



“He who laughs, lasts.” — Anonymous

You have probably heard that “Laughter is the best medicine,” and it is true! Humor and the subsequent laughter it produces have many therapeutic effects on the body. Laughing not only relieves stress and improves your mood and emotional state, it also has many social and physical health benefits (Mayo Clinic, 2020; Robinson, Smith and Segal, 2019).

Laughter improves physical health

- Improves cardiovascular health
- Improves brain functions
- Improves respiration
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces pain
- Enhances your immune system
- Decreases “stress” hormones
- Relaxes muscles
- Stimulates circulation
- Burns calories

Laughter enhances mental health

- Improves mood
- Relieves feelings of anger and frustration
- Reduces tension
- Lowers anxiety
- Lightens burden
- Increases energy
- Enhances creativity
- Increases personal satisfaction
- Makes it easier to deal with difficult situations
- Improves mood
- Balances the mind and body
- Inspires hope
- Adds joy to life

Laughter has social benefits

- Feels good
- Combats feelings of loneliness
- Changes behavior
- Creates social connections
- Strengthens relationships

Laughter strengthens relationships

- Keeps you connected when you laugh together
- Creates joy, vitality, and resilience
- Heals resentment
- Decreases tension
- Unites people
- Triggers positive feelings
- Connects people emotionally
- Enhances a positive bond
- Contributes to spontaneity
- Releases inhibition
- Helps you express true emotion
- Improves problem-solving

Add humor to your life

It's important to seek out and take advantage of opportunities to laugh every day.

- **Find fun.** Only boring people get bored. Find simple items that make you giggle, such as family photos, memes, funny movies or video clips, a joke. Life shouldn't be boring, it should be fun!
- **Share a hardy guffaw.** Sit at the dinner table or connect on a virtual video and reminisce. Tell funny stories and learn new things about your family.
- **Spend time with funny or joyful people.** Laughter is contagious. Spend time with those who help you see the bright side of life, and when possible, avoid those people who are negative.
- **Look for humor every day.** If you pay attention to your surroundings (versus keeping your head in your phone), you will see absurd, silly, or even odd activities that may make you smile.
- **Surround yourself with happy.** Frame fun photos of people you care about and happy memories. Keep a joke calendar on your desk.
- **Make time for humor.** Do you have a funny saying you like? Write it down and put it on the refrigerator. Try buying a daily calendar with a new joke each morning. Is there an object, like a stuffed animal, that always makes you smile? Put it in your living room where you will see it often.
- **Take a "fun break" every day to laugh:** Schedule it if necessary. Read jokes. Start a humor notebook. Listen to a funny tape. Watch a comedy show or funny YouTube video, then recommend it to others.
- **Smile.** A smile is the start of laughter, and it has a positive effect on others.
- **Don't be defensive.** Laughter can help us forgive, forget, and even overlook judgment and doubt.
- **Count your blessings.** At the end of the day, focus on the positive aspects of your day and make a list about things for which you are grateful.
- **Don't dwell on negativity.** Limit the amount of negative news, people, stories, and conversations you let in, and try to find the light at the end of the tunnel for those things or behaviors of others you cannot control.
- **Laugh at yourself.** Don't take yourself too seriously. Remind yourself to lighten up.

Laughing makes life more enjoyable. If you find it hard to laugh, call a medical professional as something more serious may be going on. You can also search online for a yoga or laugh therapy group. Even simulated laughter can help improve health and well-being (Robinson, Smith and Segal, 2019).

References:

- Robinson, L., Smith, M., Segal, J. (2019). Help Guide. Laughter is the best medicine.
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- Mayo Clinic. (2020). Stress relief from laughter? It's no joke.
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Source:

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