

A Hug A Day



this day. I love this.

It looked like the hug bug had bitten me as a youngster. As I grew older, I didn't outgrow the appreciation for a great hug and I would take one whenever I could get one. It was impossible for me to turn down the offer of a hug. I couldn't find anything that could warm my heart better than a good hug, though a really good cup of coffee could come close. I discovered that hugs do more than make you feel good; hugs are actually good for you. I wonder if a hug a day might just keep the doctor away as well as an apple will. They'd sure be more fun to make a part of the

daily routine. A good hug only takes ten to twenty seconds but can reap many benefits.

If there is such a thing as a "hug advocate" it would be me. I absolutely love hugs. Getting them, giving them and even seeing them given makes me smile. I would hug just about anyone, even animals. I grew up on a farm where my parents were huge hug promoters. In our house, you couldn't visit or leave without being caught in a hug. I think it was a rule somewhere in our book of family rules: thou shalt hug loved ones whenever possible. My dad sure didn't appear to be the hugging type, a tall, broad and burly man with grease stained mitts and just about as much hair covered his face as it did his head. Those big paws gave the warmest and best hugs though, the kind that would make you forget all your troubles. My mom still follows the family's hugging philosophy to

What Can a Hug Do?

- * Relieves Stress. When you hug someone, you reduce the amount of a stress hormone called cortisol in your body.(1)
- * Aids Relaxation. Hugging helps your muscles relax and can send feelings of calmness to your brain.(2)
- * Lowers Blood Pressure. When you touch someone during a hug, pressure receptors under the skin called "Pacianic Corpuscles" are stimulated. These receptors signal the vagus nerve in the brain. The vagus nerve branches out to many organs, including the heart. This nerve slows the heart down and decreases blood pressure.(1)
- * Increases Security. Hugging someone you love builds trust and security and can help you feel safe.(2)

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