Improve your health with laughter!

It might sound silly to try to laugh more, but it is worth it. Keep reading to learn about the serious health benefits of laughing.

1. **Raise your mood & lower your stress.** When you laugh, your fight or flight response is put on hold. You take in a lot of oxygen, your blood vessels can widen and allow more blood to flow through your body, and your brain releases feel-good chemicals that help you relax.
2. **Relieve your pain.** Laughing triggers your body to produce natural painkillers and release tension in the muscles. In one study, people who laughed by watching a comedy managed to hold their hands in freezing ice water for longer than those who did not laugh. The pain-reducing effects lasted for up to 20 minutes after laughing.
3. **Bond with others.** Shared laughter can help relieve tension, promote group bonding, and strengthen connections and admiration. As long as laughter is not at another person's expense, it is a great tool for connecting.
4. **Potential long-term benefits.** The extra oxygen and blood flow may benefit your heart and lung health. As well, the benefits to your mood and stress levels can lower your risk of anxiety and depression.

So, how do you add more laughter into your life?

Some of us may have felt like we have lost our sense of humor to the realities of adult life. Laughter, play, and fun may seem like a reward you have to earn. But work is never done. Just like any other skill, you can practice finding humor. Here are some tips to work your funny bone:

1. **Schedule in something funny.** Find a silly video, watch a funny TV show or movie, listen to a humorous podcast, or go to a comedy club. If a picture or a joke makes you laugh, save it, and put it up somewhere you will see it or share it with others.
2. **Spend time with people who make you laugh.** Shared laughter is linked to positive relationships well-being. Think about who makes you belly laugh and book some time to call or visit with them.
3. **Try to remember something that made you chuckle or smile today.** You can find humor in your everyday life just like you can practice being thankful for the little things.
4. **Practice a smile or a laugh. See what happens.** In practices like laughter yoga, instructors will guide people in voluntary laughter which can turn into genuine laughter. See how your body and mind feel after forcing a laugh.

Seriously, laughing for your health is no joke. It is free and has no side effects, so try it out!

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