

PARENTS TALK BACK A better way to hug loved ones

Humans crave touch from the moment we are born.

Studies have shown that touch is important to infants' development, and as we grow up, that impulse to connect never goes away. We instinctively know how to grab on to and hold another person for comfort or to express affection.

But while most hugs are nice, some are better for us than others.

The majority of hugs last about three seconds, numerous studies have found. And more than a decade ago, researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill reported the benefits of the prolonged hug: one that lasts 20 seconds. This type of contact boosts levels of oxytocin — also known as the "love drug" or "bonding hormone" — as well as serotonin, the biochemical that helps stabilize mood.

Oxytocin is released at that point where trust meets touch. There's a surge in our bodies when a mother breastfeeds her baby, or during an orgasm, or even during an extended, 20-second hug.

It is a powerful hormone that bonds us to the people who provoke that oxytocin release.

Nick Ortner recently published a children's book called "The Big Book of Hugs: A Barkley the Bear Story," which teaches children and parents about the power of hugs.

"We've become very head-centric," Ortner said. "We try to think our way out of everything, to mentally process it, and we've ignored that we have a body."

Ortner listed the overwhelming benefits of frequently hugging your kids: Long hugs help children feel loved and safe. They build trust and closeness between the parent and child. They improve pulmonary and immune system functions and sleep patterns. They strengthen digestive, circulatory and gastrointestinal systems. Hugs lower anxiety and stress, and lessen feelings of loneliness, isolation and anger.

They teach us how to give and receive.

Since his daughter June was born more than eight months ago, Ortner's been practicing what he preaches.

"We hug the baby all the time," he said.

He acknowledges that this dynamic will change as his child grows up, and that the concept of personal space differs from culture to culture. Americans tend to prefer a large zone of space around them.

Even so, knowing the benefits, I decided to implement this "prolonged hug" agenda at home.

First, I approached my youngest, who is 10 — an age when hugs are still willingly given and accepted. I told him I needed to hug him for 20 seconds, wrapped my arms around him and started the stopwatch on my phone.

After a few seconds, he said, "Why is this so long?"

I assured him it would be over soon, and afterwards, I asked how he felt.

"Well, relaxed, sorta."

Anything else?

"Smiley. That's pretty much all."

Those reactions seemed pretty consistent with the research.

I moved on to the teenager. I am not allowed so much as a smile in her direction in public, so this hug had to occur far away from any potential embarrassment. Still, she agreed to accept my longer-than-usual hug.

"How do you feel now?" I asked.

"Protected, I guess," she said. (That made me want to hug her far more often.)

My last hug recipient required some upfront clarification.

"I need to hug you for 20 seconds," I said to my spouse. "But don't get the wrong idea. It's for a column."

He was still amenable to the idea. We were watching television on the couch, so I had to lean into this hug. After my timer hit 20 seconds, I asked for feedback.

"It was relaxing at first," he said. "But then you were crushing me, and I couldn't really breathe, but I thought I shouldn't tell you at the time."

But hugs are always relaxing, he quickly added.

A close call.

It called for a closer embrace.

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Aisha Sultan is a St. Louis-based journalist who studies parenting in the digital age while trying to keep up with her tech-savvy children. Find her on Twitter: @AishaS.



AISHA SULTAN
Parents talk back

Six tips to keep your Facebook clean, secure and private

By ANICK JESDANUN
AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK — Got hundreds of Facebook friends you hardly know?

Now is a good time to do some digital cleanup, while the year is still fresh. Review your security and privacy settings, and make sure those casual acquaintances you met at a bar eons ago aren't still getting the most intimate details of your life. Get rid of games and apps that might have latched onto your account years ago, but that you no longer use.

Here are six cleanup tips:

1. Secure your account

You've doubtless heard you should have a strong password. It's especially important for email and social-networking accounts because so much of your digital life revolves around them. Plus, many other services let you log on using your Facebook account, so if that gets compromised, so will your other accounts.

Because passwords are tough to manage, it's best not to rely solely on them. Turn on what Facebook calls Login Approvals. It's in the account settings under "Security." After you do so, you're asked for confirmation — entering a special number sent to your phone — when signing on from a new device.

Unless you switch devices often, this is something you set up once and forget about. And no one else can log in with your password unless they also have your phone and that special number.

2. Review your privacy settings

Facebook offers a series of quick privacy "shortcuts." On desktops and laptops, look for the small padlock on the upper right corner of the browser. On Apple and Android devices, access shortcuts through the menu — the three horizontal bars.

The key shortcut is "Who can see my stuff?" See whether you've been inadvertently broadcasting your musings to the entire Facebook community. You'll probably want to at least limit sharing to "Friends" rather than "Public," though you can customize that further to exclude certain individuals or groups — such as co-workers, acquaintances or grandparents. When sharing, remember that less is more.

While you're at it, check "Timeline and Tagging" in your account settings from a PC or mobile. You can insist on approving posts that people tag you in. Note that this is limited to what appears on your personal timeline; if Mary tags you in a post, Mary's friends will still see it regardless of your settings. That includes friends you may have in common with her.

If you're on a desktop or laptop, Facebook has a Privacy Checkup tool to review your settings. Look for that padlock. This tool is coming soon to mobile.



In this 2012 file photo, a girl looks at Facebook on her computer in Palo Alto, Calif. AP Photo/Paul Sakuma, File

3. Don't be afraid to unfriend

Purge friends you're no longer in touch with. If you think "unfriending" is too mean, add them to an "Acquaintances" or "Restricted" list instead. "Acquaintances" means they won't show up in your news feed as often, though they'll still have full access to any posts you distribute to your friends. "Restricted" means they'll only see posts you mark as public. Either is effectively a way to unfriend someone without dropping any clues you've done so.

You can also create custom lists, such as "college friends" or "family." This is great for oversharing with those who'll appreciate it, while not annoying everyone else you know and putting yourself in danger of becoming an "acquaintance" yourself. You can create lists on a traditional PC by hitting "More" next to "Friends" to the left of your news feed. Individuals can be in multiple groups. Capabilities are limited on mobile devices, although changes you make on the PC will appear on your phone or tablet.

4. Watch those apps

Perhaps someone invited you to play a game a few years ago. You tried it a few weeks and moved on, yet the app is still getting access to your data. Or perhaps you've used Facebook to log onto a service you no longer use, such as one to track the 2014 Winter Olympics. It's time to sign out. If you're not sure you still use it, drop it anyway. You can always sign on again.

The Privacy Checkup tool on PCs will review apps for you automatically. On mobile devices, look for "Apps" in the account settings (not "Apps" in the main menu).

A related option is the Security Checkup

tool. It's an easy way to log out of Facebook on devices you rarely use. You can also enable alerts when someone tries to sign on from a new device or browser. To run this, go to <http://Facebook.com/securitycheckup> on a PC. On the Android app, you can search for "security checkup" in the Help Center. On iPhones and iPads, you'll have to find the options individually in the account settings under "Security."

5. Control your data

You can exert some influence over whose posts you see more or less often by going to "News Feeds Preferences." The setting is on the top right on browsers and Android apps and on the lower right on iPhones. Here, you can select friends who'll always show up on top, or hide someone's posts completely.

Finally, if you're worried about data usage, you can stop videos in your news feeds from playing automatically. On Android, go to "Autoplay" in the "App Settings." On iPhones, it's in the account settings under "Videos and Photos."

6. Plan ahead

Two settings might eliminate grief later in life ... or death.

In the security settings, you can designate certain friends as trusted contacts. They'll have power to help you if you get locked out of your account for some reason. You can also designate a "Legacy Contact" — a family member or close friend who'd serve as your administrator should you, um, make your last status update (as in, ever). They won't be able to post on your behalf or see your messages, but they'll be able to respond to new friend requests and take a few additional actions on your deceased behalf.

OUT OF THE VAULT

Fog seeding at Pendleton airport leads to cockpit whiteout

An entry in the *East Oregonian's* Days Gone

By column spurred a letter from Michael Stratton, a Pendleton financial advisor. His father, Clair Stratton, was featured in the daily history column when a fog seeding trial at the Pendleton airport created an unseasonal snowfall in downtown Pendleton in December 1965. Mike said he appreciated the trip down memory lane, and then related a second seeding run that created a whiteout of a completely different kind.

Clair Stratton and his family moved to Pendleton in 1960, and he opened an aircraft maintenance shop first at Woodpecker Field east of Pendleton, and then at the Pendleton airport in 1962. He became a full-service fixed base operator and a Cessna dealer.

Stratton was under contract



RENEE STRUTHERS
Out of the vault

with United Airlines during the 1960s to do fog seeding when visibility was lower than legal for planes to land. He and his crew used a Cessna Skylane equipped with a storage container and a chute to deliver dry ice into the fog bank. In the winter of 1966, Stratton and his crew were called for another fog seeding run but the Skylane they normally used was not available. "Dad, being innovative, looked around and realized they had a new Cessna Turbo 206 in stock and he decided they would use it for that day's flight," Mike remembers.

The seeding project started out

using dry ice, but by 1966 they had moved to using large bags of a white powdery substance. Stratton took a rear door off the 206, turned a passenger seat backward and then strapped himself into the seat with the bags loaded in beside him. Once his pilot, Joe Ferrucci, leveled out above the fog, Stratton cut the corner off one of the bags and started dumping the powder out the door.

The first bag was dispensed without incident, Mike said. But the wind caught the powder from the second bag and blew it back into the cockpit of the plane. Now they were flying not only by instrument flight rules, but there was zero visibility inside the plane as well. The powder was statically attracted to everything inside the plane, including the instrument panel and the insides of the

windows.

Stratton and Ferrucci calmly managed to complete their mission and land safely. But, Mike said, "They literally looked like two snowmen as they exited the airplane."

The Cessna Turbo 206 was eventually sold to Walla Walla wheat rancher Pat Lynch. One of Mike's jobs as "ramp rat" at the airport was to clean airplanes after their annual inspections. He said for the next few years after the "in-flight whiteout," small amounts of white powder still turned up from under the seats and other areas of the interior during the plane's annual cleaning.

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Renee Struthers is the Community Records Editor for the *East Oregonian*. See the complete collection of *Out of the Vault* columns at eovault.blogspot.com

ODDS & ENDS

Rare weather event produces spontaneous snowballs in Idaho

By KEITH RIDLER
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — Thousands of snowballs rolled in a flat central Idaho field look like the work of hundreds of ambitious kids — except there are no human tracks.

A rare weather event caused the spontaneous snowballs at the Nature Conservancy's Silver Creek Preserve and surrounding fields near the tiny town of Picabo.

Preserve manager Sunny Healey spotted the cylindrical shapes up to 18 inches high on Jan. 30 following an overnight windstorm. They created long lines in the snow as they moved.

"You could see the tracks that they made, and I thought that was really curious," Healey said. "I had to stop a couple times. Then, along Highway 20, there were thousands of them."

So-called snow rollers are so rare and fleeting that the precise weather conditions needed to form them are not defined, said Jay Breidenbach, a meteorolo-



Sunny Healey/The Nature Conservancy via AP

This Jan. 30 photo shows a rare weather event that caused spontaneous snowballs at The Nature Conservancy's Silver Creek Preserve and surrounding fields near the tiny town of Picabo, Idaho. The National Weather Service says snow rollers are caused by an unusual combination of snowfall around a couple inches with the right water density and temperatures near freezing followed by strong winds.

gist with the National Weather Service. Snow rollers up to 18 inches are especially rare.

"Those are some pretty big rollers," Breidenbach said. "I've seen some small rollers, but never

that big."

In general, it takes an unusual combination of a couple of inches of snow with the right water density and temperatures near freezing, followed by strong

winds, he said.

"It can't be real dry snow or it would blow into drifts," Breidenbach said.

Rollers require some type of firmer base, such as a frozen layer of earlier snow, for the new powder to start rolling on. Plus, the wind must be strong and steady but not with powerful gusts that could damage the formations.

"It would probably blow them apart because they are fragile," Breidenbach said.

It snowed on Jan. 29, with the snow becoming wetter toward evening, Healey said. She lives at the preserve and said winds woke her up.

In her five years working at the preserve, she had never seen such an event, but a local rancher in his 70s told her he's spotted them twice in previous decades.

"We know basically how they form and why they form, but we don't know the exact details," Breidenbach said. "It would be interesting to go there with some weather instruments to watch them form."