

The 5-Minute Friendship Routine

A simple way to keep in touch with the people who matter to you, 5 minutes at a time.



FIND WHAT YOU NEED

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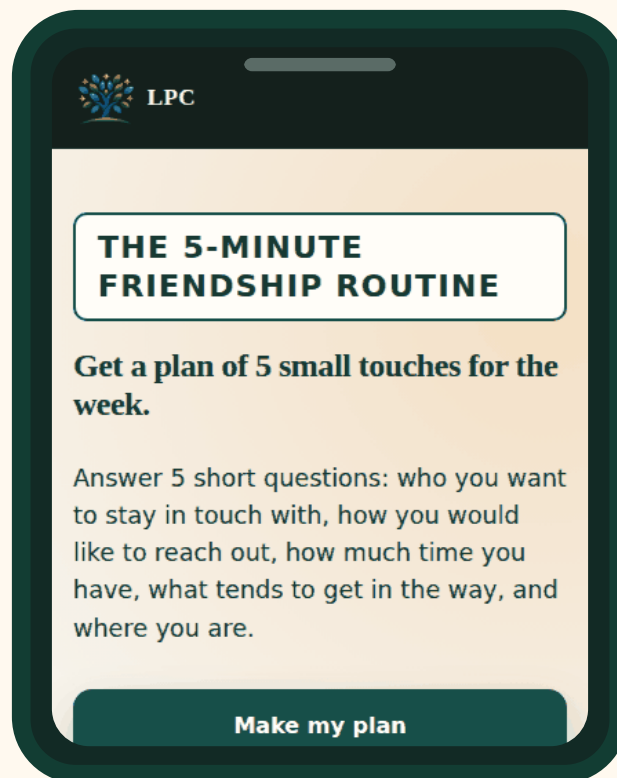
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Quick Route: Start with the Friendship Routine Companion App



If you want to get in touch with someone today, the Friendship Routine Companion App can help you start now.

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You answer 5 short questions, and the app gives you a plan of 5 small touches spread over the week, each built to take about 5 minutes. It does not ask for the names of your friends.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free.

Read the Important Note About Keeping in Touch first. Then use the app if you want a plan for this week, or keep reading and learn the method at your own pace.

Open the Friendship Routine Companion App

<https://friendship.lifeperksclub.com>

A GENTLE NOTE

Important Note About Keeping in Touch



This guide gives everyday ideas for keeping in touch with people you already know. It is general information, not therapy, medical or relationship

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advice, and it does not replace the sources listed at the end.

It does not promise that a friendship will last, that someone will answer, or any particular result in your life. The 5-minute frame is this guide's own idea. It is a way to make a small start, and it does not come from an official source.

If you are going through a hard time, talk to a person you trust or a health care provider. You never have to send a message, make a call or keep up a contact that feels uncomfortable, or that puts pressure on you. You are free to stop or to step back from a contact that is not good for you.

START HERE

Why Friendships Slip When Life Gets Busy



Many of us mean to write and let the weeks go by. Work runs long, errands pile up, a month goes by,

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and the message you meant to send is still sitting in your head.

U.S. public health sources describe connection to other people as a fundamental human need. The U.S. Surgeon General's advisory lists simple actions such as answering a call from a friend, sharing a meal and listening without the distraction of your phone.

This guide builds on that idea with its own suggestion: make the action so small that you can do it on a busy day.

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A message can stay unsent for ordinary reasons. You may not know what to say. You may feel it has been too long. You may think a short note is not worth sending. You may plan to do it properly later, when you have time, and later does not come.

The method in this guide goes around those reasons. It does not ask for more time or a better mood. It asks for about 5 minutes, one person and one small contact. A short message sent today is better than a long one you never send.

WHAT A 5-MINUTE TOUCH CAN BE

What a 5-Minute Touch Can Be



In this guide, a 5-minute touch means one small, real contact with one person: a message, a call, a note or a short chat.

The words that matter are small and real. Small, because the aim is to fit into a day that is already

CONTINUED

full. Real, because the touch is meant for an actual person, with something that is true: a hello, a memory, a question, a thank-you.

A touch can be a text that takes 1 or 2 minutes to write. It can be a call that lasts 5 minutes because you are walking to your car. It can be a card in the mail. It can be a few words at the door when you drop something off.

A touch is not a performance. It does not need to be clever, long or emotional. It does not need to

CONTINUED

catch up on everything you have missed. It does not need to end with a plan. If it is kind and true and short, it is a touch.

Five minutes is this guide's own frame, chosen because it is short enough to start. Some touches will take 2 minutes. Some will take 10, and that is fine. If a touch runs longer because the conversation is good, let it.

THE METHOD

The 3-Part Touch: Reach, Say, Close



Every touch in this guide has the same 3 parts. Knowing them in advance can make it easier to start.

Reach. This is how and when you get in touch. Choose the way that fits the moment: a text, a

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voice note, a call, a card, a photo, or a few words in person. A U.S. health source (NIH) mentions reaching out by phone or online, and by video chat. Choose the one that costs you the least effort today.

Say. This is the one thing you want to put in the touch. It is a single thought: you were thinking of them, you remembered something, you have a question, you want to say thank you. Say one thing. If you try to say 5 things, the touch can grow past 5 minutes.

Close. This is how you end it. A good close is meant to take the pressure off. It tells them they do not have to answer right away, or at all.

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Examples: "No need to reply, just wanted you to know." "Talk soon." "Hope your week is a good one." A close is also kind to you, because it lets you hit send without waiting for a response.

When you are stuck, go through the parts in order. Where will I reach them? What is the one thing I will say? How will I close it? Try to answer all 3 in about a minute.

Here is a full touch built that way: a text to a friend you have not seen in a while. Reach: text, while the coffee is brewing. Say: "I walked past the diner where we used to get pancakes and thought of you." Close: "Talk soon, and I hope you are doing well."

That is the whole method. Everything else in this guide is a way to apply it.

WHO IS ON YOUR KEEP-IN-TOUCH

Who Is on Your Keep-in-Touch List



A routine needs people. You can build it from a short list of the people who matter to you, and the list can be kept in your head or on a slip of paper.

A U.S. public health source (CDC) describes emotional support as people we can turn to in

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good times and hard times. Let that idea guide you gently as you think of names. You do not have to be sure. A name that comes to mind is enough.

Start with a few people, 5 at most. Think of different kinds, and do not worry about ranking them. You might include:

A close friend. Someone you already talk to, where a quick note is easy to send.

Someone far away. A friend or relative in another city, state or country, where distance makes a spontaneous visit unlikely.

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Someone you have lost touch with. A former coworker, a neighbor who moved, an old roommate.

Family. A sibling, a cousin, a parent, an adult child, anyone you would like to hear from more often.

A neighbor or a person from your community. Someone you see often but rarely talk to beyond a wave.

If your list ends up longer, that is fine. If you can only think of 2 or 3 names, that is fine too. The

CONTINUED

guide works with any number, because each touch is about one person at a time.

The companion app does not ask for the names of your friends, so nothing about the people on your list needs to be typed into it. You choose the type of person in the app, such as a close friend or someone far away, and you decide in your own head who that is today.

One more thing about the list. It is not a to-do list. Nobody on it is a chore. If a name starts to feel like an obligation, you can cross it off for now. This guide is about touches that feel light to send.

12 REUSABLE 5-MINUTE TOUCHES

12 Reusable 5-Minute Touches



These 12 touches are patterns, not scripts. Each one follows Reach, Say, Close and can be used

CONTINUED

again and again with different people. Change the wording to sound like you. Where a sample message appears, it is our own wording and meant as a starting point.

You do not have to use all 12. Pick the 3 or 4 that feel natural and let the rest wait.

THE METHOD

A quick hello message



What it is. A short text or message that says hello and nothing more.

When it fits. When someone crosses your mind and you have 1 minute. It is the simplest touch

CONTINUED

there is, and a good one for people you talk to often.

Reach. A text or a chat message. Send it when the thought comes, not later.

Say. One friendly line. "Hi, thinking of you today. Hope the week is going well."

Close. Leave the door open without asking for anything. "No need to reply."

Make it yours. If you usually joke around with this person, keep the joke. If you tend to be more formal, keep it formal. A hello that sounds like you is easy to send.

THE METHOD

A voice note on your way



What it is. A short recording, 1 minute or less, sent to someone while you are on your way somewhere.

When it fits. When typing feels like too much, or when you want the person to hear your voice. It

CONTINUED

can suit friends and family who are not in a hurry to answer.

Reach. A voice message in your messaging app. Record it when you are standing at the bus stop, before you start the car, or walking to the mailbox. Pick a spot where you can speak without noise.

Say. One thing, said the way you would say it out loud. "Hi, it is me. I just passed the park where we used to walk, and I thought of you. I hope you are doing well."

Close. End on a warm note and let them off the hook. "Listen when you have a minute. No need to call back."

THE METHOD

A photo and a question



What it is. A picture you took, with one simple question attached.

When it fits. When you see something that reminds you of the person, or you want to share a

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small piece of your day. A photo gives you something easy to say.

Reach. A text with a photo. Take the picture, add a line, send it.

Say. Describe the photo in a few words and ask a question that is easy to answer. "Look what is blooming in my yard. Do you still garden?"

Close. Ask lightly, with no deadline. "Tell me when you get a chance."

Make it yours. The question can be tiny. "Remember this place?" or "Have you tried this?" works fine. The photo does most of the work.

THE METHOD

A call while you walk



What it is. A short phone call made while you are already moving: walking the dog, pacing the driveway, strolling to the store.

CONTINUED

When it fits. When you want to hear the person's voice, and you have 5 or 10 minutes you were going to spend anyway.

Reach. A phone call. You can send a quick text first, "Free for a 5-minute call?", if you would like to be sure they are free. Or simply call and see.

Say. Open with why you called. "I was out walking and thought I would call and say hi." Then ask one open question: "How has your week been?"

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Close. Name the time up front, so the call ends gracefully. "I only have a few minutes, but I wanted to hear how you are." When the time is up, say so warmly: "I have to get going, but I am glad we talked."

Make it yours. If the call goes to voicemail, leave a short message. That counts as a touch.

THE METHOD

Remembering a date that matters



What it is. A message on a day that matters to someone: a birthday, an anniversary, a day they once told you was important.

CONTINUED

When it fits. When you have a date written down, or a reminder on your phone. It is an easy touch because the timing is already decided for you.

Reach. A text, a card or a call. A card takes a few minutes more, and that is fine.

Say. Name the day and say one thing you appreciate. "Happy birthday. I am glad you are in my life, and I hope today is a good one."

Close. Keep it simple. "Thinking of you."

Make it yours. If you do not remember dates, keep a short list in your phone's calendar. In the companion app, you can add a personal note with the dates you want to remember.

THE METHOD

Replying properly to an old message



What it is. An answer to a message that has been waiting for a reply, perhaps for days or weeks.

When it fits. When there is a message sitting in your inbox that you keep meaning to answer. Replying is a touch, and it is easy to put off.

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Reach. Reply directly to the old message. You do not need to start fresh.

Say. Say you got it, and then answer it. "I am sorry it took me a while to write back. Thank you for your message. Here is my answer..." One honest sentence about the delay is plenty. A long apology makes the message heavier than it needs to be.

Close. End with warmth and a small step forward. "I would love to hear how things are going."

Make it yours. If the message was a question, answer it. If it was news, respond to the news. If you are not sure what to say, "Thank you for telling me. I am thinking of you" is a good place to begin.

THE METHOD

A thank-you note



What it is. A short message that tells someone you are grateful for something they did or said.

When it fits. When a person has done a small kindness: a ride, a recipe, a listening ear, a helpful

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tip. A thank-you is a touch you can send long after the fact.

Reach. A text, a card or a short email. A handwritten note is a nice way to say thank you.

Say. Name what they did and, if you can, how it helped. "Thank you for the casserole last month. It saved our evening, and it was delicious."

Close. End on a kind note. "I appreciate you."

Make it yours. Specific is better than general. "Thank you for everything" is nice. "Thank you for driving me to the appointment" is more specific.

THE METHOD

A check-in after something big



What it is. A message to someone who has had a big event: a move, a new job, a trip, a celebration, or a hard stretch.

When it fits. When you know something big happened in a person's life, and you want them to

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know you remember. This touch asks one question, and it asks it gently.

Reach. A text or a call. Choose the kind of message that is easy for them to answer or ignore.

Say. Mention the event and ask a simple, open question. "I have been thinking about your move. How are you settling in?"

Close. Make it easy for them to respond when they are ready. "Take your time. I am here whenever you want to talk."

Make it yours. If the event was something hard, keep it short and kind. A line that says you are thinking of them can be a kind way to start. This guide does not give advice for serious situations.

THE METHOD

Making a small plan



What it is. A message that suggests one small, specific thing to do together, such as a walk, a coffee or a call.

When it fits. When you would like to see someone, and "we should get together sometime"

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has been the closest you have come. A small plan with a day in it can be easier to say yes to than an open-ended wish.

Reach. A text or a call. Offer one option and keep the plan small.

Say. Suggest a specific, easy plan. "Would you like to take a walk on Saturday morning? I could meet you at the park at 9."

Close. Leave room for them to say no or suggest something else. "If Saturday does not work, tell me what does."

Make it yours. A small plan can be a phone date instead of an in-person one. "Can I call you Sunday afternoon?" is a plan.

THE METHOD

A shared link or recipe



What it is. A link, a recipe, an article or a tip you pass along because you thought the person might like it.

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When it fits. When you come across something that fits a friend's interests. It is a small way to say you thought of them.

Reach. A message with the link or a photo of the recipe. Add one line of your own.

Say. Say why you are sending it. "I saw this and thought of your tomato plants. Have you tried this?"

Close. Tell them there is no homework. "No need to read it now."

Make it yours. Keep a few of these ready. When you see something that suits a friend, send it right then, before the thought fades.

THE METHOD

A short note to someone far away



What it is. A brief message, card or letter to a friend or relative who lives far from you.

When it fits. When distance means you cannot drop by. A small note can reach across the miles.

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Reach. A card or letter in the mail, an email, or a text with a photo. If you want, try a video chat, which an NIH article lists among the ways to reach out.

Say. Share one small thing from your day, and ask about theirs. "It rained all day here and I made soup. What is the weather like where you are?"

Close. Say you hope to hear from them, with no pressure. "I would love an update when you have time."

Make it yours. Small, everyday details are fine. What you had for lunch can be a perfectly good note.

THE METHOD

A 5-minute catch-up at the door



What it is. A short, in-person conversation in a place you already are: the front door, the hallway at work, the lobby, the front steps.

When it fits. When you see someone you know and have a few minutes. You do not have to plan

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this one. You only have to decide, in the moment, to stop for a moment.

Reach. Turn toward the person, put your phone away and give them your full attention. A U.S. health source names listening without the distraction of your phone as one of the keys to human connection.

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Say. Ask one real question and listen to the answer. "How are you doing this week?" Then follow up on what they say.

Close. Wrap up kindly. "I am so glad I ran into you. Let's talk again soon."

Make it yours. If you are in a hurry, say so, and say you are glad you stopped anyway. A short, warm exchange is still a touch.

WHERE YOUR 5-MINUTE TOUCHES

Where Your 5-Minute Touches Fit



The hardest part of a routine is finding the moment. Here are some places where 5 minutes

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tend to be free. These are our own suggestions, so keep what fits your day and drop the rest.

While you wait. Waiting for the coffee, the kettle, the bus, the school bell, the doctor's appointment. You can use one for a hello message.

On your way. When you walk, you can use a call or a voice note.

At the door. Many everyday meetings take place at a doorway: with a neighbor, a coworker,

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someone you pass every week. The catch-up at the door touch fits right there.

On a set day. You could choose one day a week for your touches, such as Sunday afternoon, or tie them to an existing habit, like the morning coffee. A fixed time means you do not have to decide each day whether to do it.

Pick one or 2 places and try them for a week. If they do not fit, change them. A routine that fits your day is more useful than one that looks good on paper.

WHERE TO START

When You Have Not Talked to a Friend in a Long Time



It can feel awkward to contact someone after a long gap. A long silence can make it feel too late. This section is about getting past that feeling.

First, you do not owe anyone an explanation. You do not need to account for every month. One

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honest sentence is plenty: "It has been too long, and I have been thinking of you."

Second, keep the touch small. A short message is easy to answer. You are not trying to catch up on everything in one go. You are opening the door.

Third, do not ask for a lot in return. You can say hello, share a memory or ask how they are, and leave it there. Let them decide how much to give back.

Here is a simple pattern. Reach: a text or a card. Say: "I was thinking about [a shared memory] and wanted to say hello. I hope you are well." Close: "No need to answer, but I would love to hear from you."

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A few tips:

- Start with a memory you share.
- Skip the long apology. A short, warm note is kinder.
- Pick someone from your list and try 1 touch this week. You can leave the rest for later.

If the person answers, you can reply in the same easy tone, and the contact may open up on its own. If they do not, that is explained in the next section. In both cases, reaching out was a kind thing to do.

WHERE TO START

When a Friend Does Not Reply



Sooner or later, you will send a message and hear nothing back. It is a common experience, and it is worth deciding in advance how you will handle it.

A missing reply can have many ordinary reasons, and you cannot know which one.

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This guide cannot tell you the reason for a silence. What it does offer is a simple way to respond.

Let the Close do its work. If you ended your touch with "No need to reply," then you have already said so. You did what you meant to do. The touch is complete the moment you send it.

Wait, and then decide. If you would like an answer, give it a while. There is no rule for how long. A gentle follow-up after some time is fine. Keep it light: "Hi, I wanted to check that my message came through. No pressure at all."

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Send only one follow-up. Our suggestion is one gentle nudge. After that, let it rest.

Try a different touch. If a text did not get an answer, a card or a quick call is another way to try. Or you may simply wait and try again in a few weeks with something light, like a photo.

Move on to someone else on your list. Your routine does not depend on any single person. If one contact stays quiet, you can send your next touch to another person and come back later.

If a contact leaves you feeling worse each time, or if it feels one-sided in a way that wears you down, you are free to step back. This guide never asks you to keep chasing anyone. A touch should feel like a small gift to give, not a burden to carry.

WHERE TO START

When Friendships Feel Hard



Some weeks are harder than others. You might be tired, stressed or low on energy, or you might be going through something difficult. On those weeks,

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a routine like this one can feel like one more thing on your list.

On a hard week, you can make the routine smaller. Send 1 touch instead of 5. Pick the easiest one: a quick hello message or a reply to an old message. Or skip the week and begin again when you are ready. The routine will be here.

You are also free to rest. You do not have to be in touch with anyone if you do not feel like it. This guide is meant to be useful, not to add pressure.

CONTINUED

Keep the touches that feel good and set aside the ones that do not.

If things feel hard in a bigger way, talk to a person you trust or a health care provider. That might be a friend, a family member or your doctor. U.S. public health sources suggest turning to a trusted person or a health care provider when things feel hard, and this guide agrees.

This guide cannot give advice about serious situations. It is a book of small, everyday ideas for keeping in touch. It does not take the place of professional help, and it does not claim to.

STEP BY STEP

Your First Week of Friendship Touches



Here is a simple plan for your first week. It uses 5 touches, one per day for 5 days, and leaves 2 days open. Adjust it to your own schedule.

CONTINUED

Before you start. Take 5 minutes to make your list from Who Is on Your List. Pick 5 names, or fewer, and write them down.

Day 1: a quick hello message. Choose someone you talk to often. Send a short hello. It is the easiest start.

Day 2: a photo and a question. Take a picture of something from your day and send it to a friend with one easy question.

CONTINUED**Day 3: replying properly to an old message.**

Open your messages and find one you never answered. Reply with one honest line and an answer.

Day 4: a thank-you note. Think of someone who did something kind for you. Send a short, specific thank-you.

Day 5: a call while you walk. Call a friend or relative when you are already out on a walk or an errand. Tell them you have a few minutes.

CONTINUED

Days 6 and 7: rest. You can skip these days, or use one for a catch-up at the door if you happen to see someone you know.

At the end of the week, take a minute to look back. Which touch was easiest? Which was the most fun? Which one would you do again?

You can write a few words on your phone or in a notebook. The companion app lets you save these as personal notes, so you can look back at what worked for you.

If you missed a day, do not try to make it up. Pick up where you are and keep going. A week with 3 touches is still a week with 3 touches.

KEEP YOUR FRIENDSHIPS GOING

Keep Your Friendships Going



After your first week, you can decide what comes next. Here are a few ways to keep the routine going without making it heavy.

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Keep it small. If you keep adding to the routine, it can turn into a chore. Stay with 5 minutes and one person at a time.

Repeat what you enjoyed. You do not have to try a new touch every day. If a hello message is easy for you, keep sending hello messages. The 12 touches are there when you want a change.

Rotate your list. Over a few weeks, you can send touches to different people, so the whole list gets a turn. You do not need a strict schedule. A glance at your list is enough to remind you who has not heard from you in a while.

Link it to a habit you already have. If you drink coffee every morning, make your touch part of it. A touch tied to something you already do can be easier to remember.

CONTINUED

Keep a few notes. A line about what you sent and what came back is enough. Notes help you remember what a friend mentioned, so your next touch can pick up from there. In the companion app, you can add your own personal notes to a plan.

Be kind to yourself. There will be weeks when you do nothing, and that is all right. You can begin again with 1 touch whenever you want. The routine is there to help you, so change it whenever you like.

You are building a habit of reaching out in small ways. The habit is the whole method.

OPTIONAL COMPANION APP

The Friendship Routine Companion App

This guide explains the method. The Friendship Routine Companion App turns it into a plan for this week.

You answer 5 short questions: who you want to stay in touch with, how you would like to reach out,



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how much time you have, what tends to get in the way, and where you are.

The app builds a plan of 5 small touches, spread over the week, each one built around the 3 parts of this guide: Reach, Say and Close. The app does not ask for the names of your friends.

Save favorites and add personal notes, so your app is tailored to your preferences.

You can create 2 complete personalized plans free. After that, a one-time unlock of \$9 keeps it yours. There is no subscription and no renewal.

Open the Friendship Routine Companion App

<https://friendship.lifeperksclub.com>

FINAL CHECKLIST

Final Checklist: Your 5-Minute Touches



☐ I made a short list of people who matter to me.

☐ I know the 3 parts of a touch: Reach, Say and Close.

CONTINUED

☐ I chose 1 person and 1 touch to start with.

☐ I kept my message to 1 thought and ended it without pressure.

☐ I picked a moment in my day for my touches.

☐ I know a missing reply does not have to mean anything.

☐ I will send only 1 gentle follow-up if I would like an answer.

CONTINUED

☐ I know I can make the routine smaller on a hard week.

☐ I know I can step back from a contact that does not feel good.

☐ If things feel hard, I will talk to a person I trust or a health care provider.

The phrase 5-minute touch means one small, real contact with one person: a message, a call, a note or a short chat.

SOURCES

Sources Used for Friendship and Connection Guidance

The general statements about connection in this guide come from U.S. public health sources. They were read on October 5, 2026. Check the official pages for the latest wording.

The 5-minute frame, the 3 parts (Reach, Say, Close), the 12 touches, the list of people, the first-week plan and all sample messages are our own suggestions. They are not official guidance.

The guide gives no number of touches or contacts that is "enough", because the sources we used do not give one.

CONTINUED

- U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on social connection (2023) — connection to other people as a fundamental human need; simple actions such as answering a call, sharing a meal and listening without the distraction of your phone.
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>
- HHS Office of the Surgeon General, Social Connection (page reviewed February 19, 2025) — overview of the advisory. <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/connection/index.html>
- HHS, Key Information for Individuals — everyday actions to keep in touch, and turning to a trusted person or a health care provider if things feel hard.
<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-social-connection-individuals.pdf>

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- CDC, Social Connection (page reviewed March 27, 2024) — emotional support as people to turn to in good times and hard times.

<https://www.cdc.gov/social-connectedness/about/index.html>

- NIH News in Health, "Staying Connected to Fight Loneliness" (May 2020; an older page) — reaching out by phone or online, and by video chat.

<https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2020/05/staying-connected-fight-loneliness>

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