

Volunteering as you age



Volunteering is great for building strong social connections and enriching your life. It's a powerful way to contribute to the greater good.

You can find your sense of purpose when volunteering. [Mike Trafalski is a perfect example of this.](#) After retiring from teaching, he became a volunteer.

His contribution makes a big difference to a lot of people who need his help.

Volunteering can make you happy and healthy

Helping others and contributing to your community is good for your health and happiness.

Volunteering provides physical, mental, and social benefits. It can improve your quality of life and give you a sense of belonging. Many studies have found a strong link between happiness and volunteering ([APA 2014](#)). People over 70 who volunteer experience improvement in their mental [wellbeing](#).

Some researchers also discovered an important health benefit. Adults over the age of 50 who volunteer on a regular basis are less likely to develop high blood pressure ([APA 2013](#)).

Where to find volunteering opportunities

Volunteer work is on offer all over Australia. There's a good chance you'll find a role that matches what you're interested in.

- Visit your local volunteering organisation, or search [GoVolunteer](#), the [Volunteering Australia](#) database.
- [SEEK Volunteer](#) is another big database of voluntary jobs. It operates in partnership with Volunteering Australia.
- If you're interested in volunteering for a particular organisation, check their website for more information about the roles on offer.
- If you are feeling adventurous you can also try [volunteering abroad](#) or have a volunteer vacation.

Volunteering for older people

Many organisations value older volunteers as mentors and role models. Here are just a few larger organisations that have a good reputation with older people:

- [COTA Australia \(Council on the Ageing\)](#)
- [Heart Foundation](#)
- [Meals on Wheels](#)
- [Cancer Council](#)
- [Grey Nomads](#)
- [Farm Army](#)
- [Seniors & Aged Care Volunteering Organisations | GoVolunteer](#)

Older people are often the backbone of volunteer programs run by local councils and community centres. If you'd like to be more involved with your local community, contact your local council.

Types of volunteering

There are many different types of voluntary roles. For example, short term, long term, and one time volunteering options. Your schedule, interests, and preferences should help you choose a role.

If uncertain, start with a small commitment. This is a good way to try volunteering. It can also give you a better idea about the kind of voluntary position that might be the right fit for you.

Short term volunteering also gives you the chance to explore your interests and passions. It can lead to self discovery, helping you to identify your strengths.



How to start volunteering

- Assess how much time you can realistically commit to volunteering.
- Make a list of your skills.
- Identify areas of interest.
 - What issues or causes appeal to you?
 - What activities make you feel most fulfilled?
- Research different volunteering opportunities and organisations. Look for positions that match your interests and values.

- Explore the roles and responsibilities of each opportunity.
- Check if the organisation provides training for volunteers. This can help you build new skills and feel more confident in your role.
- Consider the level of support available from the organisation. Having a mentor can be helpful.
- Research how the organisation measures and communicates its impact. This matters if you want a role where you can see the results of your efforts.
- Is there a trial period for finding out if a role is the right fit for you?
- Volunteering should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Taking the time to choose the right role will also help you to connect with more like minded people.

How to understand if volunteering is right for you

It's a good idea to reflect on any volunteering experience. It doesn't matter if it's a one off or short term role. Your time is valuable.

Even when you've found the right role, reflecting on it is important. This can ensure it remains meaningful. Reflection also lets you celebrate your achievements.

Volunteering environments may change over time. If a long term voluntary role is no longer a fulfilling experience, find a new one that motivates you. There will always be good opportunities available to you.

More helpful information

If you need more information, take the [LiveUp quiz](#) or get in touch with one of our helpful team on 1800 951 971. You can find more tips and advice by following the links below:

- [ABC 90 for 90: Ways to volunteer](#)
- [Benefits of volunteering | healthdirect](#)
- [Why Volunteer? | The Centre for Volunteering](#)
- [Can volunteering boost our mental health? | ABC listen](#)
- [Volunteer skills: definitions and examples | Indeed.com UK](#)
- [Ways to look after yourself while volunteering | ReachOut Australia](#)

CONTACT US

Website: liveup.org.au

Email: communities@liveup.org.au

Phone: 1800 951 971

Facebook: facebook.com/LiveUpAus

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