

A Laugh a Day Can Keep the Doctor Away



There are many reasons why laughter should become a vital part of your day. Smiling will make you feel better. In fact, it is infectious. It makes everybody feel good. Here are some reasons to use laughter as a stress release:

- ✓ Can stimulate the immune system
- ✓ Changes your focus and can improve concentration
- ✓ Fosters healing
- ✓ Improves breathing
- ✓ Improves circulation
- ✓ Unleashes natural pain killers

Visualize A HappyTime

It may sound simple, but a good way to deal with stress is to visualize a happy time. Change your focus or mindset. Visualize something pleasant, happy, and/or enjoyable and your body will respond. For instance, think about a happy day you had at the beach, on the mountains, in a boat, or with beloved friends or family. Just this can make your body respond in a better way.

Change your environment, or what you are doing. Think about more positive things. Make a concentrated effort to forget about the thoughts, feelings or concerns that have added to your stress.

Have Fun

Start by planning what you will do for fun, then make it happen. Do something you enjoy. Read a book, or a magazine. Take a walk outside. Play cards. Play a table game with others. Get a massage. Go for a swim. Ride a bike. Listen to some music. Go to a free concert in the park. Go to a church. Sit by a stream or creek or pond. Go fishing! It is not only ok to play, it is important for health and well being. Take time out from your troubles. Let your body get re-nourished. Your body needs your help in times of stress. So, go and have some fun without guilt!

Get Moving

Get your body moving. Exercise reduces high blood pressure, improves brain function and the cardiovascular system. Dedicate some time every day to do some physical activities that make you breathe harder and sweat.

Make it fun! Find an exercise buddy to make physical activities more fun. Go for a walk with a friend. Go dancing. Go for a bike ride or a walk on the beach or the woods. Choose an activity that brings you pleasure, makes you feel good or happy.

Nutrition:

- Plan to eat foods for improved health and well-being. For example, increase the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat.
- Use the [food guide pyramid](#) to help select healthy food choices.
- Eat an appropriate amount of food at a reasonable schedule.
- Drink plenty of water.

Social support:

- Make an effort to be with other people. This can change your personal focus to others rather than "self".
- Reach out to individuals.
- Nurture yourself and others.

Relaxation:

- Learn about and try using one or more of the many relaxation techniques, such as guided imagery, listening to music, or practicing yoga or meditation. Take time for personal interests and hobbies.
- Listen to your body.
- Take a mini retreat.

Attitude:

Personal attitude has a direct influence on whether a situation or emotion is or is not stressful. Be positive. Look happy, even if you feel sad inside. Keeping a smile on your face will make you feel better, and others will respond accordingly

Some of the Sources of Information Used in this Overview

Academic & Specialty Centers for Public Health Preparedness

<http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/owpp/cphp.asp>

American Psychiatric Association

<http://www.psych.org/>

National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

<http://www.ncptsd.org>

Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

<http://www.usuhs.mil/psy/traumaticstress/newcenter.html>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

<http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/ADM90-537/Default.asp>

For more information, visit www.bt.cdc.gov

or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).