



After a rough day at the office or a nasty interchange, a great joke can often quickly lift us out of a bad mood. But why? Dutch researchers think they've verified why this is so and how a joke helps us -- most of the time - laugh it off and turn our negative mood positive. Madelijn Strick, PhD, a postdoctoral researcher at Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands, and her team set out to figure out exactly how a joke can lift bad moods. Not to spoil the punch line, but the researchers found a joke works not just because the humor distracts us from negative emotions but because of the cognitive work we need to do to "get" the joke.

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