

Laugh Your Heart Out



Is laughter really the best medicine? Wellmaybe it's not the best medicine, but laughter has been proven to be very good medicine and it has no scary side effects (except maybe laugh lines). You've probably heard about the negative effects of stress hormones, but most of us lack the ability to properly de-stress. In "fight or flight" mode today's world won't let you fight and you can't really run away. So most people bottle up the stress and let the hormones released do their damage, or hope that their morning walk is enough physical exercise to lessen the effects of stress.

But enough bad news. The good news is that just as negative emotions can hurt you, positive emotions can help you. So, how can you get those positive hormones flowing? Laughter is a terrific start.

Laughter can actually improve your blood vessels, leading to improved blood flow. After listening to a comedy tape, volunteers' blood vessels open up by 19%.

Would you believe that 20 minutes of laughing gives your heart the same effect as 20 minutes of hard rowing? And who wouldn't rather laugh their heart out than do some hard rowing?

People talk about staying away from negative people and negativity, maybe the focus should be on becoming a positive person. Become someone with a contagious laugh, the person that brings a smile to everyone's face, the person everyone stands near at a ball game or a party – the one who makes everyone laugh. As Mahatma Gandhi said – *"Become the change you wish to see."*