

## TIPS FOR MORE LAUGHTER IN YOUR LIFE

When was the last time that you laughed? If you're sitting there and having problems remembering, then close your eyes and think of something funny that happened to you recently or that you might have witnessed. Do it right now. Happy to wait for you to come back. ....

What happened? You might have noticed some or all of the following:

- Your face broke out into a gentle smile
- Your eyes "crinkled" up as they do when you smile
- You may have noticed a warmth in your body
- Some of you may have taken a deep breath at the same time

Check in with how you're feeling- you may be left feeling happier. Some of you might be feeling sad because you miss what you have just remembered.

The bottom line is that a smile and hopefully a giggle is only a memory away. However there is also a lot more happening underneath that experience than what you might have physically noticed. Research recently completed by Lee S. Berk of Loma Linda University (Berk: 2006) suggests that just the anticipation of "mirthful laughter" boosts our feel good hormones- the endorphins by almost 30%. The good news here is even if you don't understand the joke you just heard, the mere anticipation that it might be funny is enough to give your spirits a boost.

Endorphins are the same feel good hormones that are produced when you exercise, engage in intercourse and of course when you eat chocolate. The added advantage of getting an endorphin hit from laughing over eating chocolate is that laughing also burns calories at the same time. Some researchers quote that ten to fifteen minutes of laughter can burn 50 calories (Gottlieb: 2005). I suppose if you combined eating chocolate and laughing at the same time (assuming you didn't choke) you could balance out the effect? That might be why Fantaes come with a joke wrapper?

**If you'd like to have more laughter and joy in your life then here are some more fool proof strategies that guarantee at least a giggle.**

1. Find other positive outgoing and happy people to spend your time with.
2. Practise smiling – even when you fake a smile or laugh the body will automatically start to feel better.
3. Practise smiling at others.
4. Yawn and stretch those jaw muscles- laughter is a great antidote if you grind your teeth.
5. Compile your own personal library of humorous material that always gets a laugh- at least from you. This could include DVD, books, tapes and even feel good inspirational cards to help you change your perspective.
6. Join or start a local laughter club.
7. Spend time playing with your pets or children. Play is a great way to start laughing.
8. Just make a decision to have more fun.
9. Download screen savers that make you smile- with all of us sitting in front of our computers for longer it seems logical to use this time to smile.
10. Avoid the news on television, radio and in the paper. If you can't resist, always finish with the cartoon section, so you can have a hearty chuckle.

11. Try and increase your spontaneity in all things that you do- this is the fastest way to a giggle.
12. Compile a memory journal of all the funny experiences you have had. This may include funny pictures, articles or cartoons that make you laugh or just mementoes from a funny situation. These memories can trigger the wonderful event all over again and return you to that funny moment. It's a great project and you can continue to add things to it. This is a wonderful resource when you're feeling low and it will immediately lift your spirits.
13. Volunteer your time to a local charity. This can be a great way to gain greater appreciation for what you have in your life and a smile always follows gratitude.
14. Take 30minutes every day and live it as if it was the last 30minutes of your life- it sure puts things into focus
15. Find out what makes you happy and keep doing it.

**Allowing more laughter into your life, could prove to be the best investment you could make in your health today.**

*The art of medicine consists of keeping the patient amused while nature heals the disease- Voltaire*

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**About Shirley:**

Shirley Hicks publishes her monthly Healthy Matters newsletter for clients and people interested in creating a happier , healthier lifestyle. If you want more happiness and health in your life , then sign up for her Healthy Matters E-zine. If you liked this article then why not download Shirley's FREE e-book, *16 EASY STEPS TO RENEW YOUR ENERGY* FREE for you today.

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