

# Curious About Laughter Yoga

## What is Laughter Yoga & How can it help you?

Everyone wants health and happiness in their lives. But instead they are getting stressed out , depressed, getting less sleep, more negative thoughts and feeling isolated. Does this sound like you? Are you someone who wants to move on and bring more laughter and joy into your life? You are in the right place. Laughter Yoga is the answer.

Laughter Yoga is a revolutionary idea – simple and profound. An exercise routine, it is sweeping the world and is a complete well-being workout. Developed by a medical doctor from India Dr. Madan Kataria and it has spread across 100 countries.

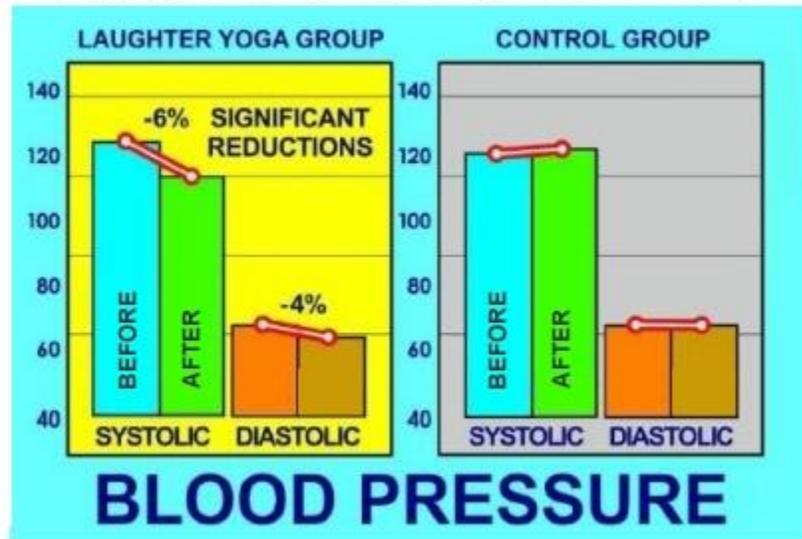
- **You can laugh with special guided techniques:** It's easy. Anyone can laugh for no reason without relying on humor, jokes or comedy and one can feel the benefits on the very first session!
- **Real and Contagious Laughter:** We initiate laughter as a body exercise in a group and with eye contact and childlike playfulness. It soon turns into real and contagious laughter.
- **Oxygenates Your Body and Brain:** Laughter Yoga is combination of deep breathing exercises from yoga and laughter exercises, which oxygenates our body and brain, makes us feel more healthy and energetic.

## Scientifically Proven Benefits

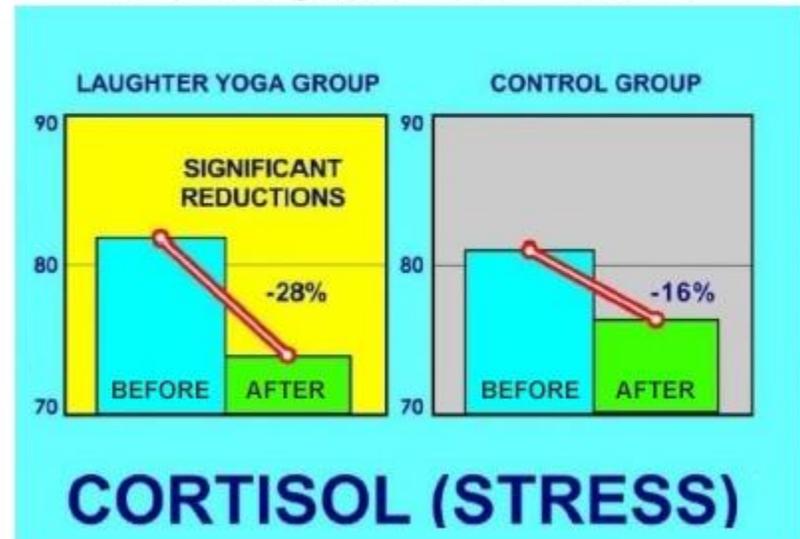
The concept of Laughter Yoga is based on a scientific fact that the body cannot differentiate between fake and real laughter. One gets the same physiological and psychological benefits.

Clinical research conducted at Bangalore, India and in the United States has proved that Laughter lowers the level of stress hormones (epinephrine, cortisol, etc) in the blood.

## 6 % Reduction in Blood Pressure



## 28% drop in Stress Levels



## 5 Benefits of Laughter Yoga

- **Good Mood and More Laughter:** Laughter Yoga helps to change your mood within minutes by releasing certain chemicals from your brain cells called endorphins. You will remain cheerful and in a good mood throughout the day and will laugh more than you normally do.
- **Healthy Exercise to Beat Stress:** Laughter Yoga is like an aerobic exercise (cardio workout) which brings more oxygen to the body and brain thereby making one feel more energetic and relaxed.
- **Health Benefits:** Laughter Yoga reduces the stress and strengthens the immune system. You will not fall sick easily and if you have some chronic health conditions, you will heal faster.
- **Quality of Life:** Laughter is a positive energy which helps people to connect with other people quickly and improves relationships. If you laugh more, you will attract many friends.
- **Positive Attitude in Challenging Times :** Everyone can laugh when life is good, but how does one laugh when faced with challenges? Laughter helps to create a positive mental state to deal with negative situations and negative people. It gives hope and optimism to cope with difficult times.

Step 1: Clapping and Warming-up Exercises: We clap with our hands parallel to each other for full finger-to-finger and palm-to-palm contact. This stimulates acupressure points in our hands and increases energy levels.

Then we add a rhythm to the clapping to further increase energy levels and group synchronicity, often a 1-2, 1-2-3 rhythm.

Next we add movement. There are many variations, but most move hands up and down and swing from side to side with corresponding movements of the legs and feet. By now most are already in a better mood and smiling.

**Chanting and Moving:** We add a simple chant to our clapping, normally ho, ho, ha-ha-ha. These are heavy exhalations that come from the belly to stimulate diaphragmatic breathing.

We move randomly, smiling and making eye contact with others in the group.

Many add dance movements to this sequence which boosts feelings of happiness and joy.

Enthusiastic clapping, chanting and movement help build a positive energy, gets our diaphragm moving and creates a positive group dynamic, preparing us to laugh.

**Gibberish Talking:** Gibberish is a language of sounds without meaning. Children speak gibberish when learning to speak and during play. We sometimes use gibberish as a warming up exercise to help loosen people up and reduce inhibitions and shyness. Some people find it easier if you tell them what to 'talk' about. Different emotions can be expressed including happiness, anger, sadness, romance and more. It is a playful exercise and helps cultivate childlike playfulness. Gibberish may be fast or at normal conversational speed and generally involves a focus on tone and hand and body movements to convey meaning. Silent gibberish is also fun and easier for some.

## **Step 2: Deep Breathing Exercises**

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

### **A typical deep breathing exercise:**

From a relaxed standing position, bend forward at the waist to a point where you are comfortable (different for everyone) while exhaling through the mouth to fully empty your lungs. Dangle your arms. Bending helps push the diaphragm up and empty your lungs. Hold briefly.

Straighten up slowly while inhaling through your nose and take as deep a breath as possible. Raise your arms to the sky, stretching your body slightly backwards. Hold your breath for 4-5 seconds.

Exhale slowly as you bring your arms down and bend forward. Try to exhale longer than you inhale in order to empty your lungs completely. Hold...then repeat.

A variation is to hold your breath a little longer, then letting the air burst forth in hearty laughter.

There is no necessity to do the breathing exercise after every laughter exercise. These exercises are designed to take a break and relaxation so that you don't get tired doing laughter exercises continuously. You can decide according to your judgment after how many exercise to do these breathing exercises. You can do after two exercises Autry exercises depending upon the energy levels of the group.

### **Step 3: Childlike Playfulness**

An objective of Laughter Yoga is to cultivate your childlike playfulness that helps you to laugh without reason. We sometimes chant after an exercise:

Very good (clap), very good (clap), yay (swinging arms up into a Y shape with thumbs up in childish exuberance and exhilaration).

Chanting of very good, very good, yay in between laughter exercises and breathing exercises the entire group keeps chanting very good very good yay. This will help you to keep the energy levels and build up the enthusiasm. You can decide after how many exercises you should chant very good very good yay.

### **Step 4: Laughter Exercises**

**They are divided into three types:**

**Yogic Laughter Exercises:** Some exercises are based on yogic breathing (Pranayama) and a few are based on yoga postures, including the ever-popular Lion laughter performed with growling laughter.

**Playful Laughter Exercises:** These help to reduce inhibition and shyness and to convert simulated laughter into unconditional laughter. They often include method-acting techniques to shift our mindset, imagining and acting out a situation or a role. One-meter laughter, Milkshake laughter, Mobile phone laughter and Hot-soup laughter are especially popular.

**Value-based Laughter Exercises:** These are designed to ‘program’ positive feelings to gestures or situations while laughing, teaching our subconscious new auto-responses. Visa card laughter, Appreciation laughter, Greeting laughter and Forgiveness laughter are popular.