

what to do: 150 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO BUILD SOCIAL CAPITAL

Social capital is built through hundreds of little and big actions we take every day. We've gotten you started with a list of nearly 150 ideas, drawn from suggestions made by many people and groups. Try some of these or try your own. We need to grow this list. If you have other ideas, post them at: <http://www.bettertogether.org>. You know what to do. Build connections to people. Build trust with others. Get involved.

1. Organize a social gathering to welcome a new neighbor
2. Attend town meetings
3. Register to vote and vote
4. Support local merchants
5. Volunteer your special skills to an organization
6. Donate blood (with a friend!)
7. Start a community garden
8. Mentor someone of a different ethnic or religious group
9. Surprise a new neighbor by making a favorite dinner—and include the recipe
10. Tape record your parents' earliest recollections and share them with your children
11. Plan a vacation with friends or family
12. Avoid gossip
13. Help fix someone's flat tire
14. Organize/participate in a sports league
15. Join a gardening club
16. Go to home parties when invited
17. Become an organ donor or blood marrow donor.
18. Attend your children's athletic contests, plays and recitals
19. Get to know your children's teachers
20. Join the local Elks, Kiwanis, or Knights of Columbus
21. Get involved with Brownies or Cub/Boy/Girl Scouts
22. Start a monthly tea group
23. Speak at/host a monthly brown bag lunch series at your local library
24. Sing in a choir
25. Get to know the clerks and salespeople at your local stores
26. Attend PTA meetings
27. Audition for community theater or volunteer to usher
28. Give your park a weatherproof chess/checkers board
29. Play cards with friends or neighbors
30. Give to your local food bank
31. Walk or bike to support a cause and meet others
32. *Employers*: encourage volunteer/community groups to hold meetings on your site
33. Volunteer in your child's classroom or chaperone a field trip
34. Join or start a babysitting cooperative
35. Attend school plays
36. Answer surveys when asked
37. *Businesses*: invite local government officials to speak at your workplace
38. Attend Memorial Day parades and express appreciation for others
39. Form a local outdoor activity group
40. Participate in political campaigns
41. Attend a local budget committee meeting
42. Form a computer group for local senior citizens
43. Help coach Little League or other youth sports – even if you don't have a kid playing
44. Help run the snack bar at the Little League field
45. Form a tool lending library with neighbors and share ladders, snow blowers, etc.
46. Start a lunch gathering or a discussion group with co-workers
47. Offer to rake a neighbor's yard or shovel his/her walk
48. Start or join a carpool
49. *Employers*: give employees time (e.g., 3 days per year to work on civic projects)
50. Plan a "Walking Tour" of a local historic area
51. Eat breakfast at a local gathering spot on Saturdays and mingle
52. Have family dinners and read to your children
53. Run for public office
54. Stop and make sure the person on the side of the highway is OK
55. Host a block party or a holiday open house
56. Start a fix-it group: friends willing to help each other clean, paint, garden, etc.
57. Offer to serve on a town committee
58. Join the volunteer fire department
59. Go to church...or temple...or walk outside with your children—talk to them about why its important
60. If you grow tomatoes, plant extra for an lonely elder neighbor – better yet, ask him/her to teach you and others how to can the extras
61. Ask a single diner to share your table for lunch
62. Stand at a major intersection holding a sign for your favorite candidate
63. Persuade a local restaurant to have a designated “meet people” table
64. Host a potluck supper before your Town Meeting
65. Take dance lessons with a friend
66. Say "thanks" to public servants – police, firefighters, town clerk...
67. Fight to keep essential local services in the downtown area – your post office, police station, school, etc.
68. Join a nonprofit board of directors
69. Gather a group to clean up a local park or cemetery
70. When somebody says "government stinks," suggest they help fix it

Note: Expanded from original list of “100 Things You Can Do to Build Social Capital” (Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America project at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard); additional contributions from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Rochester Area Community Foundation, as well as ideas from the public.

71. Turn off the TV and talk with friends or family
72. Hold a neighborhood barbecue
73. Bake cookies for new neighbors or work colleagues
74. Plant tree seedlings along your street with neighbors and rotate care for them
75. Volunteer at the library
76. Form or join a bowling team
77. Return a lost wallet or appointment book
78. Use public transportation and start talking with those you regularly see
79. Ask neighbors for help and reciprocate
80. Go to a local folk or crafts festival
81. Call an old friend
82. Enroll in a class and meet your classmates
83. Accept or extend an invitation
84. Talk to your kids/parents about their day
85. Say hello to strangers
86. Log off and go to the park
87. Ask a new person to join a group for a dinner or an evening
88. Host a pot luck meal or participate in them
89. Volunteer to drive someone
90. Say hello when you spot an acquaintance in a store
91. Host a movie night
92. Exercise together or take walks with friends or family
93. Assist with/create your town or neighborhood's newsletter
94. Organize a neighborhood pick-up – with lawn games afterwards
95. Collect oral histories from older town residents
96. Join a book club discussion & get the group to discuss local issues
97. Volunteer to deliver Meals-on-Wheels in your neighborhood
98. Start a children's story hour at your local library
99. Be real. Be humble.
Acknowledge others' self-worth
100. Tell friends and family about social capital and why it matters
101. Greet people
102. Cut back on television
103. Join in to help carry something heavy
104. Plan a reunion of family, friends, or those with whom you had a special connection
105. Take in the programs at your local library
106. Read the local news faithfully
107. Buy a grill and invite others over for a meal
108. Fix it even if you didn't break it
109. Pick it up even if you didn't drop it
110. Attend a public meeting
111. Go with friends or colleagues to a ball game (and root, root, root for the home team!)
112. Help scrape ice off a neighbor's car, put chains on the tires or shovel it out
113. Hire young people for odd jobs
114. Start a tradition
115. Share your snow blower
116. Help jump-start someone's car
117. Join a project that includes people from all walks of life
118. Sit on your stoop
119. Be nice when you drive
120. Make gifts of time
121. Buy a big hot tub
122. Volunteer at your local neighborhood school
123. Offer to help out at your local recycling center
124. Send a "thank you" letter to the Editor about a person or event that helped build community
125. Raise funds for a new town clock or new town library
126. When inspired, write personal notes to friends and neighbors
127. Attend gallery openings
128. Organize a town-wide yard sale
129. Invite friends or colleagues to help with a home renovation or home building project
130. Join or start a local mall-walking group and have coffee together afterwards
131. Build a neighborhood playground
132. Become a story-reader or baby-rocker at a local childcare center or neighborhood pre-school
133. Contra dance or two-step
134. Help kids on your street construct a lemonade stand
135. Open the door for someone who has his or her hands full
136. Say hi to those in elevators
137. Invite friends to go snowshoeing, hiking, or cross-country skiing
138. Offer to watch your neighbor's home or apartment while they are away
139. Organize a fitness/health group with your friends or co-workers
140. Hang out at the town dump and chat with your neighbors as you sort your trash at the Recycling Center
141. Take a pottery class with your children or parent(s)
142. See if your neighbor needs anything when you run to the store
143. Ask to see a friend's family photos
144. Join groups (e.g., arts, sports, religion) likely to lead to making new friends that bridge across race/ethnicity, social class or other social cleavages
145. Attend or start a free summer music series at a local park
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