



Do Something Special for Someone

CHALLENGE

Look for ways to help others.

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Do Something Special for Someone."
2. To complete the Challenge, perform an act of kindness on at least 22 days this month.
3. Keep records of your completed Challenge, in case your organization requires documentation.

Driven to Do Something

When Ohio resident Bob Votruba sent his two kids off to college, he wanted them to remember important lessons taught at home. Be nice to others. Say thank you. Smile. Be good. And he felt driven to share those simple values with others. So the empty-nester and former home builder bought an old school bus, added a shower and a bed, and made room for his Boston terrier named Bogart. Then he set off on a 10-year adventure to perform One Million Acts of Kindness and encourage others to make the world a better place one good deed at a time.

"Fifty acts of kindness per day for 55 years equals one million acts of kindness," Votruba says. "It can be a smile, holding a door for a stranger, or something as simple as letting a driver proceed ahead of you."

In our fast-paced, ever-changing world, it's easy to miss the kind of opportunities to do good that Votruba hopes to help people recognize. But studies show that helping others can better your mood, reduce stress, and improve your quality of life. And you don't need to achieve world peace, or donate millions of dollars to a cause to make a difference. Just do something special for someone, at least one act of kindness each day for a month.

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

- Aesop

Doing Good Matters

When you share your time, or talents, or just do something that makes someone else feel happy, you're making a difference. And it's not just for the other person.

Research shows that doing good can improve your health.

In a recent study, researchers tracked 3,000-plus volunteers. And they found a link between doing good and improved health. About 95 percent of the volunteers said they felt a sense of personal satisfaction, inner peace, and self-worth for days after doing good.

Researchers found that helping others can release endorphins in the brain and make you feel good. This is important because endorphins help reduce stress. Health problems such as headaches, muscle pain, and high blood pressure have been linked to stress. Stress is also a factor that can cause heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.



Take the Kindness Quiz

Find out if performing acts of kindness can improve your health.

Y N

- I sometimes feel stressed out.
- I sometimes feel depressed, unhappy, or unsatisfied with life.
- I want to reduce my risk for heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.
- I want to improve my relationship with others.

If you answered **yes** to any of the questions, you could benefit from volunteering, lending a hand, or performing an act of kindness – random or otherwise. Research shows that doing something kind for someone else makes you feel good. It also helps lower your stress level and your risk for high blood pressure and other health risk factors.

In the study, the mental and physical benefits of doing good increased the more the volunteers helped others. Those combined benefits increased the most when they helped someone they knew. Helping a stranger produced the most endorphins in the brain. Doing good matters. It's the kind of mantra Votruba wants everyone to remember. And it's easier than you might think.

5 Health Benefits of Kindness
<http://tinyurl.com/3olcxa8>

Understanding Good Intentions

The ingredients for practicing random acts of kindness are universal. Caring, showing respect, being honest, listening, finding your passion, taking action, and allowing enough time for solutions to work are all important.

Before you perform an act of kindness, ask yourself:

1. Is this the best way to help?

You might be drawn to make a credit card payment for someone or spend a few hours consoling a distraught friend. Perhaps your actions are enabling rather than truly helpful. Don't take responsibility away from someone. Think it through. In some cases, a person may need assistance. But the quickest solution to the problem may not always be the best way to help them.

2. What's your motive? You can appreciate when someone lends you a helping hand or does something that makes you feel special. When you do something special for someone, make sure it's from your heart. Doing good grudgingly will only heap more stress on you.

3. Can you handle a negative reaction? Actions you think are good might be perceived differently. The person for whom you are doing something special might resent your offer, regardless of your good intentions. Be sensitive to the feelings of the other person.

Lending a helping hand or encouraging another person who's feeling down is not always as easy as it seems. Use especially good judgment and caution when you reach out to strangers.



Kindness Begins With You

Discover who you are and what motivates you. Develop a passion. Find something you feel strongly about – for example: a charity, a cause, or a belief system. Or just look for those opportunities to do something special for someone else in your community.

The following list of ideas can help you get started:

In Your Community

- ✓ Volunteer at a local hospital.
- ✓ Read stories to schoolchildren.
- ✓ Donate to a food drive or charity.
- ✓ Donate a book to your local library.
- ✓ Clean house for a friend.
- ✓ Babysit for parents with young children.
- ✓ Serve food at a local shelter.
- ✓ Donate used clothing to charity.
- ✓ Bake cookies for a friend.
- ✓ Adopt a road and go on litter patrol.
- ✓ Pay for music lessons for a low-income student.
- ✓ Volunteer as a tour guide at an historic site in your community.
- ✓ Adopt a pet from an animal shelter.
- ✓ Donate blood.
- ✓ Weed a neighbor's garden.

At Home

- ✓ Write a kind letter to someone.
- ✓ Give your spouse a foot massage.
- ✓ Wink or smile at your children.
- ✓ Kiss your children.
- ✓ Mow your neighbor's lawn.
- ✓ Invite a friend over for dinner.
- ✓ Listen to your children.
- ✓ Do someone else's chores for the day.
- ✓ Write thank you notes.
- ✓ Throw a party for someone.
- ✓ Call a friend to let them know you're thinking about them.

Other Ways to Make a Difference

- ✓ Say thank you.
- ✓ Pay the toll fee for the car behind you.
- ✓ Listen more.
- ✓ Hold a door open for someone.
- ✓ Compliment others.
- ✓ Smile at people.
- ✓ Help a stranded driver.
- ✓ Give directions to someone who is lost.
- ✓ Give up your seat on the bus or subway when it's crowded.
- ✓ Return your shopping cart.
- ✓ Let other drivers in front of you.
- ✓ Share an umbrella with someone standing in the rain.
- ✓ Let someone go ahead of you in line at the grocery store.

Every act of kindness matters. When you make the effort to help someone else, you change the world in a positive way. You also give a boost to your physical and mental health.

What can you do today to make a difference?

100
Kindness
Ideas
<http://tinyurl.com/cwq44r>



Keep a Kindness Journal

At the end of every day, write down what special thing you did for someone that day. Some days you might find you have more than one act to record. Review it regularly. You'll have a list of memories that will bring a smile to your face. Plus, you'll be able to see how easy it is to do something special for someone.

Sources:

Journal of Social Psychological and Personality Science. 3(5): 5639-5645.

Psychological Bulletin. 131(6): 803-855.

American Psychological Association.

Luks A, *The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*. New York: iUniverse.com, Inc.

Random Acts of Kindness Foundation.





Do Something Special for Someone

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you do something special for someone.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you did something special for someone, at least one act of kindness per day. To complete the Challenge, you must meet the goal on at least 22 days out of the month. Then keep up this practice for a lifetime of best health.

CHALLENGE
Look for ways to help others.

MONTH: <input type="text"/>							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUN.	MON.	TUE.	WED.	THU.	FRI.	SAT.	Weight & weekly summary
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_____ Number of days this month I did something special for someone

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking or biking

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____

