



Humor: A Serious Weapon in the Fight Against Stress

Scientific researchers have demonstrated that laughing and maintaining a sense of humor ward off stress, fight illnesses and promote overall mind and body health. Find simple ways to laugh and relax, and turn to humor when you feel worries and frustrations creeping in. What can laughter do for you?

- **Lower blood pressure and improve cardiovascular health:** Laughing increases the heart rate and improves blood circulation. Research also shows that the physical effects of laughter last for up to two hours after you stop laughing.
- **Boost the body's immune system:** Laughter can increase the body's level of T-cells, which attack virus-infected cells.
- **Relax muscles:** Laughing works at least five different muscle groups throughout the body and improves muscle tone.
- **Help control pain and make you feel good:** Your body releases a shower of adrenaline and endorphins when you laugh.
- **Decrease hormones that cause stress:** These include dopamine and epinephrine.
- **Prevent heart attacks:** Laughter's ability to reduce stress, tension and anger can actually safeguard the heart.
- **Stimulate the brain:** Researchers have discovered that laughter changes brain-wave activity.
- **Burn calories:** When you laugh regularly and for long stretches, your metabolism and body temperature increase.
- **Aid in digestion:** Research indicates that laughing can stimulate enzymes that act as natural laxatives.
- **Relieve depression:** Laughter helps you get your mind off your troubles and helps control physiological factors that may promote depression.

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