

For healthy cortisol levels it is necessary to enable the body's relaxation response to operate each time the fight or flight response occurs.  
Laughter is nature's built-in Reset Button.

Number 11 - Fight depression with a smile.

Recent research has established that electrical brainwave patterns of the right and left hemisphere of the brain tend to co-ordinate more when we find something humorous and laugh.

This is important because of evidence that depression is accompanied by low co-ordination in brain wave patterns between the two sides.

It has been established with biofeedback and the observation of brainwaves whilst meditating, that the mere act of smiling internally reverses the stress response in our neuro-endocrine system and stimulates our brainwave pattern into deep healing and longevity.

So....

## Why not laugh?

Excerpt from

### It Could Be Verse

- An Anthology of Laughter Quotations  
for those Suffering from Stressful Situations

©Kit Hammond Stapely

You can find out more at:

[www.miraclesdohappen.org.uk](http://www.miraclesdohappen.org.uk)

Or from:

Kit Hammond-Stapely  
3 Riverside Villas  
Portsmouth Road, Long Ditton,  
Surrey, KT6 5PX  
020 8398 4034  
[kit.hammond@boltblue.com](mailto:kit.hammond@boltblue.com)



## Why laugh?

by Kit Hammond Stapely

Have you ever wondered just how laughter could improve your life and reduce stress?

Take a look inside to learn  
how and why you would benefit  
from incorporating more  
laughter into your life...

**Number 1 - Laugh so much that you nearly fall over.**

OK, not quite that bad, but have you ever really let go and just laughed for all you were worth? When you laugh you lose muscle control because laughter has a profoundly relaxing effect on the muscles.

Muscles throughout the body tense and relax during laughter in exactly the same way as in stress reduction techniques such as yoga. So if you laugh with your whole body you are in effect giving yourself a laughter workout.

**Number 2 - Laugh so your sides ache.**

When you laugh your diaphragm convulses. This involuntary convulsion of the diaphragm, that is a component of laughter, does two valuable things:

- a. It tones up your muscles - that's why your sides can ache - another workout! and...
- b. Like a bellows it pushes all the stale air out of your lungs, which means that fresh air rushes in to replace it.

**Number 3 - Laughter is good for your blood.**

Laughter alters your breathing cycles so that more oxygen is inhaled and toxic carbon dioxide is exhaled. All that inhaled fresh air brings more oxygen into your system, which is what oxygenates the blood.

**Number 4 - Fancy a massage?**

When you laugh, the convulsion of the diaphragm causes it to push against your internal organs. This causes a beneficial shake-up and increased blood flow to your internal organs (they like that!).

**Number 5 - More exercise with mirth.**

Did you ever feel exhausted from a bout of hearty laughter? That is because laughter acts on your body like exercise. According to Dr. William Fry at Stanford University, "One minute of laughter is equal to 10 minutes on the rowing machine."

**Number 6 - Chuckle to relieve the pressure.**

Laughter raises your blood pressure just long enough to increase oxygen and blood supply to tissues and then it reduces. There is compelling evidence to show that regular hearty laughter can permanently reduce your blood pressure - with no side effects. Also, your temporarily increased blood pressure sends an increased volume of blood coursing faster round your body which beneficially expands and energises the whole cardio-vascular system.

**Number 7 - A natural high.**

Laughter makes the world seem bright. Endorphins are what make you feel as if the world is a sunnier place. If you ever experienced the 'Runner's High' you may know that endorphins are credited with being our natural source of pain killers and the

feel-good factor. The science is young, however, and there is some doubt that it is actually endorphins that are responsible. If it feels good I don't care what they call it, I just enjoy the effect. If you want more scientific detail consult wonderful, wonderful Wikipedia.

**Number 8 - Boost your immune system.**

Ontario's Waterloo University recently established that exposure to laughter improves immune system functioning and produces significant rises in the body's natural defences. Chronically low antibody levels produce greater likelihood of future disease. It is particularly intriguing that in this study those classified as having a good sense of humour, given something to laugh at, experienced the greatest rises in antibody levels.

Your immune system is boosted by increasing your levels of:

- a) infection-fighting T-cells,
- b) disease-fighting proteins called Gamma interferon and
- c) B-cells, which produce disease-destroying antibodies,

**Number 9 - Give yourself a laughter facial.**

Apart from the fact that a smiling or laughing face is naturally many, many times more attractive than one with a neutral expression, laughter increases blood flow to the face and it responds by taking on a rosy glow. It also gives the facial muscles a good work out which tightens everything up.

**Number 10 - Relax and enjoy.**

Dr Lee Berk and Dr. Stanley Tan at Loma Linda University have shown that 30 minutes of 'mirthful laughter' (watching a funny movie as opposed to a merely pleasant one) decreases the cortisol levels in the blood by up to 87%.

This is good because cortisol, like adrenalin, is great for you in emergencies but only in short bursts. Chronic stress occurs when your body doesn't get a chance to return to normal. Prolonged levels of cortisol in the blood stream can create grave consequences, including:

- reduced thyroid function,
- reduced mental performance,
- blood sugar imbalances,
- reduced bone density,
- decrease in muscle tissue,
- increase in abdominal fat ('apple' pattern),
- lowered immune function and inflammatory response,
- raised blood pressure.