

What is Laughter Yoga?



Laughter Yoga is a growing concept that began in 1995 by a Medical Doctor in India, Dr. Madan Kataria.

Dr. Kataria was writing an article for a Medical Review Journal about Laughter being good medicine. He had an idea for a Laughter Club and thought that he could start it right in his nearby park where he and many others walked in the morning. And so he did, hours later he went off to the park and with four other friends, began the first club for five people just laughing in the park.

It began in a park in Bombay, India (now known as Mumbai) and has now grown to over 8,000 laughter clubs in over 80 countries.

While Laughter Clubs form all the time and sometimes close up for a variety of reasons, *most being about the time to commit to the experience.* In India Laughter clubs exist every day of the year. In the USA they are often run only once a week or month. The Laguna Beach Laughter Club in California boasts having a daily morning Laughter club on the beach. Yet there are a variety of ways in which the clubs have expanded and are now in medical institutions, hospice, schools, wellness centers, business and community.

Yoga means union. By uniting laughter exercises with breathing it oxygenates the body and the mind.

How it is different from traditional yoga, is that some of the asanas (yoga poses) are used to deepen the breath. Yoga is a Sanskrit word Yuj, it simply means union and what Laughter Yoga does is bring together the deeper breathing practice of Yoga and Laughing Exercises that enhance the oxygen in the body and the brain.

Laughter yoga is done in a group setting where eye contact and a childlike playfulness stimulate the laughter.

Laughter Yoga Clubs, sessions or programs are typically created with groups, though many creative leaders offer a variety of ways that include helping individuals to laugh alone or simply oxygenate and feel better through simple exercises. In a group setting eye contact is made and the vocal sound of laughing is also enough to become contagious where everyone laughs along.

Typical Laughter sessions will have a leader who prompts the direction of the session. Breathing and stretching activates the body and is done in ways that all can participate and benefit. Next some clapping to warm up the body and instruction followed by the laughter exercises. There is a grounding laughter meditation that simply allows any left over laughter from the session to find its way through the body in an easy and relaxed method and this is typically followed by a guided grounding meditation or exercise to leave all feeling refreshed and energized. Sessions can be done sitting, standing or even lying down, leaders are trained to adjust the session to work with specific groups. In this way everyone is welcome and anyone can participate.



There are no jokes, comedy and a place where the sense of humor develops. It is laughter for no reason.

Jokes and comedy are sometimes subjective and not everyone gets the joke. So while they are often highly entertaining what the body learns in a laughter session is that laughter can come up spontaneous and in the practice of regular sessions it often does without prompt. It develops the Humor Being!

It is a scientific fact that exercised laughter has the same physiological and biochemical benefits as genuine laughter. You may begin with an exercised form of laughter yet through the contagious nature genuine laughter is formed for an authentic experience.

Like the studies done on biofeedback, the body has a wonderful adaptation and can simply create much wonderful benefit with the power of suggestion. Studies have proven this effect and in the laughter sessions, laughter is prompted by exercises in the beginning and soon the natural laughter begins to automatically appear. Over time laughter comes up naturally and effortlessly and the exercises become more playful which gives a sense of permission to remember playfulness and joy. Laughter is seen as a tool to create both which benefit the body in such wonderful ways. So even if the laughter begins in an exercise format, the laughter generated becomes just as beneficial for the mind and body as the natural laughter. After about 15 minutes the heart rate is increase and the benefits of regular exercise kick in.

While it may be easy to explain, creating an experience of a session gives the participants a health over all view point.

Laughter sessions can be done in a variety of settings with a variety of groups. Anyone can begin one and the value of a professional leader is in directing how it can continue in creative ways to benefit everyone and work with a variety of groups. Laughter Clubs throughout the world are typically free. Professional sessions aim to deliver a specific purpose for a specific group at a determined location and time. These sessions are generally fee based.

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