

Outdoors health tips from the Posse: Laugh It Off

We have all heard the old phrase “laughter is the best medicine.” Around our house laughter is a constant, especially where my spouse is concerned. In her case, the laughter is usually directed at me for something I may have done.



Mark Rackay
Tips from the Posse

Recently, I mentioned to my wife that I thought I needed a break from all this work related toil, and suggested a 10-day Canadian trip. She retorted something about “what work?”

It was difficult to understand her through all the laughter. There is something very annoying about a wife laughing at all your ideas, and seeing her with tears of mirth running down her face. It is very annoying and I plan on telling her so, first chance I get. For now, I will just quietly leave the room, a secret to marital bliss, without saying anything else.

We all enjoy a good laugh, from an under-your-breath giggle, all the way to a rolling, howling, sidesplitting laugh (the kind my wife enjoys at my expense). Truth is, laughter is actually very good for your health.

Laughter triggers healthy physical and emotional changes in the human body. A good guffaw actually strengthens your immune system, relieves pain and reduces the effects of stress.

When we were a kids, we laughed all the time, often referred to as “being silly” by the adults. As adults, life gets in the way and we become more serious, because of work, family and responsibilities. If we can remember to laugh it off, we can release anger, be more forgiving, and even live longer.

Dr. Lee Berk and Dr. Stanley Tan, from the Loma Linda University in California, researched the benefits of laughter and found some incredible results.

People who laugh on a regular basis were found to have lower blood pressure. Lowering blood pressure reduces the risk of heart attacks and a stroke. Laugh off the small stuff rather than letting it stress you out.

A good laugh reduces the stress hormones. By lowering the level of stress hormones, you are cutting the anxiety and stress that impacts your body. The reduction in stress hormones may result in higher immune system performance.

Laughter can be considered an exercise.



My Florida buddies, Randy Howrigan and Mike Mott, have learned the health benefits of a good laugh. (Special to the Montrose Daily Press/Mark Rackay)

When you laugh, the muscles in your abdomen expand and contract, the same way they do when you do an ab exercise.

The solid guffaw is also a good cardiac workout. It gets your heart beating and burns an amount of calories per hour similar to a moderate pace walk. I would not suggest replacing your workout with a daily giggle-fest, but laughter is a good addition to your routine.

T-cells are special immune system cells in your body, just waiting to be called upon for activation. Laughter will activate those T-cells and you immediately reap the benefits of fighting off sickness. Incorporating humor in your life will help keep you healthier during the cold season.

Your body contains endorphins. Endorphins are natural painkillers we all have inside of us. Laughter causes an immediate release of endorphins, which can be very effective, especially to those who suffer from chronic pain. It is hard to laugh off a migraine headache or a broken leg, but a

light-hearted lifestyle may help.

Doctors have found that people, who have a positive outlook on life, have a tendency to fight off disease and sickness better than folks with a negative outlook on life. Laughter helps promote a sense of well-being.

Still, too much of a good thing can do you in, much to the dismay of your creditors. People have been known to actually die laughing. If you had a brain aneurysm (and up to 5 percent of us do and don't know it), a good laugh could cause it to rupture.

You could also suffer death from a hernia. During a bout of hard laughter, your stomach muscles contract and put pressure on the abdominal wall. If part of your bowel punches through, you have got a hernia. If that hernia becomes strangulated from your continued fit of mirth, all your life memberships could be nullified.

People with COPD or a heart condition should probably avoid serious bouts of laughter. Laughter gets your heart rate up, and that could rupture and dislodge

coronary plaque build up. This would block arterial blood flow, causing a heart attack and a premature trip to paradise.

I would not let fear of death keep me from laughter. Laughing it off has far more benefits than dangers to your body. The more you “lighten up,” the more people around you will as well.

My Grandfather used to say, “Don't be so serious, none of us are getting out of here alive.”

That is pretty sage advice from a man who lived a long, happy and laugh filled life. Now, I need to go see if my wife is over her laugh attack, and see if she is willing to seriously discuss a Canadian hunting trip for me. ●

Mark Rackay is a columnist for the Montrose Daily Press and avid hunter who travels across North and South America in search of adventure and serves as a Director for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org



Physician Assistants at River Valley Family Health Center standing in front of ground breaking equipment in Montrose on 10/4/18. **L-R:** Melanie Hanley, Karie Long, Rachel Stranathan (6 years at River Valley), Jeannie Mueller (5 years at River Valley), Shawna Mcelroy, Josh Enevoldson.

**RECEIVING MEDICAL CARE
CAN BE STRESSFUL!**
PAs
(PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS)
ARE HERE TO HELP.

PAs are medical professionals who diagnose illness, develop and manage treatment plans, prescribe medications, and can serve as your primary healthcare provider. PAs improve healthcare access and quality, making it easier for you to get the care you need.

Rachel and Jeannie are the only CDE (Certified Diabetes Educators) south of Grand Junction. They have been PAs in the area for 11 years.

MONTROSE

5 HILLCREST PLAZA WAY
970-497-3333

DELTA

107 W. 11TH
970- 874-8981

OLATHE

308 MAIN ST.
970-323-6141

RIVERVALLEYFHC.COM

*The Care You Need
from the People
You Can Trust
- Close to Home.*



EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (970) 874-2222 • DCMH URGENT CARE (970) 874-7696

DCMH FACILITIES

Internal Medicine Associates • Premier Women's Healthcare of Delta
West Elk Walk-In Clinic in Paonia • West Elk Clinic in Hotchkiss
DCMH Family Medicine - Delta • DCMH Urgent Care
Grand Mesa Oncology Center • Grand Mesa Rheumatology Center
Delta-Montrose Home Health Services

SERVICES OFFERED

Inpatient & Outpatient, Same Day Surgery • Medical and Intensive Care • Clinical Laboratory
Stork's Landing (Labor & Delivery) • Physical & Occupational Therapy • Endoscopy Services
Cardiac & Pulmonary Rehabilitation • Registered Dietician / Diabetes Educator
Radiology - CT Scan, PET-CT, MRI, X-ray, Bone Density, Ultrasound,
Nuclear Medicine, Stereotactic Breast Biopsy, Digital Mammography
Respiratory Therapy • Cardiac Testing • Pulmonary Testing • Sleep Disorders



DELTA COUNTY
Memorial
HOSPITAL



Top 100 Rural Community Hospitals in the Nation for the third year in a row.
www.deltahospital.org • 970.874.7681 • 1501 East 3rd Street • Delta, CO 81416