



### Laugh Out Loud (LOL)

-CA. Dhanashree D. Prabhu

Health is wealth goes an old adage. Good health is as much about mental fitness as it is about physical fitness. In fact, if one is mentally strong and fit, physical fitness will follow. It's all in our mind to live the way we want to. One way to be mentally fit and in turn physically, is LAUGHTER. Truly, laughter is the best medicine!

Technically, laughing is a reaction to certain stimuli. It is an audible expression or appearance of excitement, an inward feeling of joy. It is usually linked to a number of positive emotions. However, sometimes it could be the expression of embarrassment, confusion. Laughing surely is contagious. Many times you must have observed, when people around are laughing, you end up in the same state without even really knowing the reason behind their laugh.

Children are known to laugh a great deal more than adults: an average baby laughs around 300 times a day compared to an average adult, who laughs around 20 times a day!

### Laughter and the brain

Laughter is linked with the activation of certain parts of the brain that produces endorphins, the natural pain-killers. Laughter also boosts the number of antibody-producing cells leading to a stronger immune system. There are specific regions in our brain for specific activities. But laughter is like a current which touches many regions of the brain.

Did you know, laughing 100 times is equal to 10 minutes of rowing or 15 minutes of bike riding? You might have observed that you get very exhausted after a heavy bout of laughter. Well, that is because you have just had an aerobic workout!

### Benefits of Laughter

#### Physical Health Benefits:

- Boosts immunity
- Lowers stress hormones
- Decreases pain
- Relaxes your muscles
- Prevents heart disease

#### Mental Health Benefits:

- Adds joy and zest to life
- Eases anxiety and fear
- Relieves stress
- Improves mood
- Enhances resilience

#### Social Benefits:

- Strengthens relationships
- Attracts others to us
- Enhances teamwork
- Helps defuse conflict
- Promotes group bonding

**Can't I just tickle myself?**

For us it seems so natural, but the funny thing is that humans are one of the only species that laugh. Laughter is actually a complex response that involves many of the same skills used in solving problems. We don't really need the scientific researches to reckon that laughter is decreasing from our lives. We take things and ourselves too seriously! Among the easiest ways to developing your sense of humor: *take yourself less seriously.*

Ah! Apparently, for tickling to make us laugh, the brain needs tension and surprise, something that's obviously missing when we tickle ourselves. Although, how the brain uses this information about tension and surprise is still a mystery.

Well, even if you did not grow up in a household where laughter was a common sound, you can learn to laugh at any stage of life. Here are some ways to start and keep it going

- Smile. (in Kal Ho Na Ho terms – Count 1, 2, 3 and smile – Eeeee)
- Count your blessings. (Literally make a list. You will feel thankful resulting in an automatic smile)
- When you hear laughter, move towards it.
- Spend time with fun, playful people.
- Bring humor into conversations.
- Figure out what makes you laugh and do it more often.
- Laugh at yourself.
- Surround yourself with reminders to lighten up.
- Deal with your stress. (Dr. Asthana in the movie Munna Bhai MBBS)
- Pay attention to children and emulate them.

*Laughing with others is more powerful than laughing alone.*

**Horrible problem - really?**

When you find yourself taken over by what seems to be a horrible problem, ask these questions:

- Is it really worth getting upset over?
- Is it worth upsetting others?
- Is it that important?
- Is it that bad?
- Is the situation irreparable?
- Is it really your problem?

Humor takes you to a higher level where you can view the world from a more relaxed, positive, creative, joyful, and balanced perspective. More than just a respite from sadness and pain, laughter gives you the courage and strength to find new sources of meaning and hope. Even in the most difficult of times, a laugh or even simply a smile can go a long way towards making you feel better and in turn fair better.

Best of all, this priceless medicine is fun, free and easy to use! So go ahead, and LOL 😊