

# Asset Health *Talk*

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

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## MORE LAUGHTER It's Just What the Doctor Ordered for Stress

Laughter can't remedy all illnesses, but now, more data shows humor's positive health effects, especially when it comes to stress relief.

### A GOOD LAUGH CAN:

- \* Increase personal satisfaction and make it easier to cope with difficult situations
- \* Improve your mood, help lessen your depression and anxiety, and make you feel happier
- \* Stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which help alleviate some of the physical symptoms of stress
- \* Fire up and then cool down your stress response and increase your heart rate and blood pressure, which results in a good, relaxed feeling



Laughter matters because it brings you back down to earth in intense moments, makes social bonds stronger and soothes your nervous system.

### LIGHTEN YOUR WORKLOAD WITH HUMOR:

- Hang up photos or comic strips in your office that make you giggle.
- Spend time with people who make you chuckle, and share funny stories or jokes with them to return the favor.
- Don't laugh at the expense of others because some forms of humor aren't appropriate. Use your best judgment to recognize a good joke from a bad or hurtful one.
- Before attending a serious meeting, try to recall that excited feeling of having fun by walking by an outside playground and listening to children laugh.
- In a cheerful way, empathize with people who irritate you because a co-worker who criticizes your work might be dealing with a personal situation.
- Whether it's the absurdity of a request you received via email, a person who gets under your skin or your own too-high expectations of yourself, laugh about the situation and watch your stress begin to fade away.

"Stress Tip: Find the Humor in Every Situation," Lindsay Holmes, huffingtonpost.com, March 6, 2015.

"10 Ways to Add Humor to Lighten the Work Load," Elaine Ambrose, huffingtonpost.com, March 2, 2015.

"Stress Relief From Laughter? It's No Joke," Mayo Clinic Staff, mayoclinic.org, July 23, 2013.



“I am suspicious of people who never laugh, and I am suspicious of people who laugh too much.”

– Katherine Preston

## HUMOR Can Create Intimacy and Trust

Laughter fosters connection and compassion, solidifies friendships and makes people feel included.

New research reveals that having a sense of humor can create intimacy and trust because:

- » Others get pulled toward our playfulness, and our jokes comfort them.
- » It connects us and frees us.
- » It lets us momentarily see our struggles in a more positive light and encourages others to do so, too.

“I feel closest to those who see the absurdity in awful situations and who laugh as easily as they cry. And so humor becomes a kind of litmus test. Giggling together becomes the start of intimacy, the beginning of something deeper,” said Katherine Preston, author of the article *Does Humor Build or Destroy Intimacy?*

“Does Humor Build or Destroy Intimacy?” Katherine Preston, huffingtonpost.com, March 6, 2015.

“Make Laughter a Habit,” Katherine Zeratsky and Jennifer K. Nelson, mayoclinic.org, Aug. 9, 2014.



# MICROgreens: TINY but EXTREMELY Nutritious

Did you know that microgreens like red cabbage, cilantro and radishes have up to 40 times more vital nutrients than mature plants?

All the nutrients that microgreens need to grow are there because they are harvested right after germination, according to researcher Qin Wang, Ph.D., assistant professor at the University of Maryland in College Park.

**MICROgreens** are:

- Usually about 1 to 3 inches long and are very delicate
- Highly concentrated with nutrients like most spices and herbs
- Available in a variety of colors and provide a variety of flavors like sweet and spicy

In the past, commercially-grown microgreens were only available to chefs who use them as flavor accents and garnishes for soups, salads and sandwiches. They started appearing on chefs' menus as early as the 1980s in San Francisco, California.

"It's really kind of an artistic thing currently, but it's nice to know that not only do microgreens look pretty and have strong flavor, but they also have an incredible punch of nutrition," said researcher Gene Lester, Ph.D, of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).



Today, microgreens are available at most farmers markets and upscale grocery stores. Look for the most intensely colored ones because they are the most nutritious. And like any raw vegetable, they need to be washed carefully before eating, but cooking them isn't recommended due to their high water content.

A sunny windowsill can be a great place to grow your own microgreens, especially during the winter months. You can purchase a microgreen window box growing kit, which can be a great project for children to partake in, too.

"They are little, and kids like things that are kid's size," said Roberta Duyff, registered dietitian and author of the American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide. "They can put it on their own salad or some cheese or hummus to make it look pretty."

"Tiny Microgreens Packed With Nutrients," Jennifer Warner, webmd.com, Aug. 31, 2012.

"Specialty Greens Pack a Nutritional Punch," USDA, ars.usda.gov, Feb. 6, 2014.

"10 Smart Gift Ideas for the Healthiest Cook on Your List," Meredith Melnick, huffintonpost.com, Dec. 12, 2014.

## Too Much of Anything Can Be a Bad Thing

It sure seems like old adages have been in the news a lot lately.

And recently, new research pays tribute to an aged saying that too much of anything can be a bad thing.

Danish researchers learned that too much jogging can actually be just as bad for the body as too much inactivity. Wait, what? Jogging is supposed to be a pretty good method for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

But in excess, just like binge eating, drinking or staying up all night, too much jogging can actually harm the body.

### Here's what the researchers found:

In a 12-year study of 1,000 healthy joggers and non-runners, jogging at a steady pace for less than two and a half hours each week was best for health.

"This study shows that you don't have to run marathons to keep your heart healthy," said Maureen Talbot, senior cardiac nurse at the British Heart Foundation. "Light and moderate jogging was found to be more beneficial than being inactive or undertaking strenuous jogging, possibly adding years to your life."

The study recommends we should all get about 150 minutes of moderately intense exercise, such as brisk walking or biking, each week.

"Training Very Hard 'as Bad as No Exercise at All,'" BBC News Health, bbc.com, Feb. 6, 2015.