

Humor

Programs that tickles your funny bone

Laughter Exercises

In this interactive learning activity, we explore the role that laughter and fun play in enriching our lives, and learn ways to get more of both. After all, in the words of Charlie Chaplin, “A day without laughter is a day wasted.” So, let’s not waste any more time—it’s time to get laughing!

Props & Preparations

- This is a copy of the complete activity for the facilitator, which includes laughter exercises, links to videos, and a plan for creating a humor club.
- Make [large-print copies of the jokes](#) for people to take turns reading aloud. Cut along the lines and give each reader a copy of their joke.
- As with any program involving exercise, ensure participants are cleared to participate and remind them to stop if any discomfort or fatigue occurs.

Getting Started

Have participants sit in chairs arranged in a semi-circle or rows. Allow enough space between chairs for people to extend their arms.



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Introduction

The saying that laughter is the best medicine is one many of us are familiar with and subscribe to. However, did you know that consciously introducing humor and laughter into one’s daily life can also result in greater happiness? It’s a fact that daily doses of laughter can make us feel better and help us have a more positive outlook on life. There are many things that make us laugh—people, babies, animals, comedians, movies, TV shows, books—the list goes on and on. And, when none of these things are available, we can simply laugh at ourselves. The ability to laugh at oneself is considered an important coping mechanism to have.



Workout for Humor Muscles

Steps 1–3 – Warming Up (Show video for this part if you can or follow these instructions.)

Step 1 – Clapping Warm-up

1. Begin by clapping hands with palms and fingers touching (3 times).
2. Clap to a cha-cha rhythm: 1 and 2 and 123 (3 times).
3. Add laughter by chanting “Ho, ho, ha, ha, ha” while clapping (3 times). Then slow it down for 3 more times.
4. Chant “Ho, ho, ha, ha” and clap to the beat (3 times).

Step 2 – Deep Breathing

1. Breathe from your belly (put hands on belly to feel the breath). Take a deep breath to the count of 2, and then breathe out to a count of 3 (3 times).
2. Repeat, but now laugh with a “ha, ha, ha, ha” sound when breathing out (3 times).

Step 3 – Add Some Fun

Clap while chanting “Very good, very good, yay”—raise arms in air when saying “yay.” If raising arms is difficult, instruct participants to hold their hands together and move arms in a circle (3 times).

Step 4 – Has Us Laughing (some exercises to choose from)

Note: Laughter, even when orchestrated with exercises such as these, has the same therapeutic effect on the body as genuine laughter.

- Begin by greeting the person seated to the left by shaking their hand and laughing out loud. Listen to everyone else laughing—it will make people laugh even harder.
- Have the group start with smiling, then begin to giggle, then turn the giggles into laughter, and gradually increase the volume of the laughter.
- Have participants take a few moments to think back to a happy memory that makes them laugh. Ask for people to share their memories if they are comfortable so everyone can get in on the laugh.
- Slowly lift both arms in the air as far as they comfortably reach and make an elongated “aeeee” sound. Imagine this joyful sound is coming all the way from your toes to your heart.
- A Laughter Sneeze: Pretend to sneeze and end it with a laugh: *ah, aaah, aaaaaaaah, ha, ha, ha.*
- Laughter vowel exercise: Start with “A” and laugh as you say “ah, ha, ha, ha, ha”; “E” and say “he, he, he, he, he”; “I” and say “hi, hi, hi, hi, hi”; “O” and say “ho, ho, ho, ho, ho”; “U” and say “hu, hu, hu, hu, hu.” Repeat as often as desired.

Joking Around

Apart from laughter exercises, telling someone a joke is generally a guaranteed way to get a laugh. For this part of the program, there are 10 jokes for 10 volunteers to take turns reading aloud. Encourage participants to laugh loud and long after each joke is told and work those laughter muscles.

- **Optimist:** The glass is half full.
Pessimist: The glass is half empty.
Mother: Why didn't you use a coaster!
- "Mom, don't get alarmed, but I'm at the hospital."
"Son, please. You've been a surgeon there for eight years now. Can we please start our phone calls differently?"
- **Teacher:** "OK class, who will give me the chemical formula for water?"
Pupil: "HIJKLMNO."
Teacher: "What on earth are you talking about?"
Pupil: "Well you said yourself yesterday it was H to O!"
- Daddy reads some bedtime stories to make little Danny fall asleep.
Half an hour later, Mommy opens the door quietly and asks, "Is he asleep?"
Little Danny answers, "Yes, finally."
- A 65-year-old millionaire is getting married and throws a big wedding reception.
His friends are quite jealous, and one of them asks him how he landed such a gorgeous young beauty.
"Simple," grins the millionaire, "I faked my age."
His friends are amazed and ask him what age he said.
"Well," he replied, "I said I was 95!"
- A neighbor comes to Mr. Myer and says, "Your dog just bit my mother-in-law."
Mr. Myer is horrified and apologizes profusely, adding sadly, "You'll probably be wanting financial compensation, won't you?"
"Absolutely not!" smiles the neighbor. "I'd like to buy the dog."
- A wife hangs up the phone after a half-hour of talking.
The husband is surprised, "Wow, that was quick—usually you're on the phone for at least two hours."
Says the wife, "Yeah, well, it was a wrong number."
- A student at an advertising school came up to a pretty girl and hugged her without any warning.
The surprised girl said, "What was that?"
The guy smiled at her, "Direct marketing!"
The girl slapped him soundly.
"What was that?!" said the boy, holding his cheek.
"Customer feedback."
- A man drives deep into the forest to get rid of his cat. He lets her out at an abandoned place.
After one hour, he gets a phone call from his wife: "The cat is back home."
The man growls: "Can you put her on the phone? I'm lost and need directions."

- Two criminals are about to break out of prison. The first one jumps off a wall into a trash container.
The guard shouts, “Who’s there?”
The criminal replies, “MEOOOOOOW!”
The guard is relieved, “Ah ok, just a cat.”
Then the second criminal jumps.
The guard hears the noise and is suspicious: “Hello, anybody there?”
The second criminal yells, “Nah, just the cat again!”

Pausing for a Laugh

Laughter is contagious, or so they say, and these videos are proof of that. We’re willing to bet you’ll at least smile, if not laugh out loud, while watching them.

- [Video 1](#) – One guy starts laughing on a subway, and soon everyone joins in. Bet you can’t help but smile when you watch this.
- [Video 2](#) – Who can resist a laughing baby?
- [Video 3](#) – We dare you not to laugh at this Melissa McCarthy interview on *Ellen* about her embarrassing wardrobe malfunction involving Spanx.
- [Video 4](#) – Watch this very funny video of a man being interviewed live on TV while being interrupted by his children.

And That’s All Folks

We end with a quote from Dr. Seuss: “From there to here, from here to there, funny things are everywhere.” So, go out there and take pleasure from the funny things you see and hear, and laugh out loud about them—it is good for your mind, body, and soul.

Laughter Exercises – Jokes

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