

Laughter  
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where we can  
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the 'now'.



**Goal:** Take a minute each day to laugh and start every day with a smile!

You have probably heard the phrase “[Laughter is the best medicine](#).” Have you ever taken a moment to really ask yourself what makes laughter the best medicine and should I be taking a dose each day? The answer is a resounding ‘Yes!’

**Physical Benefits.** Unlike humor, laughter is a physical act. It crosses all boundaries of race, culture, gender, socioeconomic status. Hearty belly laughter improves respiration, increases circulation, stimulates the immune system to help resist disease and enhances your aerobic capacity. Norman Cousins stated that laughter is like internal jogging. For those of us who don’t enjoy running, does that get your attention? Laughter temporarily increases heart rate and blood pressure, followed by muscle relaxation (up to 45 minutes) and a decrease in blood pressure, like an “internal jogging.” Laughter burns an additional 60 to 120 calories an hour over resting rates. Laughter is child-like playfulness that makes your circumstances seem less serious and therefore tolerable. Daily chores are less burdensome when you laugh while doing them. They aren’t always fun, but you might have more fun with laughter than without.

**Social Benefits.** Laughter is like [social glue](#). It breaks the ice in unfamiliar situations. It allows people to be more

open with one another, breaking down instinctive barriers and interrupting power struggles or hierarchy. When we laugh with others, judgment and self-criticism seem to fade. Laughter also stimulates creativity. It silences the analytic, judging part of the brain to allow the creative, abstract part to generate new ideas and thoughts.

**Cognitive Benefits.** Laughter, including “non-humor based” laughter, is shown to increase positive affect, which consists of positive emotions such as excitement, self-assurance, and cheerfulness. Induced positive affect widens our scope of attention and increases intuition, creativity, and imagination. Positivity and openness feed one another, creating an upward spiral of personal growth and human flourishing. For those who practice purposeful laughter in the workplace, it has been found to enhance employee morale, resilience, and belief in ones’ abilities.

**Emotional Benefits.** Laughter is a great tool to keep in our toolbox of positive coping strategies. [Laughter reduces stress](#) by providing a positive way to view problems. Laughter solidifies friendships, and pulls people into the fold. Eye contact with the people you laugh with facilitates even more laughter. Laughter relieves stress and anxiety. You can’t laugh and worry at the same time. Laughter puts us in the present moment where we can experience the ‘now’ which is the only moment where we can experience happiness.