

How Laughter Improves Your Memory

Dr. Victor Marchione MD | [Wakeupworld](#)

You don't need a doctor to tell you that a giggle session is good for the soul, but new research shows that it can also be good for your brain.



A recent study of people with diabetes (rising numbers in North America) found that laughter could reduce age-related memory loss.

I'm all for it! Life is short, after all, and if can't have a bring-you-to-tears laughter session now and again, well, what's it all for?

Could you pass a memory test (with flying colors)?

The study, presented at San Diego's Experimental Biology meeting, involved 20 healthy individuals aged 66 to 72. Researchers at Loma Linda University in California had one group of test subjects sit quietly in a room and had the other, which included both people with diabetes and those without, watch a short comedy video.

Immediately after, they tested the patients' memory and found that those who had watched the funny video performed better on all of its measures – memory recall, learning ability and visual recognition. The researchers found that memory recall and learning ability were up by about 40 percent in the group that watched the funny video, compared to 20 percent for the

group that watched nothing.

The study subjects also showed lower levels of cortisol, a stress hormone known to negatively impact brain neurons, after watching the video. Measured at the start and end of the test via saliva samples, the cortisol levels decreased in the humor group for those both with and without diabetes, but stayed constant in the control group.

The subject group with diabetes showed both the greatest improvements in the memory test and the greatest reductions in cortisol levels after watching the comedy video. So watching those crazy YouTube videos your friends and family email you might do you and your brain a world of good.

Stress can harm your body and your brain

Too much stress is hard on your body, we all know that. But recent research has shown that stressful emotions could make the brain more susceptible to mental illness and previous studies have shown that stress increases cortisol production. This lends credit to the idea that stress can damage memory and the ability to learn in older people.

The recent California study shows that a person's memory performance should improve as they encounter less stress, co-author Dr. Lee Burk told Medical News Today. "Humor reduces detrimental stress hormones like cortisol that decrease memory hippocampal neurons, lowers your blood pressure, and increases blood flow and your mood state," Burk explained. All good!

Laughter causes your body to release more endorphins and dopamine to the brain, which makes us feel good and improves memory by increasing gamma wave band frequency, he said.

The research could be used to improve rehabilitation and wellness programs for the elderly. Cognitive abilities like

learning and memory recall get more difficult as we age, but are essential for our quality of life. Burk says, "Although older adults have age-related memory deficits, complementary, enjoyable and beneficial humor therapies need to be implemented for these individuals."

ABC News recently reported that laughter also has the potential to improve immune function and change brain wave activity toward the "gamma frequency" that improves memory and recall. However, the study group was small, which limits the degree to which the results can be applied to the population as a whole.

Regardless, it is always a good idea to make a point out of having a good laugh every day, but the added bonus of improved memory might sell the idea to you even more!

About the author:

Dr. Victor Marchione, M.D. received his Medical Degree at the University of Messina and has been licensed and practicing medicine in New York and New Jersey for more than 20 years.

Dr. Marchione is a respected leader in the field of smoking cessation and pulmonary medicine, and has served as principal investigator in at least a dozen clinical research projects relating to serious ailments such as bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. He also been featured on ABC News and World Report, CBS Evening News with Dan Rather and the NBC Today Show.

Today, Dr. Marchione is the editor of the daily Health eTalk newsletter and works on the Advisory Board for [Bel Marra Health](#). He believes promoting inner health is the best approach to medicine and sickness prevention.

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