



Laugh More

CHALLENGE

Laugh more to improve your health

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Laugh More."
2. Create a plan to laugh more and stress less to improve your health.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



In the 1960s, doctors told journalist and educator Norman Cousins that he didn't have long to live.

He was diagnosed with heart disease and a painful form of arthritis at age 35.

But instead of giving up hope, Cousins developed his own form of therapy: Laughing.

Watching just 10 minutes of slapstick comedy by the Marx Brothers and laughing helped him be pain free for at least two hours at a time.

He made laughter and humor a regular part of his life. And he lived 36 years longer than doctors predicted.

Just think about... laugh-out-loud movies. A good joke. Funny videos on YouTube. And all those priceless moments with family and friends when you laugh until you cry.

They all have something in common. Laughing is good for your health. Your doctor may not write out a prescription for laughter, but it's still good medicine.

Ready to beat stress and improve your health? Take the month-long health challenge to Laugh More.

Take the LOL Quiz

How much do you know about the health benefits of laughing? Take this quiz to find out.



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1. Laughing 100 times has the same effect as riding a stationary bicycle for 15 minutes.
2. Stress hormones that weaken your immune system decrease after a good laugh.
3. A good laugh strengthens the heart and lungs and increases your body's ability to use oxygen.
4. Laughter has little to no effect on blood pressure, stress, muscle tension, or pain.
5. When you laugh, endorphins are released in the brain that help improve your mood.

How did you do? There's some truth to the phrase, "Laughter is the best medicine." Research shows laughter is good for your mental and physical health in many ways.

Answers: 1.True, 2.True, 3.True, 4.False, 5.True.

LOL: 3 Surprising Reasons to Laugh More

Can laughing really make a difference?

Norman Cousins made it his lifetime pursuit to laugh more and live longer. And it worked.

He lived to be 75 years old, despite a doctor's prediction that he would be dead before age 40.

In his book, *Anatomy of an Illness*, Cousins provides a detailed look at how he used laughter to reduce pain, maintain a positive outlook, and live a long and happy life.¹

Personal experiences like his prompted researchers to begin taking a closer look at the health benefits of laughter.²

1. Lower heart disease risk

It's the leading cause of death in the United States and claims the lives of nearly 700,000 people a year.

But laughing can reduce your risk, according to a Japanese study.³ Researchers followed 17,000 people for six years. They found that:

- **People who laugh daily live longer** and have a lower risk for heart disease, than people who laugh less often.

30 mistakes in Star Wars
<https://tinyurl.com/nm73ssl>



23 Fun Ways to Laugh More

Need a good laugh to lighten your mood and improve your health? Here are 23 ways to help you smile, be happier and laugh more:

Media that makes you laugh

After just 10 minutes of watching comedy on TV and laughing, Norman Cousins felt better for hours. If you're in need of a good laugh, enjoy a funny movie, TV show, or video on the Internet. Then walk away with a smile on your face.

1. Watch a funny TV show or movie.
2. Even if you've seen it before, watch your favorite funny movie again.
3. Watch funny videos on the Internet.
4. Instead of hitting fast-forward, watch commercials and look for clever and funny ads.
5. Even if you're not a Star Wars fan, watch the 1977 George Lucas movie, and try to find the mistakes, like when a Stormtrooper bangs his head on a door.

Laugh with your peeps

Some of the best laugh-out-loud moments occur when you're with family, friends, or co-workers. Here are some ways to enjoy a few laughs when you're with others:

6. Tell a funny story or embarrassing moment about yourself.
7. If your kids say something funny at home, share it with others.
8. Play silly practical jokes on each other.
9. Plan an ugly sweater day at the office.
10. Post funny comics on your office door or share on social media.
11. Look at old photos of yourself, family, and friends.
12. Make funny faces at each other, or have a staring contest.
13. Organize a funny movie night, and dress as your favorite character.
14. Call each other by funny nicknames for a day.
15. Laugh at other people's jokes.

Find something to laugh about every day

You never know when something funny might happen that turns an ordinary day into a can't-stop-laughing day to remember. Here are a few more ways to laugh more and stress less:

16. Try not to take yourself too seriously.
17. Go to a comedy club, show, or funny movie.
18. Look for things that are interesting, funny, or out-of-the-ordinary.

(Cont'd) LOL: 3 Surprising Reasons to Laugh More



2. Reduce stress

Ever feel stressed out? You're not alone. An estimated 76% of adults report feeling stressed during the past month, according to a recent survey.⁴

Too much stress can increase: blood pressure, anxiety, depression, obesity, and even weaken the immune system.

Fortunately, laughter can help, according to researchers at Loma Linda University.⁵

"Laughter causes the release of endorphins," says Dr. Lee S. Berk. "...It also decreases cortisol, which then reduces stress."

3. Lower blood pressure

Half of all adults in the U.S. have elevated or high blood pressure, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There are typically no symptoms, but it's a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke, and kidney disease.

In a recent study, researchers found that **attending a stand-up comedy act once a week** for a month "resulted in a significant reduction in systolic blood pressure and heart rate."⁶

But wait...there's more. Laughter may also help:⁷

- Boost immune system
- Increase oxygen consumption
- Reduce pain
- Improve mood
- Protect memory

112
clean jokes
<https://tinyurl.com/rd847dy5>

19. Smile more.
20. Skip instead of walk.
21. Order a diet water with a serious face.
22. Share a funny joke with co-workers or friends.
23. Learn to laugh at your own mistakes.

Laugh every day. You'll feel better and live longer.

5 reasons to
laugh every day
<https://tinyurl.com/mr3y8j4u>

References

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4. American Psychological Association. (2022). Stress in America 2022: Concerned for the future, beset by inflation. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yvu7rtnv>
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CHALLENGE

Laugh more to improve your health

Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to laugh more and stress less to improve your health.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to laugh more.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I laughed more
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____