

Mayo Clinic Minute

Why do scary movies make your heart race?

Video	Audio
Vivien Williams	Scary movies. The dread, fear and horror that makes your pulse quicken and palms sweat.
Regis Fernandes, M.D. Cardiovascular Disease Mayo Clinic	“What happens to the human body when you watch a scary movie? This comes from the known fight or flight response. ... When we are being chased by an animal, our instinct is to either fight the animal or flight, which means to run away. So, probably, that same mechanism gets triggered when we get scared by watching situations on the screen that are similar to that situation in real life.”
Vivien Williams	Cardiologist Dr. Regis Fernandes says three things happen: Your heart rate increases, blood flow to muscles increases and adrenalin flows.
Regis Fernandes, M.D.	“It’s similar to exercise.”
Vivien Williams	Dr. Fernandes does not suggest replacing exercise with watching scary movies, but he does say that the body’s reaction to being frightened its unlikely to hurt healthy individuals.
Regis Fernandes, M.D.	“If you enjoy that thrill, it’s not dangerous.”
Vivien Williams	And it seems many of us just love the feeling of being terrified.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Vivien Williams.