



# LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

Laughter is the strongest and most effective way of instantly making you or someone else feel better. Many people don't recognize the many mental, social, and physical benefits that are brought on by laughing. Using humor daily can really make each day a bit better.

Adults are usually so caught up in the seriousness of life and obligations that they don't even realize they laugh less. On the other hand, children laugh more due to their carefree nature and their emphasis on fun and play. A study referenced in Very Well Mind shared that children laugh up to 400 times a day, while adults only laugh 15 times a day.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes you need to encourage yourself to sit back and have a laugh. Laughter truly is the best medicine.



## NEUROLOGY

Before looking into the different ways laughter improves your mental, social, and physical health, take a deeper look into your brain. Neurology is the study of the nervous system, and this includes the brain. When people laugh and are happy, the brain releases specific chemicals that makes them feel this way. These chemicals are called endorphins. Other "happy" hormones include dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin. Laughter has also been proven to reduce the effect of stress hormones and release antibodies that strengthen your immune system!



## BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER ON YOUR HEALTH

So, how does laughter benefit your health? Now that you know about the chemical responses that happen in your brain with the release of endorphins and the reduction of stress hormones, you can see the ways laughter improves different areas of your health.

### MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS:

- Improves your mood
- Increases your confidence
- Reduces anxiety and stress
- Strengthens resilience
- Reduces negative emotions

### PHYSICAL HEALTH BENEFITS:

- Strengthens your immune system
- Protects the heart
- Decreases pain and discomfort
- Relaxes muscles

Not many people would consider the way laughter can also encourage a change of perspective. This can lead to a more resilient and optimistic outlook on difficult situations; it will enable you to remain positive during a period of change, disappointment, or loss.



## LAUGHTER AND RELATIONSHIPS

Laughter plays a huge part in your relationships with others. It's how people connect, make friends, and feel comfortable around others. Laughter reduces stress, it has a calming and pleasurable effect.

Laughter is a tool that increases different responses in the brain, and one of those is emotional engagement. Emotional engagement is something that happens when emotions are subconsciously processed. This happens a lot in social gatherings; it is good for your mental and emotional health.

Many people also don't consider the way laughter can help with conflict and tension. Have you ever been arguing with a close friend or sibling, when one look at them leaves you laughing so hard that you forget why you were arguing in the first place?

The action of laughing and the positive mental reinforcement further encourages you to forget resentments, judgments, and anger. Instead, it encourages you to reduce defenses and bond with another person. Implementing laughter within a conflict relieves tension, stress, and anger and allows for a more proactive and problem-solving conversation.



## LAUGHTER AND YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Being surrounded by laughter and an environment in which you feel comfortable being yourself can be the key to better mental health. Laughter promotes the environment around you to be optimistic, hopeful, and comfortable.

When you feel better mentally and physically, you are also able to focus better and become more productive. So the next time you are feeling down, try and have a laugh! Call a friend, watch a show, or find a funny social media video.

1. Scott, E., & Goldman, R. (Ed.). (2020, April 24). The health benefits of laughter. Very Well Mind. Retrieved January 30, 2024, from <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-stress-management-and-health-benefits-of-laughter-3145084>

