


THE SCIENCE OF SMILING

By Chris King



Did you know that exercising our zygomaticus major and orbicularis oculi muscles by holding a pencil with our teeth makes us feel better.

WHAT?

Well before you start running around sterilising piles of pencils, there is an alternative exercise that is even easier to perform. For that, all you need to do is **SMILE!** 



So, what is going on?

Smiling is a bit like reverse engineering a happy incident. For example, if we spot a friend, our brain will tend to produce a lot of 'feel good' endorphins which in turn encourages us to smile. The act of smiling will then activate the secretion of yet more happy hormones. But, if we just smile, even in the absence of a happy incident, the contraction of facial muscles around the mouth will still result in the secretion of endorphins and again help us to feel good.

And this is just the tip of the good news about smiling!

Research has indicated that smiling can produce a lot of other health benefits including lowered blood pressure, heart rate and reduced levels of anxiety. Other claims made by researchers suggest that smiling can also increase your sense of wellbeing, make you look both thinner and younger and provide a form of natural pain relief.

For chocoholics, like me, the really interesting cutting-edge science has indicated that one smile can generate the same level of brain stimulation as up to 2000 bars of chocolate! I'm not sure if I believe that finding, so I intend to test it out myself, very thoroughly.

Oh, and one last thing...

A Swedish study has recently confirmed something that the great Louis Armstrong reminded us about many years ago. That smiling is contagious...

**WHEN YOU'RE SMILIN'...KEEP ON SMILIN'
THE WHOLE WORLD SMILES WITH YOU
AND WHEN YOU'RE LAUGHIN'...KEEP ON LAUGHIN'
THE SUN COMES SHININ' THROUGH**



Songwriters: M. Fisher, J. Goodwin, L. Shay.

Try and watch Jo's video and you can test out the contagious nature of smiling for yourself.

SO REMEMBER...KEEP SMILING!