

Laughter – The More the Better



Photo by neomonkey

Pre-reading

Questions:

- What do you think you may learn in this reading?

Definitions:

- Arousal – the condition of being stimulated or excited
- Resolution – the reduction or subsiding of a condition within the body
- Endorphin – a chemical/hormone of the brain that affects emotions

Reading

16 A laugh a day may keep the doctor away. Humor is good medicine. Research has shown
33 many **benefits** of laughter. It helps keep our mind and body healthy. It relaxes our muscles and
47 increases circulation. Laughter increases the oxygen level in our blood and lowers blood pressure.
It also boosts the immune system. Infections are less likely to strike if we are laughing.

63 Laughter is a form of release. It rids our body of stressful emotions and reduces the level of
81 stress hormones. Think of a time when you had a good belly laugh. Was your whole body
98 engaged? Laughter can be a total body experience, much like exercise.

109 According to Doctor Pam Schiller, laughter has two stages. One is the arousal phase that
124 increases the heart rate. The other is the resolution phase that allows the heart to rest. She says
142 that, “Laughing gives the diaphragm, abdomen, respiratory system and facial muscles a complete
155 work-out.”

156 The benefits of laughter can also be seen in the brain. Research tells us that humor
172 stimulates parts of the brain known as reward centers. These reward centers release endorphins
186 that combat pain and create a natural high. The brain feels rewarded by finding something funny.

202 Laughter and humor are two powerful tools. Learn to laugh at yourself. Don’t worry or
217 analyze why people laugh – just join in! Think funny thoughts. Sing silly songs. Read some
232 funny jokes such as, “Why are basketball players sloppy eaters? Because they always dribble.”
246 “What has more lives than a cat? A frog – it croaks every night!”

259 A smile is the first step toward laughter. Smile often. Look in the mirror and smile at
276 yourself. Smile at your co-workers. Smile at your spouse, or with your children. Smile at
291 strangers on the street. Smile at friends that you meet. Remember, “The day goes, the way your
308 mouth turns!”

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Level 5.0

Understanding

1. What does the phrase “The day goes, the way your mouth turns,” mean? _____

2. How does laughter affect stress? _____

3. What does the word **benefit** mean? _____

4. What does laughter do to the brain? _____

5. What are some ways to get more humor in your life? _____

6. How does laughter help fight-off infections? _____

7. Why should we laugh more? (List at least three reasons.) _____

Writing

Choice A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Choice B: Research suggests that children laugh 400 times per day and adults only laugh 15 times per day. What does this mean? What can we learn from it?
