

Laughing for Your Health

Whether you played an April Fools' joke on someone or you were the target of a prank, you benefited from April Fools' Day in more ways than you realize if you had a good belly laugh as a result.

Laughing provides many physical and emotional benefits. According to Humor and Health Journal, laughing lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, increases immune function, releases endorphins, and produces a general sense of well-being. Laughing also provides a workout for the diaphragm and increases oxygen flow providing a cleansing effect similar to deep breathing. By finding the humor in situations, we are guarding against interpreting these situations as threatening or challenging, which will only serve to increase the distress we feel. By making light out of a situation, we may feel more in control and less overwhelmed. Not bad considering laughing is free and has no unpleasant side effects!

Need more humor in your life? Start your day off on a healthy and happy note by listening to comedy on your way to work (and guard against stress from traffic too!). Watch a sit-com. Have a tickle-fest with your children. Look for the silly in things. Set aside time to allow yourself to laugh if you need to (there are actual "laughing clubs" in India that meet just for this purpose!). Take note of the unexpected or humorous things around you and share it with a friend. Try subscribing to a free online joke-of-the-day website. Share these jokes with your family at dinnertime so the whole family can benefit from laughter.