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MEETING PEOPLE

# How to Meet People[[1]](#footnote-1)

Sometimes people have lots of potential friends in their lives and they just need to do more to try to hang out with them and start a relationship. But the opposite is just as often a problem, when they don't have many friendship prospects around. In that case they have to meet some.

Below is a list of some ideas of ways to meet new people. It's all about being proactive.

### Characteristics of good places to meet people

Some places to meet new friends are better than others. The more of the following that apply to one the better:

* It's somewhere where the situation breaks the ice for people and naturally gives them reasons to talk to each other.
* It allows you to reliably see the same people several times, so you have a chance to get comfortable with them and gradually get to know them. It's not that you have one five minute chance to make a good impression and then you may never see them again.
* It allows you to meet people who are similar to you, in terms of your hobbies and values.
* It's somewhere where there's a core of regulars, but also new people continually entering the mix.

### You may have to force yourself out of your routine to meet people

Some people are a bit lonely because they've gotten into a daily pattern where they're either working, or they're hanging around at home pursuing solitary hobbies. That's fine, but if they want to meet some new friends they may have to shake up that pattern. They might need to add some more social hobbies to their repertoire, or push themselves to get out and do things in the evening when they'd normally be chilling out in their apartment.

### You may have to try out a few ways to meet people before one works for you

I don't have any official stats for this, but I'd guess meeting people is one of those 80/20 things. You'll meet most of your new friends easily through a handful of avenues, while other ones won't really work for you at all. You may go to a few events and not really run into anyone you could get to know better. Or you'll find making friends there is technically doable, but logistically difficult and discouraging. Then you'll join one more club and instantly and effortlessly make a group of amazing friends. So don't get discouraged if your first few attempts don't seem to come to anything.

### Lots of ways of meeting people aren't perfect

You can handicap yourself by looking for the ideal set of circumstances to meet people under. Sometimes you have to work with the so-so hand you've been dealt. For example, someone may attend swing dancing classes and feel there's not enough opportunity to get to know anyone, since new people are always coming and going, and there aren't a lot of chances to talk. The situation may just not be workable for them, like the point above was getting at. Or they may have success if they stretch a bit, say by inviting potential friends out anyway even if it is more of a low percentage play, or by coming earlier or staying later to create time to talk to people.

## Places to meet people

### Through your friends, significant other, and other people you already know

* Meeting someone's friends is also a higher quality 'meet' compared to a total stranger. The ice is already broken. You have things in common (your mutual friend, if nothing else). They're probably going to be friendly and make an effort to chat to you. They're somewhat pre-screened for characteristics you like because they already know your friend. You're more likely to meet them more than once and have a chance to get to know them and see if you click.
* Ideally you'll meet a person who has a ton of friends, is the centre of his social circle, and is always inviting you to parties or throwing them themselves. Don't discount the lone wolf types though.
* If you already have some friends you can make a conscious effort to meet their buddies. You could throw a party or organize an event with the invitation that they bring other people they know. You could ask your partner if they've got any friends you might hit it off with.
* Also, having a friend with you can make it easier to approach other strangers. Two people approaching a group to talk is a little less intimidating than having one person having to go in all by themselves.
* This general point can also work on a much smaller scale. Like you could start a conversation with a guy in a pub and two minutes later be introduced to his friends.

### A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Another standard option. People who are student-aged in particular often report being able to meet a lot of friends from part-time jobs in call centres, restaurants, or large stores. The other staff are generally in the same age group, and new people are constantly coming on board. If it's realistic for your circumstances you may even want to consider switching jobs, or getting another one on the side. For example, if you work a few shifts a week alone as a night security guard, maybe you could transfer somewhere with more social opportunities.

### B \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You could also volunteer somewhere. Like you could put in a few hours a week working with youths, or agree to help out at a one-off fund raising party and meet the other people there. It can be a good way to meet people who have similar values to you. I mean, not just anyone who signs up to help a particular organization for free.

### C \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

There's classes in the sense of being a high school or university student, where of course you'll have a ton of chances to meet people. There's also the option of signing up for a class out of your own interest in cooking or drawing or whatnot. Personally, I think signing up for a class purely to meet people is a bit excessive, but if there's a topic you want to learn about anyway, than why not?

I think one small flaw with classes is that you spend a lot of time learning and focusing on the teacher and not necessarily being able to socialize with anyone. You're often restricted to before the instructor starts talking or afterward as everyone is filing out of the room.

* You can break the ice with someone with the whole, "Let's exchange contact information in case one of us misses a day" thing. Talking about the course material or teacher also comes naturally.
* If you get assigned to do group work with people then the class just did you a favour.
* If you meet someone you like, it's probably better to become their class buddy and sit with them for the rest of the semester rather than seeing what's behind 'door number three'. You can get to know them well and hopefully become friends outside of class.

### D \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The appeal is obvious. You join up and you instantly know a group of people who share a similar interest to yours. You can also start your own club or informal meet up. For example, you could start up a book club and have the first meeting be at your house.

### E \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Joining the team gets you admission to a group of people who you'll see for the next few months at least, with who you'll develop some camaraderie from playing together, and for who socializing after the game will naturally. Sports leagues also vary in how sport-focused and competitive they are. Some are all about playing and take it pretty seriously. Others are just a glorified excuse to go for drinks after the game is over. They may not even play a 'real' sport, instead going with something much more casual and friendly to non-athletes, like dodgeball or kickball.

### F \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If you're religious there are lots of opportunities for you to meet like-minded people. Besides from attending regular services at a church / temple / mosque, and meeting people that way, there may also be offshoot events, recreational activities, and clubs you can take part in (e.g., a religious study class, a group that organizes monthly charity events, the stereotypical bingo night). Different churches have different flavors to them based on their denomination, the types of people who attend, and so on, and you may have to try a few out before you hit on one that has a community you click with.

### Through your kids

This one becomes more prominent if you've started a family. There are a lot of ways to meet people, mainly other parents, through your kids:

* You can talk to other parents at the playground, or before and after day-care or school, or during Little League games.
* You can get to know the parents of your children's friends.
* You can get involved with organizations like a Parent-Teacher Association.
* You can volunteer your time as a coach or scout leader, and get to know the other adults who are involved as well.

### Your living situation

Anyone who's lived alone during their first year of college will tell you not to do it...

* Living in a big dorm is your best bet, though you can't really do this once college is over. You'll meet a lot of your neighbours naturally, but you can also go out of your way to introduce yourself to people. Or just make sure to hang out in the common areas and chat to whoever shows up.
* Joining a fraternity/sorority is even better, though it's not for everyone.
* Living in a large building with lots of other people your age around is better than being in a small place with no one who's similar to you.
* Having a roommate is a big boost to your social life. They'll bring their friends around too.
* Even in smaller apartment buildings sometimes months can go by between running into a particular neighbour in the hall, but if you do see someone, chat to them and invite them to hang out if they seem alright. If they invite you to drop by their apartment one day, actually take them up on their offer.
* If your living situation really sucks (e.g., you live alone in the middle of nowhere), moving might be something to consider.

### Your family

I find this one tends to vary from family to family. Some people are close to their cousins, and hang out with them as they would with any other friend. In other families there's more an attitude of, "Ugh, why would I want to spend time with my dorky relatives?" The same thing applies to siblings. Some people get along with their close-in-age brothers or sisters quite well, and their social circles intermingle. For others, being buddy-buddy with their sibling is the last thing they'd want to do. If you're from the type of family that's open to hanging out with relatives or siblings, there may be some potential unexplored friendships there. Maybe you'll hit it off with all of your cousin's buddies?

### A job where you get to be friendly with the public

The first ones that come to mind for me are nightlife job like bartender, bouncer, or DJ. The next thing that comes to mind is being a barista in a coffee shop. The idea is that the customers will tend to talk to you, or it's natural for you to chat to them during quiet periods. Any kind of customer service position can work really. The ideal situation is probably working at a store directly related to one of your hobbies, and where customers stick around for a while to speak to each other and the staff.

### At a party

A party may be held by a friend, through your job, or through an association at your school. You could also throw one yourself. Either way, they gather a lot of people together, who are all pretty open to mingling with each other and making new contacts.

### An individual sport

If team sports aren't your thing then you can still get a lot out of more individual sports where people gather together to train or compete.

* If you play a competitive individual sport then you can meet the people you play against. Your gym may have a day where people can show up at a certain time and then pair off to play. Some will have bulletin boards where you can leave notices or put your name on a sheet to find opponents.
* Another broad category is sports where people show up at one place to train together. Martial arts gyms, skate parks, or rock climbing gyms are good examples. These places usually have a pretty informal atmosphere and it's common for people to chat or help each other out (e.g., holding the pad while one person practices their kicks, belaying someone or giving them pointers, etc.)
* Finally, there are some individual sports like swimming, where everyone pretty much does their own thing, but they all have to show up at the same place to do it. After a while you're bound to end up talking to some of the other regulars.

### Online

This method still has a bit of an outdated stigma attached to it, but pretty much everyone does it at some point.

* You could go on a site like [Meetup.com](https://www.succeedsocially.com/meetup) to find events to attend. You could even start your own group to meet like-minded people.
* You could use a bulletin board site like [Craigslist](http://www.craigslist.org) to advertise for a running buddy or announce a club you're organizing.
* Some people use online dating sites to look for friends. In their profile they'll say something like how they're new in town and are just looking for people to hang out with, not date.
* On forums related to things like music or bands you can announce you're going to a certain concert and put out an invitation for anyone else who's coming to meet up with you.
* You can meet up with people from a website you frequent in real life. Discussion forums often arrange local meet ups. Other types of conversation-oriented sites do the same thing (e.g., social news sites like Reddit.com, large blogs with active communities).

One issue with meeting possible friends through sites where the members have time to build a presence for themselves is that sometimes people portray themselves a certain way online, and come across totally differently in real life (whether intentionally or not). This can lead to disappointment on either end. Sometimes you'll be disappointed in the people you meet. At other times it's you who's doing the disappointing. The latter can be quite the knock to your self-esteem. Be aware of this, especially if you tend to come off as awkward in real life, but are confident when you're behind a keyboard.

### A solitary activity that you can make social

If you have an interest that you normally partake in on your own, you may be able to introduce a social element into it. For example, if you like running, then put out a call for a running buddy. If you normally mountain bike by yourself then you could find a group that rides together on the weekends. If you like reading you could start a book club. If you like playing an instrument then start a band or join one. If you're a writer you could organize a group where people meet to share what they've been working on and help each other improve. If you're into comics or card games maybe you can hang around the store with the other hobbyists instead of staying at home.

If you think a certain type of group or club would help you but there isn't one around then try starting one yourself.

### Having something to offer other people

This works in two ways: First, it can cause people to seek you out. Second, it gives you leverage to approach other people. With this approach you do have to be careful not to let yourself get used. If there's something you have that other people appreciate, there's nothing wrong with leveraging it a little, but don't let yourself be taken advantage of by someone who has no interest in being your friend.

There are tons of examples:

* If you're good at something, and have a reputation for being helpful, then people will come to you for advice. For example you may be one of the better members at the rock climbing gym, and if you're not too aloof, people will come to you for pointers.
* If you're a good artist you could join a club and offer your services, like volunteering to design the posters for a student association's pub night.
* You may have access to something other people like or find useful, like a car, cottage, nice apartment, or connections to get into certain bars for free. Though you'll have to be careful to let people use you.

### Any sport or hobby where people congregate at a designated time and place

Near where you live there may be a basketball court with a pickup game that goes on every Saturday morning. There may be a spot at the university where every Monday at 9pm students who are interested in break dancing get together to practice. Every Sunday morning at a nearby nondescript parking lot hobbyists may meet to screw around with their remote controlled cars. If you're into the same kind of stuff, you can show up and join in.

### Bars or pubs

First, if you hang around a place long enough eventually you'll see who the other regulars are and it will only be natural to get to know them. This is one of those cases where familiarity breeds trust and liking. Also, if you play a game like pool, darts, or air hockey you can ask other people to play against you. You're bound to talk to them as you play.

### A part of town where people from a certain group tend to hang out

If you identify with a certain scene or subculture and know other people from that group usually hang around in a certain area, then go there as well. You may end up striking up a conversation with someone you have a lot in common with, especially once you've been seen around enough that other people decide you're probably alright.

### Crowded places (e.g., a small bar with music, comedy, or readings)

If you're going to a book reading you may meet some people just because the circumstances force everyone to sit close together, or ask to share a table. Often it's only natural that you chat to each other a bit next.

### Random events

Grab the local free lefty paper, or go to *Craigslist.com* for your city, and check out the section with a list of events that are happening that week. There can be some pretty random stuff in there. Go to any that strike your fancy. Some of them may be a bust in terms of meeting people, but if nothing else you'll get to have some new experiences.

### Public places

You know, coffee shops, museums, and the grocery store. This is another suggestion you tend to see across multiple articles on how to meet people. If you're outgoing and confident you can strike up conversations with people, and you may hit it off with some of them and arrange to keep in touch. However, I think the options above are easier. Approaching strangers can be scary, and your average person who's out shopping isn't in a 'meeting new friends' head space.

This article has been adapted from:

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