



HEALTH & Beauty

Smile! It's Good for You

If you like to smile, you're in luck. Studies show that you benefit both emotionally and physically.

A recent study published in Psychological Science reports that the act of smiling has a positive effect on our happiness and physical health.

This can help the heart recover more quickly after stressful events, altogether boosting our well-being. Researchers deduct that the act of smiling is so powerful because it actually can rewire your brain to make positive patterns more often than it does negative ones.

EFFECT ON OTHERS

Another study by Penn State University found that people who smile appear to be more likable and courteous. This can help enhance your beauty in the eyes of others, who will take positively to your natural happiness.

Everyone wants to be the person who walks in and lights up a room. Your level of social engagement also plays a role in improving your overall health, so spread the love and make new friends along the way.

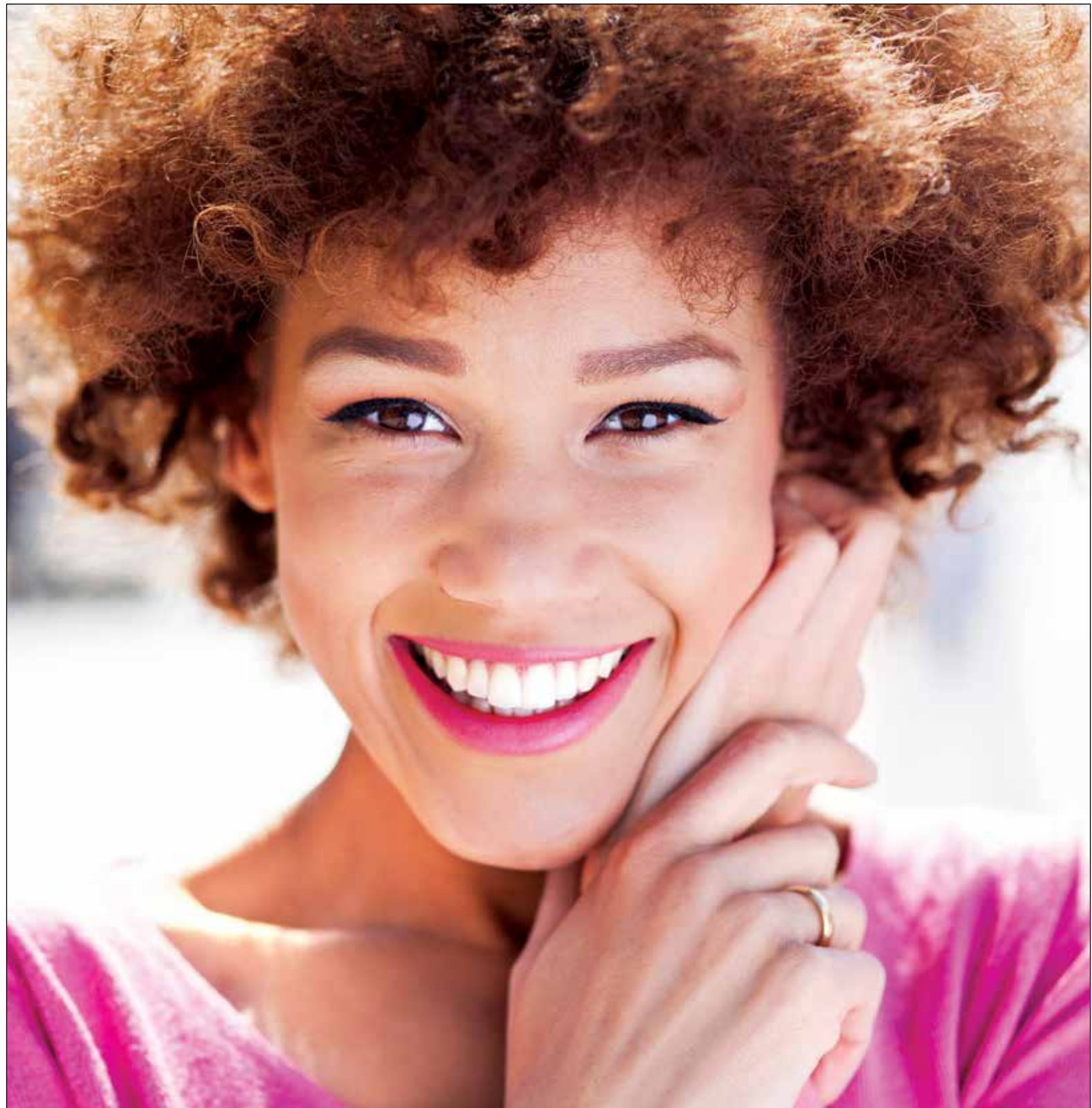
SMILE MORE

Smiling is obviously linked to happiness or humor, so what if you're going through a particularly tough time, finding it hard to smile?

Try to think happy thoughts. Do you have a memory or story that makes you smile? Repeat it to yourself during a time when you need a boost. If you have trouble conjuring up positive thoughts, surround yourself with those who can help you.

CONFIDENT SMILES

Some people are afraid to give off their best smile because they're self-conscious about their teeth or gums. Even a subdued smile can have positive effects on your health, so don't be afraid to give a closed-mouth grin.



Dining Out? Practice Self-Control

The day you start your new diet, your co-workers decide to celebrate a birthday by going out to eat. It happens.

It's as if your new commitment to eat healthier has put out an announcement that you need to be challenged and tempted into fatty foods with no nutritional value.

The good news is you can take some simple steps before, during and after your meal that will help keep you on track.

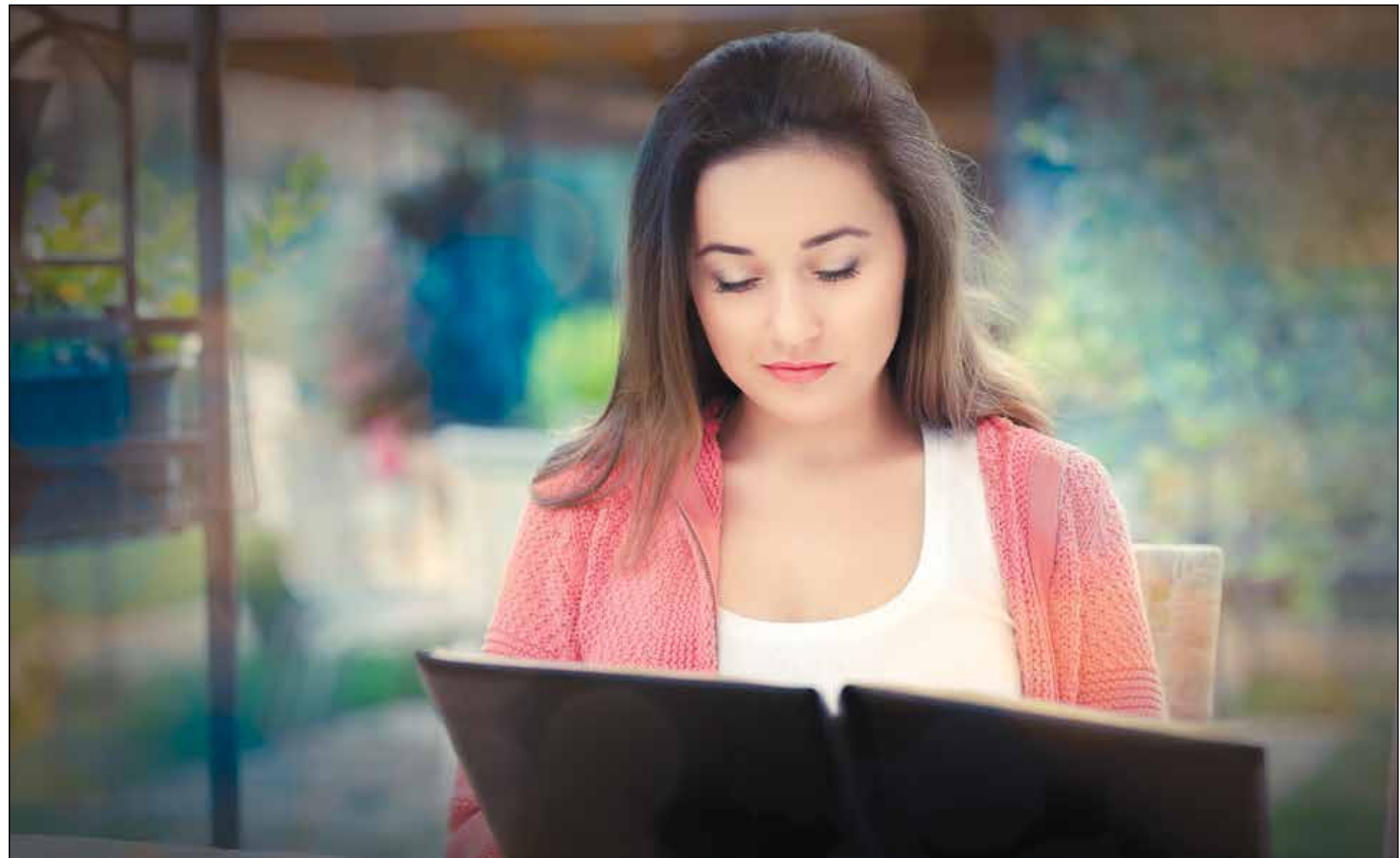
BEFORE YOUR MEAL

Eat a small apple or drink a large cup of water before your meal to help suppress your appetite. The more full you feel before your meal, the less likely you are to order larger portions.

Another way to ensure a smarter lunch is to make a pact with a co-worker to eat a salad. Having someone in your corner will help you stay true to your decisions and feel united in your front against unhealthy eating.

DURING YOUR MEAL

The best action you can take during lunch is to stick to your plan. It may be difficult, but don't even look at the main lunch entrees or oversized sandwiches. Stick to the appetizers or salads page and choose something that fits with your goals.



© FOTOLIA

Most restaurants now include calorie counts for each meal in their menus. This helps you map out an entire meal and know exactly what it means for your nutritional plan.

During your meal, take small bites and take part in the conversation around you. There is nothing wrong with

leaving food on your plate, and letting your stomach tell your brain it's full can take a few minutes. Relaxing between bites can help the two connect.

AFTER YOUR MEAL

If your office is a close enough distance from the

restaurant, tell your co-workers you're going to walk back and will meet them in a few minutes. A post-meal walk can eliminate some of those calories you just picked up at lunch.

Once you get back to your workplace, take an extra lap around the building or use the stairs to make it up to

your office. Every extra step counts — and research proves it.

According to the American Council on Exercise, an average woman walking three miles per hour for 15 minutes can burn 67 calories. That is equal to one of the rolls you had at lunch or a medium portion salad.

Tame that Temper

When is the last time you had a timeout? Just because the days of terrible twos and kindergarten are long gone doesn't mean a timeout can't help you keep your temper under control.

In fact, taking a few minutes to calm down and diffuse a situation can help you reduce stress that can be harmful to your physical and mental health.

The next time you get peeved by someone cutting you off in traffic or a home repair that drains your bank account by a few hundred dollars, send yourself to the corner. And don't reemerge until you're feeling calm and collected.

SELF-CONTROL

The Mayo Clinic recommends that people find a calming force in their lives that can help them better handle stressful situations, which are a natural part of life. This can range from actions that you take or people with whom you surround yourself.

Techniques such as making a concerted effort to think before you speak can help you work through issues in your head before projecting onto others, for example. Or allow yourself to vent to others, but only after you've had a chance to calm down and express your concerns in a clear manner.

These types of actions can be particularly important if you are in a position of lead-



© FOTOLIA

ership in your company or are a parent.

Set a positive example for your employees and children to create a culture of collaboration and constructive communications.

EXERCISE

Physical activity has been proven to reduce stress levels that can cause you to become angry, according to the Mayo Clinic.

If you're feeling stressed or angry — or even if you're not — a brisk walk or jog can help you keep your cool. It also can serve the same purpose as a timeout, giving you the time you need to consider alternative ways of

handling a stressful situation.

You can find clarity during exercise. A half-hour jog can open your eyes to what is going on around you, helping you realize that other people are probably having problems, too.

Chemicals in Cosmetics

Potentially harmful substances are finding their way onto the shelves of our health and beauty aisles, cautions the Breast Cancer Fund headquartered in San Francisco.

Carcinogens and endocrine-disrupting chemicals can increase the risk of breast cancer, and the Fund reports that these substances are in the makeup many women are wearing right now.

DANGEROUS CHEMICALS

The Breast Cancer Fund posts a list of chemicals commonly found in cosmetics and their effect on the body (breastcancerfund.org). Here are a few:

Phthalates: This group of endocrine-disrupting chemicals are found in synthetic fragrances. Exposure has been linked to early puberty in girls, which is a risk factor for later-life breast cancer.

Parabens: These compounds have been identified in biopsy samples from breast tumors, reports the Fund, and are commonly used as an antifungal agent in creams, lotions and deodorants.

Lead: The Fund says lead may be a contaminant in more than 650 cosmetic products, including sunscreens, foundation, nail colors, lipsticks and whitening toothpaste. Lead is dangerous because it is linked to miscarriage and puberty delays.



© FOTOLIA

CHOOSE SAFE COSMETICS

Making sure you're using the safest possible products comes down to one simple strategy: simplicity.

Choosing products with a simple set of natural ingredients can help reduce the chance of chemicals making their way into your system. Simplicity in how much makeup you use is also part of a smarter process.

Discard any makeup that contains ingredients that haven't been proven safe or healthy. Cutting back on the amount of makeup you use is a surefire way to avoid the dangers of potentially harmful synthetics.

The Breast Cancer Fund urges women to avoid products that list the word "fragrance" on their packaging. Synthetic fragrance, the Fund reports, can contain hundreds of chemicals that can cause major damage to the body.

Practice Fiscal Fitness

Some of the biggest stressors for women and men alike are those caused by financial restrictions. Living paycheck to paycheck or not having enough money in savings can cause fights and worry, as well as increased debt.

The worst thing you can do is crumble under your own debt.

In a recent report in *Business Week Daily*, a comparison of people who had a high level of debt and those who did not showed that high stress levels were linked to double the chance of a heart attack.

Within the same study, specific health issues also were found in the group stressed over their finances.

Here are some specific statistics uncovered by the study:

Ulcers and digestive tract: Twenty-seven percent of people with high stress over finances reported digestive problems versus 8 percent of those who did not worry about money.

Headaches and migraines: Forty-four percent of people financially stressed reported having migraines, while only 4 percent of unstressed participants reported the same.

Depression: Twenty-three percent of those experiencing financial stress were depressed compared to 4 percent of those not feeling any financial worries.

Muscle tension: Highly stressed people were 65 percent more likely to experience back pain and muscle tension than those with low stress.



© FOTOLIA

STAYING FISCALLY FIT

So what can you do about it? Much like you are urged to

stay active physically to stave off certain diseases, experts recommend you stay active in your fiscal life, as well.

This means planning well in advance for retirement and

emergency savings. And don't be afraid to seek outside help.

A Metlife survey recently found that attending a financial training program increased people's feelings

that they were in control of their finances by 25 percent.

That confidence can carry over into smarter spending and saving habits that set you up for years to come.

A Family Effort

After the excitement and motivation of a new workout or dieting plan fade, where are you supposed to look for a spark? Your children need exercise as much as you do, so why not involve them in your routine?

According to the national fitness program Let's Move, children should get a total of 60 minutes of physical activity each day, and adults need at least 30.

Exercise has never been more important to protecting children from incurring preventive illnesses later in life.

Childhood obesity rates have tripled since the 1980s, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. At this rate, one-third of children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes in their lifetime.

Below are some easy ways to create family-friendly exercise habits.

MUSIC

Firing up the music is a great way to keep your family in shape. Research has shown that music benefits our health in a variety of ways.

This can include our ability to cope with pain, as well as overall physical and mental well-being. Whether you're using music to motivate your family during a workout or simply dancing along, you can reap the rewards of rocking out.

One study reported by the National Institutes of Health even found that playing soft music and dimming the lights during meals can help people

slow down while eating, ultimately consuming less food.

JOIN A CENTER

Particularly if you live in a cold-weather area, it can be

challenging to find ample year-round physical activity. If you're fortunate enough to live near a city with a large recreation center, your problem could be solved.

Paying for a membership

can unlock a portal of activities for your family, from swimming and dancing to basketball and karate classes.

You and yours can enjoy the convenience of taking part in the activity of your choice, all

without having to worry about battling the outdoor elements. Be on the lookout for special sign-up deals announced during slower seasons, such as in the middle of winter or summer.



Skin Cancer By the Numbers

We all know how to prevent most forms of skin cancer. Limit sun exposure and use strong sunscreens to dramatically reduce your risk of contracting the disease.

But a deeper look at the numbers might open your eyes to the importance of taking these steps instead of merely knowing about them.

The Skin Cancer Foundation figures below paint a stunning picture of the serious nature of skin cancer. For the full list, visit www.skincancer.org, where you also can find information on the various forms of skin cancer, as well as expert tips on prevention.

- One person dies of melanoma every 57 minutes;
- An estimated 9,940 people will die of melanoma in 2015;
- Nearly 5 million Americans are treated for skin cancer every year;
- Each year, there are more new cases of skin cancer than the combined incidence of cancers of the breast, prostate, lung and colon;
- Over the past three decades, more people have had skin cancer than all other cancers combined;
- One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of their lives;
- Basal cell carcinoma is the most common form of skin cancer, with an estimated 2.8 million people diagnosed annually in the United States;
- Organ transplant patients are up to 250 times more likely than the general public to develop squamous cell carcinoma; and
- As many as 3,000 deaths from advanced cell carcinoma occur annually in the United States.

