

Laughter Yoga Resource List

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What is Laughter Yoga

Laughter Yoga (also known as Hasya Yoga) is a new concept started in 1995 in Mumbai, India, by Dr. Madan Kataria, a medical physician, and his wife Madhuri Kataria, a yoga practitioner.

Laughter Yoga combines unconditional laughter with yogic breathing (pranayama). Anyone can Laugh for No Reason, without relying on humor, jokes or comedy.

Laughter is simulated as a body exercise in a group; with eye contact and childlike playfulness, it soon turns into real and contagious laughter. 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.

Benefits of Laughter Yoga

1. **Health Benefits.** Laughter Yoga reduces stress and strengthens the immune system.
2. **Elevates Mood.** Laughter Yoga can change your mood within minutes by releasing endorphins from your brain cells. This makes you feel good, and when you feel good, you are in a better mood.
3. **Increased Productivity.** Laughter exercises can increase net supply of oxygen to our body and our brain, which helps improve efficiency and performance. You'll feel energetic and can work more than you normally do without getting tired.
4. **Social Connector.** Laughter is a great connector of people. Through eye contact, childlike playfulness, contagious laughter, and without relying on language, we get to know one another in a heartfelt way.
5. **Coping with Challenges.** Laughter Yoga teaches people to laugh unconditionally. Laughing when times are hard is a coping mechanism that provides strength in adversity, helping people keep a positive mental attitude regardless of circumstances.

Additional Benefits of Laughter Yoga for Children

1. Promotes Healthy Emotional Development
2. Increases Academic Performance
3. Builds Physical Stamina
4. Develops Self-Confidence
5. Enhances Creativity

Additional Benefits of Laughter Yoga for Seniors

- Adds More Laughter to Life
- Promotes Physical Health
- Supports Good Mental Health
- Increased Social Connection
- Adds to Longevity

Unique Features of Laughter Yoga

Instant Results

1. Cost Effective
2. Time Efficient
3. Anyone can do it
4. Scientific Evidence

History

At 7am on March 13, 1995, Dr Kataria went to his local park in Mumbai, India, and persuaded four people to join him in starting a Laughter Club. Their group of five grew to more than 50 people within a few days. They'd tell jokes or stories to make each other laughter. After two weeks, their stock of good jokes and stories ran out and negative, hurtful, and naughty jokes emerged, offending people and complaining. Dr Kataria went home and reviewed his research notes. The next day he asked them to try to act out their laughter. Their acting turned contagious. He created a series of exercises to stimulate laughter within a group.

Many individuals have contributed to the history of modern therapeutic laughter. A few that inspired the development of Laughter Yoga include:

- Norman Cousins, author of *Anatomy of an Illness*, in which he described a potentially fatal disease and his discovery of the benefits of humor and other positive emotions to battle it
- Dr. William F Fry, psychiatrist, Stanford University, California, USA, who examined the physiological effects of laughter and is considered the father of gelotology (the science of laughter)
- Dr. Lee Berk, PhD, Loma Linda University Medical Center, a psycho-neuro-immunology (PNI) researcher who studied the physical impact of mirthful laughter
- Dr. Hunter "Patch" Adams, MD, brought fun and laughter to the hospital (immortalized in the film Patch Adams starring Robin Williams), and inspired thousands of therapeutic care clowns world wide

LY Exercises to try at home

1. Hot Soup
2. Milk Shake
3. Cell phone
4. Red Light
5. Library Laughter
6. Laughter Cream
7. Lion Laugher

Supplemental Resources

Songs to set the mood

“Best Day of My Life” by American Authors

“Golden” by Jill Scott

“Happy” by Pharrell Williams

“Soy Feliz” by Emir Sensini

“Unwritten” by Natasha Bedingfield

“Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina and the Waves

“Grounding Dance” by Laughter Yoga University

For Children and Families

Children’s Songs

Welcome Song

Hickety, Pickety, Bumble Bee

Can you say your name for me?

Parent and/or child say name and then they laugh

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Eyes, and ears, and mouth and nose.

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.

Place both hands on parts of body as they are mentioned. As you go through the song replace body part with a Ha and by the end of the song everyone is laughing!

Familiar Tunes like

If You're Happy and You Know it (Sing a verse of Ha, Ha, Ha...)

Wheels on the Bus (add a verse of Ha, ha)

Holiday Songs like Jingle Bells (Sing ho, ho ho's instead of lyrics)

Suggested Books:

1. Counting Kisses by Karen Katz (Counting with words and then Ha Ha's)
2. Head to Toe by Eric Carle (How would this animal laugh, as well as move)
3. Dog in Boots by Greg Gormley (situationally funny)
4. Moo who by Margie Palatini (all her books are hilarious for kids and adults)
5. Bark, George by Jules Feiffer (situationally funny)
6. The Prince Won't Go to Bed by Dayle Ann Dodd (the kids giggle when we repeat together the phrase; "Waa, Waa, Waa, I will not go to bed")
7. Eyes, Nose, Fingers, and Toes by Judy Hindley (great book for infants/tots with parents--includes body parts as well as feeling the belly while making Ha, He, Ho noises)
8. Any book YOU think is funny

LY Exercises to implement in Storytime

1. Food Theme, Milk Shake Laughter and Hot Soup Laughter
2. Super Hero Theme: How would a Superhero Laugh? Or a Villain? Spider-Man (shoots web then laughs)
3. Fairy Tale Theme: Royal Laughter, Red Carpet Laughter
4. Transportation Theme: Red Light Laughter, Rowing Laughter
5. Bird Theme: Bird Laughter--Penguin, Eagle and Chicken
6. Animal Theme: Lion, Tiger, etc.
7. Monster/Halloween Theme: Zombie, Dracula, Frankenstein
8. Winter Holidays Theme: Santa laugh
9. Movement Theme: Jello Legs, Meter Laughter
10. Feelings Theme: Happy, Sad and Angry Laughter

For Teens

Explore Brain Gym for kinesiology physical exercises that activate the left and right sides of the brain and elevate the heart rate.

For Seniors

Songs to sing

Music is one of the last senses to go...patients with dementia, alzheimers, also helps retain memories.

Favorites Look at the top pop songs from the years when your loved one was a young adult. (1930s to 1970s)

- Elvis
- Motown

Tap, Clap, Drum along songs, like

- singing, tapping or shaking percussion instruments, drumming or clapping
- Chicken Dance song

Singalongs, like

- "Bicycle Built For Two (Daisy)"
- "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain"
- "I've Been Working on the Railroad"
- "You Are My Sunshine"
- "A-Tisket A-Tasket"

Laughter Yoga General Resources

Websites

Laughter Yoga University: <http://www.laughteryoga.org/english>

Help Guide: non-profit guide to mental health and well-being:
<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/laughter-is-the-best-medicine.htm>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044456>

Books

The Inner Spirit of Laughter – Five Secrets from the Laughing Guru by Madan Kataria (e-book)
<http://www.amazon.com/Inner-Spirit-Laughter-Secrets-Laughing-ebook/dp/B00BI8SWXA>.

The last best cure: my quest to awaken the healing parts of my brain and get back my body, my joy, and my life by Donna Jackson Nakazawa (2013).

Laugh for No Reason by Madan Kataria (also available as an e-book, and available in Spanish, French, German, and Italian) <http://laughteryoga.org/english/shopping/products/3>.

Laugh Your Way There: a Laughter Yoga workout for commuters by Laura Gentry (2008). (audiobook)

A whole new mind; why right-brainers will rule the future by Daniel Pink (2005).

Supplemental Books (not specifically Laughter Yoga related but shares some of the guiding principles that fuel our work)

Back to Health through Yoga by Ramesh Bijlani (2008).

The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work by Shawn Achor (2010).

Prana and Pranayama by Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati (2010).

Articles on Laughter Yoga and the Benefits of Laughing

HAPPILY EVER LAUGHTER.

Doskoch, Peter. *Psychology Today*. Jul/Aug96, Vol. 29 Issue 4, p32. 4p. 2 Color Photographs. Reading Level (Lexile): 1180. , Database: MasterFILE Premier.

HOW LAUGHTER YOGA CHANGED MY LIFE AND MY MIND

<http://www.refinery29.com/2014/08/73076/laughter-yoga>

I TRIED LAUGHTER YOGA AND IT ACUALLY MADE ME HAPPIER

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/laughter-yoga-class-happier_us_56a8f81ee4b0f6b7d5447846

LAUGH YOURSELF HEALTHY...AND THAT'S NO JOKE!

Singer, Wendy. *Odyssey*. Feb2011, Vol. 20 Issue 2, p32-35. 4p. Reading Level (Lexile): 1170. , Database: MasterFILE Premier.

THE LAUGHING GURU.

Khatchadourian, Raffi. *New Yorker*, 8/30/2010, Vol. 86 Issue 25, p56-65, 9p, 1 Color Photograph. (Article), Database: Literary Reference Center.

LEARNING THE YOGA WAY OF LAUGHTER. Perry, Alex. *Time*. 1/17/2005, Vol. 165 Issue 3, pA26-A26. 1/2p. 1 Color Photograph. Reading Level (Lexile): 1060. , Database: Middle Search PlusReports.

LIVING IN BALANCE. GIGGLE YOUR WAY TO HEALTH WITH LAUGHTER YOGA.

Johnson, Jill. *Massage Magazine*. Jun2011, Issue 181, p68-73. 5p. , Database: Alt HealthWatch.

The Surprising Health Benefits of Laughing by Dr. Rita Beckford, MD

<http://blog.doctoroz.com/oz-experts/the-surprising-health-benefits-of-laughing>

YOU JUST GOTTA LAUGH.

Wadyka, Sally. *Real Simple*. Jul2014, Vol. 15 Issue 7, p144-150. 7p. Reading Level (Lexile): 1130. Database: MasterFILE Premier.

AUDIO

6 Minute English: Laughter Yoga (BBC Learning English)

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/sixminute/2009/10/091029_6min_laughter_yoga_page.shtml

Laughter Yoga: Relaxing, if a Bit Kooky by Mandalit Del Barco NPR Dec 18, 2006

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6641178>

Various Radiolab stories on laughter) <http://www.radiolab.org/story/91588-laughter/>

Laughter Yoga: Easing the Burden of Serious Disease By TOM PORTER • MAR 31, 2015 on

MPBN <http://news.mpbn.net/post/laughter-yoga-easing-burden-serious-disease#stream/0>

VIDEO

About Laughter Yoga

How-to (exercises and teaching info) available for purchase through

<http://laughteryoga.org/english/shopping/products/6>

Laughter Yoga segment of the 2001 BBC series The Human Face, with John Cleese,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0N60nBD-_Mc

The Laughing Club of India (2001) documentary film, short, by director Mira Nair

Laughology (2009)

Purchase or download at: <http://www.laughology.info/Laughology/Laughology.html>.

Oprah episode

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tga6wRGIIss>

TEDMED Live Talk by Dr. Madan Kataria

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hf2umYCKr8>

30 Days of Beauty: Laugh More, Dr Oz,

<http://www.doctoroz.com/videos/30-days-beauty-laugh-more>