

# When In Doubt, Smile!

Chances are this isn't the first time you are reading that a smile is contagious.

Why is that important for us to remember?

When you share a smile with someone, the instinctual response is to smile back. It is almost like saying hello.

When the brain is genuinely feeling happy, it produces endorphins and transmits a signal to your facial muscles to smile. The smiling face sends a signal back to the brain that it is happy (more endorphins released), which, if left to continue, can repeat on loop *ad infinitum*.

What a pleasant thought... an endless loop of happily smiling!

Smiling can alleviate one's mood. Smiling can also, incredibly, lower heart rate levels after recovery from stressful activities. This [University of Kansas study](#) introduced brief stressors to participants, and found that smiling during difficult times can help reduce the intensity of the body's stress response. *The findings were the same with both fake smiles and genuine smiles, regardless if a participant actually felt happy.*

The two facial muscles that get a great workout while smiling are your zygomaticus major muscle and orbicularis oculi muscle. Studies have shown that exercising these muscles can trick your brain into thinking you are happy, so it releases the endorphins that can ultimately make you feel better.



Muscles of facial expression – Smiles workout  
zygomaticus major and orbicularis oculi

How can we use this scientific information for the good of the

world?

By smiling at a stranger on the street, or at the grocery store. Consider spreading endorphins for the benefit of others!

Smiling is an easy way to communicate with others without even speaking. You can connect on a level that words sometimes cannot achieve.

It is possible the person you smile to will take it as an insult, and become more sullen. But chances are pretty great that the other person will smile back. And you know what? It'll make you happy to see that, and you'll smile for real all over again.

Have you maybe been challenged to smile lately? Are the blues overtaking the reds and yellows in your life?

Some self-help is in order! Take a moment to think about some things that make you smile. Even if you get just a little upward turn of the lips, this is the right direction!

Ask yourself: I wonder what will make me smile today?

Daily, give yourself a reminder of what makes you happy. Write it down in great detail if it helps you really feel the pleasure.

Those who smile more live longer, healthier lives, have better relationships, are more successful in careers, receive faster promotions, and have better marriages.

Help your mind find things that will naturally make you smile so that you can continue the loop of happy feelings and more peaceful and relaxed state of mind. And as always, share this pleasant feeling with others as much possible.