

Feel Good and Funny

By Nick Arnette

Do you think humor is a luxury? Sure, you enjoy laughing and you like to spend time with friends whom you find funny. But in this busy world, you might think, *Humor is not a priority. I have more important things to do. I've got business meetings, Little League, and I need to make time for the gym, too. After that, if I'm not too tired, I'll try to have a laugh or two.*

You might want to rethink that. Laughter is as important to your health as going to the gym. And not only are the health benefits from laughter hard to beat, they are FREE!

Here's what the really smart guys and gals are saying about the health benefits of laughter.

Researchers at Wisconsin's Marquette University found that watching comedy clips actually improves memory.¹⁷

A study at the University of Maryland concludes that *laughter* causes blood vessels to expand and contract more easily. While stress constricts blood vessels by as much as 35 percent, *laughter* opens up blood vessels a whopping 22 percent more than when your body is at rest.

Laughing burns about 50 calories per hour.¹⁹ Don't give up on the exercise, though, because it would take about six hours

of laughing to burn off a cheeseburger. Kids laugh about four hundred times a day. If you can manage to laugh just half as much as a child does throughout the day, you will give your heart a good workout. □ "Laughing one hundred to two hundred times per day is the cardiovascular equivalent of rowing for ten minutes," says Dr. William F. Fry, associate professor of clinical psychiatry at Stanford University. "When something strikes you as funny, you laugh. And when you laugh, your body responds. You flex, then relax, 15 facial muscles plus dozens of others all over your body. Your pulse and respiration increase briefly, oxygenating your blood. And your brain experiences a decrease in pain perception, possibly associated with the production of pain-killing, pleasure-giving endorphins." □ Laughter also helps maintain a healthy immune system. It decreases stress hormones, lowers bad cholesterol, and raises good cholesterol. Pardon my grammar, but when you laugh good, you feel good. Imagine the following conversation:

Jeri: Hey Larry, you look great. What's your secret?

Larry: I've been laughing a lot...watching lots of comedy shows, reading funny books. You should try it. It's so much fun, and it makes me feel great! Best thing of all, it's free and has zero calories.

Jeri: I think I'll start laughing right now—about that ridiculous toupee you're wearing!

Norwegian scientists found that people with a sense of *humor* have a 30 percent higher probability of survival when severe disease strikes. Like the old saying goes: He who laughs, lasts! When Sven and Inga tell you that your sense of humor might make you live longer, take notice.

The preceding article is an excerpt from *Me, We and Glee: How to have a great attitude, work as a team and keep your sense of humor*, by Nick Arnette. Known as *The Feel Good Funny Guy*, Arnette is a popular keynote speaker at business meetings throughout the United States and Canada. You can contact Nick Arnette at www.NickArnette.com, email: nick@nickarnette.com

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