

Here's the Scoop

Being Bad Can Be Good

Let go of your guilt—new research reveals the benefits of bothersome behavior



Cursing

Go ahead—drop an f-bomb if you stub your toe. It can ease the ache: A study from England's Keele University found that people who put their hands in ice water tolerated it longer when they cursed. "We don't necessarily recommend that people go around swearing, but cursing minimizes physical and emotional pain," says Svetlana Kogan, M.D., a New York City internist. Why does it feel so good? It may trigger the body's fight-or-flight response and the release of natural pain relievers, say researchers.

MORE SURPRISING ADVICE

- ✦ **Chew gum** It's relaxing and can help you eat less. (Just make it sugar free.)
- ✦ **Vent** Holding in anger can contribute to higher blood pressure.
- ✦ **Fidget** Moving around can help with circulation and burn extra calories.
- ✦ **Eat fat with every meal** A tablespoon of good-for-you fat (such as nuts or avocados) helps your body absorb some nutrients and vitamins. —L.Q.W.



Leaving your bed unmade

Neat freaks think a well-made bed is best, but scientists at England's Kingston University disagree. With the average bed a home for up to 1.5 million dust mites—gross, we know, but stay with us—it's better to leave sheets turned down, since mites can't survive in the dry conditions of an unmade bed. And if you have breathing troubles, you have our official permission to be messy: Those creepy mites are notorious for causing asthma and allergies.

Drinking just a bit

Your favorite tasty tonic can also be good for your heart. Recent studies show that moderate alcohol intake is associated with a reduced risk for cardiovascular disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. But don't overindulge if you want to reap this benefit—women should have no more than one drink a day and men no more than two, advises the American Heart Association.



Being a little lazy

Slow down! If you've just learned something new, don't rush on to the next task. Taking time to relax can actually help your memory. In a new study from New York University, researchers showed that the brain continues to process prior experiences during periods of awake rest—which helps you retain new info. "We simply asked subjects to let their minds wander," explains researcher Lila Davachi, Ph.D. "I advise everyone to take more breaks." —Leslie Quander Wooldridge

