



## The Difference a Smile Can Make

Did you know that the first of October was World Smile Day? The holiday became official in 1999 to celebrate the creation of the famous smiley face circle with a pair of black dots created by commercial artist Harvey Ball in 1963. For Harvey, smiles were all about the connection between people. If you do so, you'll smile, and in turn, you'll brighten someone else's day. It turns out, Harvey might have been on to something because smiling has been found to have a wide range of benefits for our health and mood.

### Here are 11 ways a smile can benefit you:

1. **Live longer.** In a 2010 study, it was found that genuine, intense smiling is linked to longer life expectancy.
2. **Elevates mood.** Feeling down? Try putting a smile. It's likely to improve your mood. Smiles physically activate pathways in the brain that influence your emotional state.
3. **Relieves stress.** Smiling has the ability to reduce stress.
4. **Helps fight illness.** Smiles boost immunity and increase white blood cell counts, which protects against infections.
5. **Lowers blood pressure.** A smile could lower blood pressure. Laughter is especially known to lower blood pressure.

6. **Reduces physical pain.** Several studies have demonstrated that smiling releases endorphins and serotonin, which are natural pain relievers. By releasing these chemicals, our bodies feel better as a whole. Additionally, they reduce physical pain and promote relaxation.
7. **Makes you more positive.** Often the brain uses negative thinking as a defense mechanism. But that behavior has only negative effects. Smiling can counteract that so think more positively about life.
8. **It's contagious.** The power of a smile has been proven time and again, but is it really true? Actually, it does carry a hint of truth. In addition to elevating your mood, smiling can also benefit those around you. Your brain responds automatically to the facial expressions of other people, and sometimes you imitate them. As a result, you might notice another's smile and smile unconsciously. So, yes, smiling is contagious, as scientific research has proven.
9. **Builds trust.** People who smiled were more likely to be trusted, according to a study conducted by the University of Pittsburgh. A smile makes people feel more comfortable around you.
10. **Makes you look younger.** Smiling makes people appear younger, according to researchers. Study participants underestimated the ages of people who smiled. In addition, 63 percent of people believe smiling in photographs improves an individual's appearance.
11. **Contributes to success.** There is evidence that shows smiling regularly makes people appear more confident, and makes them more approachable. Smile when you attend meetings or appointments. You may discover people respond to you more positively.

To read the full article, [click here.](#)

## Bonus: Do Dogs Smile?

If you have a dog, you've seen that endearing look—the relaxed face, soft eyes, and wide grin. Most scientists think since dogs are masters of analyzing human behavior they really like the happy reaction they get when they please us and quickly learn how to trigger that happy emotion.

According to [PetMD](#), the phenomenon that causes a dog to smile when we smile at them is similar to “laughter contagion.” Just as one person laughing heartily can trigger another person to start laughing, a happy person that smiles can trigger a dog to smile back. However, every dog responds to situations differently; what may cause the smile reaction in one animal may not trigger it in another.

Overall, and most importantly to note is just like we may smile back when we see another person smiling, dogs also smile back or show a pleasing reaction to us as well. Give smiling a try!

To read the full article on dogs smiling, [click here.](#)