

*6 benefits of smiling
& top tips to help
you smile more!*

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A little note about smiles... and what smiling more can do

What makes you smile? Is it something you love to do often and it feels quite natural? Or, does smiling feel awkward and something you tend to avoid? You may think that most of your smiles are involuntary – an unconscious response to things around you, which bring you feelings of happiness or joy. While this is sometimes the case, smiling can also be a conscious and intentional choice.

Smiling offers many physiological health benefits. It not only lifts your mood, but it does the same for those around you. Some days it seems effortless. You wake up in a great mood; perhaps you're looking forward to something exciting. You feel amazing in your morning yoga class, someone smiles at you, you arrive on time for work with a positive attitude, ready to conquer the world – everything is going to plan!

Sadly, not every day starts this way. Maybe you wake up feeling more tired than usual, and don't have the energy to face the day. You hit snags at every turn. You exhaust yourself trying too hard, and consequently a smile seems impossible. Perhaps if you were aware of the wonderful benefits of smiling, you could start to make a conscious choice to smile?

Feel silly at the idea of smiling when you don't feel like it? Then this little guide might change your mind!

6 Benefits of Smiling

1. Smiling relieves stress

Your stress response can affect your whole body – internally and externally. You become tense throughout your body and your face is often the biggest tell-tale sign of how you're feeling. Smiling when you are stressed is not something you'd automatically do; just the thought of it seems like a crazy idea. However, a simple smile can do wonders for stress reduction and how you look... even if you are faking it. Try smiling next time you feel stressed and see if you notice how it improves your mood.

2. Smiling can boost your immune function

When you smile, you relax and consequently your immune function improves due to the release of moderating neurotransmitters. Not only do you ward off illness due to a healthier immune system, you'll also feel less stressed and happier – a win:win for smiling!

3. Smiling may help you live longer

Perhaps this is the best reason to smile more! A study carried out by Abel & Kruger in 2010 concluded that happy people enjoy better health and longevity. More recent studies show that happiness can increase lifespan by years; suggesting maintaining a happy, positive mood may be an important part of a healthy lifestyle and it all starts with a simple smile!

4. Smiling reduces pain

Research shows that smiling releases endorphins and serotonin, both of which can make you feel great. Together, they relax your body, reduce physical pain, and elevate your mood. I've tried it in many different scenarios and it works!

5. Smiling can make you more attractive

Receiving a smile can certainly lift your mood and often prompts you to smile back. We are naturally drawn to people who smile. Smiling is seen as an attractive, positive trait. Smiling can also make you look more youthful because the muscles we use to smile also lift the face, making a person appear younger, fresher, more approachable. So, there's no need for a facelift or facial massage if you smile regularly!

6. Smiling can make you feel positive & encourage positivity in others

Smiling can influence positivity. Whether you're feeling it, or smiling intentionally, it sends a message to your brain that you feel good. Try this little test: Smile. Now try and think of something negative without losing the smile. Hopefully you can feel that benefit kicking in?



Top tips to help you smile more!

1. Practice – don't feel silly, remember all the good things smiling can do! Try it as you read this article. Think of something to make you smile or laugh out loud. Make a silly face to the person next to you; hopefully you'll both smile.
2. Find a smile trigger – so how do you remember to smile through your day? You'll need something to remind you regularly. Maybe a reminder on your phone or smartwatch, or maybe choose an action like putting your keys in the door, putting the kettle on, drinking or eating. Set yourself a challenge of consciously smiling 8 times or more a day!
3. Motivate your friends and family – quite often your friends or family help you get through life's challenges. Explain the benefits of smiling to them, or send them this article. Get them on board, so you can smile your way through life together.
4. Journal how it makes you feel – at the end of the day capture any positive thoughts that have emerged from smiling more... look back at these after a week and see the difference it has made.