

Party hard!

Letting loose has major body benefits. Hang guilt-free this Friday night.

—Andrea Bartz



Chow down. A late-night bite could elevate your metabolism, says Heather K. Jones, R.D., of San Francisco. But keep it decent. At the bar, pick a shrimp cocktail, guac or hummus. The 24-hour diner calling you? Opt for a veggie omelet: Eggs contain protein, your body's building block of lean, calorie-torching muscle. Even better if you swap out those hash browns for a fruit cup.



Laugh the loudest. Cracking up relieves stress and acts as a natural pain med, probably by cueing the release of endorphins, says Robert Provine, Ph.D., author of *Laughter: A Scientific Investigation*. But don't risk cringe-inducing torture by sitting through amateur stand-up. "Only 15 percent of laughter is sparked by actual jokes," Provine says. "The rest comes from regular conversation." And we laugh more in a group. The plan: you, girlfriends, cocktails, good gossip.



Flirt brazenly. Chatting up a cute guy triggers a flood of the happy hormone dopamine, which makes you more positive, says Jeremy Nicholson, Ph.D., a social psychologist in Boston—and optimism could heighten immunity. Skin-to-skin contact cues the stress-reducing hormone oxytocin, Nicholson adds. So get touchy. We're 99.9 percent certain he won't mind.



Dance your ass off. And we mean that. Dancing long and hard can burn tons of calories, says Joseph Berning, Ph.D., an exercise physiologist at New Mexico State University—about 420 an hour, in fact. To nab the best slim-down, mimic an interval workout: Go fist-pumping wild for a song or two, take a breather, then get back out there, Berning suggests. If you throw it down 'til you're pooped, you can justify skipping Spin class tomorrow.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MEREDITH JENKS; SIGRID OLSSON/PHOTO ALTO/GETTY IMAGES; IMAGE SOURCE/GETTY IMAGES; STOCKBYTE/GETTY IMAGES.