

Words of Wellness



May 2021

Laughter is good medicine!

This year, Sunday May 2 is World Laughter Day. Isn't that funny?

It's a great day to share jokes, no matter how corny: knock-knock jokes, dad jokes, oldies but goodies, and something funny you heard on late night TV. See if you can borrow or download a joke book from your public library.

Watch a funny movie, either classics like the Marx Brothers, WC Fields, one of the *Pink Panther* movies, or something more recent. Find funny clips online—be amazed and amused by Donald O'Connor's routine for the song *Make Em Laugh* (from *Singing in the Rain*).

Try a laughing yoga practice. To learn more, visit the official website for [Laughter Yoga](#). Read about the founder, Dr. Madan Kataria, and check out the video collection. Designed to promote wellbeing, good health, friendship, and world peace, Dr. Kataria demonstrates how to laugh by yourself or enjoy laughing with others.

**A day without laughter
is a day wasted.**

-Charlie Chaplin



National Scavenger Hunt Day

Celebrate May 24 with a scavenger hunt.

While treasure hunt games have been around for a long time, the socialite Elsa Maxwell (the hostess with the moistest) is often credited with making this a popular activity. She threw lavish costume parties and organized scavenger hunts with absurd requirements (like finding a goat).

The principle of the scavenger hunt is to provide individuals or teams with a list of items they need to collect from wherever they can find them (that is, *scavenge* for them). Whoever collects the items first wins. There also are checklist versions, used in many museums and even for city-wide hunts.

As you may expect, there are virtual scavenger hunts and even scavenger hunt apps. We think a Zoom scavenger hunt can be fun! Everyone gets a list and has to collect the items and show them to the group online. You can find lists online (search images for Zoom scavenger hunt) or make your own. You can be specific (a fork) or general (something that starts with the letter B) or even personal (your favorite socks).

Playing games like a scavenger hunt can boost our wellness in many ways. Whether done as a team building activity or just for fun, interactive games are good for our social wellness. A scavenger hunt could increase our intellectual wellness, too, especially when the clues or the scavenging require some problem solving. When we need to move about to gather items on the list of things to find, the physical activity is a benefit. The humor and excitement of the game also can be a stress reliever, contributing to both our physical and emotional wellness. So, thanks to the irrepressible Elsa Maxwell and all those creators of the Zoom hunt lists! Have fun with this!

Gardening Season

May is the time when many of us get back to putting in their gardens. As we noted last year, gardening seems to have become increasingly popular as we were asked to stay home and stay safe. Time outside provides many benefits, with the mental and physical activities of gardening adding many more. Creating gardens or just looking at them can contribute to your wellness.

You can find many online resources to learn about gardening and even to enjoy virtual visits to botanical gardens around the world. For example, the website [Garden Design](#) has lots of resources, including information about plants and recommendations for everything from small container gardening to landscape beds and pest management. Even if you are not a gardener, the many pictures are worth a visit to the site.

Do you enjoy adult coloring pages or have children who love to color? You also can find free coloring pages to download from Garden Design (search for “coloring pages” on the site).

Urban Gardening

Gardens in inner cities can be a source of food for people in need while providing other health advantages. In New York, [S:US](#) produces over 7000 pounds of food annually, and has 25 urban farmers who serve as landscapers, farm specialists, and peer educators. In addition to their eight community farms and other growing spaces, they produce honey at their own beehive!

**Happy Mother's Day
To All!
May 9
2021**



References and Resources

Illustrations are listed online as free for reuse without attribution from pixabay.com

- For more on laughter, see WoW August 2020 (volume 12, number 10).
- Here's an oldie but goodie that draws a chuckle from folks of all ages: What time is it when the elephant sits on the fence? Time to get a new fence! This was from Bennett Cerf's *Book of Riddles*.
- Lewis, D. (2016, July 13). Before Pokémon Go, these scavenger hunts were all the rage. *Smithsonian Magazine*. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/pokemon-go-these-scavenger-hunts-were-all-rage-180959788/>
- Marx, P. (2012, June 25). The hunter games. *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/07/02/the-hunter-games>
- Scavenger hunt ideas: <https://teambuilding.com/blog/virtual-scavenger-hunt>
- For more on gardening, see WoW special issue May-June 2020 (volume 12, number 7).
- Check out the tour videos of botanical gardens videos: <https://www.gardendesign.com/garden-tours/#daytrips>
- Services for the Underserved (S:US) does much more than urban gardening! Their website (<https://sus.org/>) describes an inspiring array of programs and successes and their YouTube channel has gardening tips as well.