



# Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance professionals at Lawley



## VOLUNTEER WORK

In addition to boosting your social well-being, volunteering can make you feel physically stronger, increase mental sharpness, aid in reducing stress and even help you live longer. Despite these proven positive effects, only 1 in 4 Americans regularly volunteer, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If you're curious about the specific benefits of volunteering or how to get started, read on.

### Health Benefits of Volunteering

As previously mentioned, volunteering has proven health benefits. Here are just a few of those benefits:

- **Increased mental and physical activity**—Participating in volunteer activities gives you the opportunity to move and think in different ways than you're used to doing at home or at work. And, there's a good chance that you'll be on the move while volunteering, which increases your overall physical activity level, too.
- **Reduced stress levels**—Giving back to those in need is said to enhance one's sense of belonging, meaning and appreciation, which are all elements that can help reduce your stress levels.
- **Increased social well-being**—By going out and volunteering in your community, you're broadening your social circle, forging new relationships and giving back to those who are in need. All of these activities can increase your social well-being, a component that plays a large role in your overall health.

Volunteers may work full time, part time or be retired. They may volunteer with one organization a few hours a week, or with multiple organizations several hours a week. No matter what amount of time that is contributed, studies show that volunteers have an overall healthier, happier outlook on life.

### How to Get Started

Many organizations can benefit from your volunteer time. A good place to start looking is within your community. Pick one that complements your talents, interests, schedule and physical abilities. When you're thinking about what you'd like to do as a volunteer, it may be helpful to think about what's motivating you. Some volunteers are motivated by the following:

- Helping others
- Learning about the community
- Meeting new and interesting people
- Working in a team environment
- Feeling like they made a difference
- Gaining valuable life experiences
- Acquiring new skills

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Once you've determined what's motivating you to volunteer, you'll be able to narrow down your search for local volunteer programs. For example, if you enjoy helping others, it may be beneficial to try to volunteer at a hospital or clinic. If you want to learn more about your community, volunteer on a community council or committee.

You can browse online listings or a newspaper to identify volunteer programs. To ensure a successful outcome for both you and the volunteer program, ask yourself the following questions:

- When can I begin?
- How much time can I commit?
- How often do I want to participate?
- What skills can I offer?
- What skills can I gain?
- What would I not want to do as a volunteer?
- What community issue do I want to affect through my volunteer service?
- What group or population do I want to serve?

To get started, contact your local chapter of the United Way ([www.unitedway.org](http://www.unitedway.org)) or try [www.volunteermatch.org](http://www.volunteermatch.org).