

Laughter Yoga – A Complete Health & Wellness Exercise (904 Words)

What is Laughter Yoga?

Laughter Yoga is a unique exercise routine developed by Indian physician Dr. Madan Kataria. According to this concept, anyone can laugh for no reason, without relying on humor, jokes, or comedy. Laughter is simulated as an exercise in a group, but with eye contact and childlike playfulness, it soon turns into real and contagious laughter.

The reason we call it Laughter Yoga is because it combines laughter exercises with yoga breathing. This brings more oxygen to the body and brain, making one feel more energetic and healthy. The concept of Laughter Yoga is based on the scientific fact that the body cannot differentiate between fake and real laughter. One gets the same physiological and psychological benefits either way.

This idea is quickly spreading around the world, and today there are more than 10,000 laughter clubs in over 100 countries. In addition, Laughter Yoga is also practiced in companies and corporations, fitness centers, yoga studios, centers for seniors, schools, colleges, universities, and groups supporting the physically and mentally challenged, as well as self-help cancer groups.

Widely accepted globally, much has been written about Laughter Yoga in prestigious publications like *TIME Magazine*, *National Geographic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Daily Telegraph* (UK), and many others. Laughter clubs have also been featured on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *ZDF* (Germany), *NHK* (Japan), *ABC News* (USA), and other TV networks.

Why Laughter Yoga?

Everyone knows that laughter is the best medicine and is good for health. However, in this high-pressure, high-tension modern world, there aren't many reasons that make us laugh. To get the scientifically proven benefits of laughter, one must laugh for 15 to 20 minutes a day, and the laughter should be hearty and loud.

This is not possible in real life because natural laughter is conditional and lasts for only a few seconds, which is not enough to bring about health benefits. Through Laughter Yoga, one can laugh for an extended period of time and heartily because it is performed as a physical exercise rather than relying on a mental process.

What is a Laughter Club?

Laughter clubs are social clubs where people get together to perform Laughter Yoga exercises, usually for an hour, to reap the multiple health benefits of laughter and breathing exercises. They provide a rich social network of caring and sharing relationships.

Laughter clubs are FREE for everyone. There is no membership fee, no forms, and no fuss. They are run by volunteers trained as laughter leaders and teachers. These clubs are non-political, non-religious, and non-profit organizations run under the auspices of Laughter Yoga International. Our ultimate objective is to bring good health, joy, and world peace through laughter.

In India, these clubs meet every morning in public parks, and club members proudly say that they haven't missed a single day because it makes them happy, healthy, and energized. In fact, it has changed their lives.

What Happens in a Laughter Session?

A typical Laughter Yoga session is led by a laughter leader or teacher who guides the group through different laughter, breathing, and stretching exercises. There are four steps of Laughter Yoga: clapping, breathing, childlike playfulness, and laughter exercises.

It starts with warm-up exercises like clapping and chanting "ho ho ha ha," followed by various laughter exercises that help people laugh loudly and heartily from the belly. These exercises are interspersed with deep breathing. We encourage members to cultivate childlike playfulness and make eye contact, which leads to real and spontaneous laughter.

Five Benefits of Laughter Yoga

1. **Personal Life:** Laughter Yoga will help you add more laughter to your life, develop a sense of humor, and smile more. You will feel more self-confident, have a positive outlook, and experience hope and optimism. It changes your mood within minutes, and when your mood is good, everything seems better, and you perform at your best everywhere.
2. **Business Life:** Your output and performance depend on your energy level. For optimal brain function, you need 25% more oxygen than any other organ. Laughter Yoga increases the supply of oxygen, not only to the brain but to the entire body, helping you work more efficiently.
3. **Health Benefits:** Laughter Yoga is a powerful cardio workout; in fact, 10 minutes of hearty laughter is equivalent to 30 minutes on a rowing machine. It decreases the negative effects of stress on your body, which is the root cause of many illnesses. Laughter Yoga is a single exercise that deals with physical, mental, and emotional stress simultaneously. It also strengthens the immune system, lowers blood pressure, controls blood sugar, and keeps your heart healthy. It is a powerful antidote against depression, which is the number one sickness today.
4. **Social Life:** The quality of life and life satisfaction does not depend on how much money, power, position, or success you have. Rather, it depends on the number of good friends with whom one has caring and sharing relationships. This appreciation and acknowledgment help in emotional development. Laughter Yoga is a positive energy that quickly connects you with people and helps you make friends easily.
5. **Inner Spirit of Laughter:** Laughter Yoga will teach you how to keep your spirits high when you face challenges in life. It promotes a positive mental attitude, helping you cope with negative situations and deal with difficult people in a much better way than most.