

# RESILIENCE RX™

A free resource

## LAUGH THERAPY

*The science behind  
why laughter is  
good medicine*

*10 easy ways to get a  
good belly laugh when  
you don't feel like it*



# RESILIENCE RX

## Self-care techniques

The science behind why they work and  
how to implement them in everyday life

BY

LYNDA CHELDELIN FELL



This free resource is designed to provide self-care techniques to support the bereaved with the understanding that the International Grief Institute is not engaged to render any type of psychological, legal, or any other kind of professional advice.



INTERNATIONAL GRIEF INSTITUTE, LLC

[www.InternationalGriefInstitute.com](http://www.InternationalGriefInstitute.com)



---

## Laugh therapy



**Laughter offsets the impact of mental stress. Fifteen minutes of laughter on a daily basis is good for the soul.**

MICHAEL MILLER, M.D.

### Benefits of laugh therapy

Those who need a good laugh are usually the ones who feel least like laughing, yet the heart can hold joy the same time as sorrow, so go ahead and laugh. One laugh can scatter a hundred griefs, and helps lift the spirits.

A powerful healing modality, studies show that laughter offers many physical, psychological, emotional, and social benefits. It decreases stress and increases immune and infection-fighting antibodies. Smiling and laughter stimulate the facial muscles that trigger the brain to release happy hormones called endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals that promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

Because the body can't tell the difference between a real or fake smile, hold a pencil between your teeth to "fake it until you make it." The brain can't tell the difference and will be tricked into releasing those feel-good chemicals anyway.

No matter what you choose to induce a good belly laugh, the bottom line is that whatever makes you laugh is truly good medicine.

### Why it works:

- 10 minutes of laughter is equivalent to 30 minutes on a cardiovascular machine.
- Laughter and crying are like yin and yang, they both release energy.
- Laughing bypasses the mind and helps us keep a positive attitude.
- Laughter engages in perfect diaphragmatic breath. When we laugh, we exhale completely and then inhale completely, which oxygenates the brain and body.
- When our brains are fully oxygenated, our minds become calm and clear.
- School recess was designed to allow kids to run around and oxygenate the brain which allows them to learn better.
- Laughter releases endorphins which help us feel good. The brain oxygenation and endorphins combination is like a joyful cocktail.
- When we feel good and the mind is clear, we feel grounded and peaceful, less stress and less reactive.
- Laughter doesn't change reality but does help us to cultivate a positive mental attitude.
- Be silly, be playful. Laughter is contagious and allows our inner child to come out.
- Fake laughter often turns into authentic laughter. The body can't tell the difference, and the health benefits are the same.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS:

You can fake it 'til you make it! When you smile, the stimulation of the facial muscles in that way trigger the brain to release the chemicals/hormones that cause the feeling of happiness. This works even if you weren't feeling happy in the first place. The phenomena is called Facial Feedback. This works especially well if you look at yourself in the mirror, as the visual cues reinforce to your brain that you're smiling and therefore must be happy.

### Emotional Health:

Laughter makes you feel good, and this feeling can remain long after the laughter subsides. The Psychological Association has stated that smiling as little as 20 minutes every day, even if "faked," was effective in reducing symptoms in people that have been diagnosed with depression. Plus, because of the body's physiological reaction to smiling and laughing, it is impossible to feel anxious, angry or sad when you're laughing!

### Stress reduction:

Laughter helps release stress and increase energy. Clinical research has proven that laughter lowers the level of stress hormones (epinephrine, cortisol, etc) in the blood.

### Positive coping strategy:

Even in the most difficult of times, a laugh—or even simply a smile—can go a long way toward making you feel better. Laughter stimulates the brain into a positive state, which helps clear the mind and allows you more clarity and focus. Laughter helps change your perspective. Laughing, especially when you're having a tough time, creates psychological distance and can slow the momentum of overwhelm, frustration or disappointment. By getting in a positive physical and emotional state, it triggers your mind to recall positive memories and have an optimistic outlook.

It's contagious! Just hearing laughter primes your brain and readies you to smile and join in the fun. Laughing in a group can produce euphoric experiences as everyone else's laughter and joy becomes infectious, signaling your brain to let go and have a really good time! Even just smiling or laughing by yourself, with others observing, can help boost their mood too.

It makes you happy! And why would you want to be happy? Well, obviously, we all want to be happy! Plus, many studies have demonstrated that happiness can double your critical thinking skills, problem solving, and creativity. It has been shown that the happier you are, the longer you live. And, it's been shown to create more fulfilling and longer lasting relationships and more successful careers!

## **PHYSICAL BENEFITS**

### **Cardio:**

Laughter is a great cardio workout, especially for those who are incapable of doing other physical activities due to injury or illness. It gets your heart pumping and burns a similar amount of calories per hour as walking at a slow to moderate pace. . In fact, researches such as William Fry have found that one minute of a good laugh is like a ten minutes on a rowing machine. So, laugh your heart into health!

### **Blood pressure:**

Laughter has demonstrated to be a great way to lower your blood pressure. Even if you have normal blood pressure lowering it will reduce the risk of strokes and heart attacks. Blood Flow: Researchers at the University of Maryland where able to demonstrate the impact of laughter by showing two types of videos to people: some saw drama and others saw comedy. They determined that the comedies normalized blood vessels and increase blood flow, while drama restricted blood vessels.

### **Immune response:**

One of the best benefits of laughter is that it decreases your stress levels and increases your immune response. T-cells are specialized immune system cells just waiting for activation. When you laugh, you activate T-cells that immediately begin to help you fight off sickness Some studies have demonstrated that laughter increases levels of infection-fighting antibodies and boosts your levels of immune cells. So, if you feel a cold coming on, add laughter to your illness prevention plan!

### Blood sugar:

Studies into laughter have demonstrated that diabetics showed lower blood sugars levels after a laughter session than they did when eating the same thing and participating in a laughter session.

### Pain killer:

Endorphins are the body's natural pain killers. By laughing, you release endorphins, which can help ease chronic pain and make you feel good all over.

### Core muscles:

One of the benefits of laughter is that it can help you tone your abs and strengthen core muscles. When you are laughing, the muscles in your stomach expand and contract, similar to when you intentionally exercise your abs. Meanwhile, the muscles you are not using to laugh are getting an opportunity to relax.

### How to laugh when you don't feel like it:

- Watch a comedy movie or TV show
- Watch funny YouTube videos
- Listen to children laughing at the park
- Watch blooper reels on TV
- Read a funny book
- Look at funny pictures
- Read funny social media memes
- Listen to funny jokes

## Laughter Yoga:

Laughter yoga was started by Dr. Madan Kataria, a physician from Mumbai, India, who launched the first laughter club at a park in 1995, with just 5 people. Within two weeks, he had 50 people. Now there are over 13,000 laughter clubs in 80 countries around the world.

- Helps to change your mood within minutes by releasing endorphins in your brain.
- It oxygenates the brain, making you feel more energetic and relaxed.
- It also strengthens your immune system.
- Laughter is a positive energy, and like attracts like.
- Allow yourself to let go, be silly, be playful.
- You can stay in your chair the whole time. No need to learn any hard yoga moves.
- Laughter helps to create a positive mental state to deal with negative situations and negative people.
- It gives hope and optimism to cope with difficult times.

## EXERCISE:

Enjoy a good belly laugh at least once daily.

**Laughter is an instant vacation.**

~MILTON BERLE



---

## A word about resilience

“ Life doesn't get easier or more forgiving,  
we get stronger and more resilient.

JAMAIS CASCIO

### What is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to adapt to life difficulties—including loss of a loved one. When waves of sadness threaten to break us, building resilience through strategies that support the brain, body and emotions by triggering positive hormones can help during critical times, and reduce the damaging effects profound stress can have on our body over time.

### The goal

The goal of Resilience Rx™ is to offer self-help techniques that trigger positive hormones to help during waves of grief, and support you as you learn to move forward with your loved one in your heart.

### How do you strengthen resilience?

The first step is to take good care of yourself. We can't always predict the waves of grief, but we are in control of how we care for ourselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.

There are multiple ways to trigger positive hormones, and we offer you choices through Resilience Rx™. Use this resources as one of your tools in your toolbox of self care while mourning the loss of someone you love to help lift your spirits and soothe your heart.



---

## Bonus tips

“ Every day is a bonus.  
GEOFFREY BOYCOTT

### More self-help techniques to help with grief:

- Chew gum
- Stomp on bubble sheets
- Meditate
- Pray
- Change the channel
- Take up a craft that requires repetitive hand motions such as beading, knitting, clay modeling, chocolate making, woodworking
- Yoga
- Deep breathing
- Kiss
- Acupressure
- Listen to music
- Watch a viral video
- Paint the walls
- Plant flowers
- Weed
- Deadhead the roses
- Dry skin brushing
- Buy a plant
- Get a pet

ABOUT

---

## LYNDA CHELDELIN FELL

Lynda Cheldelin Fell is founding partner of the International Grief Institute, creator of Resilience Rx™, and bestselling author of over 35 books including the award-winning Grief Diaries series.

Critical incident stress management certified, she is a national educator who has curated the largest published collection of grief experiences in the world.



Dedicated to supporting resilience through best practice strategies, Lynda has earned five national literary awards and five national advocacy award nominations for her work. Learn more at [www.LyndaFell.com](http://www.LyndaFell.com).

[lynda@internationalgriefinstitute.com](mailto:lynda@internationalgriefinstitute.com) | 360-510-8590



INTERNATIONAL GRIEF INSTITUTE, LLC  
[www.InternationalGriefInstitute.com](http://www.InternationalGriefInstitute.com)

INVESTING IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE