in your career or think you might like to go in a different direction someday, volunteering is a great way to try out a new career and explore a particular field, without making a long term commitment.

#### **5. Support your mental health**

Reduce stress, combat loneliness and isolation and build your sense of self-efficacy. Giving your time and getting involved in your community can alleviate symptoms of mild depression and improve your [mental health](#). Mixing with others, working together to achieve goals and feeling that you are making a difference can also give you a healthy boost to your confidence and self-esteem.

#### **6. Improve your physical health**

As well as boosting your mental and physical health, studies suggest a link between [volunteering and physical health](#), contributing to lower blood pressure and a longer lifespan. This may be related to lower stress levels, more time outside the house, stronger social connections and more physical activity.

#### **7. Find balance and fulfilment**

Doing volunteer work you find meaningful and interesting can be both relaxing and energizing, providing balance in your day to day routine. It may also give you renewed creativity, motivation and vision that can carry over into your personal and professional life.

Short on time? A study from Harvard, Yale and the University of Pennsylvania actually suggests that [giving time gives you time](#) – or at least makes you feel like you have more.

**Find out more at [volunteeringaustralia.org](http://volunteeringaustralia.org).**

Written by Medibank