

10 tips for volunteering

Volunteering is about getting involved and being part of your community. It doesn't need to take up a lot of your time. In return, you get the reward of knowing that you are helping others. Using your skills and interests to benefit your community can give you a sense of belonging and help keep you healthy and happy.

Some tips for volunteering in your community include:

1. **Think about what you have to offer.** What sort of volunteer work would you like to do? What skills and experience can you contribute?

2. **Set aside a regular time.** Think about how much time you are willing to commit. Be realistic about what you can offer and mark it in your diary.

3. **Do some research.** Find out what is available in your local area and decide what you would like to be involved in. There are literally thousands of organisations in Victoria that are always glad to have a helping hand and to give one. Visit websites or contact your local volunteer resource centre.

4. **Look close to home.** Get to know your neighbours. Offer to put their rubbish bins out when you are putting out your own. Mow their lawn, walk their dog or invite them in for coffee. Host a street or block party.

5. **Help others learn.** Help out at your child's school or kindergarten with reading assistance, tuckshop duties or fundraising. Join a youth mentoring program. Teach a young child to play a musical instrument. Help adult migrants or refugees learn English and about life in Australia. Remember some volunteer roles that involve working with children require a Working with Children Check.

6. **Support the environment.** Get involved in tree-planting activities, tend a community garden or help clean up your local parks and waterways. Support environmental or development projects such as clean energy, tackling climate change or sustainable water.

7. **Come to someone's aid.** Do a first aid course with St John's Ambulance or volunteer at your local CFA or SES. Join an organisation like Lifeline or Family Cancer Connect and be trained to give support on the phone to those in need.

8. **Get involved with community events.** Attend fetes and festivals in your local area and offer to run a stall or help to organise the next event.

9. **Help with charity.** Support the work of a charity organisation. Offer your help with office duties, delivering meals, sorting donations, raffles or street collecting. Help distribute food and clothing to the homeless and those in need. Join a program to visit prisons or write to refugees in detention.

10. **Visit.** Spend time with older people, people who are sick or people with a disability, in their homes, in hospitals or in residential care facilities. Give them company and provide a listening ear. Help provide fun and entertainment by playing music, games and other activities.

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Better Health Channel

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