

# The Power of Play

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Here at The Well Workout, our team is on a mission to ignite a wellbeing revolution based on one simple belief: *that doing well – at work and in life – starts with being well.*

Using practices that are easy, effective and enjoyable, The Well Workout's one-of-a-kind wellbeing experiences are designed to increase energy, balance, connection and joy – all in minutes a day and without breaking a sweat.

## Four Themes

The philosophy behind our approach is rooted in the evidence-based premise that *the stressors of modern work and life have thrown our total wellbeing out of balance – physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.*

The Well Workout is designed to re-balance individuals holistically, thereby leading to enhanced cultures of wellbeing. Participants achieve measurable results by engaging in an interval-style workout that contains four practice pillars:

- **Play** – to rebalance from a focus on work as the core driver of identity and self-worth
- **Rest** – to rebalance from a life of perpetual motion and a culture that rewards busyness as a badge of honor
- **Reflection** – to rebalance from an addiction to action and the cycle of deciding and doing
- **Connection** – to rebalance from the heroes' journey of individual achievement

In this brief, we'll examine the value of **play** (the first practice pillar) as a way to re-balance from work – or in many cases – over-work.

## All Work, No Play

Some of the most recent and compelling research on the topic of over-work was compiled by Stanford Business School professor Jeffrey Pfeffer in his 2018 book *Dying for a Paycheck*. In it, Pfeffer paints a depressing picture of the state of workplace wellbeing in which:

*40% of employees are part of the contingent worker 'gig' economy and therefore do not have access to any of the employer-sponsored health and wellness benefits designed to mediate workplace stress.*

- *Job stress costs US employers more than \$300 million annually and may cause 120,000 excess deaths per year.*

- *61% of employees in one survey said that workplace stress had made them sick; 7 percent said they had actually been hospitalized.*

These statistics suggest that the trend of over-work is bad and getting worse, and that practicing play as an antidote to work should no longer be seen as optional.

## What is the Power of Play?

So what does the practice of purposeful play actually look like? One of The Well Workout's favorite ways to practice play is through laughter. We are part of a blossoming global movement called Laughter Yoga which has been shown to have numerous benefits for health and happiness.

Laughter yoga practice consists of four basic steps:

1. Clapping to activate acupressure points in the hands; along with chanting ho-ho-ha-ha-ha to start to elevate our mood
2. Breathing and stretching exercises to further oxygenate the body
3. Cultivating childlike playfulness through additional chants such as very good – very good – yay!
4. And finally, a series of laughter exercises – some based on traditional yoga practice – which involve laughing while moving, singing or humming.

Now before you dismiss the practice of laughter and play as frivolous, let me share two scientific facts with you:

**Fact #1:** *The body can't tell the difference between real and manufactured laughter.*

**Fact #2:** *Laughter produces a multitude of documented health benefits.*

# The Power of Play

To elaborate further on Fact #2, here is a short list of the many scientific benefits that have been documented as a result of regular laughter-play practice:

- Laughter enhances oxygen levels and can improve breathing capacity
- Laughter boosts the immune system resulting in fewer coughs, colds and infections
- Laughter helps alleviate stress by reducing the secretion of the stress hormone cortisol
- Laughter dilates blood vessels leading to better circulation and blood pressure
- Laughter maintains emotional balance and helps alleviate depression and anxiety

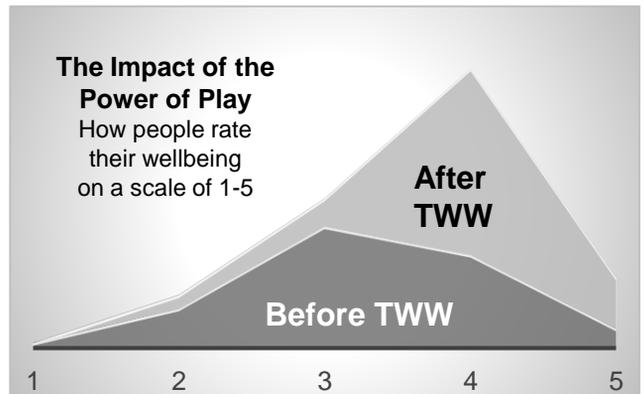
## References

*Dying for a Paycheck: How Modern Management Harms Employee Health and Company Performance—and What We Can Do About It* by Jeffrey Pfeffer, Harper Business, March 2018

*Laughter Yoga: Daily Laughter Practices for Health and Happiness* by Dr. Madan Kataria, Ebury Press, May 2018

## We Know It Works

Our own data demonstrates there is significant shift in self reported levels of total wellbeing after just one workout.



## In closing

- We live in a culture that has prioritized work at the expense of play.
- The time has come for a reset – and purposeful play is a powerful tool to get us there.
- Let's be well so we can do well... together.

If you are ready to join the wellbeing revolution and enjoy the power of play, please reach out and connect at [hello@thewellworkout.com](mailto:hello@thewellworkout.com).

To our wellth,  
*Deb*