

Mood Booster

2-minute Mini playsheet

It's way too easy to get bogged down in the serious aspects of life, that we forget to laugh. Despite the huge increase in the standard of living, the world is getting more and more serious. According to a study by German psychologist Michael Titze, in the 1950s people laughed for eighteen minutes a day, but today we laugh no more than six minutes a day. Children can laugh up to four hundred times a day, but by the time we reach adulthood, that frequency drops to only fifteen times a day.

Given the many therapeutic benefits of laughing - which I'll discuss in a moment - this is a real concern. So let me ask you honestly: When was the last time you had a belly laugh, where you laughed so hard you had tears running down your face? If it wasn't in the last week, then you're in dire need of this fun little **Mood Booster Mini**. You can do this Mini anywhere you feel comfy laughing for 2-minutes. It really is portable therapy!

YUMMY BENEFITS OF THIS MINI

Laughter has a rich history of being used as a potent medicine to heal the mind, body and soul. Surgeons used laughter to detract patients from pain as early as the 13th century. Later in the 20th century, former editor of *The Saturday Review*, Norman Cousins, used laughter (and vitamin C) to help him recover from an incurable disease. Since then, many hospitals have begun to introduce laughter into their healing programs.

Laughter lets in oxygen, which feeds the blood cells and the brain, and thus, wards off fatigue. Laughing produces many feel-good chemicals and helps manage chronic pain and illness. It has also been found to shorten recovery time after illness, by strengthening the immune system. People who laugh often, almost never get a cough, cold or flu. So if for nothing else, use this Mini as your daily preventative to avoid getting sick.

It has been scientifically proved that laughter elevates mood, brings hope, enhances communication and is instrumental for maintaining good health. When we laugh, especially when we *really* let ourselves go, our endocrine system releases endorphins and enkephalins in the brain. These substances reduce feelings of stress, relax the body and leave behind a sense of euphoria. A good bout of laughter also reduces the levels of stress hormones epinephrine and cortisol, making it a powerful antidote for depression, feeling alone, unhappy or just plain flat.

A good belly laugh helps clean out all the cobwebs of stress that choke up the body, leaving you feeling lighter and refreshed.

What's interesting is that medical research shows that even if you *pretend* to laugh or act happy, your body still produces happy chemicals. According to the principles of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), there is hardly any difference between *thinking* about doing something and actually *doing* it. Therefore whatever may be the source of laughter, it leads to the same set of physiological changes in the body.

So yes, laughing releases tension, is comforting for the heart, and helps us reconnect with who we truly are. But it also gives our facial muscles, the diaphragm and abdomen a massage and has been

described by some as internal jogging! Dr William Fry from Stanford University in the United States, claims one minute of laughter is the equivalent of ten minutes on a rowing machine. So yes, laughter - and this Mini in particular - will give you both a mental and physical workout.

HOW TO DO THIS MINI

There is no special position you need to be in to do this Mini. That said, if you take a moment to lengthen through your spine before you begin, it will ensure you are starting from a place of ease. Take a full breath in, then let it go. And when you're ready begin to laugh out loud. Don't worry if it's a fake laugh. The body can't tell the difference between a fake laugh and a real laugh and will still release happy chemicals into the body.

You may feel self-conscious or silly. This is completely normal! Embrace this uncomfortable feeling and really get into it. Laugh until you can feel it in your belly. Continue laughing for a full two-minutes - perhaps set a timer on your phone - and then bring your hands to your heart in **Prayer Pose**, bow your head, and say 'I am love'. I recommend doing this Mini every day, especially if you experience depression, or often feel a little down on yourself.

If you are not laughing at least a couple of times a day, that is a sign you are stressed. Laughter is portable, immediate therapy. I like to think of it as a way of 'charging up' the battle of the soul. We are born with the gift of laughter - it is being serious that we learn. So use this Mini regularly to learn to laugh and live all over again.