

HARNESSING THE POWER OF HUMOR:

THE SCIENCE AND THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS OF LAUGHTER

TIPS TO GET YOU
LAUGHING
NOW!

"I READ THIS
AND NOW
I'M FUNNY!"

-- CHARLIE

SCIENCE
SAYS HUMOR IS
GOOD FOR YOU.
HERE'S WHY.

CAN YOU
LAUGH YOUR WAY
TO BETTER HEALTH?

HOW HUMOR CAN
HELP YOU WHEN
LIVING WITH PSORIASIS
(GO AHEAD, RUB
SOME HUMOR ON IT)



Association for Applied
and Therapeutic Humor
The Home of Humor & Laughter Professionals



Featuring contributions from experts in the field of humor research, this report explains the science of laughter and highlights important humor research and implications. It also discusses the benefits of “prescribing” laughter for general health and for psoriasis, and shares tips and techniques to help people incorporate humor into their daily lives. This report was prepared by the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH), in partnership with Sun Pharmaceuticals.

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INTRODUCTION

Nearly eight million people in the United States have psoriasis, and most people live with the most common form: plaque psoriasis.¹ While psoriasis appears on the skin, its root cause and overall effect on a person go much deeper.

Psoriasis is a chronic autoimmune condition that can cause a great deal of physical discomfort, emotional distress and social isolation. While it may be difficult, being able to handle uncomfortable or difficult psoriasis-related situations is just as important as treating the condition. Along with lifestyle changes and medication, a healthy dose of humor has an important role for people managing this life-long condition.

Your doctor partners with you to address the physical issues associated with psoriasis, but what about the social and emotional challenges of living with the condition? Chances are, your healthcare provider won't be there to explain the symptoms on a first date (which would be helpful, but awkward).

A review of recent medical research indicates that healthy and positive humor can have a significant impact on your overall health and well-being. It can help empower people to address the physical and emotional challenges that come with the everyday reality of living with the condition. This report will present some of the current research and health benefits of using humor in a therapeutic way – to manage chronic disease, help overcome negative attitudes, and provide techniques to navigate daily challenges.

Here's an overview of what you will find in this report:

CHAPTER 1

The Science of Humor: Laughter Does the Body Good

Are you curious about the health benefits of humor and why laughter should have a place in your personal wellness regimen? This chapter will highlight some of the current medical research on the impact of therapeutic humor, and answer the following questions:

- Can humor really strengthen a body's immune system?
- How does it affect inflammation and stress?
- Can it improve my emotional well-being and resilience?

All of the studies shared in this article are guaranteed to be written by smart-looking people in white coats with glasses and pens. OK, not all of the researchers may have worn glasses or coats, but all the articles are peer-reviewed and published, so their conclusions are reliable and confirm that laughter does a body good!



CHAPTER 2

Humor Me:

The Therapeutic Nature of Humor

Once you've learned how humor and laughter can provide physical benefit, you can move on to how it helps to improve your general well-being. Aren't humor and laughter the same thing? No! Laughter is the physical expression of humor, and this chapter helps you understand that you don't need to giggle in order to benefit from humor. The true power of humor comes from its integration in one's daily life.

CHAPTER 3

A Key Wellness Tool:

The Benefits of Humor While Living with Psoriasis

While psoriasis isn't contagious, laughter is! This chapter provides information to help you start thinking about humor in an intentional way, with psoriasis-specific experiences and examples. You'll learn how one man is using humor to manage his psoriasis, and how humor can be used as a secret weapon in your toolbox to help cope with the condition.

CHAPTER 4

Start Laughing Today:

How to Bring Humor Into Your Life

Okay, I get it! Humor helps. So how do I do it? It's great to accept that humor and laughter can help in practical ways to deal with a condition like psoriasis. But what if you "just aren't funny"? Well, it isn't about being able to tell jokes or clowning around (but those are an option)... It's about the continuous search for ways to flip life's challenges to find the funny. This chapter offers actionable ideas, exercises and strategies to help you develop your "healthy humor habits" and use humor in your everyday life.

The research on humor and laughter is indeed promising. Nothing presented in this report is going to magically make your skin clear up. (If it does, let us know! We'll tell our smart people with lab coats and pens about it!) But incorporating humor as part of your "treatment plan" can be a helpful – and healthful – coping strategy to help navigate the everyday realities of life with psoriasis. These tips can make living with psoriasis a little easier, and a little more fun – and that's what it's all about!



CHAPTER 1

The Science of Humor: Laughter Does the Body Good



MARY KAY
MORRISON

There is nothing funny about living with psoriasis, but humor and laughter can help manage the lifelong condition. Psoriasis is persistent, and can be overwhelming. Coping with everyday challenges can be hard. But humor provides a lifeline to help people not only survive, but thrive. Recent research shows that humor and laughter can have a significant impact on overall health and well-being.

WHY HUMOR?

Humor is a trait that we all have, but it's expressed uniquely in each person. A sense of humor is impacted by both **nature** (personality) and **nurture** (environment). Parent-child interactions encourage humor: if a parent can help you find a humorous outlook, you can do so for yourself as an adult. In other words, humor can be developed with practice.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE LAUGH?

Laughter involves the entire body. When we laugh, the body relaxes and natural “feel-good” chemicals are released in the brain. These promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain. In the lungs, more air is exhaled out than usual, allowing a larger inhalation of fresh oxygen that enriches the blood to nourish the heart, brain and body tissues.

HOW CAN HUMOR HELP YOU?

The Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH) has been reviewing research on humor for the past 30 years. Over this time, the study of the health benefits of humor has grown significantly. Doctors and nurses are now actually “prescribing” humor and laughter, and the Mayo Clinic has recommended laughter for stress relief.²



Laughter should have a place in your personal wellness regimen. Here are some examples of the health benefits of humor:

1 Humor and Healing

Laughter has been shown to have a positive effect on healing in general, as well as an ability to affect multiple systems of the body. For example, people who watched funny material every day after having a heart attack reduced their potential risk of recurrence.³ This is because laughing lowers blood pressure and has been linked to healthy blood vessel function, which can help lower the risk of a heart attack.

2 Humor and The Immune System

Laughter can help strengthen the body's defenses, regardless of age or health. Something as simple as watching short funny videos has been shown to increase cells that fight infection.^{4,5,6} This is because when you laugh, muscles tighten and cause the body to increase the production of disease-fighting cells. It can also impact inflammation. For people living with rheumatoid arthritis, it has shown to help decrease the level of proteins in the body that cause inflammation, which can result in less joint swelling, stiffness and pain.⁷

3 Humor and Resilience

Humor can also help to sustain the body's psychological "*immune system*." Resilience is the ability to spring back from a painful situation by choosing to have an alternative outlook. It involves changing thoughts and behaviors and teaches us that we can survive and master the challenges of life. So, how does this look in the real world? Certainly, few could benefit more from a positive perspective than people facing a terminal diagnosis and considerable physical discomfort. Fortunately, people in these difficult situations, and those around them, have received significant benefits from humor therapy.^{8,9}

4 Humor and Stress

Having to manage stress and anxiety is common and can be very challenging. Stress doesn't just affect the mind, but also physically in the body. The muscles tense, the jaw clenches and shoulders tighten. But as laughter causes the body to slip into deeper breathing, this relaxes the muscles. Humor also decreases levels of the stress hormone cortisol and has been shown to help people self-report lower stress.^{10,11}

HA! 5 WAYS LAUGHTER MAKES YOU HEALTHY



**KARYN BUXTMAN,
RN, MS, CSP, CPAE, CHP**

Laughter isn't the be-all end-all, but it's easy, abundant, and doesn't cost anything. It can improve your health, it's fun and it feels good. With so much to gain, laugh it up!

Here are five ways that laughter can improve your health:

- ☒ Gets the heart and lungs pumping blood more efficiently
- ☒ Decreases muscle tension
- ☒ Improves your oxygen levels
- ☒ Energizes the body
- ☒ Strengthens the immune system

5 Humor and Memory

There is also a link between humor and memory. So, good news: when you are watching those funny videos, you can officially say you're working on improving your memory skills too! Laughter helps lower cortisol levels, resulting in higher learning ability and higher recall.¹²

6 Humor and Pain

The “feel-good” chemicals that are released in the body when we laugh have also been shown to help reduce pain. Norman Cousins, sometimes known as “the father of laughter therapy,” shared in his book how humor was a key part of his recovery plan in managing ankylosing spondylitis. He found that 10 minutes of belly laughter gave him two hours of pain-free sleep. Research into the role of humor in pain management continues today, and laughter shows pain-relieving benefits in many clinical settings, including dialysis and chemotherapy.^{13,14,15}

LAUGHTER DOES THE BODY GOOD, LITERALLY

A growing body of research shows the scientific benefits of humor. Laughter appears to make the body more able to fight disease and repair itself. So, what does that mean for you? Even with the blessing of good health today, it pays to develop the habit of using humor in daily life. An apple a day may keep the doctor away, but laughter can help keep you happy and healthy for years to come.



CHAPTER 2

Humor Me: The Therapeutic Nature of Humor



STEVEN M.
SULTANOFF,
Ph.D.

We hear it all the time:
laughter is the best
medicine! But most of us
don't understand how and
why laughter and humor
can be important
to our health.

Humor can create positive changes in our thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and biochemistry. It plays a significant role in wellness. Everyone has a different sense of humor, but we ALL respond to one or more of the universal humor stimuli that activate the sense of humor.

People “receive” humor as a combination of three key components: **wit** (cognitive), **mirth** (emotional), and **laughter** (physical). These elements are different, but each has health benefits and contributes to health and well-being. While laughter is easily recognized, wit and mirth may not be as obvious but still provide therapeutic benefits.

WIT, MIRTH, AND LAUGHTER: THE ELEMENTS OF HUMOR



WIT:

The Cognitive Experience of Humor

Wit occurs when we “appreciate” humor. It is the liking and understanding: the “getting it” that we experience as humorous.

The health benefit of wit lies in its ability to help us break rigid mind sets that are common in people who experience emotional distress like depression, anxiety, and anger. Wit helps us see the world with perspective, and reduces the impact of situations that stress us.¹⁶



MIRTH

The Emotional Experience of Humor

Mirth is the experience of joy or inner warmth that may occur as we experience humor. When our funny bones are tickled, emotional distress disappears – at least for a moment. When we experience mirth, stress dissolves and a sunny spirit takes its place. We know this naturally, and this is also shown by people who use humor to “instinctively” reduce their anxiety.

Humor also helps to thaw anger. Many of us have been in situations where the person with whom we are angry uses humor to reduce our emotional intensity. It works!



LAUGHTER

The Physical Experience of Humor

Laughter is our physical reaction to humor. When we laugh, we are activated and energized. Our muscles contract, our pulse rate and breathing increase, and we may lose muscle control. Many of us have even “leaked” during laughter.

Since laughter reduces stress, and psoriasis can be triggered by stress, then a healthy dose of laughter may also reduce the intensity or frequency of a psoriasis flare.



THE THERAPEUTIC VALUE OF HUMOR

Research has found that attitude (positive and negative) is related to many aspects of health and well-being. Likewise, emotional states (both distressing and uplifting) have been found to have direct impact on health and well-being.^{17,18}

Negative thinking and distressing emotional experiences are both directly related to illness and poor mental health. Humor counteracts both negative thoughts and distressing emotions. So, we can assume that humor will also counteract their negative effects on your health and improve your wellness.

The most powerful benefit of therapeutic humor is not in a fleeting moment of laughter, mirth, or wit. The true power of humor comes from making it a part of your daily life. Join us!

HUMOR STIMULATES US IN HEALTHFUL WAYS

MARY KAY MORRISON

WIT

- ☒ Reduces stress, anxiety, and tension
- ☒ Promotes well-being
- ☒ Raises self-esteem
- ☒ Improves relationships
- ☒ Builds group cohesiveness
- ☒ Enhances memory

MIRTH

- ☒ Increases pain tolerance
- ☒ Elevates mood
- ☒ Increases energy and vigor
- ☒ Neutralizes depression and anxiety
- ☒ Enhances creative thinking
- ☒ Increases friendliness

LAUGHTER

- ☒ Intensifies mirth
- ☒ Is contagious
- ☒ Increases interpersonal attraction and bonding
- ☒ Exercises respiratory muscles

CHAPTER 3

A Key Wellness Tool: The Benefits of Humor When Living with Psoriasis



MARY E. A.
LASKIN,
MN, RN, A-CNS

So, you've been diagnosed with psoriasis. At first, you're relieved, as you can't begin treatment until you have a diagnosis. But then, reality sets in. This diagnosis isn't just about itchy skin...

PEOPLE WITH PSORIASIS FACE NUMEROUS CHALLENGES:

- **Pain and Itching:** These uncomfortable symptoms can be constant reminders.
- **Social Withdrawal:** The visibility of the flakes and scales can trigger embarrassment. Many people seek privacy by staying home and limiting social engagements.
- **Depression:** The impact of the condition can cause stress and a feeling of hopelessness.

So, how can you deal with this life-changing diagnosis?

CATCH THE POWER OF HUMOR! REALLY? REALLY!

How in the world can I use humor to treat psoriasis? "It is about seeing funny, not being funny!" according to AATH past president, Karyn Buxman. So, it is not about being able to tell jokes or clowning around. Though, those may be options... It's about the ongoing search for ways to flip life's challenges in order to find the funny side of life.

Groundbreaking research reveals the many benefits of humor. Did you know that humor helps the ability to cope with stress? It can also decrease pain intensity and increase the ability to tolerate pain. These are important benefits for people with psoriasis. Laughing can also strengthen our connections with other people and has been found to be effective in dealing with depression.²

Learning to laugh, in spite of your diagnosis, doesn't mean you ignore the challenges of psoriasis. It simply means that you can live – and thrive – through the prism of rose-colored glasses, by purposefully using humor to help cope.

The History of Humor and Medicine: Pioneering Research Validates the Healing Power of Humor

As early as the 1300s, Henri de Mondeville, a professor of surgery, began supporting post-operative therapy with humor.²⁰ More famously, journalist and professor Norman Cousins started the current research trend when he developed his own "treatment" for ankylosing spondylitis.²¹ Cousins holed up in his apartment for a month doing what he enjoyed most: reading humorous stories and jokes, watching comedy movies and reading his favorite comics. He noticed that every time he laughed, his pain was eased. Ten minutes of laughter resulted in two hours of pain-free sleep.

More recent studies have demonstrated the many benefits of humor. Humor and laughter are shown to:

- Break the cycle between pain, sleep loss, depression and immunosuppression.²²
- Lower blood pressure, epinephrine, and glucose levels, and increase glucose tolerance.
- Produce a discharge of endorphins that have both euphoric and calming effects.²³

Even Freud chimed in on the benefits of humor, suggesting humor may be the highest of the defense processes of the psyche, that can be learned and practiced as a safeguard against anxiety.²⁴

Humor as a Stress Buster

“Stress happens when the demands on our time and energy exceed our capacity to handle them. When we don’t have, or don’t think we have, the resources needed to meet the expectations or tasks of our day, our brains shift into survival mode, which hijacks our energy and attention to focus only on what seems most important in the moment. Unfortunately, without intention this usually means we’re stuck in a fear state, pumping out stress hormones that we don’t actually use, building up toxic inflammation in our body that breaks us down over time and ironically blocks our ability to problem solve effectively.”

- Heidi Hanna, PhD, Executive Director of the American Institute of Stress

When we experience something funny, hundreds of chemical changes occur—shifting our state from surviving to thriving. Cognitive performance improves, as neurons shift toward expressing creativity, insight and innovation, while turning down the noise of the stress response.²⁵



7 TIPS TO GET YOU LAUGHING NOW!



DAVID M. JACOBSON,
LCSW, CHP

- ☒ Get to know your favorite comedians and watch them often. Be on the lookout for new comedians that you discover and find hilarious.
- ☒ Do something silly that makes you laugh: a stupid dance or funny faces in the mirror
- ☒ Have a few of your favorite comedy movies on hand to watch when you're in pain or feeling down
- ☒ Visit humor-filled websites
- ☒ Attend a comedy club or search for the funniest YouTube videos
- ☒ Listen to a comedy station or channel
- ☒ Call or meet with friends who make you laugh

HOW DOES HUMOR HELP ME WITH PSORIASIS?

David Jacobson, LCSW, CHP, lives with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. He has embraced the use of intentional humor in his daily life. His advice? First intend to laugh, then pretend to laugh, and then you'll find yourself *truly* laughing! David has made the choice to study and practice humor as a treatment for his conditions. He recently completed the coursework to become a Certified Humor Professional, to help others.

"With psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, we are always looking for ways to gain more control over our situation. With therapeutic humor, we have one more tool to use in helping to gain that control. For people like me, there is no better adjunct to any medical treatment than laughter."

– David Jacobson

While living with a chronic condition like psoriasis can be socially isolating, the good news is that laughter and humor can also help build relationships. Most of the time when we laugh, it is to communicate with one another, to improve social interaction.²⁶ Using funny cartoons, watching funny videos, and playing fun games are all examples of ways to use humor and laughter to help form and strengthen relationships. Social support can help build the foundation to cope with living with a chronic condition.

Humor therapy is powerful and can contribute significant benefits for everyone. But for people with psoriasis, humor is also a secret weapon in your toolbox. It is possible to use the power of humor to take the lead in fighting the frustration, discomfort and emotional stress of psoriasis. Intentionally seeking out humor is a great "prescription" to help cope with symptoms and live a more fulfilling – and fun – life!



CHAPTER 4

Start Laughing Today: How to Bring Humor into Your Life

(Ok, I get it! Humor helps. So how do I do it?)



PAUL OSINCUP,
MA

Hopefully, you've read through all of the research and are convinced of the power of humor, or else you've skipped directly to this part because you believe us or didn't want to read more statistics. Either way, we're glad you're here!

Following are some strategies to find the funny, harness humor, and create comedy. We hope you can use these strategies to make conversations about psoriasis a little easier, reduce your own stress, or even break the ice!

LEARNING TO EXPERIENCE HUMOR

We're often told that we need to be able to "laugh it off" or "not take things too seriously" in life. That's good advice, but much easier said than done. Many people get busy and don't consciously think about developing their sense of humor. Others feel they just aren't that funny. The good news is that humor isn't a talent – rather, humor is a habit. Here are a few humor habits to get you going and keep you laughing:

- 1 **Three Funny Things Intervention:** Research out of the University of Zurich²⁷ found that people who write down three funny things that happened each day for only one week were able to increase their overall happiness and decrease depressive symptoms for up to six months! The great thing about this exercise is that you'll also begin to train your brain to find the humor in things in real time, rather than just in retrospect. As things happen during the day you'll think, "I'll be writing that down later," and that's when you know you're training yourself to see humor in everyday life!
- 2 **Five-Minute Funny:** Set an alarm for a five-minute break each day where you'll intentionally watch a funny video (see technology section on the next page), learn a new joke, or tell a funny story to someone.
- 3 **Humor Buddy:** Find a friend and make a pact to send each other funny cartoons, videos, articles or gifs daily or weekly.
- 4 **Improv Comedy:** Take an improv class! There are many options for beginners and also for people who want to learn and practice but don't want to perform.
- 5 **Laughter Yoga:** Look for a laughter yoga class in your area. You can reap all the physiological rewards of laughter, without having to find anything funny!
- 6 **New Stuff with other Humans:** Do literally almost anything fun or novel. A lot of laughs come from when we try things for the first time – especially when we're with other people. In fact, we're 30 times more likely to laugh in groups²⁸ than by ourselves!

As you can see, the key with the above list is to be intentional. Rather than hoping that humor finds its way into your life, take an active role and learn to experience humor by *choice* rather than by *chance*.

FINDING THE FUNNY ONLINE

Taking advantage of technology is the easiest way to increase your daily humor intake. In the old days when phones had cords, and computers were the size of a Prius, people stayed up for the late-night talk shows to get their funny fix. Now, we can watch monologues or clips of cats falling into fish tanks in the palm of our hands, any time.

Like the previous examples, we can leverage technology to easily find humor. Here are a few easy go-to options:

- 1 **YouTube:** Create a funny playlist. Every time you come across a video that makes you laugh, add it to your playlist so you'll have instant access to laughs when you need them.
- 2 **Podcasts:** Is every podcast you listen to related to news, current events, or self-help? Be sure to add funny podcasts or even stand-up comedy to your commute or morning routine. Here are a few gems:
 - a. **"Laughbox":** This AATH podcast interviews humor professionals and is all about how to create and apply humor in life!
 - b. There are tons more! Just search "funny" in your podcast app.
- 3 **Twitter:** Follow [@CrackUpCharlie](#) for psoriasis-specific humor and motivation!
- 4 **Email:** Add funny photos to your emails or memos and ask people to caption the pictures. Or, simply read emails out loud in your favorite accent.

The great (and scary) thing about the technology we use is that it is programmed to remember us. The more humorous pages we like or videos we watch, the more will show up in our feeds!



USING PAIN AS COMEDIC INSPIRATION

We know that the ability to laugh at ourselves leads to greater psychological well-being²⁹ and that humor makes us more resilient.³⁰ Most great comedy also comes from the pain points in life like everyday annoyances, impossible tasks, and difficult family members. Why should psoriasis be any different?

MAKE YOUR OWN PSORIASIS MEME

CHOOSE YOUR OWN FEELING OR EVENT

When your friends ask if you're ready to go to the beach but you're having a psoriasis flare up.

When someone says: "You should try this great new lotion!"

"Is that from poison ivy?"

When someone says: "Have you tried cutting out gluten" (or dairy, alcohol, or anything good)?

"I heard it's caused by stress, maybe you just need to relax."

PAIR IT WITH A FUNNY PICTURE



USING HUMOR TO CONNECT WITH THE DOCTOR, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Having a laugh may be the last thing on your mind when seeing your healthcare provider. However, it can be a useful tool in making positive connections with the staff and your physician. When you get people to laugh, they're more inclined to like you or make a positive social connection.³¹

Some of the previously discussed humor habits and tools are perfect for your next visit to the doctor:

- The Five-Minute Funny – Put yourself in a good mood and decrease your stress by watching a funny video or listening to a podcast on your way to the office or in the waiting room.
- Tell him/her about something funny that happened to you recently. It could be something from your "Three Funny Things" intervention or something different.
- Ask the doctor or the staff, "What's the funniest thing that's happened in your job lately?" They may have some great stories!

To help you craft some clever comments at just the right time, following are a few techniques that humorists use to make things funny. Some of these are great for using at the doctor's office, while others may help ease the awkwardness of conversations with friends or family.

“THE RULE OF THREE”

A simple formula that comedy writers use when trying to get a laugh is the “rule of three.” You can use this to break the ice as you’re telling someone about your psoriasis. You simply state two serious things, followed by something surprising or funny.

By providing real information along with a little levity, you’re helping to normalize the condition and show that you want the other person to be comfortable talking with you about it.

Here are some examples of “the rule of three”:

Explaining your symptoms to a friend or a doctor/nurse:

“My most common psoriasis symptoms are that it makes my skin flake, makes me itch, and makes me break out in long sleeves.”

When the doctor asks you how you’ve been treating your psoriasis:

“I treat my psoriasis with medication, light therapy, and a vacuum.”

Explaining what psoriasis is to someone for the first time:

“Psoriasis is an autoimmune condition that causes a build-up of skin cells, scaling, and an abnormal amount of conversations about lotion.”

COMPARISON

This is another simple tool to find humor in almost anything. Simply compare it to something completely different. The stranger and more dramatic, the better! This tool can be used for a funny social media post, telling a story to friends, or to try to make your physician laugh!

Here are some examples to get you going:

When the doctor asks how you’re feeling:

“It feels like I’m wearing a fiberglass scarf.”

If someone notices some skin flakes:

“It’s like trying to clean up when you live in a snow globe.”

When someone asks why you’re wearing jeans on such a nice day:

“With my psoriasis, I feel about as comfortable in shorts as a fish on a bicycle.”



EXAGGERATION

This one is obvious but easy to use. Just take whatever the situation is and exaggerate it to the point of ridiculousness.

For example, if you're getting ready to go somewhere but feeling a bit self-conscious and like you want to completely cover up, just exaggerate and put loads of layers of clothes, scarfs, hats, and maybe even boxing gloves on then tell your friends, "I'm ready to go!" It's sure to get a laugh, make a point, and lower your anxiety a bit.

Here are some other exaggerations for use in any situation that might make you smile:

"I've put off shaving my legs for so long, now I have slippers."

"I get so itchy, my dog scratches me behind my ear."

"Now that I've shed my exoskeleton, I'm waiting to turn into a butterfly."

These don't always have to be about the pain points or bad days either. Exaggeration can also be used with the good days:

"If my skin always looked this good, I wouldn't even wear clothes!"

Now try creating some of your own exaggerations:

My skin was so red that...

My skin felt so smooth...

I was flaking so much that...

NOW, IT'S YOUR TURN

Alas, none of these humor habits or funny tips are going to magically clear up your skin. But they can make living with psoriasis a little easier. And that's what it's all about! Remember: humor and distress can't occupy the same psychological space in your brain.

We hope you'll use these tools and strategies to elevate your mood, make conversations easier, or simply to procrastinate at work. ← (The Rule of 3! See what we did there?!)

HUMOR RESOURCES

Visit the following humor resources for more information and to get laughing:



A network and resource for humor and laughter authorities and enthusiasts.
www.aath.org



Learn more about humor studies, leadership and application. Take courses to become a Certified Humor Professional (CHP).
www.aath.org/humor-academy-2

KARYN • BUXMAN

An organization dedicated to studying both the art and science of humor.
www.HighPerformanceHumor.com



Offers support, information and laughs for people living with psoriasis. Brought to you by Sun Pharma.
www.PsOReal.com



Resource about humor and stress, with techniques to make you laugh.
<https://heidihanna.com/beyondfunny/>



An organization dedicated to teaching therapeutic laughter and promoting world peace through laughter.
www.worldlaughtertour.com

CONCLUSION

Living with psoriasis can be uncomfortable physically, emotionally, and socially.

Traditional medicine is the foundation for treating psoriasis. It can help address the appearance of psoriasis symptoms of scaling, itching and redness. It can help with the pain that occurs when your body goes to battle with its own immune system.

While medications and creams may help to alleviate the physical symptoms, unfortunately it's not possible to rub an ointment on your feelings. However, it's important to also address the emotional and social challenges of living with psoriasis.

Unless you're a bear, hibernating at home just isn't an option (but, if you are a bear, congratulations on learning to read). You have to go to work. You have to go to the grocery store. You'd like to go to the movies or visit with friends. You need to proactively stand up to psoriasis and declare "I can have a psoriasis AND a great life, and I'm going to make it happen!" How? Humor.

Incorporating humor and laughter into your daily life – intentionally– can provide one more tool for your management of psoriasis. The identified benefits of humor and laughter can help you to adjust your mindset to better navigate the emotional and social challenges of psoriasis.

Starting to use humor practices and techniques might feel uncomfortable or even unnatural at first, but remember: you don't have to BE funny – you just have to SEE funny!

Developing healthy humor habits may help to make the ups and downs of life with psoriasis feel less like a roller coaster and more like a merry-go-round.

We hope that after learning about the benefits of humor and laughter – and specific strategies to incorporate humor into your life and psoriasis management – that you now have a powerful new tool to help empower you to live your best life and focus on the things that matter most.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



KARYN BUXMAN, RN, MS, CSP, CPAE, CHP

Karyn Buxman is an international speaker, successful author, and neurohumorist, living at the intersection of the brain and humor.

Ms. Buxman is a pioneer in the field of applied humor, starting with her master's thesis in graduate school and now continuing her partnerships with leading neuroscientists.

Today she helps leaders—and those they serve—achieve peak performance and optimum health through the art and science of applied humor. Her mission: to improve global health, business, and peace through laughter and heal the humor-impaired.



DAVID JACOBSON, LCSW, CHP

David Jacobson is the owner of Humor Horizons, his professional speaking/publishing business, and Director of Behavioral Health Case Management at Banner University Medical Center.

A former social work manager, Mr. Jacobson worked with patients and families of traumas including the tragic shooting event in Tucson that occurred in January 2011.

His many honors include a “President’s Award” from FlashNet Marketing, A “Joy Mask” from the Korean Broadcasting System and The Wayne Washburn Memorial Award, A “National Hero” Award, and a Lifetime Achievement Award, all from the Arthritis Foundation National Office.



MARY E. A. LASKIN, MN, RN, A-CNS

Mary Laskin currently works as a Case Manager for a Chronic Pain Management Program at Kaiser Permanente, but she has worn many hats as she has practiced nursing for more than 30 years.

Throughout her career, she has been fascinated by the use of therapeutic humor to promote healing and a better quality of life in living with chronic illnesses.

In her quest to promote therapeutic laughter with her patients, Mary became a Certified Laughter Leader through the World Laughter Tour in 2006 and a Laughter Yoga Leader in 2010. She strives to spread therapeutic laughter in both her nursing practice and the community, including serving on the Board of Directors for the nonprofit organization, Laughter Matters.



MARY KAY MORRISON, CHP

Mary Kay Morrison is an educator, and the founder and director of Humor Quest. She is the former President of the Board of Directors for the Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH), and a Diplomat with the American Institute of Stress (AIS).

Ms. Morrison has taught at every level of the educational spectrum, facilitating keynote presentations and workshop sessions for the past 30 years. With a focus on humor and stress management, her work includes integrating what we know about applying cognitive research on emotions and movement to the learning process. She has also conducted seminars on brain research, leadership, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and parenting.

Ms. Morrison has published multiple articles, several of which are currently being used as textbooks for humor studies courses: *Using Humor to Maximize Learning*, *Exploring Links between Positive Emotions and Education I*, and *Using Humor to Maximize Living*. She founded the international AATH Humor Academy graduate study and Certified Humor Professional (CHP) program, for which she currently volunteers, and is a recipient of AATH's 2016 Lifetime Achievement Award.



PAUL OSINCUP, MA

Paul Osincup is a Speaker and Positive Workplace Strategist who helps organizations create more connected, productive and intentionally positive places to work. He is the President-Elect of the AATH, dedicated to the study and application of humor to improve health and human performance.

A conflict resolution specialist, former university administrator, and comedian, his global mission for workplace happiness has provided him the opportunity to work with thousands of individuals and hundreds of companies including Nasdaq and Kaiser Permanente. Mr. Osincup's TEDx Talk, "Leading with Laughter: The Power of Humor in Leadership" has been viewed more than 175,000 times and his work has been highlighted in *Forbes*, *Success Magazine*, and on his mom's refrigerator.



STEVEN M. SULTANOFF, Ph.D, CHP

Steven M. Sultanoff is a psychologist, Professor in the Master's Program of Psychology at Pepperdine University, professional speaker and internationally recognized expert on therapeutic humor. He is Past President of the AATH.

With more than 30 years in the therapeutic humor field, he has written many innovative articles, as well as a pioneering chapter on "Humor into Psychotherapy" published in *Play Therapy with Adults*. Dr. Sultanoff has appeared on *STARZ*, *Lifetime*, and *PBS* and is frequently quoted in publications such as *Prevention*, *USA Today*, and *Men's Health*. He is a recipient of AATH's 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr. Sultanoff's web site (humormatters.com) provides a wealth of information on therapeutic humor, as well as a wide range of topical humor.

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