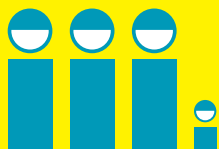


LAUGH ABOUT IT!

→ LOLing is the best medicine. Here's how, when and why to let loose.



The number of seconds it takes to produce a nonspontaneous laugh



3.35

The optimal number of people with whom to share a laugh before its bonding effects lessen. "Our research shows that laughter is very intimate," says study author Guillaume Dezecache, Ph.D., a researcher at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland.



The percentage by which your blood vessels can widen when you're laughing, compared to when you're stressed. To get that same heart-healthy benefit, you'd have to either get a prescription for cholesterol-lowering drugs or bank up to 10 full minutes of cardio for every minute of laughter. "We believe that laughter actually protects against heart disease," says study author Michael Miller, M.D., professor of medicine at the University of Maryland.

67%

Percentage of the time that people around you can tell if you're fake-laughing. (Note to fakers: Faster, higher-pitched laughs are typically judged as more real.)

LAUGHTER = ZEN

LAUGHTER INCREASES GAMMA BRAIN WAVES, THE SAME ONES ACTIVATED DURING MEDITATION. THEY MAKE YOU FEEL FOCUSED AND ALERT BUT ALSO CALM.

6:03 P.M.

The time of day when people find jokes the funniest. Researchers recorded when users rated jokes online and examined how the ratings changed throughout the day. (Least funny time: 1:30 A.M.)

A funny trick for flat abs?

Laughter yoga, which combines yogic breathing with giggles, activates your internal obliques 150 percent more than crunches do. Find an instructor near you at LaughterYoga.org.

1
SUGAR-FREE FUDGE POP
Roughly what you'd burn off if you laughed for

15
MINUTES
straight
(But who's counting?)

SOURCES: 2.1 SECONDS, CURIOUS BEHAVIOR: YAWNING, LAUGHING, HICCUPPING AND BEYOND; 3.35, EVOLUTION AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR; 50%, HEART; 67%, EVOLUTION AND HUMAN BEHAVIOR; LAUGHTER = ZEN, JOURNAL OF THE FEDERATION OF THE SOCIETIES FOR EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY; 6:03 P.M., QUIRKOLOGY; FUNNY TRICK FOR FLAT ABS, JOURNAL OF MOTOR BEHAVIOR; SUGAR-FREE FUDGE POP, INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF OBESITY.