



Your Happiness Guide

All you need to know about Laughter Yoga

Dr Madan Kataria

Founder Laughter Yoga Clubs Movement

CONTENT

Introduction.....	3	Five Major Benefits Of Laughter Yoga.....	21
Why Do We Need To Laugh More Today.....	4	Testimonials From Practitioners of Laughter Yoga.....	22
How To Laugh & Who Will Make You Laugh.....	5	Applications Of Laughter Yoga.....	27
History of Laughter Yoga.....	6	Social Laughter Clubs.....	28
Three Reasons Why Laughter Yoga.....	8	Laughter Yoga For Business World.....	29
The Concept & Philosophy Of Laughter Yoga.....	9	Laughter Yoga For Seniors.....	30
SECRET 1: We Don't Need Sense Of Humor To Laugh.....	9	Laughter Yoga For School Children.....	31
SECRET 2: Motion Creates Emotion.....	10	How To Get Involved In Laughter Yoga.....	32
SECRET 3: You Can Laugh Even If You Are Not Happy.....	10	Join Or Start A Laughter Club.....	33
SECRET 4: Cultivate Childlike Playfulness.....	11	Skype Laughter Club.....	34
SECRET 5: You Can Train Your Body And Mind To Laugh.....	11	Laughter Club on Telephone.....	35
What Happens In A Laughter Session.....	12	Laughing Alone.....	36
Top Ten Laughter Exercises:.....	13	Laughter Yoga Products.....	38
Grounding Techniques.....	19	Test Your Laughter Quotient.....	39
Health Benefits.....	20		

Introduction

You're about to laugh like you have never laughed before! But before you begin to laugh, I want to share with you a breakthrough technology called Laughter Yoga, which I discovered in 1995. It started as a social Laughter Club in Mumbai, India, but today there are thousands of Laughter Clubs in more than 72 countries. A rapidly growing global phenomenon, Laughter Yoga is now being practiced in companies, old age homes, schools, colleges, fitness centers, community centers, prisons, hospitals, homes for the physically and mentally challenged and cancer self-help groups. It is being touted as perhaps the best alternative health therapy for complete body-mind wellness.



Why Do We Need To Laugh More Today

Stress & Depression On The Rise

In this high pressure, high tension and competitive world, laughter is fast disappearing and people are succumbing to daily stressors that relentlessly rob one of the ability to laugh. Stress is the number killer today, while depression has become the number one sickness. More than 70 - 80 percent illnesses are related to stress.

The whole world is full of seriousness. There is little or no laughter at workplaces. Newspapers and television programs continually bombard us with unpleasant news and negative thoughts, making people even less secure.

It has almost become a challenge to combat stress and maintain good health - what with astronomical medical costs! People resort to several therapies, but somehow fail to spot the simplest of them all – **laughter.**

Scientifically Proven Benefits

It has been scientifically established that laughter has a profound impact on the body and mind. Not only does it help to prevent the onset of sickness by way of strengthening the immune system, it also has a healing effect. A daily dose of laughter is the one solution which has the power to unwind stress and uplift joy; the power to slow down a racing heart and strengthen the mind; the power to raise the spirit and fend off pessimism...and all this in an instant. Sounds crazy, but works like magic.

Several studies are underway in many universities around the world. 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. The results also showed significant improvement of the Laughter Yoga group in all areas, and it is particularly interesting to note the long-lasting effects of the laughter interventions.

How To Laugh & Who Will Make You Laugh

For centuries, laughter was referred to as the best medicine for body and mind, but never was there a reliable delivery system. Laughter was simply the end result of entertainment or amusement, but Laughter Yoga has taken laughter to a new level. It is a complete delivery system, allowing laughter to actually be prescribed as part of a daily routine in order to realize all of the health benefits. It enables everyone to laugh, even those who are serious, introverted and uncomfortable being funny.



History of Laughter Yoga

Inspired by articles on benefits of laughter, I launched the Laughter Club Movement in March 1995 with just 5 people in a Mumbai park. In the initial days, the group resorted to jokes and funny stories, but they soon ran out of them. This prompted me to come up with a breakthrough system of laughter. I finally found the answer he was looking for, which was based on a scientific fact that our body cannot differentiate between acted and genuine laughter. Both produced the same 'happy chemistry'.

The next morning I explained this to the group and asked them to try to act out laughter with him for one minute. Amid skepticism they agreed to try – and the results were amazing. For some, the acted out laughter quickly turned into real laughter – this was contagious and very soon others followed. Soon the group was laughing like never before. The hearty laughter that followed persisted for almost ten minutes. This breakthrough was the birth of Laughter Yoga.



What Is Laughter Yoga

- » Laughter Yoga is a unique concept where anyone can laugh for no reason, without relying on humor, jokes or comedy.
- » We initiate laughter 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 the brain which makes one feel more energetic and healthy.
- » The concept of Laughter Yoga is based on a scientific fact that the body cannot differentiate between fake and real laughter if done with willingness. One gets the same physiological and psychological benefits.
- » In addition to social laughter clubs, Laughter Yoga is also practiced in companies and corporations, Fitness centers, Yoga studios, Centers for Seniors, Schools, Colleges, Universities, Physically and mentally challenged and Self help cancer groups.



Three Reasons Why Laughter Yoga

Most people feel that if they are able to laugh naturally they don't need to join a Laughter Club,

Here are the 3 basic reasons why one must do Laughter Yoga to get maximum health benefits:

1

In order to get scientifically proven health benefits of laughter, we need to laugh continuously for at least for 10 to 15 minutes. Since in Laughter Yoga we do laughter as an exercise, we can prolong our laughter as long as we want; it brings measurable physiological changes like oxygen levels in the blood, muscle relaxation, blood circulation and release of certain hormones in the body.

2

To reap the health benefits of laughter, laughter has to be loud and deep, coming from the diaphragm. It should be a belly laugh. It might not be socially acceptable to laugh loudly, but Laughter Yoga clubs provide a safe environment where one can laugh loudly and heartily without any social implication.

3

Natural laughter that courses through our life depends upon many reasons and conditions, but there are not many reasons which make us laugh. That means we are leaving laughter to chance, it may happen it may not. In contrast, in Laughter Yoga club we are not leaving laughter to chance, but doing it out of commitment. This is a guaranteed way of getting the health benefits of laughter.

The Concept & Philosophy Of Laughter Yoga

Laughing for no reason is the core philosophy of Laughter Yoga methods. When I travel around the world, the most commonly asked questions are: Do we need a sense of humor to laugh? How can we laugh when we don't feel like laughing or are not in a good mood? How can we laugh when we have so many problems in life? Why children can laugh 300 to 400 times in a day while adults laugh only 15 times? Can we learn to laugh? Though I am a medical doctor, I must say I was not aware of these very relevant questions before starting the Laughter Club movement. But as the concept of Laughter Yoga evolved, so did the answers.

I started to experience the magic of laughing without a reason, which gradually enabled me to discover

Five Secrets of Laughing for No Reason

SECRET 1

SECRET 1: We Don't Need Sense Of Humor To Laugh

Most people believe that one must have a sense of humor to laugh, but Laughter Yoga has proven otherwise. To develop the ability to laugh joyfully, it is important to remove all inhibitions and conditioning created by self, family, and society. Laughter Yoga facilitates this cleaning process and helps to release natural joyful laughter inside of us. The techniques are effective even for people who have lost their laughter or have absolutely no sense of humor. People often say, "I am depressed", "I cannot laugh", or "I don't feel like laughing". We tell them, "It doesn't matter. Just bring us your willing body and we will make you laugh." So, even if you don't have sense of humor, don't worry. Just join a Laughter Club and you will develop a sense of humor.

The Concept & Philosophy Of Laughter Yoga

SECRET 2: Motion Creates Emotion

“How do you laugh when you’re in no mood to laugh or don’t have any reason to laugh?” The answer is – Theory of motion creates emotion. There is an inherent link between the body and mind. Whatever happens to the mind happens to the body. Therefore, if one changes the quality of thoughts, one can feel a change in body behavior. Conversely, if one can bring a change in body behavior one can experience the change in mental state. Laughter Yoga has the ability to synchronize both body and the mind, maintaining a mutual harmony.

SECRET 2

SECRET 3

SECRET 3: You Can Laugh Even If You Are Not Happy

There is an old saying, “If you are not happy, act like a happy person and you will become one.” There is great wisdom and science behind “acting out happiness”. Medical research shows that even if you pretend to laugh or act happy, your body produces happy chemicals. Laughter yoga emphasizes ‘fake it until you make it’, which clearly states that there is hardly any difference, between thinking about doing something, and actually doing it. Therefore, whatever may be the source of laughter; it leads to the same physiological changes occurring in the body.

The Concept & Philosophy Of Laughter Yoga

SECRET 4: Cultivate Childlike Playfulness

Laughter is not about laughing. It is actually about cultivating childlike playfulness. Once you learn to play, you don't have to laugh. Laughter will be the natural outcome of your playful inner child. Though laughing in a group provides a stimulus, a childlike behavior by adults helps them to get over their inhibitions and actually loosen up. Therefore, we incorporate a lot of childlike actions in the laughter clubs like producing funny sounds by swiveling the tongue inside the mouth, tapping air-filled cheeks, laughing like a child and talking Gibberish. We keep reminding our members about the importance of being like a child.

SECRET 4

SECRET 5

SECRET 5: You Can Train Your Body And Mind To Laugh

Our body and mind can be trained to laugh at will. By repeating any bodily behavior over a period of time, the mind begins to generate a predictable response. Thus, by doing laughter exercises on a regular basis, people become conditioned to be joyful. With Laughter Yoga, the brain develops new neuronal connections that produce happy chemistry in the body. These reactions can be triggered simply by laughter exercises, and doing certain actions of the body, which lead the mind to experience the emotion of joy.

What Happens In A Laughter Session

In India laughter sessions are held every day, while in the west it takes place just once a week or once in 15 days. From our experience, the benefits of Laughter Yoga are greatest when practiced daily. Normally, a session lasts for an hour in which we do laughter, breathing and stretching exercises for 30 minutes followed by Laughter Meditation and Guided relaxation of 15 minutes each.

Every Laughter Yoga session is led by a laughter leader or teacher, who controls the session, explains and gives commands to start and complete different exercises. The leader guides the members to start and complete the exercises together for improved group dynamic.

4 Steps Of Laughter Yoga:

1

Clapping:

We clap with our hands parallel to each other for full finger-to-finger and palm-to-palm contact. This stimulates acupressure points in the hands and increases energy levels.

2

Deep breathing:

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

3

Childlike playfulness:

The objective of Laughter Yoga is to cultivate childlike playfulness that helps you laugh without any reason, keeps the energy levels and builds enthusiasm.

4

Laughter exercises:

Laughter exercises are the mainstay of the session. They help to reduce inhibition and shyness and convert simulated laughter into unconditional laughter.

Top 10 Laughter Exercises:

Greeting Laughter

It is always good to start the laughter session with Greeting Laughter as it helps to connect the group as they shake hands and make eye contact. This is called Handshake Laughter. One can shake hands and look into the eyes while laughing gently (Western way of greeting). The Indian way of greeting is to join both the hands (Namaste Laughter). Alternatively, a group can do a greeting gesture from different cultures and laugh at the same time. There could also be other ways of greeting, according to the region, state or country. This is followed by ho ho ha ha ha chanting and clapping 5-6 times and deep breathing twice.



Top 10 Laughter Exercises:

Hearty Laughter

After ho ho ha ha ha exercise, participants do Hearty Laughter. To initiate, the leader gives a command 1,2,3..., and everybody starts laughing at the same time. It builds up a good tempo and the effect is better than it would be if different members laughed with different timings. In a hearty laugh, one laughs by throwing their arms up and laughing heartily. One should not keep the arms stretched upwards all the time during a hearty laugh; instead keep the arms up for a while, then bring them down and raise them again. At the end of a hearty laugh, the leader starts clapping and chanting ho ho ha ha ha 5-6 times. That marks the end of a particular kind of laughter. This is followed by two deep breaths.

Milkshake Laughter

Participants are asked to hold two imaginary glasses of milk or coffee and at the instruction of the leader, they pour the milk from one glass into another while chanting *Aeee aeee*, and then pour it back into the first glass again saying *Aeee...* After that, everyone laughs and pretends to drink milk. This process is repeated four times, followed by clapping while chanting ho ho, ha ha ha.



Top 10 Laughter Exercises:

One Meter Laughter

This laughter is very playful and duplicates how we measure an imaginary one-meter. It is done by moving one hand over the stretched arm on the other side, and extending to the shoulder (like stretching to shoot with a bow and arrow). The hand is moved in three jerks by chanting *Ae...., Ae...., Aeee....*, and then participants burst into laughter by stretching both the arms and throwing the head a little backwards and laughing from the belly. (First, the imaginary measurement is done on the left side and then on the right). This cycle is repeated twice.



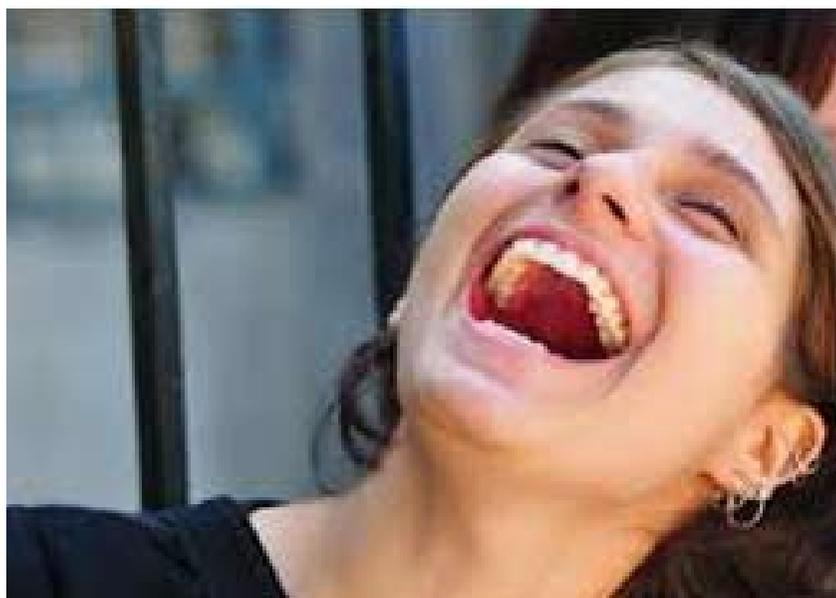
Lion Laughter

This particular laughter has been derived from a Yogic posture known as *Simha Mudra* (Lion Posture). In this, the tongue is stuck out fully, while keeping the mouth wide open. With eyes wide open, the hands are stretched like the paws of a lion and roaring like a lion is followed by laughter coming from the belly. Lion Laughter is a very good exercise for removing inhibitions and exercising the facial muscles, tongue and throat. It also improves blood supply to the thyroid gland.

Top 10 Laughter Exercises:

Silent Laughter With Mouth Wide Open

In this type of laughter, the mouth is opened as wide as possible and participants laugh looking at each other's faces and make different gestures showing their palms to each other, while shaking their heads and hands. Silent Laughter should be done with quick movements of the abdominal muscles, as we do during spontaneous laughter. It should not be like a prolonged hissing sound, which seems artificial.



Cell Phone Laughter

This is also known as Mobile Phone Laughter. It is very amusing and playful. The participants hold imaginary mobile phones and try to laugh, while making different gestures and moving around in the group to meet different people, and laugh as if they are enjoying the laughter. Mobile Phone Laughter can also be done in two groups facing each other, and at the command of the leader both the groups cross each other, while laughing and holding their make-belief mobile phones. If required, the two groups can cross over again, to come back to their original positions. While crossing, the members must look at each other and laugh.

Top 10 Laughter Exercises:

Argument Laughter

This laughter is a competitive kind of laughter between two groups separated by a gap. Two groups look at each other and start laughing by pointing their index fingers at the members of the other group. Usually, the women are on one side and men on the other. This is also quite enjoyable and amusing.



Appreciation Laughter

This is a value-based laughter where the leader reminds the participants of how important it is to appreciate others. In this exercise, the tip of the index finger is joined with the tip of the thumb, making a small circle, while the hand is moved forward and backward in jerks, looking at different members and laughing in a very gentle manner, as if you are appreciating your fellow beings in the group. It is followed by ho ho ha ha ha chanting along with clapping.

Top 10 Laughter Exercises:

Gradient Laughter

This laughter is practiced at the end of the session. Members are asked to come closer to the leader. Gradient Laughter starts with bringing smiles on faces and looking around at each other. Slowly, gentle giggles are added by the leader. Others follow and start giggling too. Gradually, the intensity of laughter is increased and the members burst into hearty laughter for about a minute. It is very refreshing and infectious.



Laughter Meditation

The second part of a Laughter session is Laughter Meditation. While doing Laughter Yoga exercises we make an effort to laugh, but with group dynamic, laughter becomes spontaneous and effortless after a while. It flows like a fountain. This is a state of Laughter Meditation. Here you don't do laughter; you become laughter. It is a deeper experience of unconditional laughter; a kind of laughter in which tears start rolling down your cheeks and your sides start aching. Maybe you'll find yourself rolling on the floor laughing. Still it is without any jokes, humor or comedy. Laughter Meditation is the purest kind of laughter and a very cathartic experience that opens up the layers of the subconscious mind and you will experience laughter from deep within.

Grounding Techniques

Laughter Yoga exercises stimulates blood circulation and raises the blood pressure for a short duration before it comes down to the base level. The muscles also contract during laughter session before returning to a relaxation mode, based on the principle of muscle contraction before relaxation. Therefore, the real benefit of Laughter Yoga comes not during the stimulation phase, but after the session when we relax.

Here are some techniques that work well to ground the energy of laughter:

Guided relaxation (Yog Nidra)

After Laughter Meditation, energy levels can be too high to return directly to normal. To reduce these levels, the leader may talk the group through guided relaxation, also called 'Yoga Nidra', or yogic sleep. This guided body tour brings immense relaxation by bringing complete awareness to different parts of the body as guided by the leader.

Ho Ho Ha Ha Dancing

Grounding dance is a spiritual method which uses the movement of the hands to direct the energy towards the ground making one feel emotionally stable and well grounded. The emphasis here is on the dreamlike dancing and the grounding action of pushing hands down towards the ground with some slight flexing of the knees. Continue for at least 10 minutes.

Humming

With eyes closed, take a long breath in and hum it out, actually saying the word "Hummm..." with upper and lower lips just touching each other. Vibrations are felt throughout the facial muscles, sinuses and eventually into the head. This exercise is also beneficial for those with chronic sinusitis and nasal blockage because humming vibrations help to dislodge mucus and also increase blood circulation.

Health Benefits

Here is an ever increasing demand to open more and more Laughter Clubs in the world because people are inspired and motivated by the enormous health benefits derived from doing Laughter Yoga. These benefits can be felt from the very first session and members report amazing improvement in their physical health, as well as a more positive mental attitude and higher energy levels.

The first thing they say is that they don't fall sick very often. There are daily reports of partial or total cure of most stress-related illnesses like hypertension, heart disease, depression, asthma, arthritis, allergies, stiff muscles and more.

Laughter Yoga is a complete package for physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being of an individual. It has all the elements of perfect health building activity. Therefore, it is not about the concept or the philosophy which attracts them; it is about what they get and how it benefits their lives.



Five Major Benefits Of Laughter Yoga:

1. Good Mood and More Spontaneous Laughter

Whether it is your personal, business or social life your mood affects everything you do. If your mood is good, you can do things much better. 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.

2. 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 healthy and energetic. Laughter Yoga is a single exercise routine which reduces physical, mental and emotional stress simultaneously.

3. Health Benefits:

You can't enjoy life if you are sick. Laughter Yoga strengthens the immune system which not only prevents you from

falling ill, but also helps to heal a variety of conditions like hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, depression, arthritis, allergies, asthma, bronchitis, backache, fibromyalgia, migraine headaches, menstrual disorders, cancer and many others.

4. Quality of Life:

Quality of life depends upon the quality of good friendships we have. 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.

5. Positive Attitude in Challenging Times

Everyone can laugh when life is good, but how does one laugh when faced with challenges? Laughter helps create a positive mental state to deal with negative situations and negative people. It gives hope and optimism to cope with difficult times.

Testimonials From Practitioners of Laughter Yoga



Maria Manninen, Finland

"My life has been pretty tough for many years and I spent lots of time crying alone at home. It was only when I discovered Skype Laughter Club That I felt a dramatic change. My life started to fill up with joy and laughter and I found myself smiling and laughing throughout the day. And when something was funny, I would laugh out loud which I hardly did before. I got so much into laughing that I did a 3-day Laughter Yoga leader's training and now lead the Skype Laughter Club on line. After a daily Skype laughter session, I feel so much happier. In fact, sometimes I laugh so much that I have to explain to people that I'm a Laughter Yoga practitioner!"



Nili Dor HaElla

Laughter helped me through difficult times: My brother David and my sister-in-law died in a plane crash in the USA. It all happened so suddenly that it was very hard for me to grasp whether it was all true or some nightmare. My body was in a state of shock and there was no way I thought I could ever laugh again. I then told myself that I would do my best even though I had to fake it until I make it. So I did and brought my body and open-heart to the Laughter Club. I shared with the group what was going on with my life and thanked them for their love and support. That laughter session was the most powerful experience I have ever had in my life. I found the ability to tap into in inner resources I did not know I had at a time when I felt weak and powerless. The Laughter Club members were so loving and supportive that I still feel lucky to be surrounded by so much loving kindness.

Testimonials From Practitioners of Laughter Yoga



Brigette, Denmark

Laughter has really changed my life. I feel happier and more focused about things that make me happy. It has changed me from being a serious person to a much lighter person. I also use laughter as my personal stress management therapy to keep my stress levels low, as I have a very stressful job. Laughter works on both physical and psychological level; therefore the whole health care can be transformed through laughter.



Neeta Fadia, Mumbai

I have been suffering from advanced osteoarthritis of the knee joints which has severely hampered my mobility. Even after my knee replacement, I found it very hard to stand even for 15 minutes without pain. But, thanks to an evening Laughter Club that started in my building compound, I began attending the laughter sessions regularly. Now, I can stand for more than half an hour continuously without pain. It is amazing how Laughter Yoga changed my life and my outlook.



Sunita Beri, Mumbai

Ever since I started doing Laughter Yoga, I found myself very peaceful. Earlier, I used to get angry at everyone in my house, but now within a week my anger has reduced by 50%. My husband and children are surprised at my changed attitude. They never saw me laughing like now. I feel relaxed and can sleep better. Thanks to Laughter Yoga, it has really worked like magic.

Testimonials From Practitioners of Laughter Yoga



Marilyn Fogelquist

I'm not a funny person. Neither can I tell jokes or remember them nor did I grow up in a home with humor. In fact, I didn't learn any skills for defusing conflict or dealing effectively with stressful events and as for problems at home; we didn't talk about them at all. Laughter Yoga has brought great joy to my life and great pleasure, as well, having provided me with the opportunity and skills to bring laughter and joyfulness to so many people in our community. Laughter Yoga has also been a blessing in helping me deal with the lingering illness and death of a family member.



Karla Ivette Oseguera Moguel

Soon after the birth of my child, I began to lose sight without realizing what was happening. I had lost 90% of my sight and was almost blind for more than a week. The diagnosis was Multiple Sclerosis. My life became like the vanishing light of a candle. I used to be a kind, affectionate and loving person with a remarkable sense of humor and plenty of vitality. But, I found myself living in darkness, with a lot of anger, frustration and gradually falling into a deep depression. Luckily, I found Laughter Yoga which gave a new meaning to my life. I have learnt to laugh all by myself under any condition. It even allows me to laugh in a ridiculous situation without being embarrassed. It makes me feel safe. I have also learnt to love myself and have realized my worth. I now respect myself more than ever before. I am happy and I can spread peace and happiness. Now, I can see that life has plenty of possibilities..

Testimonials From Practitioners of Laughter Yoga



Des, Australia

Greatly inspired by Laughter Yoga Clubs, I started to laugh all by myself every day after meditation. I allow myself to be spontaneous and childlike and make funny movements. Regular practice of laughing alone has had a tremendous effect on my health condition. Though suffering from a tumor for some time, I can feel it getting smaller. Even my specialist was amazed when he realized it had shrunk remarkably. He cancelled the radiotherapy and said, 'I am happy to keep an eye on it for now. I really believe its laughter, meditation and positive affirmations that have worked so wonderfully together.' I also think laughter is anti-ageing. Though I'm 60 I feel very energetic, there is less pain and I can easily do a lot of things. People remark I look much better and younger!



Dianne Theil McNinch

In January 1997, my thoughts of suicide became frequent and by April 1997 I was officially diagnosed with Clinical Depression. Over time my condition became severe and by this year I was spending over \$400 on depression medication each month. I first heard about Laughter Yoga on the American TV show 'Dancing with the Stars'. It seemed delightful. Then on April 11th 2007, I happened to see LY on the Oprah Winfrey show.

Just two months after my first LY experience on April 12, I had amazingly decreased the use of medicines by almost 80%. In fact, I'm completely free of all medication now and am saving over \$400 each month. I sleep better than I ever have in 11 years; people tell me I look great, especially at 64! My life has undergone a remarkable change.

Testimonials From Practitioners of Laughter Yoga



Vishwamohan, Vijayawada, South India

It's usual to celebrate one's birthday the day one is born, but, not so for me. I celebrate my birthday on the day I joined the Laughter Club! I feel I got a new lease of life and was 'Reborn' in the club.

Constantly troubled by never-ending illnesses for the over 30 years I had almost given up on life. From chronic diabetes, high blood pressure and cardiac problems to diabetic neuropathy, I had suffered immense pain and anxiety right through 53 years of my living. Disillusioned with constant medication and rising stress levels I decided to adopt an alternative method to help me feel better.

On January 14th, 2002, I joined the local Laughter Club. Gradually, my life underwent a remarkable change. My health improved considerably as my ECG, BP and blood sugar levels stabilized. I had never felt so much healthier in his entire life.

Applications Of Laughter Yoga

Initially, Laughter Yoga Clubs were only intended to be social clubs where people could come and laugh and reap the benefits of laughter for health and wellbeing. As and when Laughter Clubs movement spread across the world, people started taking Laughter Yoga to different areas where it was needed the most, and I was pleasantly surprised how this simple idea developed and pervaded everywhere providing people with enormous benefits according to their needs.

Here are some areas where Laughter Yoga has been implemented successfully:

- » Social laughter clubs
- » Laughter Yoga in business world
- » Laughter Yoga for seniors
- » Laughter Yoga for children
- » Laughter Yoga in fitness centers & yoga studios
- » Laughter Yoga in hospitals
- » Cancer self-help groups
- » Laughter Yoga for people with special needs
- » Laughter Yoga with the blind
- » Laughter Yoga for physically and mentally challenged
- » Laughter Yoga in prison and with police

Social Laughter Clubs

Social Laughter Clubs:

Laughter Clubs are a worldwide network of social clubs run by volunteers under the aegis of Laughter Yoga International based in Bangalore, India. People get together in groups in public places or indoor venues and practice Laughter Yoga exercises along with breathing and stretching exercises to reap the enormous health benefits. Laughter

Yoga Clubs are free for all anywhere in the world. We do not charge any membership fee anywhere. However, members of the club should share expenses towards hiring of venue or any equipment hire.

In order to start a Laughter Club one needs to be trained as Laughter Leader/Teacher.



Laughter Yoga For Business World

Reduces Stress

Laughter Yoga is the quickest, most effective and the most economical way to help employees reduce stress, burnout and absenteeism.

Creates Emotional Well-Being

Laughter Yoga helps employees balance and manage their emotional lives. It increases positive emotions and decreases negative emotions. This soothes workplace relations and helps people develop a work life balance.

Promotes Peak Performance

Laughter Yoga increases the net supply of oxygen to the body and brain, thus, promoting peak performance. The brain requires 25% more oxygen than the rest of the body.

If your mood is good, you do everything well. Laughter Yoga changes your mood within minutes by releasing chemicals from your brain cells like endorphin.



Enhances Creativity- The playfulness of Laughter Yoga frees right-brained thinking, the basis of all creativity. Out of this creativity, new ideas and concepts can grow, giving your business the edge it needs to move forward.

Builds Team Spirit- Laughter Yoga connects people and this builds team spirit. Communication skills are enhanced and employees engage with one another in a helpful, mutually-supportive environment.

Laughter Yoga For Seniors

Adds More Laughter to Life - As we grow older, we laugh less and less. Because of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, seniors often times can't get jokes or find anything funny. This is because humor is mental and cognitive phenomena. Therefore, Laughter Yoga is a great form of exercise and seniors can get multiple health benefits from it.

Promotes Physical Health - As we grow older because of wear and tear most seniors have many ailments like high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma and other diseases of aging. Laughter Yoga helps in healing from illnesses by strengthening immune system, increasing oxygen to the body cells and bringing a positive mental state.

Supports Good Mental Health - Many seniors suffer from depression, frustration and anger. As they lose loved ones and their health, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a positive mental attitude. Laughter Yoga supports good mental health regardless of their circumstances.



Increased Social Connection - Laughter Yoga allows for strong social bonding with friends, relatives, fellow residents at care facilities as well as care givers and medical personnel. This development of friendship decreases loneliness and increases quality of life.

Laughter Yoga For School Children

Promotes Healthy Emotional Development - It is through play that children develop emotional intelligence when they grow up. However, children today are not physically playing much, they are glued to their mobile phones, television and computer screens. Laughter Yoga encourages children to physically play and express themselves fully for their emotional development.

Increases Academic Performance - By increasing the net supply of oxygen to the body and brain, Laughter Yoga helps children stay focused for peak academic performance. Also it reduces examination stress.

Develops Self-Confidence - By encouraging boisterous self-expression, kids can find their own voice. Their leadership skills and Self-confidence naturally grows. Laughter Yoga exercises reduce inhibitions and shyness leading to more self-confidence in public speaking and other stage performances.



How To Get Involved In Laughter Yoga

How often do you wish there was more laughter in your life? How often, when you see others laughing heartily, do you wish you had a reason to laugh as well? One of the reasons the frequency of daily laughter is declining is because laughter has been left to chance. Rather than looking for a reason, or for that matter, no reason to laugh, we passively wait for some outside stimulus to jolt our funny bone, which may or may not elicit laughter. Laughter Yoga is all about making the decision to laugh and not leaving it to chance. It is not dependent on outside circumstances, but from conscious efforts from within to generate laughter. This decision is a guarantee that there will be more laughter in your life.

Everyone has a choice. If you choose to be sad, nobody can stop you; if you choose to laugh, no

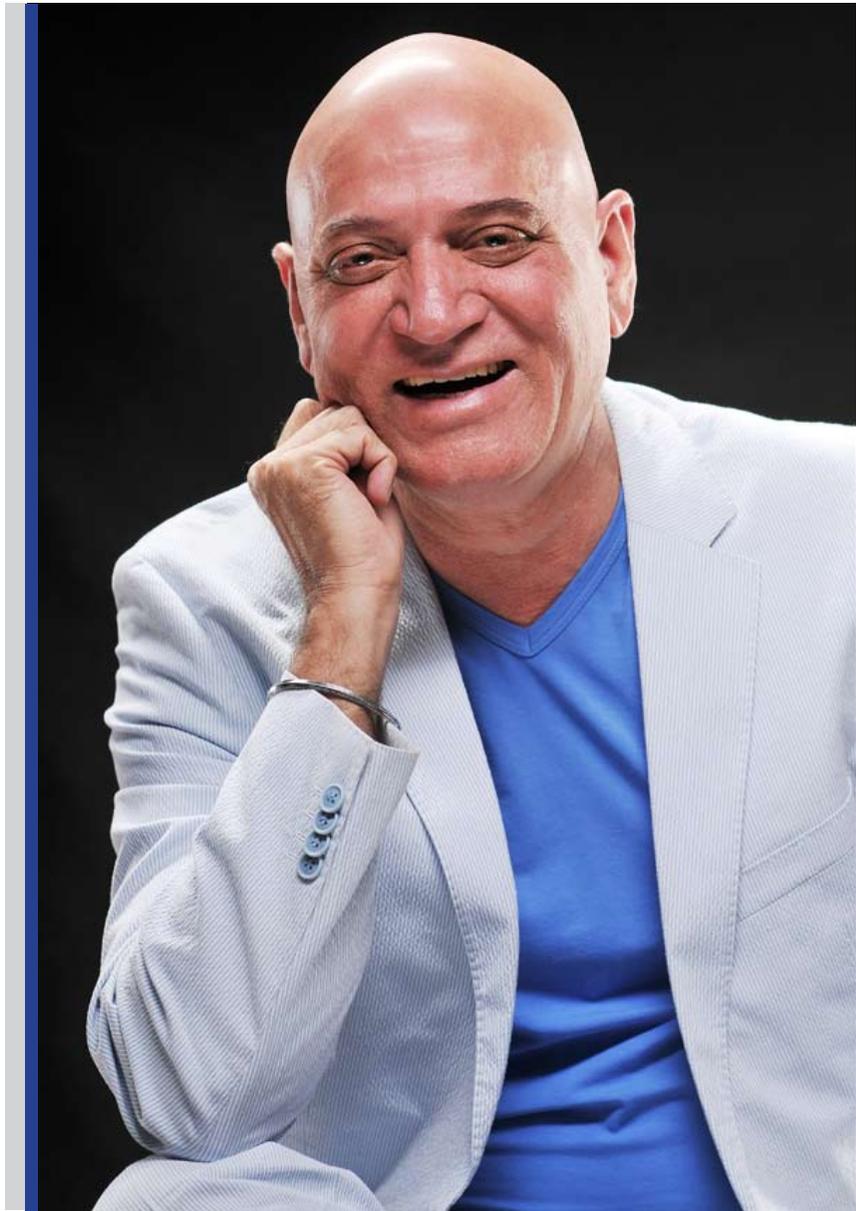
one can stop that either. Life itself has no real meaning; personal choices dictate the meaning and outcome of life. The decision to glide through trying times with a smile or laugh is entirely your choice. Challenging situations of any kind do not necessitate becoming angry, sad, upset, depressed, bitchy or whiney. Why not decide to laugh through difficult times? Try it and see the difference laughter will make.

When the decision has been made to bring more laughter into your life, there might be obstacles. As it happens in life, there will always be the naysayers, those whose mission in life seems to be to discourage and dissuade. They will question your motives; remind you that life is serious and not a laughing matter. My advice: Believe in laughter, believe in its healing value; believe that laughter can change your life, then go ahead and laugh!

Join Or Start A Laughter Club

One of the simplest ways to bring more laughter into your life is to join a Laughter Club or better yet, start one! At Laughter Club, initially, the physical act of laughing is practiced which ultimately translates into the wisdom of laughter, ready for use at any point in life. These clubs are a worldwide network of social clubs run by volunteers under the aegis of Laughter Yoga International based in Bangalore, India. People gather together in public places or indoor venues to practice laughter exercises, accompanied by breathing and stretching exercises, as they reap enormous health benefits.

Laughter Yoga International is fully independent, not-for-profit, non-political and non-religious and Laughter Clubs are social clubs are free for all anywhere in the world. No membership fee is charged; however, members of the club share venue expenses.

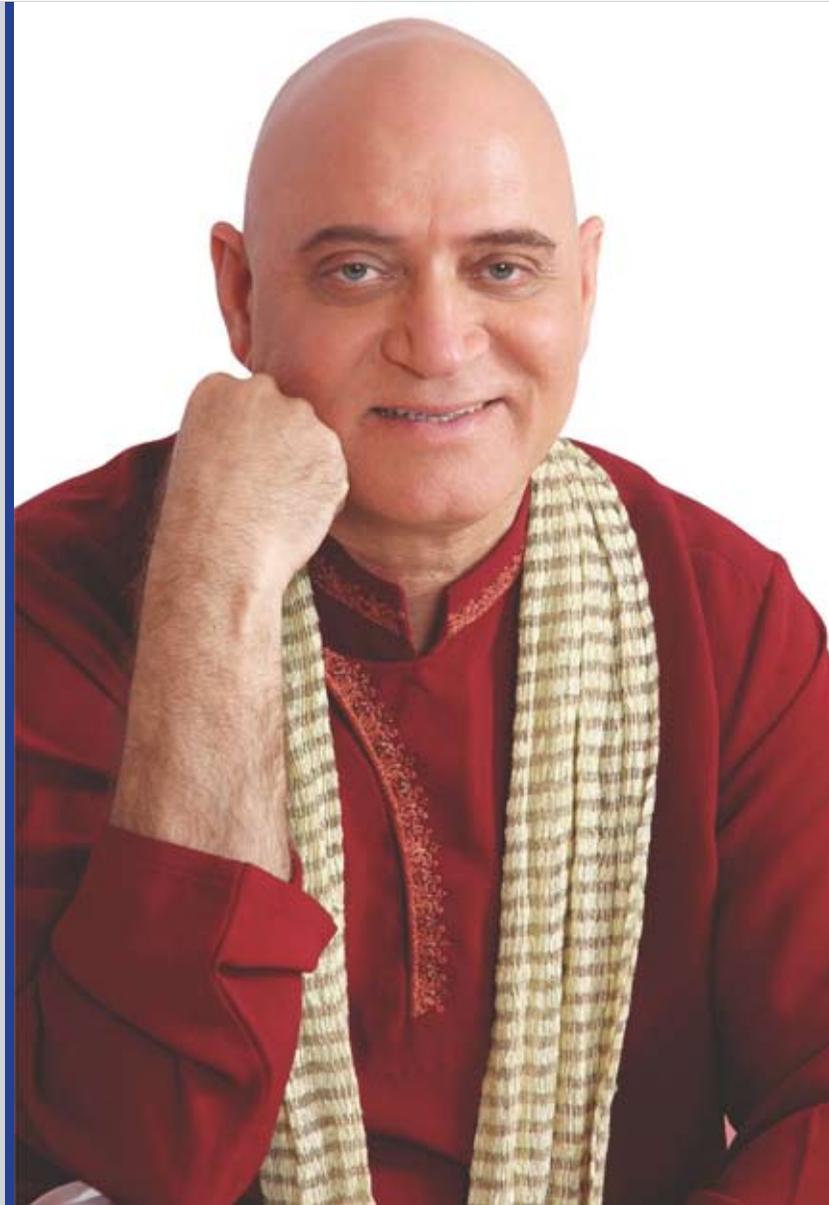


Skype Laughter Club

With growing popularity of Laughter Yoga Clubs, more and more people want to get involved, but at times they do not have a Laughter Club in their area. In such circumstances, you can easily recommend people to join the Skype Laughter club which will help them to laugh every day and reap the benefits of Laughter Yoga.

At present there are 3 Skype Laughter Clubs happening in different time zones and people can join according to their convenience.

As Laughter Yoga professionals, I strongly recommend that you must also laugh everyday on Skype and see how it works for you. If you are a laughter teacher, you can start laughter sessions on Skype for your students and eventually build your own Skype network. This is also an excellent idea for One-On- One Coaching as you can ask your students to laugh everyday on Skype.



Laughter Club on Telephone

The concept of Laughter Yoga on the phone is fast catching on as people are becoming aware of the multiple benefits of laughing daily. "Laughter Yoga on the Phone" is a virtual group laughing exercise that unites people the world over in remarkable, spontaneous and hilarious sessions of health and healing.

In joining a Laughter Yoga Phone session, you will: release tension, open your heart, lift your mood, stimulate healing and feel great about the world.

This is how our spirits connect and simple joy takes over. Together we acknowledge beauty and celebrate our lives.

When you hear other people's laughter, you will laugh with ease, connect with your child-like playfulness, and experience oneness with others on the call. When we laugh we feel alive and worry free. This brings peace to our souls. When we are peaceful, the world around us becomes peaceful.



Laughing Alone

Currently, there are thousands of Laughter Clubs worldwide, but many still find it difficult to reach these clubs due to constraints of some sort. Realizing their need to laugh on a regular basis, as well as my own, I developed specific techniques for Laugh Alone Laughter Yoga. While conducting seminars and training programs in the West, I started teaching the groups how to laugh all by themselves. It worked well and became very popular. Since Laughter Clubs meet once a week or every two weeks in Western countries, I encouraged my students to laugh alone every day in their homes. Many leaders and teachers tried laughing in the bathroom or in front of a mirror with positive results. People loved this new technique of laughing alone that helped them release their stress and maintain their health.

Laughing Alone confirms that Laughter Yoga not only heals when practiced in a group, but also when practiced alone. This exercise regime, which combines laughter and breathing exercises, is very beneficial for those looking



for alternative methods to daily laughter, as well as for patients suffering from chronic diseases and those unable to actively move or exercise. This is an innovative way of practicing laughter exercises, while reaping the same health benefits as those enjoyed at the clubs.

About Laughter Yoga Training

Since Laughter Yoga is a unique concept, a person needs to be trained as a laughter leader in order to lead a group of people through Laughter Yoga session and meditation.

Whether it is a social laughter club, corporate session, LY for schools, seniors or people with special needs, Laughter Yoga exercises remain the same with slight variations according to the need of a group.

There are 3 levels of trainings:

1. **2 Day Certified Laughter Yoga Leader Training (CLYL):**

These trainings are done by certified Laughter Yoga Teachers for 2 days, at the end of which the participants are certified as Laughter Yoga Leaders.

2. **5 Day Certified Laughter Yoga Teacher Training (CLYT):**

This is a 5-day intensive training course conducted by Dr. Kataria and authorized teacher trainers (Master Trainers). Certified Teachers can train other people as Certified Laughter Yoga Leaders and they



3. **Certified Laughter Yoga Master Trainers (CLYMT):**

These trainings are conducted by Dr. Kataria, and the master trainers are qualified to conduct certified Teacher Training Programs.

Laughter Yoga Products

If you don't have a Laughter Club in your vicinity, and it is difficult to start one, just dip into our resource center where we have numerous books, training videos learning kits, e-books and other products. You can learn Laughter Yoga methods and enhance your skills by buying these products from our online shopping center.



Test Your Laughter Quotient

Where are you with laughter? Are you laughing enough? Is laughter all about laughing? – Not at all. Go through this questionnaire and find your Laughter Quotient (LQ). Once you know your LQ, it is time for you to make a strategy of how to bring more laughter and joy into your life and to the lives of people around you.

Find Your Laughter Quotient

The following questionnaire has been formulated according to the concept and philosophy of Laughter Yoga and it will help to determine your ability to laugh for no reason, your ability to express emotions, your communication skills and if you incorporate the 4 elements of joy like singing, dancing, playing and laughing in your life and other such parameters necessary to make life more joyful and happy.

Rate each question/statement on a scale of 1 to 5:

1 = Not at all true

2 = Slightly True

3 = Moderately True

4 = Mostly True

5 = Absolutely True

1. I laugh a lot everyday

1 2 3 4 5

2. My source of laughter is driven from my internal desire to laugh and have fun

1 2 3 4 5

3. I use humor daily to perceive, express and experience a given situation in a humorous way

1 2 3 4 5

4. I add physical playfulness and a playful mental attitude while interacting with others

1 2 3 4 5

5. I sing for no reason everyday

1 2 3 4 5

Test Your Laughter Quotient

6. I dance for no reason everyday

1 2 3 4 5

7. Everyday, I express freely my positive and negative emotions

1 2 3 4 5

8. Everyday, I have a high percentage of positive thoughts

1 2 3 4 5

9. I am peaceful and calm often

1 2 3 4 5

10. Frequently I feel excited and passionate about life

1 2 3 4 5

11. I express myself as an extrovert often

1 2 3 4 5

12. I am satisfied and happy with life

1 2 3 4 5

13. My physical, mental & emotional well-being is relaxed often

1 2 3 4 5

14. I am able to communicate and interact with strangers easily

1 2 3 4 5

15. I often feel refreshed and energetic

1 2 3 4 5

16. I stay positive during challenging times

1 2 3 4 5

17. I am connected to a lot of friends

1 2 3 4 5

18. It is easy for me to laugh for no reason

1 2 3 4 5

19. I often perform random acts of kindness

1 2 3 4 5

20. I have the ability to be silly in the presence of others

1 2 3 4 5

Scoring section:

If your score is 80 - 100: You are a great laugher. Keep it up!!

If your score is 60 - 79: You are good at laughing, but can be better

If your score is 40 - 59: You laugh very little and need to laugh more.

If your score is under 40: You have a serious problem and need to do something to bring more laughter in your life.