



November, 2017



Go Ahead! Have a Belly Laugh!

There's no doubt about it, laughing feels good! Laughter has a way of lifting your spirits like nothing else can. It's such a simple experience and one that your mind and body benefit from. It's amazing what a big dose of laughter can do to improve your mood and increase your overall happiness. In addition to feeling good, laughter has real health benefits.

Laughter stimulates many organs - Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.

Laughter activates and relieves your stress response - A lively laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response and increases your heart rate and blood pressure, resulting in a great, relaxed feeling.

Laughter soothes tension - Laughter can stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

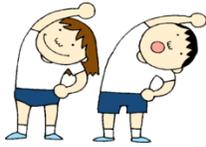
Laughter improves your immune system - Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. In contrast, positive thoughts actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.

Laughter relieves pain - Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers. Laughter may also break the pain-spasm cycle common to some muscle disorders.

Laughter increases personal satisfaction - Laughter can make it easier to cope with difficult situations. It also helps you connect with other people.

Go ahead, find something to laugh about today!

Source: Vicki Tiede, Certified Health Coach



Do You Stretch?

Stretching is often overlooked when considering how to take care of your body and mind. Whether or not stretching helps prevent injury is up for debate, but there are several other proven benefits. Stretching is a great way to begin or end the day, but it feels good and is beneficial whenever you can fit it in!

Circulation – Increased blood flow during stretching supplies nutrients to the muscles and cartilage. These nutrients help reduce muscle soreness after exercise.

Flexibility – Muscles shorten and tighten as we age, decreasing our flexibility. With decreased flexibility comes an increase in risk of muscle, tendon, and joint injuries. Stretching regularly helps increase flexibility and reduce the possibility of injury.

Range of Motion – Stretching has been shown to increase range of motion in joints. Having a better range of motion allows your body to perform at its best during exercise and makes an active lifestyle easier for your body.

Reduce Stress – We all have stress. Often stress can cause muscles to contract and become tense. Stretching helps to relax muscles, as well as release mood-enhancing endorphins.

Reduce Pain – Regular stretching can help strengthen muscles in areas where chronic pain occurs, such as the lower back. Increased strength improves posture and can aid in alleviating pain and soreness.



Sometimes You Need to Spend Time to Save Time

Using a sensible approach to time management is important for caregivers. We have so much on our plate that we sometimes forget what we are going to do until it is too late. A simple oversight or distraction can lead to missed medications, a soiled bed or a burnt dinner. We're human and these things happen to the best of us. Setting up a system that works for you can help to prevent trips to the emergency room or messy accidents, etc.

Let's not become clockwatchers, but we do need to calm the stress that pops into our lives. Take a sensible approach!

Ken Takeya wrote a nice article in www.AgingCare.com. A few points he pointed out are as follows:

1. **Plan for Planning.** Set aside 10 minutes each day to make a to-do list. Making this part of your routine with focused objectives will help you get through your day.
2. **Be Realistic about Your Tasks.** It will be almost impossible to finish the entire list every single day. Just do your best. If it helps to prioritize, label your tasks "must do" and "want to do". Tend to the "musts" first, and then the "wants" as you have the time and energy.
3. **Mark as Complete.** Each time you finish a task, scratch it off the list. This may seem simple, but the feeling of accomplishing the task is gratifying.

If you want to read the other 5 points, go to the website listed above.

Christmas Gift Idea



Do You Have a Caregiver in Your Family or Circle of Friends? Perhaps they would appreciate your thoughtfulness of a *JOYspirations for Caregivers* book. Just go to www.karenboerger.com and order from our website.



Recipe Corner



Chicken Tetrazzini – Serves 8

Easy and delicious! You could use leftover turkey after your Thanksgiving dinner.

16 oz. linguini
½ cup butter, softened
4 chicken breasts, cooked, diced
2 cans cream of chicken soup
2 cups sour cream
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper
½ cup chicken broth
2 TB parmesan cheese
2 cups shredded mozzarella

Directions:

1. Cook noodles according to box instructions. Set aside.
2. In medium bowl, combine butter, cooked chicken, soup, sour cream, salt, pepper and chicken broth. Mix well and then add in cooked noodles.
3. Spray a 9 x 13 pan and pour in noodle mixture. Sprinkle cheeses on top. Bake at 350 for 40-45 minutes. ENJOY!



Meditation Corner

Why are you cast down, O my soul,

And why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him,

My salvation and my God.

Psalm 42:11

Heavenly Father, help me to trust that for Jesus' sake You will give me the strength needed for each day. Be with me and turn my weakness into strength. Help me to cling to Your Word and rely on Your presence. As I trust in You, grant me victory over weakness and discouragement. In Christ Jesus, Amen.

Source: Blessings & Prayers for Caregivers, 2010, p. 49.