Stats for nerding out



Research collected for ActivBuds and StudyBuddys

Before seeking funding for ActivBuds and StudyBuddys, I wanted to explore my hypothesis that people need an easier way to find compatible friends, activity partners and study companions nearby.

I began with basic Google searches about friendship, shared activity and social support. This companion brings together the answers and links I collected for discussion alongside my pitch deck and business plan.

What are the statistics on happiness when people are able to be in a community or in a group or in a friendship or with friends?



Key Statistics on Friendships & Happiness

Social connection is the single strongest statistical predictor of human happiness and life satisfaction across decades of empirical research. Decades of longitudinal studies indicate that relationships with friends, community groups, and partners explain up to 60% of the variance in personal happiness, outweighing wealth, status, or career success. [1, 2, 3]

Everyday Activity Enjoyment





Everyday Activity Enjoyment: A multi-wave analysis of the American Time Use Survey analyzing over 105,000 episodes across 41,000+ individuals found that **296 out of 297 daily activities** were rated significantly more enjoyable when done with company than when done alone. [1, 2]

Network Contagion Effect



Network Contagion Effect: In the landmark Framingham Heart Study, researchers found that happiness spreads through social networks up to three degrees of separation:

Having a happy friend living within 1.5 km (1 mile) increases your likelihood of being happy by **25%**.

Having a happy mutual next-door neighbor boosts your probability of happiness by **34%**.

If a friend of a friend becomes happy, your own chance of happiness increases by **10%**. [1]

Longitudinal Impact on Health & Joy



Longitudinal Impact on Health & Joy: Findings from the 85-year Harvard Study of Adult Development show that relationship quality at age 50 is a stronger predictor of physical health and happiness at age 80 than cholesterol levels or family genetics. [1]

Global Life Satisfaction



Community & Group Membership

Global Life Satisfaction: Data from the World Happiness Report shows that having "someone to count on in times of trouble" consistently accounts for the largest differences in national happiness scores worldwide, with individuals reporting high social support scoring substantially higher in subjective well-being. [1, 2, 3]

Group Diversity Boost



Group Diversity Boost: Research published via UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center found that participating in diverse types of groups outside family circles reduces loneliness, strengthens "creative self-efficacy" (the perceived ability to manage life stress), and leads to peak personal well-being compared to homogenous networks. [1, 2]

Age-Related Significance



Age-Related Significance: In longitudinal demographic analyses (such as the Korean Community Health Survey), the relative importance of friend contact to overall happiness climbed from **7.35%** in young adults (ages 19–29) to **11.00%** in adults aged 60 and older. [1]

Lifespan Advantage



Mortality & the Inverse Effect (Isolation)

Lifespan Advantage: The Australian Longitudinal Study of Ageing revealed that individuals with the highest number of close friendships outlived those with the fewest by **22%**. [1]

Risk of Isolation



Risk of Isolation: Meta-analyses cited by the World Health Organization and U.S. Surgeon General indicate that social disconnection and chronic loneliness carry a mortality risk equivalent to smoking **15 cigarettes a day**, causing steep declines in reported mental and physical well-being. [1, 2]

What percentage of people in the world are depressed and what percentage of people in the world say that they feel less depressed when they do exercise and have fun exercising with friends?





Global Depression Rate: According to the World Health Organization, approximately **3.8%** of the global population experiences depression, including about **5% of adults** (roughly 4% among men and 6% among women). [1]

Key Facts on Exercise, Social Connection, and Depression

Prevalence: Around 280 million to 332 million people worldwide suffer from depression. In Australia, roughly 1 in 6 people experience an affective/mood disorder like depression in their lifetime. [1, 2]

Exercise and Social Support





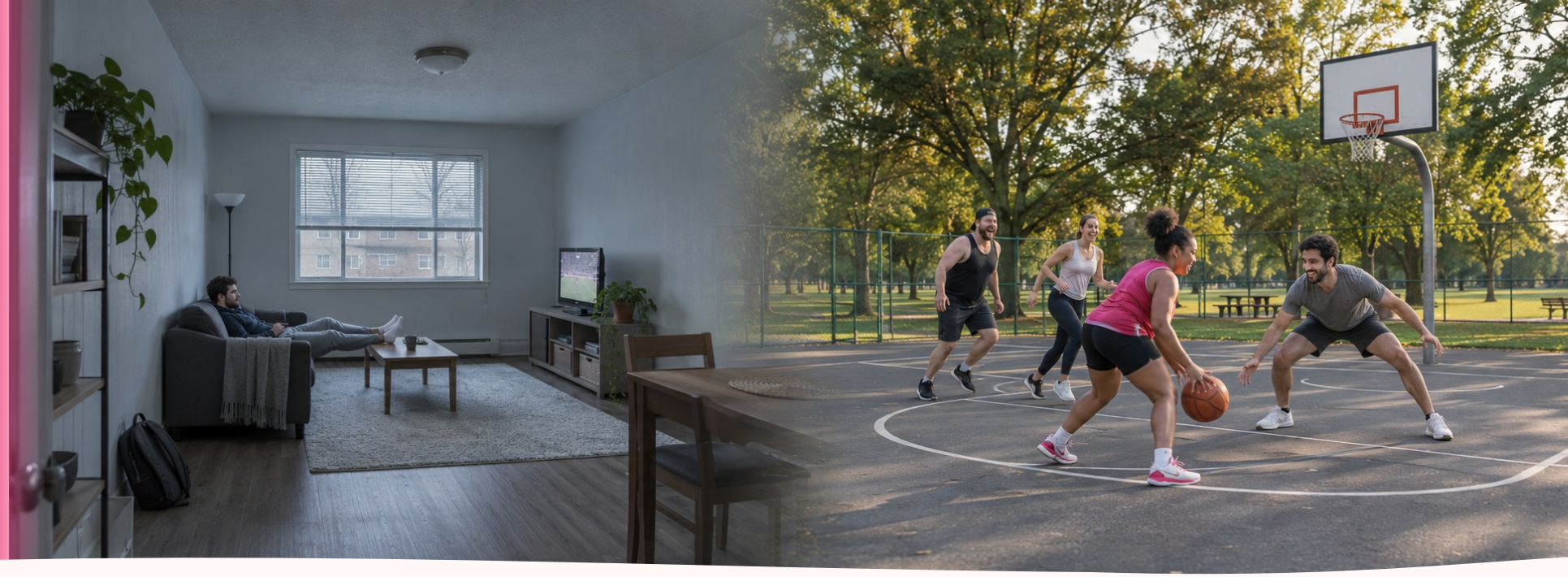
Exercise and Social Support: While large-scale public health data tracks general drops in poor mental health days and lower rates of depression among active individuals—such as a 43.2% lower self-reported mental health burden for those who exercise and a 45% improvement in mental health reporting when exercising with a companion—there is no universal global statistical percentage tracking how many people specifically claim they feel less depressed *when exercising and having fun with friends*. [1, 2]

Impact of Activity



Impact of Activity: Research published via Harvard Health and the Cochrane Library shows that regular physical activity independently lowers depression risk and can treat symptoms as effectively as certain therapies or medications. [1, 2]

Social and Group Benefits



Social and Group Benefits: Studies from the Black Dog Institute and population research on group-based exercise show that belonging to sports or exercise groups cuts clinical depression rates significantly (often nearly in half compared to non-group members) by lowering loneliness and increasing accountability and support. [1]

What percentage of people in the world say they wish that they had more friends?



Around **49%** of younger adults (such as Gen Z) and roughly **over 50%** of people overall report having fewer close connections than they want or desire more in-person friends, though broad polls like Pew Research show that about 72% of people are generally satisfied with the number of friends they have. [1, 2, 3]

Gen Z & Younger Demographics: Roughly **49%** of Gen Z adults say they do not have enough friends to spend time with in person, and **51%** report feeling lonely. [1]

General Satisfaction: Historically and across broader global studies, a majority (around **72%**) state they feel content with their existing friend count, even as modern lifestyle shifts and urbanization leave many feeling socially disconnected. [1, 2]

Perception Gap



Perception Gap: Studies on social circles also show that roughly **34% to 53%** of perceived friendships are actually mutual, meaning many people think they have more solid connections than they truly do. [1]

What percentage of people in the world are lonely?



Around 16% of people worldwide—or about **one in six**—experience loneliness, according to data from the World Health Organization. [1]

Key global and regional figures include:

By age: Loneliness is most common among adolescents and young adults (roughly one in five), though it affects people of all ages, including older adults (around 11.8%). [1, 2]

By income level: Global rates vary by region and economic status; around 15.7% of people report loneliness in high-income countries, compared to nearly 31.3% in lower-income countries. [1]

Alternative polling: Gallup World Poll data has estimated that roughly **23%** of people worldwide felt lonely a lot of the previous day. [1]

Australia context: Locally, data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that about **15%** of Australians experience loneliness (with rates slightly higher among females at 16% and males at 15%). [1]

What percentage of people in the world would do exercise if they had someone to do it with?





There is no single global statistic or census tracking the exact percentage of people worldwide who would exercise if they had an exercise partner. However, behavioral research consistently shows that social support, companionship, and workout buddies dramatically increase motivation, consistency, and participation rates:

Gym and Fitness Surveys: Regional surveys (such as those by Zumba and fitness groups) indicate that roughly **84% to 50%** of regular or reluctant exercisers report they would be more inclined to work out more often or find it easier to leave the house if they had a workout buddy. [1]

Global Inactivity Baseline: According to the World Health Organization Physical Activity Report, nearly **31% of adults worldwide** (about 1.8 billion people) do not meet recommended physical activity levels. [1]

The Impact of Companionship



The Impact of Companionship: Studies (such as research highlighted by the Charles Perkins Centre at the University of Sydney) show that social facilitation, accountability, and friendly competition significantly reduce dropout rates and increase the likelihood that individuals will hit recommended activity guidelines. For instance, older adults with family or companion support are more than twice as likely to meet physical activity guidelines compared to those who exercise alone. [1, 2, 3, 4]

What percentage of Australians are overweight or obese?





About 2 in 3 (67%) of Australian adults are living with overweight or obesity, according to data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. [1, 2]

Key Statistics for Adults

Combined rate: 67% of adults aged 18 and over are overweight or obese.

By gender: 72% of men and 62% of women are living with overweight or obesity.

Obesity alone: Around 31% to 33% of Australian adults are in the obese category.

Overweight alone (not obese): About 34% to 38% of adults are overweight.

Abdominal obesity: 48% of adults live with abdominal (belly) obesity, a rate that has nearly doubled since 1995. [1, 2, 3]

Children and Adolescents

Children aged 2 to 17: About **1 in 4 (27%)** children are living with overweight or obesity. [1, 2]

Are there studies that show that people are less likely to abuse drugs or alcohol if they have a community?



Yes, helping people build supportive friendships improves their drinking outcomes

A 2016 randomised trial involving 193 adults with alcohol problems compared a programme designed to build supportive social networks with cognitive behavioural therapy. The network programme helped people develop relationships with others who supported sobriety. Over follow-up lasting up to **27 months**, participants in that programme had:

More alcohol-free days. Fewer alcohol-related problems.

Both treatments improved other measures, including heavy-drinking days, without a clear difference between them. This is direct evidence that helping people develop a supportive social circle can improve meaningful drinking outcomes.

The study was called: **"Network Support II: Randomized Controlled Trial of Network Support Treatment and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Alcohol Use Disorder."** It was published in **2016** in the journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, by **Mark D. Litt and colleagues** at the University of Connecticut. This was the study involving **193 adults**, comparing a programme that helped people build friendships and social networks supportive of sobriety with cognitive behavioural therapy. Follow-up lasted up to **27 months**, and the network support programme produced **more alcohol-free days and fewer alcohol-related problems**.