

Are You Getting Enough Hugs?

How to Improve Your Mental, Emotional, Physical, and Spiritual Health

Virginia Satir, a world-renowned family therapist, was famous for saying “We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth.”

How many hugs are you getting each day?



As leaders, it's essential that we take this seriously—the more emotionally and mentally balanced we are, the more we can help our teams to become so.

With social distancing, dramatically reduced human contact, and more digital than physical interactions, many of us are running short on hugs.

4 Reasons Humans Need Hugs

Hugs keep us healthy!

A hug stimulates your thymus gland and regulates production of white blood cells.

- Hugs increase circulation and balance sympathetic (fight/flight/freeze) and parasympathetic (rest and digest) nervous systems.

Hugs increase feelings of belonging!

- Hugs boost oxytocin levels, which heals feelings of loneliness, isolation, and anger. Hugging is a shared experience: you're both giving and receiving affection. Nice!

Hugs make us feel safe!

Hugs emotionally “feed” us, help us remember that we're not alone, help us feel more trust with others.

- Ever notice how relaxed you feel after a juicy hug? Hugs remind us that we can face any challenge.

Hugs increase feelings of mattering!

- Hugs increase your feelings of self-esteem, being seen, and self-love.

Extended hugging (20 seconds or more) boosts serotonin levels, causing you to feel more positive emotions overall. You remember that you're loved.



3 Ways to Get More Hugs



1. Get a Hug Buddy

If you live with others, start keeping a daily tally and find out what number of hugs makes you feel most at peace.



If you live alone, get a buddy and set times when you'll get together for hugs.

You can also sit back to back on the ground and lean against one another for an extended period of time. You could be reading or talking during this time.



2. Hug/Sleep With Your Pet

Yes, this is not the same as hugging a human, but still, it's contact with another living thing, so go for it!

Throw a special pet blanket on top to protect your bedding and snuggle up!



3. Hug Yourself!

Remember the goal is oxytocin and serotonin release, so you may want to turbo-charge this experience by listing all the things you love about yourself.

Your mental and emotional health is more important than ever!

When leaders use these tools to help their teams find balance, they get results like these*:



35-50%+ Increased Productivity



90%+ Employee Retention



11-53% Reduced Employee Sick Days

*Stats are from over 1,000 of SmartTribes Institute's coaching and workshop clients

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