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## *Health Happens Together*

Everyone loves an opportunity to relax and hang out with friends. Surprisingly, social activity is also extremely powerful when it comes to improving our health. There are volumes of research that show that our social life, and feeling connected to others, is in fact essential for good health.

Take for example, the studies they've done on loneliness. In one telling study, researchers took a group of elderly people and found that there was a powerful connection between feelings of loneliness and health outcomes, including mortality. In other words, social interaction was associated with how long these people lived.

The second surprising thing these people found was that feelings of limitation were also involved. They found that feelings of loneliness were strongly associated with feelings of limitation. What these researchers said was that people that felt they had functional limitations (i.e., inability to do things) were much more likely to experience substantial feelings of loneliness

This study of course was in older adults, where the situation becomes even more significant. What about the person that skips out on the lunch with friends because they don't feel confident about it? Maybe they can't drive far, or walk, or climb stairs, etc. And because they don't know if they can make it, or they just don't feel quite up to doing it, and without really even thinking about it, give up the social opportunities that are out there for them.

We all know how habitual decisions can be. Once you do something once (or in this case, don't do something), it becomes much easier to make the same choice again. What if this could be prevented in the first place? Our ability to go out and enjoy life is very much dependent on our health and function.

When was the last time you ducked out of an opportunity to spend time with friends or family because you weren't sure you felt up to doing what everyone else was doing?

The funny thing about loneliness is that we aren't alone. As humans, we all have the same sorts of problems. Chances are, if you feel a certain way, there are probably thousands, if not millions, of people that have had the same troubles.

So why not reach out? Grab your friend and bring them with you to your chiropractor and start learning about how to start feeling and functioning better, and have more confidence in your ability to do more, and not feel like you missed out! Once we start looking for ways to improve instead of at what we can't do, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities.

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## Healthy Hang-out Ideas

1. Exercise: Try a new class together!
2. Volunteer: Giving back offers many benefits such as lowered stress and a confidence boost!
3. Cook: Try a new recipe that everyone will love!
4. Laugh: Laughter helps boost the immune system, lowers stress, and relaxes the body!
5. Take a walk: Get out and get moving!
6. Travel: Tour your own town or plan a fun trip together!
7. Dance: Dance in your home or find a local class to take together!
8. Relax: Go somewhere quiet and meditate!
9. Paint: Art therapy is shown to have many health benefits!
10. Talk: Simply engaging healthy conversations is a big brain booster!