

# FitFacts®

## Social support: Does it Really Matter?

ARE YOU READY TO MAKE A CHANGE IN YOUR LIFESTYLE?

WHETHER IT IS EATING HEALTHIER, GETTING MORE ACTIVE, OR KICKING A BAD HABIT—THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU TRY DOING IT ON YOUR OWN. NUMEROUS RESEARCH STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT PEOPLE WITH STRONG SOCIAL SUPPORT ARE MUCH MORE SUCCESSFUL AT LIFESTYLE CHANGE THAN THOSE WHO DON'T. HERE ARE 7 TIPS FOR GETTING YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM IN PLACE



**1. Have a 'heart-to-heart' with your love and other family members.**

Your odds of following through with any lifestyle change go way up when your significant other is on board. Like it or not, your partner has a huge influence on your diet, physical activity, and other habits. The same goes for other family members. Ask for support and help reaching your goals.

**2. Find a buddy.** An accountability partner can be a huge help. This is your spouse, friend, or family member who really believes in you and will make sure you stick to your plan. You can check-in on a regular basis and get encouragement when you are struggling. If you are trying to get more active, ask this person to be your exercise partner, too!

**3. Surround yourself with cheerleaders.** In addition to your accountability partner, find someone in each area of your life (work, home, family, friends, church, etc) who will be supportive of your efforts. Tell them about your goals, ask for ongoing support, and have them ask you about your progress often.

**4. Connect with other like-minded people.** It helps to share your journey with friends and family members who are working on the same lifestyle change. Find a way to keep in touch and encourage one another. This could be through a group message board on a social media site or a weekly in-person group meeting.

**5. Seek out existing support groups.** If you are having a hard time creating your own support system, try finding a support group in your area (or try forming one yourself!). It helps to talk through challenges and celebrate successes with other people on the same path.

**6. Make friends at work.** If you know a few people at work with similar interests and goals, find a way to lend support to one another during the workday. Want to get more active? Form a lunchtime [walking group](#) with your coworkers.

**7. Identify what (or who) stands in your way.** Now you know that support is key to your success. But is there anyone who tries to ruin your self-improvement efforts? This is the person who brings you donuts when you are trying to lose weight or a spouse who smokes in the home when you are trying to quit. Be prepared for how you will handle their comments and/or actions. Even better, talk to this person about how their lack of support is affecting you.

What's next? If you haven't already set some goals, check out this [Fit Fact](#). Already have your goals and a plan? It's time to get started! Your support system is ready to watch you shine!!

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[American Council on Exercise](#)

[America Walks](#)