

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# MIND &

# BODY

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## The Surprising Science of Infrared Light Therapy

Thousands of studies are documenting a powerful cellular reaction with widespread therapeutic effects

Research into infrared light therapy reveals that our bodies use light to stimulate energy production at the cellular level.



### Incandescents and Fluorescents

While incandescents use more electricity, they give a warm steady light more similar to sunlight than fluorescent lights, which are devoid of essential, natural frequencies. The color temperature, flicker rate, and light quality of compact fluorescent light bulbs can induce a mild stress response.

JEFF PERKIN

Prior to the use of electricity, human beings had an exclusively natural relationship to light. Our options were limited to the sun, a fire, or candlelight; all of which naturally emit red and near-infrared light.

That light acts as a nutrient for the human mind and body. Unfortunately modern, indoor lifestyles can lead people to become chronically depleted of natural light and its positive biological effects.

A lack of sunlight exposure can lead to a chronic deficiency of vitamin D3. Over time, this deficiency can put people at an “increased risk for many chronic diseases including autoimmune diseases, some cancers, cardiovascular disease, infectious disease, schizophrenia and Type 2 diabetes.”

To make matters worse, people have been taught to fear the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) A radiation. Many people excessively cover their skin with clothing and sunscreens, many brands of which have recently been found to contain harmful carcinogenic ingredients.

While healthier sunscreen alternatives exist, it’s important to remember that UVB radiation from the sun gives our bodies what it needs to produce vitamin D3. Healthful

sun exposure is gradual sun exposure, especially if you are fair-skinned. We need to increase our time in the sun little by little to acquire a protective tan and decrease our susceptibility to burns.

### Not All Light Is Created Equal

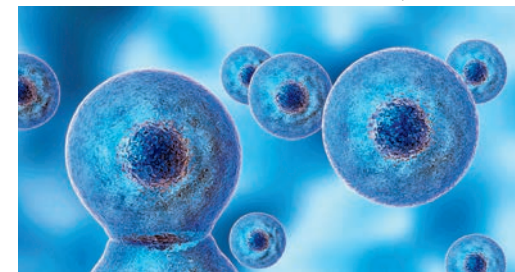
The sun radiates beneficial wavelengths of red and near-infrared light. Man-made, fluorescent lights that are found in many offices and businesses are not only devoid of these essential frequencies, these man-made lights can also be seriously harmful. The color temperature, flicker rate, and light quality of compact fluorescent light bulbs can induce a stress response.

Writing for Psychology Today, Dr. Victoria Dunkley warns that “the high color (colder/bluer) temperature of fluorescent light stimulates the non-visual pathways from the eye to various parts of the brain that involve biorhythms, stress hormones, emotions, arousal levels, and muscle tension.”

Time spent indoors under artificial lighting can have an increasingly detrimental impact on our body’s natural rhythms over time. Varying qualities and wavelengths of light stimulate different biological responses.

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### 8 Ways Spike Protein Harms the Body and How to Remove It

The signature protein of COVID-19 and the vaccine can undermine cell function with long-lasting effects

XIAOXU SEAN LIN &amp; HEALTH 1+1

Since the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world more than two years ago, more than 4.5 billion people worldwide have become fully vaccinated against it.

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# Is Your Mental Health Under Your Control?

ZIGGI IVAN SANTINI, CHARLOTTE MEILSTRUP, LINE NIELSEN, ROB DONOVAN & VIBEKE JENNY KOUSHEDE

New study finds believing you can improve your mental health is linked with higher mental well-being

The number of people struggling with poor mental health and mental disorders has been rising around the world over the past few decades. Those who are struggling are increasingly facing difficulties accessing the kind of support they need—leaving many waiting months for help, if they even qualify for treatment.

While it's clear that more needs to be done to improve access to treatment, that doesn't mean people inevitably have to struggle with their mental health as a result. In fact, there are many things people can do on their own to maintain good mental health—and even prevent mental health problems from developing in the first place. According to our recent research, one of the steps you can take to improve your mental well-being may be as simple as believing that you can.

## People who have an internal well-being locus of control believe that their own attitudes and behavior control their well-being.

In our recent study, we asked 3,015 Danish adults to fill out a survey that asked questions about mental health—such as whether they believe they can do something to keep mentally healthy, whether they had done something in the past two weeks to support their mental health, and also whether they were currently struggling with a mental health problem. We then assessed their level of mental well-being using the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, which is widely used by health care professionals and researchers to measure mental well-being.

As you'd expect, we found that mental well-being was highest among those who had done things to improve their mental health compared with the other participants.

Interestingly however, we found that—whether or not our respondents had actually taken action to improve their mental well-being—people who believed they could do



ANTON KOR/SHUTTERSTOCK

If you believe you can make yourself feel better, you are well on your way to do so.

something to keep mentally healthy tended to have higher mental well-being than those who didn't have this belief.

So while it's most beneficial to take steps to improve your mental health, even just believing you can improve it is associated with better overall mental well-being.

Though our study didn't look at the reasons for this link between belief and better mental health, it could be explained by a psychological concept known as the "well-being locus of control." According to this concept, people who have an internal well-being locus of control believe that their own

attitudes and behavior control their well-being. On the other hand, people with an external well-being locus of control think their mental well-being is largely controlled by factors or circumstances outside their control (such as by other people or by chance).

It's possible that having an internal well-being locus of control may subconsciously influence one's outlook, lifestyle, or coping mechanisms. This in turn may also affect mental health—and previous research has linked this type of belief to fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress.

This concept may explain why partici-

pants who believe they can do something to change their mental health are also more likely to have a high level of mental well-being. And this finding in itself has enormous preventative potential, as a high level of mental well-being is associated with a 69 to 90 percent lower risk of developing a common mental disorder.

### Keep Mentally Healthy

We know from a large body of research that there are simple things people can do to support and improve their mental health. This is why we developed the Act-Belong-Commit campaign, which encourages people to be active, social, and do something meaningful. This research-based mental health "ABC" can be used by everyone, regardless of whether they're struggling with a mental health problem or not.

All three of these domains are fundamental to good mental health and are associated with a range of well-being benefits, including higher life satisfaction, and lower risk of mental disorders, problematic alcohol use, and even cognitive impairment. Feeling active, socially connected, and engaged in meaningful activities is generally linked with better health and a longer lifespan.

As part of our study, we were able to show that among those who knew about these principles, about 80 percent said that the ABCs had given them new knowledge about what they can do to support their mental health, and about 15 percent said they had also taken action to enhance it.

We should view the current mental health crisis as a wake-up call about how critically important it is that people be equipped with tools that may help them to support and maintain good mental health. The results of our study may serve to remind us just how much of an impact we can have ourselves when it comes to looking after our own mental well-being—even if it's just believing we can.

*Ziggi Ivan Santini, mental health researcher, University of Southern Denmark; Charlotte Meilstrup, postdoctoral fellow, University of Copenhagen; Line Nielsen, postdoctoral research fellow, University of Copenhagen; Rob Donovan, adjunct professor, The University of Western Australia, and Vibeke Jenny Koushede, professor and head of the department of psychology, University of Copenhagen. This article was originally published on The Conversation.*

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## The ABCs of Better Mental Health

**Act:** Keep physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually active. Do something—such as going for walks, reading, playing games, or taking up a hobby. An active mind and body can foster well-being and help quell overthinking or worrying about things that may be outside of your control.



Using your body is energizing and uplifting.

**Belong:** Keep up friendships and close social ties, engage in group activities, and participate in community events. Do something with someone—whether that's going to dinner with friends or joining a recreational sports league. Spending time with people can help you feel more connected and build a sense of identity.



Few things lift the spirits like time with friends.

**Commit:** Set goals and challenges, engage in activities that provide meaning and purpose in life, including taking up causes and volunteering to help others. Do something meaningful. This can help you build a sense of meaning, mattering, and self-worth.



Helping others is one of the best ways to help yourself.

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# Using the Latest Tests, Treatments to Treat Chronic Illness

A new breed of doctor is expanding beyond drugs and surgery to offer a wider range of treatments

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Dr. David Minkoff is a pioneer in natural medicine, with an active practice in Clearwater, Florida. In this interview, we dive deep into some of his best strategies to optimize your health and resolve common challenges that conventional medicine is incapable of resolving. Like me, he's passionate about exercise and has been an avid athlete since his youth. So far, he's participated in 43 Ironman competitions and will be doing another. "Most of my practice is chronically ill people, but I have worked with some very high-end athletes, and I can really help them because I understand what kind of metabolism you need to do to be able to perform consistently at a high level," Minkoff says. "I've sort of been in the laboratory myself, and that's been very helpful."



“Half the problem is things in the body that shouldn't be there, and the other half is things missing from the body that should be there.”

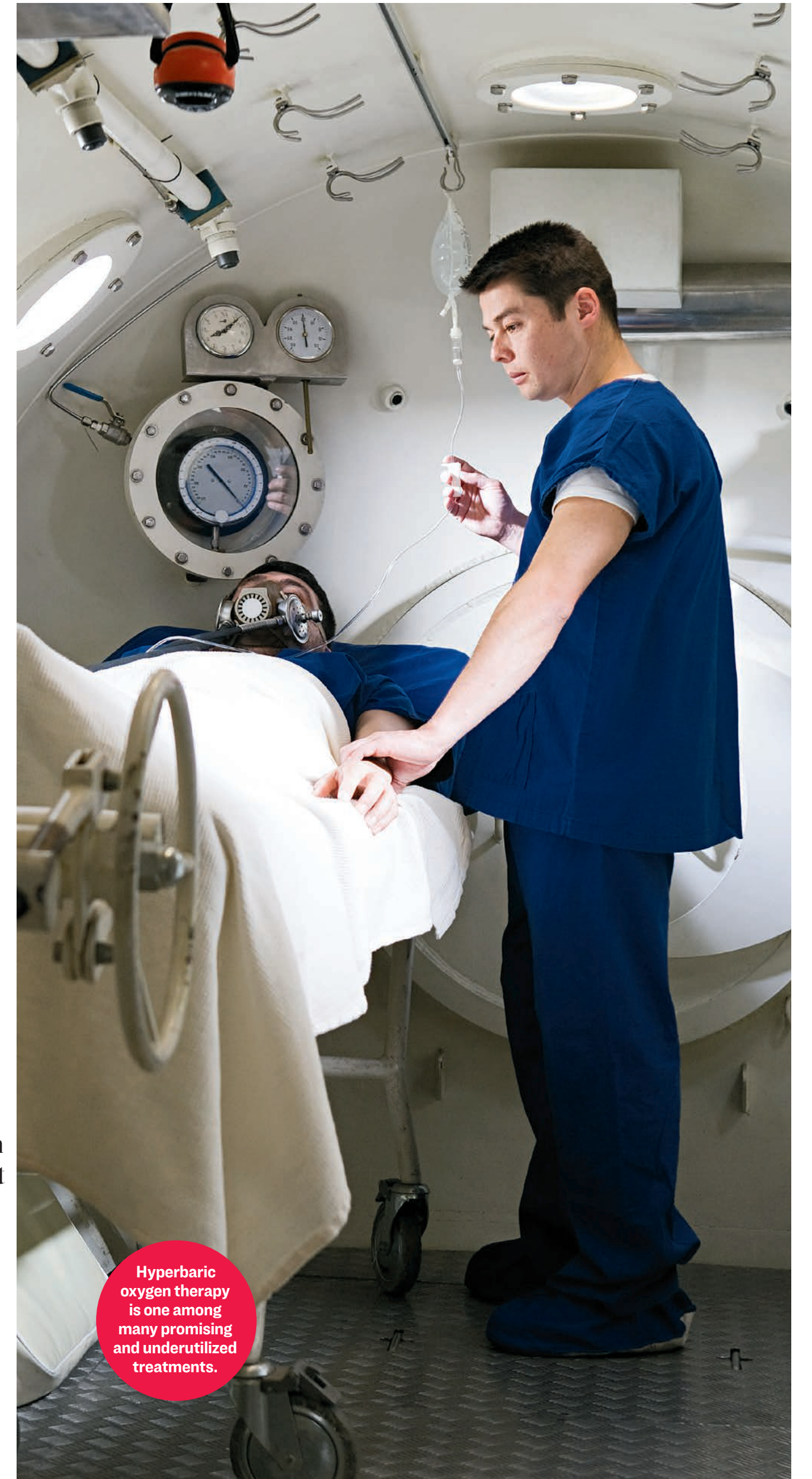
Dr. David Minkoff

### Minkoff's Journey

Minkoff has had a rather eclectic medical training, including adult and pediatric infectious disease. In 1995, his wife, a registered nurse, took him to a series of lectures by Jeffrey Bland, a pioneer in nutritional biochemistry, and the rest, as they say, is history. "My lights just went on," Minkoff says. "It was just like, 'Holy smokes, this guy is smart, and it makes sense, and I want to learn this.' So, I started going to courses. I went to ACAM [American College for Advancement in Medicine] and learned how to do chelation."

After that, he trained with Dr. Dietrich Klinghardt, a pioneering physician in

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Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is one among many promising and underutilized treatments.

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## Young Girls Are Over-Prescribed Birth Control Pills

This common medical practice can interfere with normal hormones and lead to side effects

JENNIFER MARGULIS

Some 14 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are currently taking hormonal birth control pills in America, according to government data. That's more than 10 million people, about the equivalent of the entire population of Portugal.

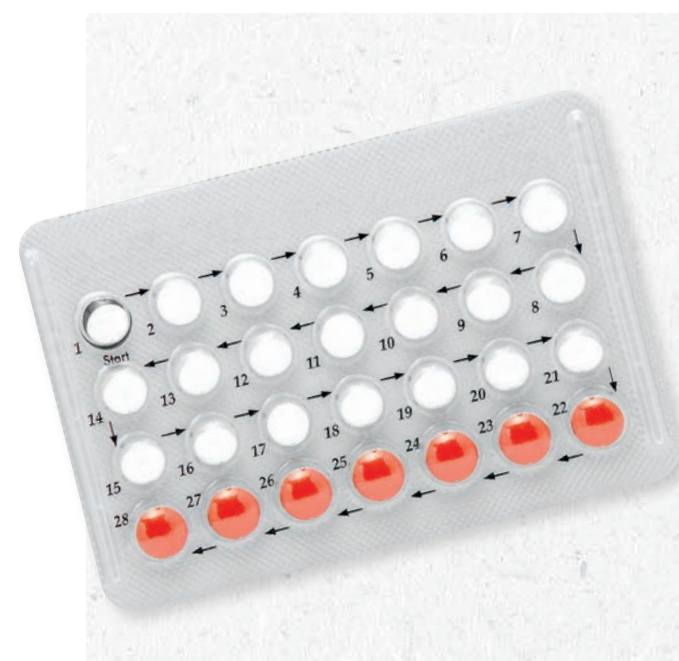
According to a 2019 United Nations report, about 151 million women take the pill worldwide.

Kristin, a mom of two, was one of them. She was prescribed birth control pills when she was still in high school. While her doc-

tor told her the pills would help with her headaches and irregular and heavy periods, no one talked to her about the risks associated with taking them.

However, when she was 20 years old, she had an elective surgery. Although Kristin had no complications from the surgery itself, a few days later, she was unable to take a full deep breath and she felt a pain in her arm. She knew something was seriously wrong, but she had no idea that she was having a pulmonary embolism.

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RIDO/SHUTTERSTOCK

# Science-Backed Reasons to Smile

Turning that frown  
upside down can  
do wonders for  
your health



Smiling has a physiological echo that releases endorphins and happens to be contagious.

## ZRINKA PETERS

You've probably heard the expressions "grin and bear it," and "turn that frown upside down." Urging someone to "put on a happy face"—or smile—is so common that these expressions reflect an intuitive understanding that donning a smile is good for us—and those around us.

Decades of research into the science of smiling also supports what so many have sensed is true—the simple act of putting on a smile—is beneficial for both our physical and mental health. The bigger the better.

Could something as simple as smiling actually lower stress levels? A study conducted by Tara L. Kraft and Sarah D. Pressman from the University of Kansas Psychology Department, and published in the September 2012 issue of *Psychological Science* had participants hold a chopstick in their mouths in such a way as to produce a 'Duchenne' (aka 'real') smile, a standard smile, or a neutral expression.

Among the 'smiling' groups, half were also asked to smile intentionally. Each

participant then completed two different stressful tasks. The researchers found that those in each of the 'smiling' groups had a lower heart rate during the stress recovery period than those who kept neutral facial expressions, and that this effect was observed whether the participants were consciously trying to smile or not. These results showed that the simple act of smiling when under stress had a positive, stress-reducing physiological impact.

Smiling is also known to benefit overall health and longevity. Researchers from Wayne State University examined 230 photos of Major League players from the 1952 baseball register, and categorized them into three groups according to smile intensity: no smile, partial smile, or full smile. After controlling for other factors related to longevity, like body mass index and marital status, the results showed that those players with the biggest smiles lived an average of seven years longer than their nonsmiling counterparts—79.9 years versus 72.9 years. Want to raise your odds of living longer? Smiling more just might help.

Aside from its benefits to physical health,

**The benefits  
to both mind  
and body of  
smiling are  
possible even  
when the  
smile is forced,  
rather than  
spontaneous.**

smiling regularly is a tonic for our mental health as well. Putting on a smile has been shown to improve mood, almost like a natural antidepressant. Smiling triggers a release of endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin, the 'feelgood' neurotransmitters that work to relieve pain and lift moods—all without the negative side effects of antidepressant medications or pain-relieving drugs.

Smiling has benefits that go beyond the individual, too. A Swedish study reproduced in *Science Direct*, confirmed what so many have suspected all along—that smiling is actually contagious. Researchers had study participants look at pictures of people showing different emotional expressions: joy, anger, fear, and surprise. They then asked the participants to frown, and found that the subject's facial expressions generally mimicked the pictures that they saw, in a process dubbed "emotional contagion." It was especially difficult for subjects to frown when faced with a cheerful, smiling face. The takeaway? Smiling really is contagious, and it's an easy, free way to spread positivity and cheer to those around us.

Interestingly, the benefits to both mind and body of smiling are possible even when the smile is forced, rather than spontaneous. In what scientists call the "facial feedback hypothesis," not only do we smile when we feel happy, but the very act of smiling can actually lift our moods and cause us to feel happier. The University of South Australia's Dr. Fernando Marmolejo-Ramos, a research fellow in human and artificial cognition at the Centre for Change and Complexity in Learning, said in a press release that "In our research we found that when you forcefully practise smiling, it stimulates the amygdala—the emotional center of the brain—which releases neurotransmitters to encourage an emotionally positive state. ... A 'fake it 'til you make it' approach could have more credit than we expect."

After two years of being surrounded by masked faces during the COVID-19 pandemic, it's time to put on a happy face and spread some cheer.

*Zrinka Peters has been writing professionally for over a decade. She has a BA in English Literature from Simon Fraser University and has been published in several publications including Health Digest, Parent.com, Today's Catholic Teacher, and Education.com*



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