

Laughter Yoga

Laughter is Healthy for YOU!

History of Laughter Yoga

- It is a fun new exercise system sweeping the world developed by Dr. Kataria
- It started in Bombay India with just 5 people in 1995 and has spread world wide with more than 5000 laughter clubs in 55 countries

History of Laughter Yoga

- Dr. Kataria had read Norman Cousins's book "Anatomy of an Illness", and decided to help his patients relieve stress through laughter
- Steve Wilson, an American psychologist and self-described "Joyologist", met Dr. Kataria on a 1998 visit to India.

History of Laughter Yoga

- In 1999, they toured America with the first “World Laughter Tour”
- Since then, the Laughter Club movement has spread around the globe

What is Laughter Yoga?

- By laughing we initiate powerful positive changes in our body, mind and emotions

Cont.

- Is a unique exercise routine, which combines unconditional laughter with yogic breathing
- Anyone can laugh without relying on humor, jokes, or comedy.
- Laughter is initially simulated as a physical exercise while maintaining eye contact with others in the group & promoting childlike playfulness.
- It crosses all barriers in that it is accessible & effective for most regardless of age, gender, race, most physical conditions & social service

Cont.

- In most cases this soon leads to real & contagious laughter. Science has proved that the body cannot differentiate between simulated & real laughter
- Laughter Yoga is the only technique that allows adults to achieve sustained hearty laughter without involving cognitive thoughts
- It bypasses the intellectual systems that normally act as a brake on natural laughter

Cont.

- Laughter Yoga sessions start with gentle warm-up techniques which include stretching, chanting, clapping and body movement.
- These help break down inhibitions & develop feelings of childlike playfulness.
- Breathing exercises are used to prepare the lungs for laughter, followed by a series of 'laughter exercises; that combine the method of acting and visualization techniques with playfulness

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- Laughter Yoga sessions may finish with 'Laughter Meditation'
- This is a session of mind-body relaxation techniques
- This is a powerful experience that often leads to a healthy emotional catharsis and also a feeling of release & joyfulness

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- Laughter Yoga is based on the scientific fact that even if you laugh as an exercise your body can't tell the difference & you get the same physiological benefits as real laughter
- Breathing exercises from Yoga (pranayama) are combined with laughter exercises
- It increases the supply of oxygen to the body & brain
- We laugh as an exercise, but real laughter quickly develops

Research

- There is sufficient data available from medical research to show that even if you pretend to laugh or act happy your body produces happiness chemicals
- Release of endorphins which creates a positive state of mind, boosts optimism, self confidence & self-worth

Research Cont.

- Laughter for no reason forces you to leave the comfort zone of the known & enter the unknown changing world or the right brain & experience its unlimited potential
- Laughter for no reason is different from laughing with humor which is a left brain process

Cont.

- Anti stress
- Enhances immune system
- Increase circulation & oxygenation
- Opportunities for group dynamics & social connection
- Emotional intelligence
- Catharsis

Cont.

- Lower blood pressure
- Improve breathing
- Relax muscles
- Reduce pain
- Burn calories
- Increase enthusiasm

Cont.

- Elevate mood
- Make your life more fun!
- Prevent hardening of the ATTITUDE!

Laughter Yoga Guidelines

- Laughter Yoga is normally performed in a group under the direction of a trained & certified Laughter Yoga Leader
- No special clothing or equipment is required although comfortable clothing that allow free movement are recommended

Clapping & Warming-Up Exercises

- Clap hands parallel to each other for full finger-to-finger & palm-to-palm contact
- Rhythm is added to the clapping to further increase energy levels & group dynamics synchronicity, often a 1-2, 1-2-3 rhythm
- Movement is then added. There are many variations, but most move hands up & down & swing from side to side, with corresponding movements of the legs & feet and or comfortable movement in a chair

Chanting & Moving

- A simple chant is added to the clapping, HO, HO, HA-HA-HA. These are exhalations that come from the belly to stimulate diaphragmatic breathing
- This can be done standing or sitting

Deep Breathing Exercises

- Laughter exercises are interspersed with deep breathing exercises to help flush the lungs as well as bring physical & mental relaxation

What Happens in a Laughter Yoga Session

- Duration 20-30 minutes. Each round of laughter lasts 30-40 seconds, followed by clapping & HO HO HA HA HA exercise
- Take two deep breaths after every bout of laughter
- Warm up clapping in 1-2.....1-2-3 rhythm then with Ho-Ho, HA-HA-HA chanting

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- Deep breathing inhale through the nose with prolonged exhalation, then chant VERY GOOD, VERY GOOD, then raise your arms up in the sky with your thumbs up to say YAEH....3 times (3-5 reps)
- Greeting laughter, shake hands with at least 4-5 people in the group
- Hearty laughter, laugh by raising both arms to the sky (also can be done from a sitting position). Feel the laughter flowing from your heart to the universe (3-5 reps)

Example of Laughter Exercise Names

- Mental Floss
- Laughter Cream
- Cell Phone
- Bicycle
- Silent
- Humming
- Argument
- Appreciation

Cont.

- Argument
- Appreciation
- Gradient

Closure

- Body-Mind guided relaxation scan

World Laughter Day

- World Laughter Day is May 6, 2012
- It was first observed in 1998
- On World Laughter Day, laughter leaders & laughter lovers will gather all over the world to laugh!
- Please remember to laugh, as it will prevent hardening of the ATTITUDE!