



CERTIFIED LAUGHTER YOGA LEADER TRAINING MANUAL



VERSION 2024

Welcome to Certified Laughter Yoga Leader Training

My Name is :.....Ha Ha Ha



Trademark: *The term 'Laughter Yoga' in English and other translations is the trademark of Dr. Madan Kataria and Laughter Yoga International*

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Before Getting Started...

Training Material

1. Training Manual: Please study the e-manual before your training. It will help you understand the concept so that you can focus more on the facilitation skills of Laughter Yoga during the training. You will receive the hard copy of the manual during the training.

2. Leader Certificates are granted only by Laughter Yoga International. Please ensure that you receive an official certificate issued and signed by Dr. Madan Kataria and your trainer. After training, you will be registered and your profile page will appear on the international website (www.laughteryoga.org) and you will get free six months Prozone membership.

3. Trademark: By entering into training you confirm your agreement to the following:

The term 'Laughter Yoga' in English and other translations is the trademark of Dr. Madan Kataria and Laughter Yoga International. Certified Laughter Yoga professionals to promote Laughter Yoga may use this term. To incorporate this name in any company, business entity, organization or website domain you must ask for permission in writing from Laughter Yoga International.

For any queries in this regard please contact e-mail help@laughteryoga.org

Objectives of the Training

- » The first and most important objective of the training is to bring more laughter into your own life. The best way to achieve this is by becoming a Laughter Yoga leader.
- » You will gain the knowledge and skills to lead a group laughter session and meditation.
- » As a Laughter Leader, you are authorised to teach the Basic Learning Course and issue a certificate.
- » Also you can conduct laughter yoga sessions for corporates and organisations.

How Will You Benefit from this Training

Know Laughter: You will get in-depth knowledge about laughter and Laughter Yoga wisdom - how and why it works, as well as the immeasurable benefits it provides for body-mind wellness.

Do Laughter: Knowledge alone is not enough. You have to actually do laughter to experience the benefits. Laughter Yoga methods will give you guidelines and practical skills to do laughter in a group and once your body gets the intelligence of laughing without a reason, you can even laugh all by yourself anytime, anywhere.

Be Laughter: Laughter is not just about learning and doing Laughter Yoga - it is about living it. Therefore, it is essential to bring happiness to others in order to find yourself happy. With our experience with Laughter Yoga worldwide, we found that once people start laughing on a regular basis, it automatically brings attitudinal changes in their behavior. They become more loving, caring and forgiving. Not only do they laugh in the laughter session; they carry the spirit of laughter throughout the day. It also helps to keep their spirits high and mind positive when faced with challenges of life.

Leader Training Resource Kit

1. Manuals and Courses

Basic Course and Leader Training Manual PDF (They are given as a part of course which you will receive from your trainers).

2. Exercise and Practice Video:

- 40 Foundation Exercises (Video)
- Yoga Nidra (Audio)
- Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance and Laugh Dance Party (Audio and training videos)

3. Scientific Resources

- Scientific Research on Laughter Yoga (PPT and PDF)
- Laughter Yoga Science of Breathing (PPT and Video Link)

4. Global Laughter Yoga Resources

Video Link for Laughter Yoga Worldwide

5. Marketing and Promotional Materials

- Laughter Yoga Business Cards
- Logos
- Brochures
- Flyers
- Standees
- Banners

6. Customised Basic Learning Course Certificate.

Note

These resources are available to all Prozone members (Continuing education for Laughter Yoga Professionals)

Please contact help@laughteryoga.org

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CHAPTER 1

History of Laughter Yoga



Five people who created history on 13th March, 1995. Standing from L- R: Madan Mohan Pushkarna, Mohan Singh, R K Tandon. Sitting: Madan & Madhuri Kataria

In March 1995, Dr. Madan Kataria, a medical doctor from Mumbai, India was writing an article on 'Laughter - The Best Medicine' for a health magazine, 'My Doctor'. In his research he discovered many modern scientific studies that described at great length the many proven benefits of laughter on the human mind and body.

In particular, Dr. Kataria was impressed by American journalist Norman Cousins' book *'Anatomy of an Illness'* in which he described a potentially fatal disease of the spine – Ankylosing Spondylitis which he contracted in 1964. After taking tons of painkillers each day which did not help, he finally experimented with the power of humor, laughter and other positive emotions and found that 10 minutes of mirthful laughter gave him two hours of pain-free sleep. His story baffled the scientific community and inspired a number of research projects. Besides this, Dr. Kataria was also inspired by research studies done by Dr. Lee S. Berk from Loma Linda University and Prof. William Fry from Stanford. Immediately, he decided to field-test the impact of laughter on himself and others.

On March 13, 1995 he got up at 4am and was pacing up and down in his living room when a sudden idea flashed through his mind: If laughter is so good, why not set up a Laughter Club. He was ecstatic and could hardly wait to implement the concept. Within

three hours, he hurried to the public park where he used to go for his daily morning walk and tried to convince the regular morning walkers about the importance of laughter and to start a Laughter Club.

The expressions were predictable. They thought he was crazy. They laughed at the idea and scoffed at the whole concept. But, Dr. Kataria did not give up and managed to motivate some people –thus was born the first Laughter Club with just five people. They met for half an hour every morning to laugh together much to the amusement of befuddled onlookers. In the beginning, the session began by someone telling a joke or narrating a humorous anecdote. Soon, people started enjoying the whole exercise and reported feeling much better after a laughter session of 20-30 minutes.

Bearing the initial ridicule and criticism, he firmly continued to explain the health benefits of laughter till gradually people became a little more receptive and showed a keen interest. The attendance started growing, and there were nearly 55 people by the end of the week. For ten days the routine continued with much vigor, after which they hit a snag. The stock of good jokes and stories ran out, and they were left with negative, hurtful and naughty jokes which prompted some participants to complain that it would be better to close the club than to continue with such jokes.

Determined to keep the Laughter Club alive, he asked the club members to give him a day to resolve the crisis. That night, he kept trying to look for some way to laugh without jokes. Providentially, he laid his hands on a book 'Emotions and Health', from Prevention Health Care Series (USA). While reading a chapter on humor and laughter, he was surprised to discover that the body cannot differentiate whether you are actually happy or acting a happy person. It clearly revealed that if one cannot laugh, one should pretend to laugh. He also learned that not only laughter, but a bodily expression of any motion, generates a similar emotion in the mind. This was a breakthrough and he thought "why not use laughter as an exercise".

The next morning, he explained this to the group and asked them to try and act out laughter with him for one minute. Though skeptical, they agreed and the results were amazing. For some, 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. Finally, there was laughter, real laughter – with no jokes.

The fact that one could laugh without an external trigger was a unique feature. But there were some people who were naturally inhibited and shy and found it difficult to generate laughter. As every person has a different psychological temperament, it was harder for some to laugh. His new challenge was how to get these people laughing without any reason.

He soon came up with the idea of warm-up exercises, such as clapping and chanting ho ho ha haha. This loosened the inhibitions and helped people to laugh easily. Soon different kinds of laughter exercises were developed, which included elements of role-play, childlike playfulness and other techniques from my days as an amateur dramatic actor.

As the concept evolved, he saw many similarities between laughter and *pranayama* in yoga. Both were based on the principle of optimal breathing - fundamental to good health. Together with his wife, Madhuri, we incorporated the elements from this ancient form of yogic breathing with laughter and the result was Laughter Yoga or *Hasya Yoga* (as known in Sanskrit) - a complete workout for health and wellness. A physically-oriented technique, it allows for multiple health benefits, primarily increasing the supply of oxygen, boosting the immune system and energizing and recharging the metabolism.

Today, with thousands of Laughter Yoga Clubs burgeoning worldwide, scores of people are taking advantage of the enormous benefits of laughter and are experiencing relief from a variety of stress-related illnesses. It has grown on its own strength, and the actual benefits are undeniable.

CHAPTER 2

What Is Laughter Yoga

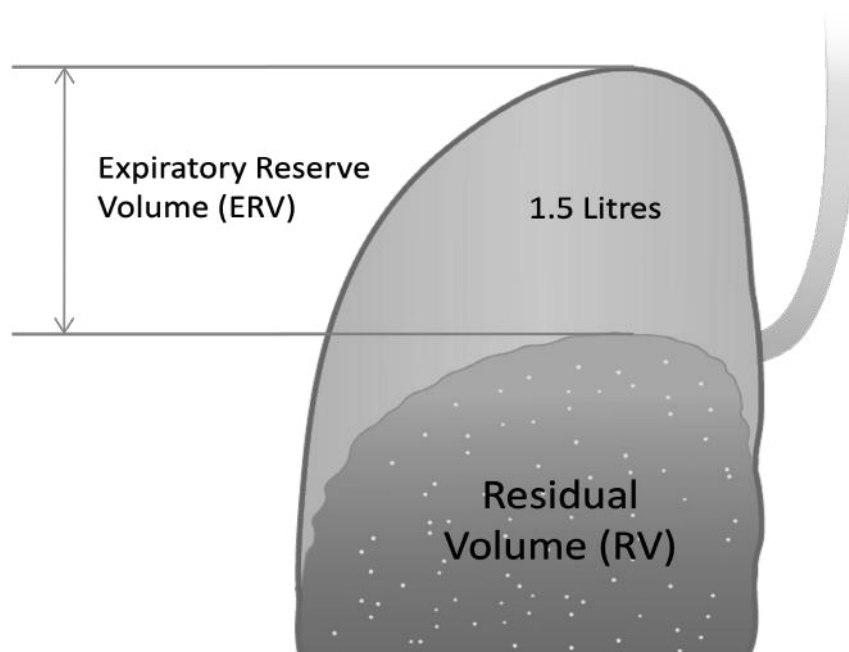
Laughter Yoga is a unique exercise routine which combines unconditional laughter with yogic breathing (*pranayama*). Anyone can laugh without relying on humor, jokes or comedy. Laughter is initially simulated as a physical exercise while maintaining eye contact with others in the group and promoting childlike playfulness. In most cases this soon leads to real and contagious laughter. Science has proved that the body cannot differentiate between simulated and real laughter. Laughter Yoga is the only technique that allows adults to achieve sustained hearty laughter without involving cognitive thought. It bypasses the intellectual systems that normally act as a brake on natural laughter.

Laughter Yoga sessions start with gentle warm-up techniques which include stretching, chanting, clapping and body movement. These help break down inhibitions and 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. These exercises, when combined with the strong social dynamics of group behavior, lead to prolong and hearty unconditional laughter. Laughter exercises are interspersed with breathing exercises. Scientifically, it has been proven that 20 minutes of laughter is sufficient to develop the full physiological benefits.

A Laughter Yoga session may finish with 'Laughter Meditation' which is a session of unstructured laughter, whereby participants sit or lie down and allow natural laughter to flow from within like a fountain. This is a powerful experience that often leads to a healthy emotional catharsis and also a feeling of release and joyfulness that can last for days. This is generally followed by guided relaxation exercises.

Connection between Yoga and Laughter

The word Yoga arises from the Sanskrit root *Yuj* which means to get hold of, integrate and harmonize. It means getting hold of our lives, integrating all aspects of life and harmonizing our bodies with our minds, spirits and society. As the concept of Laughter Yoga evolved, Dr. Kataria found a deep connection between the basic fundamentals of yoga and what one did in Laughter Clubs. He incorporated deep breathing exercises from yoga in between laughter exercises, which helps to increase the net supply of oxygen to the body and brain.



Breath is life: Breathing is fundamental to life. One can live without food and water for several days, but cannot survive if breathing stops for even few minutes. According to yogic philosophy, we are alive because the cosmic energy from the Universe flows into the body through the breath, which is the life energy force or *prana*, as called in yoga.

From a medical point of view, the most important component of breath is oxygen. Due to stress and negative mental state, breathing becomes shallow and irregular. We tend to hold our breath whenever the mind is upset or in a state of turmoil. This leads to lack of oxygen and accumulation of carbon dioxide in the blood which further causes anxiety, stress arousal and emotional reactions.

More oxygen from exhalation: The hallmark of yoga breathing is that we should exhale longer than inhale so as to get rid of as much of the residual air from the lungs and bring in fresh air and more oxygen for the next breathing cycle. Have you ever realized what we do while laughing? Actually, we are exhaling. During laughter, exhalation lasts much longer than in regular breathing. In normal breathing we inhale and exhale only 500 ml of air while there is 1500 ml of residual and stale air which has more carbon dioxide. This be a forced exhalation from laughter exercises which brings more oxygen to our body and brain.

Breathing capacity and laughter: The principal organs of respiration are the lungs. Due to a sedentary lifestyle we do not utilize the full capacity of our lungs. As a result, part of our lung cells do not participate in oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange. Laughter and deep breathing exercises open up all the cells of the lungs and also the respiratory passages, which leads to an increase in breathing capacity, also called vital capacity.

Diaphragm activates parasympathetic system: It is important to know that the diaphragm is a major muscle of respiration which separates the thoracic and abdominal cavity. Two thirds of breathing takes place by the movement of the diaphragm and only

one third by the expansion of the rib cage. Under stressful situations, most people breathe from the chest and do not use their diaphragm.

Both laughter and yogic breathing exercises are intended to stimulate the movement of the diaphragm and the abdominal muscles. The diaphragm is connected to a special branch of the autonomic nervous system called the parasympathetic system or the calming branch responsible for relaxation. The opposite is the sympathetic system, also known as the stress arousal system. One can turn off the stress arousal system simply by learning to move the diaphragm. The most important exercise done in Laughter Clubs is the chanting of ho ho ha ha ha, which helps people to focus on abdominal muscles so that they can learn to train their diaphragm and laugh from the belly.

Change your breathing, change your mind: There is a direct relation between the breathing pattern and the state of mind. When under stress, breathing becomes fast, irregular and shallow. There are spells of breath-holding according to the number of disturbing and negative thoughts crossing the mind. In contrast when the mind is at peace, breathing becomes more slow, regular and deep.

Breathing is the only process that has a dual character. It goes on automatically and is under the control of the unconscious mind, but it can also be consciously regulated or changed. Through the practice of belly laughter and deep breathing, we can learn to change our breathing pattern from shallow to deep and easily alter the thoughts in the mind. Even if one has disturbing thoughts, with deep breathing, the body will not experience the stress response.

Laughter Yoga connects people: Unconditional laughter connects people from different cultures and countries, no matter what language they speak or how they live. Laughter Yoga promotes a strong union between those who laugh together resulting in family-like bonds, providing social interaction and networking --- essential for happiness. The goal of Laughter Yoga is to connect people with one another at heart level without judgment --- this is the true meaning of yoga.

Laughter Yoga promotes spiritual growth: Laughter Yoga goes beyond just laughing. It not only fosters a feeling of physical wellbeing; it also enhances the spirit and touches the emotional core. It has the power to change the selfish state of mind to an altruistic state of mind. It has been proven that people who laugh are likely to be more generous and have more empathy than those who don't laugh.

This inner spirit of laughter becomes apparent as people develop a state of internal peace. The worries and intense goals that have driven their lives become less important. People become aware that true happiness comes from giving unconditional love, caring for others, and sharing with each other. Laughter Yoga inspires members to make the world a better place not only for themselves, but for everyone.

What is Laughter Yoga? (Five Points)

1. Laughter Yoga is not comedy; it is an exercise program. It is a unique concept where anyone can learn to laugh without relying on humor, jokes, or comedy.
2. We initiate laughter as an exercise in a group setting. Through eye contact and childlike playfulness, it quickly transforms into genuine and contagious laughter.
3. The reason we call it Laughter Yoga is that it combines laughter exercises with deep breathing. This brings more oxygen to the body and the brain, which makes one feel more energetic and healthier.
4. Scientific studies show that the body cannot differentiate between real laughter and voluntary laughter. One gets the same health benefits whether laughter is real or simulated.
5. Laughter Yoga was founded by Dr. Madan Kataria, a medical doctor from India with five individuals in a Mumbai park in 1995. Today, there are thousands of free laughter clubs in over 100 countries. In addition to social laughter clubs, laughter yoga is also practiced in senior centers, companies and corporations, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, yoga studios, organizations for physically and mentally challenged individuals, police departments, prisons, and many other venues.

Note:: Five numbers are provided solely for memorisation purposes. When presenting five points, there is no need to mention these numbers.

Why Laughter Yoga? (Three Reasons)

Many people ask why they should force themselves to laugh and what's wrong with laughter occurring naturally and spontaneously through watching funny movies, jokes, and comedies. Here are three basic reasons why one must practice Laughter Yoga to gain maximum health benefits:

1. Sustained Laughter: In order to obtain scientifically proven health benefits of laughter, we need to laugh for at least 10 to 15 minutes continuously with some deep breathing in between. As natural laughter typically lasts for only 3-4 seconds at a time, it is not sufficient to bring about physiological and psychological changes in our body. Since in Laughter Yoga, laughter is practiced as an exercise, we can prolong our laughter for as long as we want.

2. Hearty Laughter: To reap the health benefits of laughter, it has to be hearty and deep laughter coming from your belly. While it might not be socially acceptable to laugh loudly, Laughter Yoga sessions provide a safe environment where one can laugh heartily without any social implications.

3. Unconditional Laughter: Natural laughter that occurs in our daily lives depends on many reasons and conditions, but the fact is that there are not many circumstances that make us laugh. This means we often leave laughter to chance; it may happen, or it may not. In Laughter Yoga, we do not leave laughter to chance, but we practice it with commitment. This is a guaranteed way of obtaining the health benefits of laughter.

Five Benefits of Laughter Yoga

1. Elevates Mood

Laughter Yoga can change your mood within minutes by releasing endorphins from your brain cells. This makes you feel good and if you are in a good mood you do everything well. It makes you cheerful all throughout the day.

2. Health Benefits

Laughter Yoga reduces stress and strengthens the immune system. If your immune system is strong you will not fall sick easily and if you have chronic health conditions, it will help to heal faster.

3. Business Benefits

Our brain needs 25 percent more oxygen for optimal functioning. Laughter exercises can increase net supply of oxygen to our body and brain which helps to improve efficiency and performance. You will feel energetic and can work more than you normally do without getting tired.

4. Social Connector

Quality of life depends upon quality of our friends and our relationships. Laughter is a great connector of people and brings lots of good friend with caring and sharing relationship.

5. Laughing through Challenges

Anyone can laugh when times are good, but Laughter Yoga teaches people to laugh unconditionally so that they can laugh even when times are hard. It provides strength in adversity, a coping mechanism to help people keep a positive mental attitude regardless of circumstances.

CHAPTER 3

The Concept and Philosophy of Laughter Yoga

Laughing for no reason is the core philosophy of Laughter Yoga methods. Some of the most commonly asked questions about laughter 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? How do children laugh 300 to 400 times in a day, while adults laugh only 15 times? Can we learn to laugh?

Here are the answers to all these questions which define the five key concepts and philosophy of Laughter Yoga.

1. You can develop sense of humor through Laughter

Most people believe that one must have a sense of humor to laugh, but Laughter Yoga has proven otherwise. No one is born with a sense of humor, which is the brain's capacity to perceive, relate and experience a situation, and judge if the situation is funny or not. Sense of humor is a mental and intellectual phenomenon - very individual and cultural. Moreover, many people cannot identify with a sense of humor and believe that it needs special talent and skill to be humorous.

Laughter arising out of humor is conditional. It depends upon a reason to laugh, person's state of mind, level of happiness and life satisfaction. But, laughter in Laughter Yoga is unconditional; it is an outcome of childlike playfulness. By indulging in playful activities, Laughter Club members reduce their inhibition and shyness, which helps to open up their perception, thereby enabling them to see more humor in daily life.

Dr. Robert Provine, a pioneer researcher on laughter, says that laughter which comes in our daily life does not really come from humor and jokes. It actually comes from the little things people do or experience when they are with friends or likeminded acquaintances. In fact, they laugh 30 percent more as they enjoy the company. They do not need any funny situation or a humorous stimulus to laugh.

2. How can you laugh when you're not in a good mood?

a) Theory of motion creates emotion: There is a two - way link between body and mind. Whatever happens to the mind happens to the body. If you observe sad and depressed people, their bodies are also depressed. They walk slowly, talk slowly and their body movements are also slow.



The opposite is also true; whatever happens to the body happens to the mind. Dr. Kataria remembers what his father said, 'If you're sad, don't sit idle. Keep doing some physical work or go for a walk and jog, you will feel better'. And he was right; one always felt better by keeping the body active. This is known as theory of motion creates emotion.

Psychologist William James in 1884 found that bodily expression of any emotion can reinforce a similar emotion in the mind. The connection works both ways: from **mind to body and body to mind**. For example: Acting sad and depressed (for example sitting in a moping, depressed posture and replying to questions in a sad and dismal voice) soon leads to real emotional sadness. Actors who portray strong emotions often tell of real-life emotional repercussions. Many film and theater actors have reported that while performing tragic roles they experience a real sadness.

b) Laughter Yoga is based on two models:

i. Humor model or mind-to-body model: Do you know why children laugh 300 to 400 times in a day while grown-ups laugh only 10 to 15 times? It's because adults use their cognitive ability to first comprehend humor and then laugh. This model relies on the ability to understand what's funny and amusing. For example, the extent to which a person laughs at a given joke depends on the quality of the joke, the narration and also the state of mind of the listener.

But, the model has its limitations. It does not guarantee how much a person will laugh. It's conditional: dependent on a sense of humor, the state of mind and the quality of the external stimulus. You will not laugh much if you hear the same joke a second time.

ii. Childlike model or body-to-mind model: If you observe children, you will find that they laugh the most while playing. Their laughter comes straight from the body and does not make use of humor which is mind. This clearly shows that for children, the source of their laughter is within the body. We, too, can use it whenever necessary by moving the body at our own will. The significant feature of this model is that the person must actively participate in laughter and humorous activities.

Laughter Yoga and laughing without any reason helps to cultivate this childlike playfulness. Once you learn to play, laughter is a natural outcome. When you learn to induce laughter in the body, the mind just falls in step. The physical model of laughter is easy to practice for most people - they are relieved not to feel the pressure to identify with the mental part of humor.

3. How can you laugh when you're not happy?

We often hear people say, "How can I laugh when I have lots of problems in my life and am going through hard times and there is absolutely nothing to laugh about?" But, don't worry – you can laugh even when you're not happy. This is what we learn from the Laughter Yoga experience.

a) Fake it until you make it: 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. According to the principles of neuro linguistic programming (NLP), 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. Many actors, all over the world, have experienced the effect of faking emotions. They often felt sick after enacting a sad and depressing role, which clearly indicates that if acting sad can make one sick then acting happy can make one healthy. We have a saying in Laughter Clubs: **"We don't laugh because we're happy; we're happy because we laugh"**.

b) Difference between happiness and joy: Laughter Yoga makes a clear distinction between happiness and joy. Happiness is a conditional response subject to fulfillment of desires of the mind and is related to happenings in the past and the future and hardly ever deals with the present. Do you remember how long you stayed happy after getting that diploma, car, job, or new house that you had worked so long for? Sadly, the fact is that even if the conditions are fulfilled, happiness is often fleeting as it is quickly displaced by new conditions—the idea of forever-moving goalposts.

In contrast, joy is unconditional commitment to be happy from within despite life's problems. It can easily be triggered by joyful activities like laughing, dancing, singing and playing. It is purely a physical phenomenon while happiness is a concept of the mind.

Even when you're going through hard times, you can definitely get involved in joyful activities and once you become joyful, your body will experience physiological and biochemical changes. It will release certain neurochemicals from your brain cells and make you feel good and once you feel good within, the perception of the outer world will change. Laughter Yoga is all about learning to be joyful and navigate happiness in a much better way.

4. Childlike Playfulness is the source of Laughter

It is true that children can laugh hundreds of times in day, while grownups laugh very little. Have you ever observed when children laugh? They laugh all the time while playing. 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. In Laughter Yoga clubs we encourage people to be like children and cultivate childlike playful behavior through laughter exercises. This helps them to get over their inhibitions and shyness and loosen up.

5. Can we actually learn to laugh?

"I have been a serious person all my life. Can I learn to laugh now?" Some people believe that they cannot learn to laugh because it is a part of their personality and cannot be changed. Either you're a serious person or a laughing person right from the beginning - this is actually not true. As children we laugh a lot, but as we grow up, we lose our laughter due to reasons like serious environment, insecurities, fears and discipline.

The good news is that you can train your body and mind to laugh at will. It is very simple. Repetition is the mother of any skill. By repeating any bodily behavior over a period of time, the mind begins to generate a predictable response and it becomes a new habit.

With repetitive laughter exercises, the body starts reacting out of reflex before the conscious brain can rationalize and think. Throughout our lives, we are conditioned in both positive and negative ways. 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 - no matter what.

CHAPTER 4

What happens in a Laughter Yoga Session?

Laughter Yoga sessions vary according to the group and its objectives. Sessions conducted in hospitals, nursing homes, schools, business offices or for seniors might be quite different to Laughter Yoga sessions for the general public.

There are three components of a complete experience of Laughter Yoga

- » Laughter Yoga Session – Four steps of Laughter Yoga
- » Laughter Meditation
- » Guided Relaxation (Yoga Nidra)

Simple rules before Laughter Yoga Session:

Faking is fine: You will get benefits of laughter even if you laugh intentionally. Faking is fine.

Keep moving: When laughing in a group one should keep moving around and meeting others while maintaining eye contact.

No strain: Do not over exert or apply too much force while laughing. Try to be playful. Less force translates into more enjoyment

Laugh longer: Since we do voluntary laughter exercises try to laugh for longer in order to get rid of the residual air in your lungs. Each laughter exercises will last between 30 seconds and 1 minute. However there are no hard and fast rules. You can keep laughing as long as the group is enjoying.

Deep breathing: Laughter exercises should be interspersed with deep breathing.

Part A

Four Steps of Laughter Yoga

Step 1: Clapping and Warming-up exercises: Since it is not easy to laugh without a reason, the laughter session starts with warming up exercises like clapping, and chanting ho ho ha ha ha, which reduces inhibition and shyness.

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



Chanting and Moving: We add a simple chant to our clapping, which is ho, ho, ha ha ha which should come from your belly.

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. While clapping move your hands from one side to the other (see picture). Enthusiastic clapping, chanting and movement helps build a positive energy, gets our diaphragm moving preparing us to laugh.

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.

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 and relax. 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 (see picture).



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

Step 3: Childlike Playfulness

An objective of Laughter Yoga is to cultivate your childlike playfulness.

We have special childlike cheers such as **Very good** (clap), **Very good** (clap), **Yay** (swinging arms up in a Y shape with thumbs up in childish exuberance and exhilaration). This chanting of 'Very good, very good, yay' in between laughter exercises



and breathing exercises helps to keep the energy levels and builds up the enthusiasm. You can decide after how many exercises you should chant this.

Step 4: Laughter exercises

There are hundreds of laughter exercises being practiced in Laughter Yoga Clubs all over the world. The most popular exercises are 40 foundation exercises which you can find at the end of the manual.

Closing Cheers

At the end of the session we chant three slogans. After each slogan the group is invited to throw their hands up in the air enthusiastically and shout YES!

Leader: We are the happiest people in the world!

People: YES!

Leader: We are the healthiest people in the world!

People: YES!

Leader: We are the (name of group) Laughter Club!

People: YES!

If the cheers are being done for a presentation and the participants are not members of a Laughter Club, the final statement can be something else, like "We are fabulous laughers!"

Laughter Yoga Closing Ritual

This goes in alignment with our mission statement of Laughter Yoga which is Health, Happiness and World Peace. Place both hands in front of your chest with palms facing outwards. Move them while chanting ho ho ha ha 4 times in all 4 directions (up, down, left and right). Then move your arms in a circular motion and do Hearty Laughter thrice –

(first hearty laughter means: let everybody in this world be healthy; second one means: everyone in this world be happy and the third time it symbolizes: let there be peace in this world). Finally join your palms together, bow your head and do *namaste*.

Part B

Laughter Meditation

What 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 which is very different from laughter exercises, but still 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.

In Laughter Meditation, one has to make a conscious effort to completely detach oneself on mental and emotional levels from one's own feelings and thought processes, as well as from the physical world to prevent distractions. On the other hand, while laughing, we do not have any conscious thought process, and all our senses naturally and effortlessly combine in a moment of harmony to give joy, peace and relaxation.

Laughter as dynamic meditation

There are two broad categories of meditation – one is still meditation and the other is dynamic. When you focus on any activity or movement and get involved in that activity fully it becomes a dynamic meditation, because you are not thinking of any other thought. In this way you start enjoying the activity. Some examples of dynamic meditation are chanting mantras, singing, dancing, playing and laughter. Another example is when you see children playing, they forget the whole world because they put one hundred percent awareness into their play.

One of the reasons why people fail to meditate is because they cannot control their thoughts in the mind. The moment they sit for meditation, more thoughts start flowing than normal and eventually they give up. They think they cannot get rid of the thoughts, so how can they meditate? Since nature of the mind is not still, it is dynamic, it would be better if you start with dynamic meditation and once the mind is focused, you can move on to still meditation.

Initially, Laughter Meditation should be practiced in a group, which makes it easier to experience the wisdom of laughing without a reason. Once you've learnt it, you

can easily practice Laughter Meditation all by yourself. I suggest first you should try Laughter Meditation with small groups – for example you can try with family members or whenever you invite friends over for any social get together. Make them sit together in a circle so that they see each other. Then start laughing slowly and gently as in Gradient Laughter and gradually increase the intensity. People may find some kind of absurdity while laughing for no reason, but eventually group dynamic and the infectious nature of laughter helps them to laugh for real.

Laughter as catharsis

We observe in laughter groups that many people start crying during Laughter Meditation. This is because laughter helps to release pent up feelings and emotions, which have been stored in the sub-conscious mind from the past. Therefore, laughter is both physical as well as psychological release. We also found that people can release their anger and frustration through laughing. As a result, they find themselves very calm when they go through irritations in everyday life. People become less reactive and less judgmental.

Guidelines to achieve the meditative state of laughter

Duration: Laughter Meditation should not be more than 20 minutes. Do it for 10 minutes in a sitting position with eyes open, then take a short break of silence and breathing for five minutes followed by another 10 minutes of lying down with eyes closed. There is no hard and fast rule about the duration.

Ideal venue: Indoor venue is best suited for Laughter Meditation as there is least distraction. While selecting the venue make sure it is comfortable, clean and peaceful. You can also use yoga mats and blankets on the ground.

How to sit: You should sit relaxed in a normal posture with eyes open so that you can see others laughing. You can also move your body naturally while laughing. Sit comfortably in an inward facing circle so people can see each other and make eye contact. They should not be too spread out.

No talking, no distractions: The most important instruction is to make it very clear to all that nobody must talk or try to communicate in any way (no eye messages, funny faces, and funny sounds) because we need to release the conscious mind, and any form of communication will actually engage it.

Steps of Laughter Meditation

Before doing Laughter Meditation, it is better to do some warming up with laughter exercises. This will energize the people and help them to get rid of their inhibitions and shyness. After few laughter exercises, now you're all set for Laughter Meditation.



- 1. Warming up exercise:** Place your hands in front of your chest with palms facing outwards and push them twice forwards saying ho ho aggressively and then twice downwards saying ha ha to stimulate the diaphragm. Then take a few long deep breaths and repeat. Alternatively, you can initiate Laughter Meditation by doing Gradient Laughter where people start laughing slowly and softly in the beginning and gradually increase the intensity of laughter slowly and gradually. Soon, it becomes infectious and sets off a chain reaction to infect other people.
- 2.** When you're sitting in a group watching others laugh, laughter keeps flowing spontaneously and effortlessly as a part of group dynamic. The key factor here is eye contact.
- 3.** Allow people to do Laughter Meditation for about five minutes, then ask them to take a few long deep breaths and observe silence for a minute.
- 4.** After the silence start laughing slowly and gradually and continue to build the group laughter for another five minutes.
- 5.** Next ask the group to lie down on the floor and close their eyes and allow the laughter to build slowly and gradually. You can do this for 5-10 minutes, after which take few deep breaths and then observe silence and relax the body.
- 6.** To end the Laughter Meditation, you can do Yoga Nidra relaxation. Complete instructions are given in the next chapter.

What if Laughter Meditation doesn't work?

Due to some reasons the group might not get spontaneous laughter and they might not laugh as you would expect. There are many reasons for that. Either the group is inhibited or there are some cultural variations besides some outside factors. If you find yourself in a situation that it is not working, you can try the following:

- Take a short break of silence and ask people to close their eyes and focus on breathing.
- Do Gradient Laughter many times until it becomes infectious.
- If nothing works, just keep doing different laughter exercises rather than feel embarrassed.

Each laughter session is different even with the same group. Sometimes, if sitting on the floor doesn't work, you can ask people to lie down and keep their eyes closed. Then start Gradient Laughter. It might work because some people can laugh better while lying down with their eyes closed. You can also tell them to lie down on their back, hold their knees against the chest and try to laugh. This will help to push the diaphragm up and makes laughter flow easily.

Cluster Chair Arrangement

Sometimes the group members can't sit on the floor due to some physical limitations or the floor may not be appropriate to sit on. Laughter Meditation can also be done sitting on the chairs. You can ask the participants to arrange the chairs in a cluster and bring them as close as possible to facilitate the process of Laughter Meditation.

Part C

Guided relaxation (Yoga 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 refers to a specific guided meditation that originated from tantric yogic practices. Yoga Nidra produces a wakeful state of deep introversion and connection with us that is not only relaxing and rejuvenating, but also has the power to transform our core issues. Yoga Nidra is the most thorough and profound process to move us systematically through our entire being, including physical, energetic, mental, emotional, and spiritual layers.

Laughter Pledge

Idea by Marina Herrera Pérez Mexico

I promise to laugh everyday

For a reason or no reason

I promise to laugh everyday

In health and in sickness

I promise to laugh everyday

In good times or even in hard times

Put your finger on your nose...

Take a long deep breath and Laugh hahahahaha

CHAPTER 5

Four Elements of Joy **Singing, Dancing, Playing and Laughing**

Happiness from within

Many Laughter Clubs end their sessions with singing, dancing, and laughter. The core philosophy of Laughter Yoga is not seeking happiness from external sources but cultivating it from within, which is called joy. External happiness is not certain; it is conditional and depends on getting what you want. However, many times you do not get everything you want. Conversely, joy, which is called happiness from within, can be triggered by the simplest of physical activities, such as singing, dancing, playing, and laughing. We call these the “four elements of joy.”

As children, we had all these elements. But as we grow up, joy is lost to inhibition and self-consciousness, which often limit participation in lighthearted activities. A Laughter Club is an ideal platform that gives permission to become like a child again and brings those elements back, making singing, dancing, playing, and laughing easier within a safe environment.

Group Dynamics

People usually find it difficult to sing alone as they feel they are not good singers. Though it requires special talent to have a singing voice, it becomes easier to sing in a group—for example, singing the national anthem, devotional, or birthday songs. The same holds true for dancing. Most people hesitate to dance individually, but it becomes easier when we dance together during festivals, weddings, and any celebrations.

Therefore, at the end of a laughter session, many Laughter Clubs have incorporated group singing and dancing. They sing popular songs from films, cultural songs, jingles, and nursery rhymes from their school days, and finally, they end up laughing. Singing is a mind-body activity that can be used to express emotion, influence thought, and bond human beings. Medical studies have shown that singing can reduce stress, lower heart rate and blood pressure, improve lung capacity, decrease pain, and elevate mood. Every Laughter Yoga session is a chance to celebrate being alive, being able to breathe, and allowing our inner child out to play. When we incorporate singing, dancing, playing, and laughing all together, our joyfulness becomes multiplied.

Please note that it is not necessary to sing full songs and remember all the words. Most often, we sing only the opening lines, and this gets us laughing and running around like kids. You can get ideas for songs from the videos in your resource pack. You can pick up the most popular songs in your country and culture and sing in a group. Also, you can sing children's songs which we used to sing when in school. Just add laughter at the end of the song. (There are many YouTube videos available on singing, dancing, and laughing on the Laughter Guru Channel)

Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance

To combine all four elements of joy - singing, dancing, playing, and laughing - we created Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance music, which is becoming popular. People from all age groups love Bollywood laughter dance because it adds value to Laughter Yoga sessions. It can ideally be played at the end of your trainings, workshops, and laughter clubs.

It is an ideal exercise program with music like Zumba, but it has a lot of fun elements of playing and dancing. It is ideally suited for younger people who might not enjoy the laughter exercises for no apparent reason. They would love to sing, dance, play, and laugh with it. Once they open up to Bollywood dance, they become more receptive to laughter exercises as well.

We also have a slower version that can be practiced with seniors who can do Bollywood dance while seated on chairs. School children absolutely love it. We have also tried BLY Dance with physically and mentally challenged populations, and it works very well.

Therefore, learning laughter yoga dance and teaching it in your classes is part of our laughter yoga teaching curriculum.

You need to download the videos to learn different steps. The best way to learn is to play these videos on your TV, laptop, or computer. Once you memorize the steps, you can just play the music, and people can follow the steps from you.

If you have the facility of a big TV screen or projector, you can simply play this video and let everybody follow the steps. This works very well for beginners.

The Bollywood Laughter Yoga Dance combo kit is available on the Laughter Yoga International website, where you can buy and download different audio and video combinations. It is available in 6 minutes, 10 minutes, and 20 minutes video formats, and different durations and speeds of audios are available for download.

Laugh and Dance Party

After Bollywood dance, this is another simple laugh and dance music that focuses more on dance as a form of aerobic exercise, which will definitely increase your cardiovascular endurance.

In this music, we have incorporated good beats where you can do freestyle aerobic dancing actions. For fun, we have included some typical actions and words like the sound of “chuk chuk” (moving your hands like a train engine), sounds of “oolala oola oola” with some funny gestures, and “Balle Balle shawa shawa,” typical Punjabi dance gestures from North India.

These dancing music pieces are interspersed with different laughter exercises, such as Namaste Laughter, appreciation laughter, and gradient laughter. You can watch a YouTube video of a Laugh and Dance party from the German laughter yoga conference.

Laugh and Dance party audios and videos are available for purchase on our Laughter Yoga International website.

Message for Laughter Leaders by Doctor Kataria

1. Laughter Yoga is 25% theory and 75% practical, so more emphasis should be given to practicing laughter exercises.

2. Before you make anybody laugh, you must explain:

- 5 points about what Laughter Yoga is
- 3 reasons why Laughter Yoga is beneficial
- 5 benefits of Laughter Yoga

This explanation should take less than 5 minutes, after which you can lead them through the 4 steps of Laughter Yoga. You must memorize these basics thoroughly and speak with confidence.

3. Daily laughter practice: To become a successful leader, you must practice laughing by yourself every day for at least 10-15 minutes. You can laugh on your own or join online Laughter Clubs worldwide.

4. Starting a free social laughter club will provide an ideal platform to develop your laughter skills and build self-confidence to lead laughter exercises.

5. After completing your training, start doing laughter exercises with small groups informally, such as with family members, friends, or at social gatherings. You can lead at least a few exercises with your friends.

6. Watch the 40 Foundation Laughter Exercises video and select 15 to 20 exercises that you like the most, then start teaching those exercises.

7. Dancing with laughing attracts many youngsters, making them more likely to participate in laughter exercises during the dance. Learn Bollywood Laughter Dance and Love Dance Party; they can be played at any social get-together and are enjoyed by all age groups.

8. Finally, Laughter Yoga is primarily for social service. Initially, focus on spreading laughter and giving the gift of laughter to others. Business opportunities will follow.

CHAPTER 6

Contraindications In Laughter Yoga

Laughter Yoga is like any other aerobic exercise and all the conditions apply as that of any other aerobic activity like swimming, jogging, running etc. Should you experience any pain, discomfort and breathlessness, you must discontinue Laughter Yoga and take medical advice.

People with following conditions must take medical opinion before doing Laughter Yoga exercises:

Hernia: Hernia is very common in elderly people and in those who have chronic cough and prostate enlargement. If you notice any swelling in the groin area while laughing or experience any pain, you must consult your doctor before doing laughter exercises regularly. Hernia normally needs surgical correction.

Incontinence in women: This is most common in women. If there is involuntary passing of urine while laughing or coughing you must consult your doctor. This may be due to sagging of the uterus or weak ligaments.

Bleeding: Those suffering from bleeding from any part of the body must be very careful while doing laughter exercises.

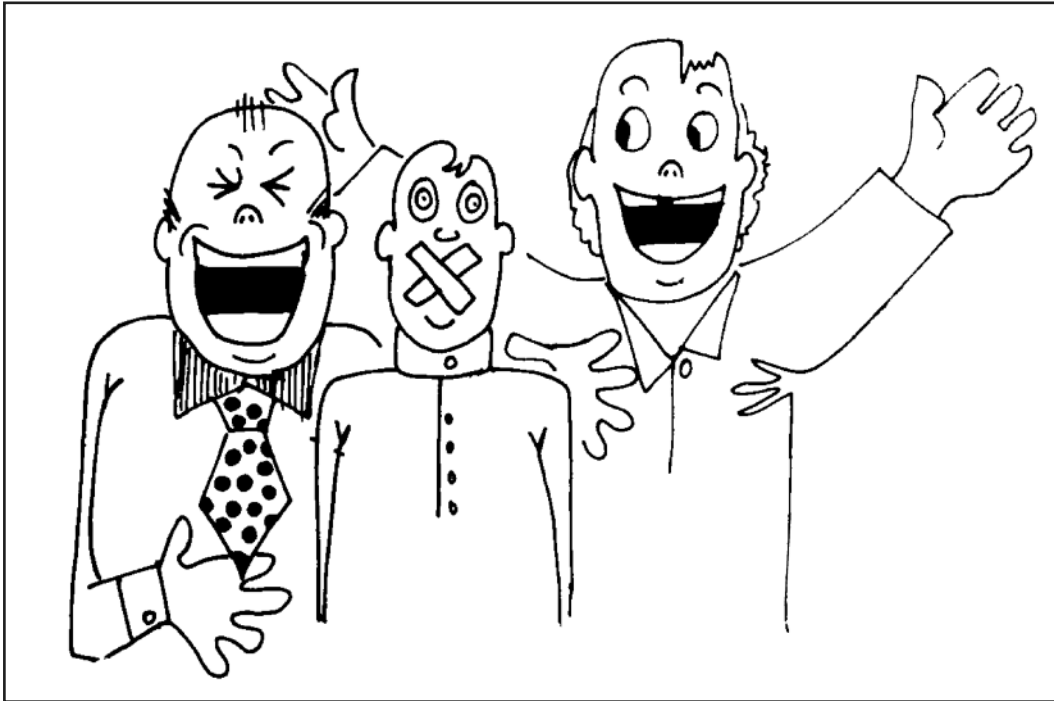
Heart problem with chest pain: If you experience any chest pain while doing any exercise you must consult your doctor.

Pregnancy: Women with history of miscarriage and those in the last two months of pregnancy must take precaution and see the doctor before doing Laughter Yoga.

Major surgeries: One must wait for at least three months after any surgery before resuming any strenuous exercises.

Epilepsy: Those with a history of epileptic seizures must be careful as change in any emotional state can trigger an epileptic attack. Take expert opinion.

Severe backache: If someone has prolapsed inter-vertebral disc (slipped disc), one should not do laughter and other exercises, unless advised by their physician. Any forward and backward bending can aggravate the symptoms of slip disc.



Minor discomforts after doing Laughter Yoga

1. Heaviness in the head or mild headache: Some people complain about heaviness in the head or mild to moderate headache after doing Laughter Yoga exercises. This is quite common, no cause of concern, and usually settles down on its own. But, if it continues it may be due to excessive force being applied during laughter exercises. Take it easy, and do the laughter exercises gently. Put more emphasis on feelings, breathing, and enjoying the exercises rather than applying force.

Other possibilities of persistent headache after Laughter Yoga exercises are high blood pressure and chronic migraine headaches. People must get their blood pressure checked if they are on the borderline or have hypertension before doing Laughter Yoga exercises. We have had many people suffering from migraine headaches for years who have benefited from doing Laughter Yoga. As one of the reasons for precipitation of migraine attacks is stress and pent-up emotions, Laughter Yoga acts like an emotional release.

2. Irritation in the throat and dry cough: Another common complaint is irritation in the throat or mild cough. This is also quite normal and people should be reassured and advised not to laugh too hard, and drink more water. As a leader, one must give instructions and laugh a bit louder to motivate the group. But if you are laughing too hard and screaming too much, it might damage your vocal cords if you do it for a long time. This can lead to permanent hoarseness in your voice, an occupational hazard! You must be mindful not to persistently misuse your voice. Speak and laugh from your diaphragm to project your voice, not from your throat and mouth.

CHAPTER 7

Health Benefits of Laughter Yoga

There 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 for Wellness

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.

Best cardio workout: As life has become more sedentary and stressful, people find it hard to stick to any exercise routine. Laughter Yoga is an ideal alternative as it can be compared to any aerobic exercise. Just 10 minutes of hearty laughter is equal to 30 minutes on the rowing machine. It is ideally suited for busy professionals and business people who have very little time to exercise.

More oxygen: Oxygen is one of the primary catalyst for all metabolic reactions in the human body. Ongoing scientific studies show that lack of oxygen is the major cause of most diseases. Negative emotions constrict the supply of oxygen and induce shallow chest breathing. Laughter Yoga exercises facilitate longer exhalation and deep breathing through the diaphragm. This helps in flushing the lungs of stale residual air and increasing the net supply of oxygen.

Increases blood circulation: Physical disease or mental problems restrict circulation and slow down the body system. Research has shown that laughter causes an 'internal jogging' that massages and increases circulation to flush the body and organs of waste products leaving us ready to operate at peak performance.

Maintains emotional balance: It is comparatively easy to manage physical or mental stress, but very complex to handle emotional stress which arises due to problems at home or at work, faulty relationships and several other strained situations. Faced with such circumstances, people find it hard to express their feelings and emotions. As a



result, they suppress their emotions. Laughter Yoga helps free the flow of emotions and releases pent up feelings. It defuses painful emotions like fear, anger and resentment; instead cultivates positive emotions like unconditional love, generosity, openness, compassion and willingness to help and serve others.

Laughter boosts Immune System

Laughter Yoga strengthens the immune system and one does not fall sick easily. Our experience with regular Laughter Club members is that they don't suffer from frequent cold and cough and upper respiratory tract infections. This indicates that their immune system has become stronger. Scientific studies show that it takes at least 2-3 months of regular laughter practice to bring about changes in the immune system.

Depression

Depression is the number one sickness in the world today. Depressed people seldom laugh; but if they do laugh regularly, they are less likely to be depressed. Laughter increases the levels of dopamine and serotonin in the brain cells. We have seen that many Laughter Club members were able to reduce anti-depressant medication doing laughter exercises. In fact, some have completely stopped the medication.

Laughter Yoga provides social support which helps to prevent depression, usually brought on by loneliness and isolation. It is like an extended family which connects people and creates lifelong relationships.

Anxiety and Panic Attacks

When in a stressful emotional state or turmoil, breathing becomes faster, shallow and irregular. People hold their breath which leads to an accumulation of carbon dioxide in

the blood. Laughter Yoga provides an excellent cardiac workout. It lowers the amount of residual air in the lungs, replacing it with oxygen-rich air and reducing the level of carbon dioxide in the lungs, thereby reducing the risk of pulmonary infection.

By shifting the breathing pattern from shallow to deep diaphragmatic breathing, Laughter Yoga stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the cooling branch of the autonomic nervous system and the opposite of the sympathetic stress arousal system. This scientific phenomenon coupled with yogic breathing helps to loosen stress and relieve anxiety.

Heart Disease and Hypertension

Dr. Michael Miller, a leading heart researcher from Maryland University & Medical Center discovered that laughter dilates blood vessels promoting circulation and reducing blood pressure. Having too much cholesterol in the blood can lead to the hardening and narrowing of the arteries (atherosclerosis) in the major vascular systems. A daily dose of laughter reduces cholesterol, improves blood circulation to the heart thereby proving to be a great preventive to hypertension and heart disease.

Laughter Yoga and Diabetes

Diabetes like heart disease is a major health hazard worldwide. Laughter Yoga exercises help to control fasting and postprandial blood sugar as proved by scientific research done in Maribor University, Slovenia. It also reduces the stress hormone cortisol responsible for increase in sugar levels; in effect lowering the blood sugar and helping a diabetic patient. It even increases the blood flow to the pancreas, which improves the production of insulin.

Bronchitis and Asthma

People suffering from allergic bronchitis, asthma and smoker's bronchitis (COPD) can benefit from laughter exercises. They have a lot of residual air in their lungs, which can be removed by laughter exercises, thereby increasing their oxygen levels and improving the breathing capacity.

Laughter exercises also help to remove the thick mucus from the inner lining of the bronchi which improves the flow of air into the lungs. One of the common reasons why people get asthmatic attacks is due to infection. Laughter Yoga strengthens the immune system and significantly brings down the frequency of asthmatic attacks.

Laughter Yoga for Cancer patients

Cancer is on the rise and has become the second major killer after heart attack and strokes. Cancer centers all over the world are incorporating Laughter Yoga exercises as a complementary therapy along with traditional forms of treatment. When someone

has cancer, it causes tremendous emotional disturbance and mental stress. Laughter exercises quickly help to reduce the trauma and put their mind in a positive state, thus enabling them to cope with the disease in a better way. Since Laughter Yoga is a physical method, it is ideally suited for cancer groups who can practice laughter as a form of exercise with no need of any humorous intervention.

Laughter Yoga increases the oxygen level in the body cells and rapidly increases immunoglobulin levels that help fight infection and increases the number of natural killer cells (NK cells) in the blood, which plays a key role in cancer prevention. It should be combined with other forms of treatment to provide cancer patients with an improved quality of life and the best possible chance of survival.

Laughter Yoga for Chronic Illnesses

There are many illnesses which have no cure and one has to take lifelong medication. Laughter Yoga exercises can help to reduce the symptoms of patients with rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, diabetes, blood pressure, auto-immune disorders like multiple sclerosis and other chronic diseases. It also keeps their mind positive, effectively enabling them to manage their disease on a daily basis.

Laughter Yoga and Pain

There are two types of pain people experience in life. One is due to some physical illness and the other due to some emotional disturbance in the mind. Laughter Yoga exercises is a great remedy for release of emotions and lessening of pain as it releases endorphins or natural opiates that are more potent than equivalent amounts of morphine.

It also helps in reducing physical pain in those suffering from arthritis, spondylitis and muscular spasms of the body. Most Laughter Club members, especially seniors, usually suffer from arthritic pain but it is seen that after doing laughter exercises, the intensity of pain decreases significantly.

CHAPTER 8

How To Lead A Laughter Yoga Session Effectively- Systems And Procedures

Pre-session Guidelines

Frequency: 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 every day. This is why Laughter Clubs members in India are getting the maximum health benefits.

Venue: While selecting the venue for a laughter session, especially indoors, remember high roof venues are not suitable as there is lot of echo and the energy of laughter gets lost due to large space. Another factor you should keep in your mind is the size of the group. Do not select big venues if you have a small group size, because it is better to be close to each other while doing laughter exercises.

When doing a laughter session outdoors, e.g. in public parks, make sure they are away from residential buildings so as not to disturb other people. Even indoors Laughter Yoga can get noisy so ensure that the doors and windows are closed to minimize the noise levels.

Group size: To run a Laughter Yoga session we need a group of at least 5 to 15 people to make a good group dynamic. The more the merrier as it makes the laughter session more infectious, and becomes easy for people to laugh. As a leader, one has to spend little energy and effort to keep the group dynamics and energy going of a large group. But, when there are fewer people, the leader has to spend more effort and energy to keep up the group dynamic.

Clothing: Wear loose clothing which does not restrict your abdominal movements. Avoid tight strings or belts above the navel area.

Utilization of space: Put posters/banners on the walls. If you use only a part of a large space try and partition the area with a row of chairs. Also have chairs available for people who cannot sit comfortably on the ground. Make sure all people coming for the first time sign a liability release form and you have your proper insurance.



Session Guidelines: Duration: 30 -45 minutes

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

Introduction: Briefly introduce yourself and Laughter Yoga. Explain contraindications and make sure people have signed the disclaimer.

Caution the group: They have to clap, breathe and laugh which may lead to some strain. Tell them if in doubt, they should not do it. They can watch and walk out if they lose control.

How should people stand: While conducting a Laughter Yoga session, make sure people do not stand in a circle as they need to keep moving and have eye contact with other group members. In a circle, people feel more self-conscious and try not to move much. This affects the quality of laughter as there is lack of interaction and eye contact. Therefore, ask the group to stand randomly and close to each other to help maintain the group dynamic.

Less force more enjoyment: Most sessions focus on enjoyment rather than force when doing laughter exercises. So remember don't strain or force out laughter.

Childlike playfulness: We strive to cultivate childlike playfulness during Laughter Yoga exercises.

Open your mouth a bit wider: While doing laughter exercises, ho ho ha ha clapping and chanting ask people to open their mouth a bit wider to experience the sounds of laughter and ho ho ha ha coming from the belly. This will help the diaphragm to move which in turn brings more relaxation.

Remember the exercises: To run a successful laughter session, one needs to practice and remember at least 30 to 40 Laughter Yoga exercises. You can learn these from our

40 Foundation DVD. In case you can't remember, keep a little card with the names of exercises in your pocket and refer to it while taking the session.

Giving Commands

The most important skill of a leader is to give commands for participants to start the exercise together and laugh at the same time. He has to constantly maintain the group dynamic and energy. This requires clear commands. Therefore, as a leader, always embody good energy levels, be audible and clear. Remember powerful people have a powerful voice. How much people laugh will depend on your energy levels as they are copying you.

How to end the exercise is equally important. Use clapping or other techniques like ho ho ha ha chant to stop the exercise. In case the group responds well to a particular exercise, you can allow them to continue a little longer. But, remember never to stop the exercise midway or prematurely. Stop it when you feel it is complete.

Before starting any exercise, tell its name, explain how to do it and demonstrate.

Every leader will develop a personal style. A command to start may be ONE....TWO....THREE or ONE... TWO.... START... delivered slowly, loudly and building in volume.

For deep breathing, participants must start together as the timing of inhalation, holding and expiration should be carefully controlled to remain within group limits but push these limits gently. The command may be: **'Now we'll take a deep breath.... Ready.... Start'**

Demonstrate Stretching and New Exercises

Practice giving instructions for stretching and other exercises. Especially with new participants, the leader should demonstrate an exercise to show the movement, speed and timing. Always keep them moving and you must also move so people follow your example. Clap dynamically (motion creates emotion). Swing from side to side, introduce easy dance movements and keep smiling. Stir them around to avoid people sticking with friends or in one area throughout a session.

Sometimes you can promote good sustained eye contact by dividing the group into two, facing each other. This format is interactive and playful and works well for certain types of exercises.

Pay compliments. Keep telling them how great they are --- **'I Like It', 'You Are Great', 'Very Good' etc.**

We generally do not instruct or correct members during sessions. This is not martial art and people will not have negative side effects from finding their own style.

Be Creative

Vary the exercises to control the pace: start slow, build up, slow down, build up, slow down and build up again. Having a theme like 'At the airport', 'In the kitchen', 'In a hospital' etc helps some people to visualize more easily and become caught up in the playfulness.

Keep it fresh and try to change the exercises every session. Challenge participants to develop their own exercises but try them before class to decide whether to use them. It can be fun to hand the group over to participants sometime, but be careful. Some people may get out of hand or behave inappropriately. Ask ahead before the session what they plan to do. Interrupt and take over if you feel things going off course. Introduce dancing or singing. Laughter Yoga is about joy and dance and music can help build the joy.

Other Factors

Mind the time: A laughter session should start and end on time. Excessive laughter may create distress in some.

Be mindful: If your group responds well to an exercise let it continue. When you believe it is time, stop it.

Keep religion and politics away: Do not use religion or politics in any exercises or explanations. We are non-political, non-religious, non-parochial, and non-judgmental. We love everyone equally.

Conclusion

Involve your members. Ask for feedback. What did they like best? What don't they like?

Invite active participation. You must actively work to develop a 'core group' of people who are willing to lead exercises and in the course of time, lead sessions so that you can take time off occasionally without canceling sessions. These people will also help and support you in special events.

Successful leaders develop their core members to take over a club or session, and then start another. Some leaders in India have started dozens of clubs in this way.

Keep the interest of the group in mind. If your group wants more exercises, longer or shorter sessions, sessions at another time, listen to them and discuss it with the group before making a decision.

CHAPTER 9

Landmark Scientific Study on Laughter Yoga

Comparing the cardiovascular effects of simulated Laughter (Laughter Yoga) and Spontaneous Laughter

A comparison of the cardiovascular effects of simulated and spontaneous laughter

Mikaela M. Law Elizabeth A. Broadbent John J. Sollers

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Link: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S096522991830030X>

Hypothesis

Laughter is a form of aerobic exercise. It increases heart rate and increases respiratory rate, activates internal oblique muscles to similar levels as crunches and back lifting exercises. Cardiovascular and pulmonary demands are the same whether laughter is spontaneous or voluntary. Therefore, the act of laughter itself is the critical component, even in the absence of humour.

Protocol

Interventions: A sample of 72 participants were randomised to one of three 6 minutes interventions.

Group 1: Participants in the simulated laughter condition were asked to generate fake laughter by doing laughter exercises. Simulated laughter is triggered by oneself at will and therefore is not elicited by humorous stimuli. This form of laughter is commonly known as voluntary laughter and involves laughing on command.

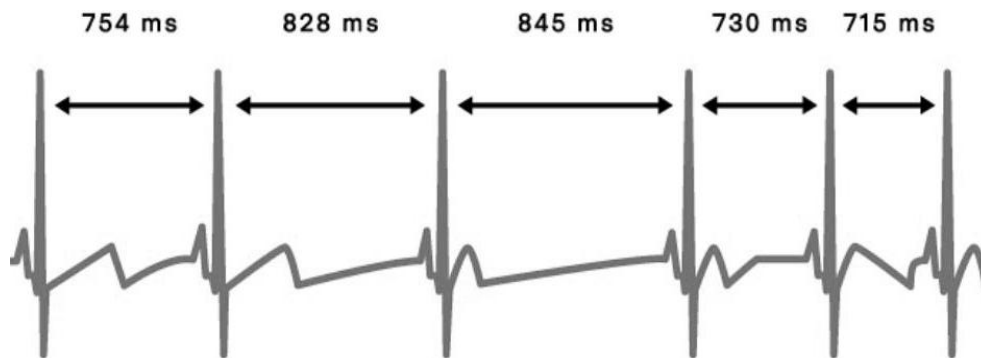
Group 2: The spontaneous laughter condition viewed a humorous video. Spontaneous laughter, commonly referred to as 'real' laughter, is triggered by external humorous stimuli

Group 3: The control condition watched a non-humorous documentary.

What was Measured

1. Heart Rate Variability (HRV)

The interval between the normal heart beats is not same it keeps changing from beat to beat. There is variation between the heart beats depending upon stress signals or relaxation response.



Heart Rate Variability HRV

Hypothalamus keeps sending signals to the rest of the body through Sympathetic and Parasympathetic system. It regulates our heart rate, blood pressure, breathing, and digestion. Your Sympathetic system, fight-or-flight system tells your heart to speed up and the variation between subsequent heartbeats is low (Low HRV) Your Parasympathetic System tells your heart to slow down, making room for variability between beats (Higher HRV).

There is increased Heart rate HR and decreased HRV during exercise and Heart rate Variability (HRV) increases after exercise and throughout the day.

Increased HRV shows activation of Vagus Nerve (parasympathetic system) following laughter and other exercises.

Why Check Heart Rate Variability?

People who have a high HRV may have greater cardiovascular fitness and be more resilient to stress. Those with Low HRV are more prone to Hypertension heart disease and stroke. Measuring and Monitoring HRV will tell you about how stressful situations are negatively affecting your health. HRV will tell you about your lifestyle and the outcome of your exercise programs, yoga, meditation and Laughter Yoga.

Stress Response after Laughter

The study also compared the ability of these two types of laughter to buffer the cardiovascular stress response to a laboratory stress task. After their assigned intervention, participants were exposed to a shortened version of the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST). Participants were given three minutes to prepare and three minutes to present a speech to convince the experimenter to give them their dream job.

Amount of Laughter

Laughter Intensity and Frequency Scale (LIFS)

The study investigated whether the effects observed were correlated with the amount of laughter produced. The amount of laughter produced by each participant was measured by the Laughter Intensity and Frequency Scale (LIFS), Humour Response Scale. These scores for each scale were then combined to give an overall score for the six minutes

Result

The simulated laughter condition had a significantly higher heart rate ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$) and lower rMSSD ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .13$) during the laughter task compared to the other two conditions.

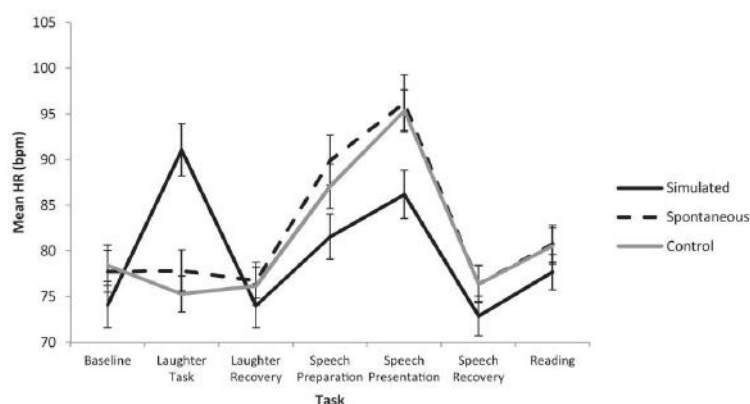


Fig. 2. Mean HR across tasks split by condition.

Contrary to this hypothesis, simulated laughter resulted in a larger increase in HR and decrease in rMSSD than spontaneous laughter. It was also hypothesised that both forms of laughter would attenuate the stress response compared to a control condition. However, only the simulated laughter condition had an attenuated stress response to the TSST as represented by a smaller increase in HR than the other two conditions.

Conclusions

This research suggests that simulated laughter may have stronger effects on HR and HRV than spontaneous laughter, and the reduction in rMSSD may not be solely due to the amount of laughter produced. One can become more resilient to daily stresses of life with Laughter exercises. It modifies our response to stressful situations. Simulated laughter has better stress buffering effect.

CHAPTER 10

Laughter Yoga Alone: 40-day Laughter Challenge

Daily laughter practice is imperative for all Laughter Yoga professionals. As a leader, it is essential to laugh wholeheartedly and consistently to effectively demonstrate various laughter exercises and inspire others to embrace this practice.

Engaging in laughter every day enhances your endurance, enabling you to sustain laughter for extended durations. This, in turn, amplifies your ability to spread contagious laughter during your laughter sessions.

Following the completion of leader training, participants embark on a 40-day laughter challenge. This involves laughing for at least 5-10 minutes daily, gradually progressing to 15-20 minutes, interspersed with deep breathing exercises amidst different laughter exercises.

Factors that Facilitate Laughing Alone:

Willingness to Laugh: Intentional laughter may initially seem awkward to many individuals, who perceive it as artificial. Scientific research shows that the body will create positive response even when you have the intention of doing something good. Thus, a readiness to engage in laughter cultivates a positive mindset essential for fully embracing the benefits of laughter, whether practiced individually or in a group setting.

Self- dialogue: Do not criticize the quality of your laughter. Remind yourself that this is not about real or spontaneous laughter, but that your laughter is merely an exercise with scientifically proven benefits that will provide more oxygen to your body. No other exercise is inherently natural; we engage in them solely because we know we will benefit from them. Therefore, tell your mind that this daily laughter practice is for the sake of good health.

40 Day Formula: To establish any new habit, one must consistently repeat the particular activity for at least 40 days. This process aids in the development of new circuits in the brain, integrating the new behavior into your unconscious mind. Laughing alone leads to the positive conditioning of a joyful state of mind through repeated engagement in laughter and breathing exercises over an extended period. The brain forms new neuronal connections as a result, which stimulate the release of happy neuropeptides and hormones in the body in response to this repetitive action.

Guidelines before getting started:

Get over awkwardness: Initially, you may feel self-conscious about what others might think when you find yourself laughing alone. Before practicing Laughter Yoga alone, it's beneficial to communicate with your family, reassuring them that what you're doing is laughter as a form of exercise. You can also extend an invitation for them to join in if they're interested.

Every person is different: Do not assess the quality of your laughter. Each individual is unique. Begin with simple techniques and strive to enhance your solo laughter practice continuously. There exists no definitive right or wrong method to laugh. When laughing alone, you'll naturally develop sounds, gestures, and postures that align with your comfort level.

What to wear: Wear loose and comfortable clothing for breathing and laughter exercises. Trousers should be fastened below the navel to avoid hindering abdominal movements. Additionally, avoid tight belts that restrict belly movement.

Duration and ideal time: One should aim to laugh for at least 15 minutes. You can start with 5-10 minutes and gradually extend the duration. It's preferable to practice laughter alone first thing in the morning, as it can uplift your mood and maintain a positive outlook throughout the day. However, if morning laughter isn't feasible, you can laugh at any time of the day to increase energy levels.

Laughing Alone Exercises

Warm-up chanting Ho Ho Ha Ha

Before beginning to laugh, engage in some warm-up exercises. Ideally, perform these warm-up exercises while standing. Start by saying "ho ho" twice as you extend your hands forward away from your chest, and then say "ha ha" as you lower your hands downward. Gradually increase the speed of saying "ho ho ha ha." After a couple of repetitions, proceed with some deep breathing exercises. Raise your arms above your head, inhale deeply, and hold your breath for 3-5 seconds. Then, slowly bend your body from the waist and exhale while saying "haaaaaaa" and continue to laugh.



Fake it until you make it:

Try faking laughter by saying “ha ha ha,” “he he he,” and “ho ho ho.” Keep experimenting with this silly exercise until you genuinely start laughing at the absurd sounds of your own laughter. Try various ways to simulate laughter sounds until you discover some that amuse you. Stick to them and practice them regularly. Initially, simulated laughter may feel awkward, but with repeated practice, your body will become conditioned so that genuine laughter quickly follows the moment you start faking it.

Breathe, Stretch hold and laugh:

Cross your fingers in front of your chest and take a long, deep breath while stretching your arms above your head. Try to elongate your spine as much as possible while holding your breath for 3-4 seconds. Then exhale and laugh heartily while lowering your arms. Repeat this sequence three times.

Signature laughter exercise:

Extend your arms in front of your chest, inhaling deeply as you clench your fists and draw them closer to your heart. Hold your breath for three seconds as the leader chants, “Hold it, hold it, hold it,” then burst into hearty laughter, throwing your arms skyward. Keep the laughter flowing, swinging your body and waving your arms from side to side for as long as you can.

Gentle Laughter:

Intentionally laughing out loud can be challenging to sustain for many people. However, if you laugh gently and maintain a giggle, you can prolong your laughter for as long as you wish, and it will sound very natural

Laugh and Open up your Lungs

Three lobes of the lungs:

a) The lungs consist of three lobes: upper, middle, and lower. To enhance oxygen flow to the upper lobe, assume the reversed namaste position with your hands behind your shoulder blades. Inhale deeply, holding for three seconds, then exhale with prolonged laughter.

b) For the middle lobe, adopt the mountain posture in Yoga by joining your hands in namaste position above your head. Inhale deeply, hold for three seconds, and exhale with laughter. Return your hands to the front of your chest.

c) To target the lower lobe, extend your arms in front of your chest. Inhale deeply, folding your arms and fists, holding the breath for three seconds. Upon exhaling, stick out your tongue and laugh from the belly.

Silent Laughter:

This is the most useful exercise that anyone can do without disturbing other people. When you know that you have to laugh without making a sound, you end up laughing even more.

Sit quietly in one corner of your room and attempt to laugh silently with your mouth open wide. Though you may begin by simulating laughter, it will quickly transition into genuine laughter.



Voice Reinforcement Technique:

Have you ever noticed that when your mood is not good, your voice loses its energy? It becomes less vibrant and full. In contrast, when you're happy and confident, your voice becomes more vibrant. During laughter exercises, you are actually opening up your voice, which resets your emotional state through a process called biofeedback. The freedom and expression of the voice affect the free flow of emotions within the mind. Thus, the pitch and tone of your laughter can change your state of mind, even when practiced as an exercise. Since there is a two-way link between the body and mind, freeing the voice with the sound of laughter can bring about a change in the entire emotional state.

The three most important laughter exercises for practicing this voice reinforcement technique are Milkshake, One Meter Laughter and Aloha Laughter. Essentially, before laughing, we use prolonged vowel sounds like "Aayyyy" or "Oooooo" to facilitate an easy flow of laughter.

Milkshake Laughter: Hold two imaginary glasses of milk. Pour one into the other saying, "Aeee...", pour the second into the first, saying (a little higher) "Aeeee ..."; then pretend to drink saying "Aah-ha-ha-ha-ha!". Variations: 1. If you don't like milk, just pretend to mix it and throw it behind you or onto the ground in front of you.

One Meter Laughter: In this exercise pretend to measure imaginary one meter of fabric. Left arm out to the right hand sliding over arm like shooting bow and arrow. Right hand slides over in three jerks, chanting "Aeeeh!" until both arms open outstretched. Tilt your head up and belly laugh. This cycle is repeated twice.

Aloha Laughter: Aloha Laughter, derived from the traditional Hawaiian greeting. It is very stimulating energising. While standing arms are raised overhead, chin is up, as Alooooooh is said in a crescendo, ending the exercise with laughter while bringing your arms down.

Integrating Laughter Exercises with Everyday Situations:

Laugh your way through household chores: Laugh while doing repetitive household chores such as washing dishes, mopping the floor, vacuuming, hanging clothes, and cleaning windows. Not loud laughter, just a gentle giggle, will help change your perspective toward mundane chores and make them less daunting.

Laughing in the bathroom: Your bathroom can serve as a private, safe haven for you to laugh alone. Here, you can be as funny as you want without the fear of anyone watching. Laughing daily while taking a shower will condition your body. The moment you turn on the tap, you will automatically start laughing. This highlights the benefit of repeating any activity and integrating physical behaviour with it.

Laughing in the car: Laughing alone exercises can be highly effective during challenging times on the road, such as traffic tie-ups and other daily irritants. Rather than losing patience, laughter can help alleviate anger and stress. You can practice gentle gradient laughter or any laughter exercises while driving or when stuck in traffic. Consider keeping some humor props like funny hats or noses in your car, which you can wear during such situations.

Ha Ha Mantra for free floating hostilities:

There are many situations in our daily lives that can leave us feeling upset, angry, and frustrated. These moments can be referred to as “Free Floating Hostilities,” as they occur frequently in our day-to-day experiences. There are three ways you can respond with laughter:

If something goes wrong in the presence of others, you can laugh while pointing fingers at yourself. This is a good way to acknowledge your mistakes and maintain humility.

If you are alone when something happens, simply laugh and accept the situation. Recognize that there’s nothing you can do to change it, so you might as well find humor in it.

Chanting the “ha ha” mantra is another way to respond to accidental or deliberate mistakes. Instead of becoming upset or angry, laughter yogis have found a better way to process these hostilities.

Here are a few examples of such situations:

Running out of toilet paper, searching for a parking spot only to have someone else pull in, waiting in a long line at the cash counter only for it to close when your turn comes, spilling something on your shirt or blouse, experiencing a flight delay

CHAPTER 11

Applications Of Laughter Yoga

Laughter Yoga in the Workplace (Business World)

Stress in the Workplace: People today are facing tremendous stress and burnouts in the workplace. Even highly talented and skilled people cannot perform well if they are emotionally imbalanced and stressed. Though there are many methods used to reduce stress, Laughter Yoga addresses most of the workplace issues and is most cost effective and less time consuming. It is a single exercise routine which reduces physical, mental and emotional stress simultaneously and brings an emotional balance.

By introducing Laughter Yoga sessions for all staff, companies have reported a happier place of work, increased efficiency, better communication, increase in sales and productivity, increased creativity and better teamwork, decrease in illness and absenteeism and a reduction in employee turnover.

Peak Performance: In this highly competitive world everyone wants to stay ahead and perform to their maximum. Laughter Yoga quickly changes the mood state by releasing endorphins, which results in changing one's entire perception of the outer world, thereby improving performance in any field. Another way that Laughter Yoga helps to optimize performance is by increasing the levels of oxygen in the body and brain.

Team Building: Laughter is a great connector of people as it breaks all hierarchies and is a force for democracy. It is a powerful tool that helps develop a positive mental attitude, hope and optimism and increases communication skills, all of which are requisites in



teambuilding. It teaches one to understand others and balance one's own emotions and diffuses stress and generates peace and harmony in the mind which leads to improved thinking and better creativity with a defined focus on team goals.

Laughter Yoga – Quick Recharge Mechanism: Laughter Yoga is a quick recharge mechanism, which helps revive the energy levels, performance, attention span and concentration, thereby leading to a better efficiency and higher output.

Eye Contact and Smile – Tools of communication in business: In the business world, developing the art of smiling and eye contact is the most effective way of communicating. Smiling people generate better business, especially in the field of sales and marketing, customer service, hospitality and service industry. Laughter Yoga has proved extremely beneficial in this respect as the whole concept is based on making each other laugh just by eye contact.

Innovation and Creativity: Childlike playfulness cultivated by Laughter Yoga stimulates the right brain activity, which is the seat of creativity and helps generate new ideas and insights about workplace issues and problems. With repeated sessions, playfulness gets wired to the body and mind and becomes a part of psychological makeup. This soon starts reflecting in the day-to-day activities during working hours. It provides a safe environment to introduce new schemes, make new strategies, set up discussions and debates, develop common visions and replace old assumptions with fresh ideas.

Value of Laughter Yoga as an exercise for business people: Business people are exceedingly busy and have no time to exercise. Also, because most exercises are a lot of hard work, and tend to get boring and monotonous, people abandon the exercise programs. But, Laughter Yoga offers a powerful exercise program with a difference. There are no postures or skills to learn, no special yoga clothes or equipment required, and since it is done in a group, it is easy to learn. Anyone can do it and become an expert from the first session. It has been proved that 10 minutes of hearty laughter is equal to 30 minutes on the rowing machine. This helps to stimulate heart rate, increase blood circulation, supply oxygen and remove waste products, thereby improving mental and physical health.

Laughter Yoga For Seniors

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 a mental and cognitive phenomena. Therefore, Laughter Yoga is ideally suited for seniors as laughter is done in the form of an exercise and they can get multiple health benefits from it.

Retirement Blues: Seniors who are involved in Laughter Yoga fall under two categories: a) Those who have just retired and are physically active, b) Those living in



age care facilities and assisted living centers. Laughter Yoga is a great boon for seniors as it helps to reduce stress, generate a positive attitude, boosts self-esteem and overcomes feelings of insecurity.

Decline of Cognitive Faculties: Faced with age and age-related troubles, seniors find that their physical and mental faculties decrease. With the beginning of certain diseases like Alzheimer's and Senile Dementia, the capacity to comprehend humor declines. Simple tasks become difficult, frustration levels rise making it harder for them to laugh. Under such conditions Laughter Yoga is ideal to improve their health and well-being as it helps to provide an emotional bonding and is one of the most powerful tools against depression. It helps them to laugh and start living a life full of joy once again. Being a physical process, it does not require any mental abilities thus helping the older people to understand humor without using their cognitive faculties. 15 minutes of Laughter every day also increases the memory, thinking ability and intellectual capacity.

Promotes Physical Health: Laughter Yoga helps in healing by strengthening the immune system, increasing oxygen to the body cells and producing a positive mental state. Regular practitioners with chronic pain, migraines, headaches and asthma have found attacks to become less frequent, and in some cases, to disappear completely. Many with high blood pressure, severe spinal, neck or shoulder problems and even diabetes have found their life normalizing eventually requiring no medication.

Improves Circulation: Laughter Yoga provides exercise to the lungs and circulatory system and pushes the heart rate up to a level comparable to any aerobic exercise. It is an ideal workout for the elderly as they cannot walk and do much physical exercise.

Insomnia in Elderly: Many elderly people who previously had difficulty in sleeping and needed tranquilizers and sleeping pills, found Laughter Yoga exercises helpful in getting better quality sleep.

Supports Good Mental Health: Many seniors suffer from depression, frustration and anger. As they lose loved ones as well as their health, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a positive mental attitude. Laughter Yoga changes a person's biochemistry in a way that supports good mental health regardless of circumstances.

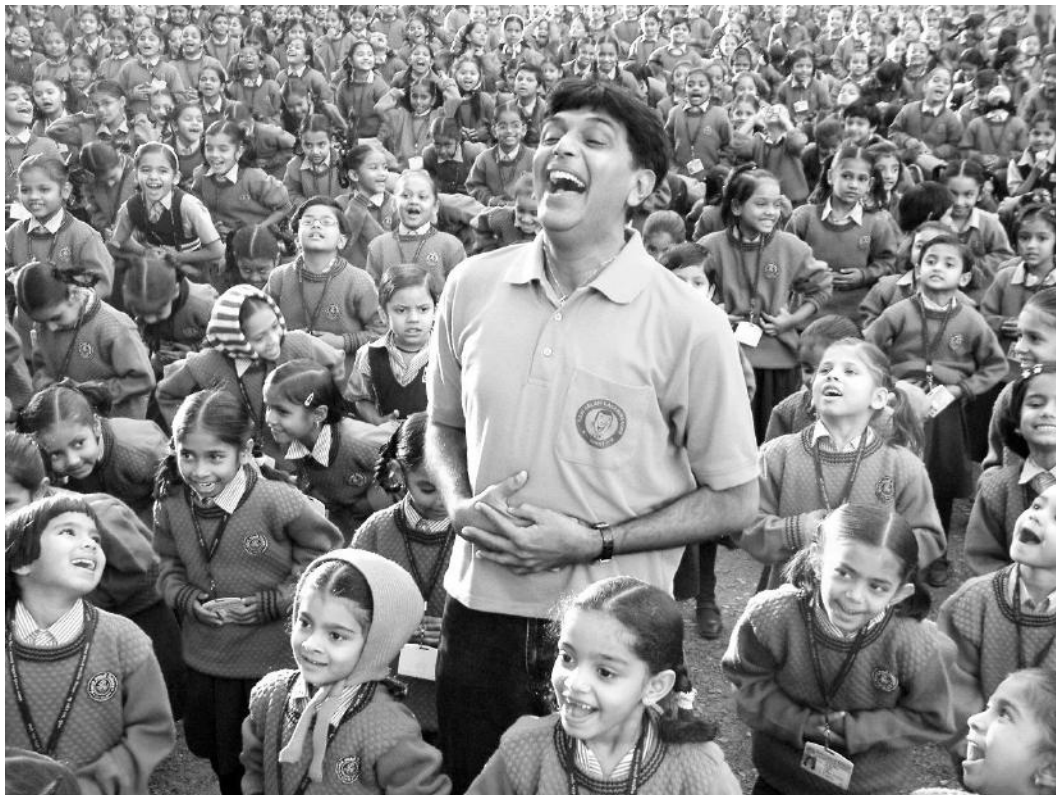
Laughter Yoga for School Children

Children today are faced with the rigors of several pressures and stresses. They are subjected to new and different childhood realities and have forgotten to laugh and play. Physical activity is restricted, new strains are imposed, adult behavior is demanded at very early age and group play and child-to-child interaction is being replaced with electronic games and remote communication devices.

Why Children Need To Laugh More Today

Academic pressure: Children today are under tremendous academic pressure, which leads them to strive for unrealistic goals, which if unfulfilled can bring on serious stress and prove detrimental to their mental and physical health.

Technology robs them from play: Physical play is being replaced by mobile phones, video games, television and internet. High tech communication skills have eroded the fun of laughing at simple things.



Lack of emotional bonding: Increase in divorce, working parents and the reduction in family size leaves children alone for long stretches of time, rather than in healthy group play. There is a general decrease in parenting skills, which leave children deprived of strong moral and emotional guidance and role models.

Negative attitude towards laughter in schools: Children are programmed against laughter – Teachers sometimes ask children to stop laughing in the name of discipline and sometimes they get punished for laughing. They get programmed in the mind that laughing is not good and this is one of the reasons they lose their laughter when they grow up.

Benefits of Laughter Yoga for School Children

Developing Emotional Intelligence: Modern studies show children develop emotional intelligence through laughter and play. Those who don't play enough in their childhood grow up emotionally unbalanced and find it difficult to maintain their relationship with people. Laughter Yoga encourages children to physically play and express themselves fully, which is the key to development of emotional intelligence.

Increases Academic Performance: Laughter exercises flush the lungs of stale residual air improving oxygenation, which helps in better concentration, increases the learning ability and helps to enhance academic performance.

Improves Concentration and Attention Span: Studies show a huge leap in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Children with this disorder are extremely hyperactive and find it difficult to concentrate for even short periods. Laughter Yoga exercises improve blood circulation, which in turn enhances concentration levels, learning ability and academic performance.

Boosts immune system: Regular laughter exercises also reduce absenteeism due to cough and cold and chest infections, as it boosts the immune system. It also helps build physical stamina and helps in children in their in sports.

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

Enhances creativity: As Laughter Yoga has play at its core, right brain thinking is practiced, which enhances creativity on many levels.



Laughter Yoga For People With Special Needs

Living with different disabilities is a huge challenge and can be hard to deal with. It can lead to severe mental trauma and stress. People are prone to negative feelings and emotions that undermines all rationality giving rise to a confusing mindset regarding one's own image and capabilities. One undergoes an all-time low and sensations of self-pity and low self esteem set in.

Laughter Yoga with mentally and physically challenged

Laughter Yoga has the ability to elevate the mood state and help the person to cope with physical and mental disability, while providing relief from feelings of negativity. The group dynamics of Laughter Yoga lead to more openness and aids people to accept reality, making it a great technique for emotional release and balance.

Many people with a physical disability are sometimes unable to move parts of their body without regular physiotherapy exercises. Due to lowered mental functions, they often find it difficult to follow commands properly. Anecdotal evidence suggests that laughter sessions help people in this situation to become more compliant with physiotherapy commands, leading to notable improvement in motor functions. Also, because the exercises revolve around laughter, all physical challenges are approached positively. Participants do the best they can physically and always feel they succeed because they are invited to laugh on their own terms, and that's always a win (if you can breathe, you can laugh).

Relieves pain: Laughter triggers endorphins, which provides an immediate pain relief that's either partial or full. What is worth noting is that people's relationship with pain

“shifts” as they find that they can laugh at what was before a source of physical and emotional pain.

Dissipates anger: Trying to live with a disability can be very frustrating as it forces one to be dependent on others. Choosing to laugh is an approach to voluntary simulated laughter that focuses on “letting go”, and helps to disconnect from the past and keeps them in the present moment with a positive mental attitude.

Alleviates sadness and depression: People with disabilities have to go through hardships and sufferings for years together. They often find it hard to express their feelings and emotions, which leads to sadness and depression. Laughter Yoga helps to alleviate their negative emotions and improve the mood state.

Lowers stress and anxiety: Any form of disability can be the cause of immense stress and anxiety. Frustration, anger, aggressive behavior and irrational logic overcome the power of reasoning. Laughter has been shown scientifically to provide a substantial and immediate reduction in stress levels as it lowers stress hormones like cortisol and epinephrine and enhances the levels of health hormones and neuropeptides that alleviate symptoms of stress within minutes.

Helps to safely express emotions: The group dynamics in Laughter Yoga lead to more openness and help people to share their grief. Laughter exercises and the deep breathing relax the body and the mind and assist one to accept reality. It is a safe haven for such people to release their inner feelings without fear and pain.

CHAPTER 12

Role Of A Laughter Leader

Leadership qualities: A successful laughter session requires a skilled leader. Their main function is to explain, start and stop different exercises, and to control and adjust the 'pace' of the session varying stretching and breathing with hearty laughter. The leader is an example to all and laughs more easily and infectiously than others. In addition, a good leader is one who leads people from behind helping them to become leaders. In order to have a good relationship with other co-leaders, never find faults, instead looks for positive qualities and profusely appreciate them. In other words, do not correct people; connect with them.

Motivate: The leader motivates others to drop their inhibitions and be more playful so that simulated laughter can change into genuine peals of hilarity using techniques including 'motion creates emotion'. Be careful to interact with each person through eye contact and even physical proximity, especially those that require help getting into laughter.

Promote punctuality: Try to start on time and encourage your participants to be there. Punctuality is a sign of respect and getting to a session on time will reinforce their self-esteem. However, if most people are unusually late one day due to a traffic jam, accident, sports event, etc., then ask the others if they mind waiting ten minutes to start (you will end late) and play a game to occupy and amuse those who have arrived.

Maintain discipline: Try to keep control through a loving attitude rather than through forceful behavior. Avoid confrontation during a session. If a member gets out of hand talk to them privately after the session and ask them to modify their behavior as a mark of respect towards the group.

Stay current and tune in: Laughter Yoga is evolving continuously worldwide. Try to keep up to date with improved techniques so you can deliver maximum benefit to your participants. Laughter Yoga International is building ways to capture the latest developments and deliver these to all Laughter Yoga leaders and professionals through a new website that promotes networking and sharing. We will also soon develop a continuing educational program. Please visit www.laughteryoga.org regularly and be sure to add your insights and experience so that all can benefit.

How to become a better Leader

The joy and benefits you receive through laughter are passed to others. Try to laugh often in laughter sessions, when socializing, with your family, or by yourself. Dr. Kataria has developed a system to make it easier and more effective to laugh alone.

Trust and do the best you can: You will not always succeed; you will not always achieve your objectives. If things don't go your way, don't become disappointed or gloomy. Be thankful for what you've achieved and look at the positive side.

Actively listen: Develop your empathy. When you listen to people, try to imagine how they feel, try to stand in their shoes. Take the time to hear people out.

Devote 30 minutes a day to introspection/meditation/laughter/time spent in contemplative stillness/writing a journal/walking in creative silence/doing one thing perfectly and with full attention. Any of these activities will positively impact your life. Spend some time each week thinking about Laughter Yoga and your role, achievements and plans.

Work smart. Learn to tap into the creative powers that are manifest in your group. Involve your members and be open/willing to change.

Develop a core group of committed members and develop their skills in leading parts of the session until they can lead occasional sessions. Lead by inspiring them to do this good work. Make your club a team effort rather than a one-man show. Develop common or shared goals. Find people who are retired or have lifestyles that allow them to volunteer and devote time.

Acknowledge people with good ideas. Good leaders recognize and praise others for their contribution.

Practice Lion Laughter on a regular basis to develop your voice, and try to improve your skills in leading exercises.

Practice opening your mouth a little wider. A wide open mouth brings laughter deeper from the abdomen. Laugh from your belly (not your throat).

Be aware of your body language. Try to use full-arm movements and use your body to express yourself.

Make eye contact with as many different participants as possible. This promotes laughter and tells you who may need more help.

Be dynamic in your exercises with almost exaggerated movement. You are the role model -- swing your arms and upper body and move around. Bend your knees in rhythm and encourage group rhythm.

Don't talk too much. Laughter Yoga is about doing and experiencing.

Walk the talk. Laughter Yoga is about developing joy, becoming more emotionally sensitive, developing feelings of caring and sharing, and improving your mental attitude. Develop these qualities in all aspects of your life.

CHAPTER 13

How To Start A Laughter Club

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.

What's Free?

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

What's Fee Based?

Outside of the Laughter Clubs, any teaching, coaching and training conducted by laughter leaders or teachers for personal and business development are chargeable as per the skills and abilities.

No Control on Laughter Clubs, No Posts, No Hierarchy

All Laughter Clubs are individual entities and are free functioning units. They are not under control of any other organization of a group or an institution anywhere in the world. Although there are no rules and regulations but on behalf of Laughter Yoga International we do offer important guidelines for social Laughter Clubs.

All Laughter Clubs must follow three guidelines:

1. Non- political 2. Non-religious 3. Not for profit.

Laughter Club Registration

The registration of Laughter Club is FREE. You can register your clubs Laughter Yoga International website: www.laughteryoga.org.

Starting a Laughter Club in India

In India, most Laughter Clubs function on a daily basis and the members meet at public parks. If you want to start a Laughter Club, find a place in your locality where people can assemble early morning while going for a walk. It can be a public park, an open ground or a beach. The chosen place should not be in the immediate vicinity of residential complexes so as to prevent any disturbance to others. Apart from social Laughter Clubs, Laughter Yoga exercises can be combined with traditional yoga classes at the end of their sessions, as well as with any other health building activities like aerobics, gymnastics, dance and singing.

In Western Countries

The concept of Laughter Clubs is slightly different in the West where club members like to meet for 1-2 hours every weekend or fortnightly. They laugh together for 30 minutes along with breathing and stretching exercises, followed by Laughter Meditation for 30 minutes. Later, there are humor activities, fun games, brain storming on psychological and philosophical aspects of laughter and dancing with music.

Training for Leaders

You need to be trained as a laughter leader to start a Laughter Club. Laughter Yoga workshops and trainings are being done all over the world by qualified Laughter Yoga professionals. You can find the details on www.laughteryoga.org.

Core Group: If you take the responsibility of running the social Laughter Club, it will be too much of work and commitment. It is better to form a core group of 4- 5 like-minded people, who can lead the club by taking turns and also jointly promote different activities.

Frequency and Timing: Daily meetings are best in terms of benefits for yourself and participants, but for many this may not be practical. Consider meeting once or twice a week, or even less frequently. The days of the week are also important. Weekends may be easier for many people (and for you if you work also).

Venue: Finding a free or very cheap venue can be a challenge. During some seasons you may be able to meet outdoors, but rainy and the winter season would make it difficult. Even in a park you may require permits, so do your research. Church halls, community centers, scout halls, public libraries, museums, hospitals or clinics may provide free venues if you do not charge. Another option is to meet at someone's home. If there are companies or organizations with an ideal space, ask them to donate the space in exchange for sponsorship promotion. They will generate goodwill among members.

Make sure the venue matches your group size, that it has adequate ventilation, toilet facilities and heating if you have cold winters. Be careful not to disturb neighbors as Laughter Clubs can get very noisy. Is the floor suitable for sitting or lying down? Also, beware of very high ceilings as laughter energy could be dissipated and echo may be a problem.

Try at all times to avoid costs or keep costs very low. Laughter Clubs need to be provided as a free service. If there are costs for venues and other necessities, these can be defrayed by making a small charge or asking for donations. You can also look for sponsors who will gain considerable goodwill from members of the club by helping to keep it free.

CHAPTER 14

Guidelines for Online Laughter Clubs

Daily Laughter Practice

To get the maximum health benefits of Laughter, one must practice Laughter yoga every day. In India, laughter clubs are experiencing rapid growth due to their daily meetings, which serve as a significant motivator for individuals to join. In the Western world, laughter yoga sessions were typically held once in a week or twice a month. However, we've emphasized to all laughter yoga professionals the importance of laughing every day. Advances in online technology have made this more feasible, allowing for daily laughter practices.

Skype and Zoom Laughter Clubs

To overcome this limitation; innovative solutions emerged during the COVID pandemic. Even before COVID, people had started laughter clubs on Skype in areas lacking physical laughter clubs. Skype couldn't accommodate more than 15-20 people, as the quality of experience diminished with a greater number of participants. During COVID, people turned to Zoom laughter clubs to laugh every day, and it proved to be an excellent platform where a larger number of people could participate with video. After the COVID pandemic, people continued laughter clubs on Zoom as it provided them with the opportunity to practice laughter club activities daily. Zoom laughter clubs are still more popular, but for smaller groups, Skype laughter clubs are still continuing

Laughing During Difficult Times

We have been telling people, "Everyone can laugh when times are good, but how can you laugh when life gives you challenges?" We've demonstrated that laughter persists even in the face of adversity. To reap the benefits of laughter during difficult times, one must continue to laugh even when not going through any challenges. This will help program our minds to create happy chemistry whenever there is nothing to laugh about.

Online Teaching Coaching Training for Future

Although online laughter sessions and trainings are not substitute to in-person laughter sessions and trainings. But the reach of online technology is much wider, and it is way must faster. If you want to spread Laughter Yoga faster, we need to take the help of online technology to the maximum. Both for free laughter club as well as teaching, coaching, training people. Physical trainings can also be combined with online training. Because most of the theory part can easily be covered by online classes. This will make more cost effective.

Advantages with Online Technology

1. Cost effective - People can attend the course at their comfort level without travelling.
2. It is international - people can join from any part of the world provided suitable time.
3. It provides good experience of laughter and it motivates people to involve in physical laughter clubs later.
4. Good for teaching the contents with visuals, graphs, and videos.
5. Recording facilities - anyone misses any lesson they can get the recordings.

Disadvantages

1. Personal touch and physical contact are missing
2. If you are not familiar with technology, it can be messy.
3. Heavily dependent on internet speed.
4. Different time zones can be challenging.

Guidelines for Online Laughter Sessions

Technical Guidelines

- Free versions on zoom is available only for 40 minutes and maximum 100 people can join.
- For more duration you can buy the lowest subscription @ USD 14.99 with 100 people max.
- You must know the time zones of different countries. You can get time converter and check the times in different countries.
- When you setup the zoom meeting make sure that you check the mute upon entry and uncheck unmute participants. So that they cannot unmute on their own.
- When you play the music, share the sound from the laptop/computer. This applies when you want to show any videos also.
- You must have at least one assistant as a co-host to operate while you are conducting the session. He/she will manage spotlighting, muting, unmuting etc.
- You can livestream your laughter club on Facebook and YouTube provided you have a subscription. Free version does not allow.
- If you are conducting classical 4 steps of laughter yoga, it is better to keep the facilitator on spotlight, and co-host can add a few more people to spotlight. It allows up to 9 people. For best experience it's better to keep 4 people on spotlight instead of 9 people
- Every 10 minutes you must ask people to unmute and laugh for few minutes. During this the co-host can spotlight different people.
- When you are doing childlike playfulness and gibberish, you can ask people to unmute and do the exercises.
- When you are spotlighting other people keep them muted. Only their actions can be seen.
- When you begin the session, you find out that anyone who joined for the first time you must introduce. You can also celebrate birthdays, and anniversaries with music.
- Laughter club duration is 30 minutes. After that you can play any dancing music and ask people to dance.

Note: If you attend a few sessions of the international laughter club on Zoom, you'll gain a fair idea of how to conduct a laughter club online. We also provide assistance to all Prozone members on demand.

CHAPTER 15

World Laughter Day

History

World Laughter Day was created in 1998 by Dr. Madan Kataria, founder of the worldwide Laughter Yoga movement. The celebration of World Laughter Day is a positive manifestation for world peace and is intended to build up a global consciousness of brotherhood and friendship through laughter. Its popularity has grown exponentially with that of the Laughter Yoga movement now counting thousands of Laughter Clubs in more than 100 countries.

The first World Laughter Day gathering took place in Mumbai, India, in 1998. Twelve thousand members from local and international Laughter Clubs joined together in a mega laughter session.

“HAPPY-DEMIC” was the first World Laughter Day gathering outside India. It took place in the year 2000 in Copenhagen, Denmark where more than 10,000 people gathered at Town Hall Square. It was the largest ever gathering that laughed and bonded together and the event went into the Guinness Book of World Records.

Why World Laughter Day

The main objective of Laughter Yoga is to promote world peace through laughter. Some people find this idea fanciful, but an understanding of the science of emotions and emotional contagion in particular shows how this might be achieved. The practice of Laughter Yoga causes the body to release certain ‘Feel Good’ hormones into the bloodstream related to feelings of happiness, warmth, unconditional love, bonding, tolerance, forgiveness, generosity, and compassion. Let’s call this a Joy Cocktail. The presence of this ‘Joy Cocktail’ of hormones and neuro-peptides precludes the production of other hormones and neuro-peptides that correspond with hatred, fear, violence, jealousy, aggression and the emotions associated with war and oppression.

By practicing Laughter Yoga in groups, the level of this Joy Cocktail is raised to high concentrations through the multiplier effect: people leaving Laughter Yoga sessions go forth and interact with many people who are in turn affected to varying degrees by this powerful emotional state of joy. They in turn ‘infect’ other people they come into contact with. You can experience this ‘chain reaction’ after your very first Laughter Yoga session. Not only will you cheer up your friends and family but you may also cheer up the bus driver and others on your bus, the people you work with, the staff at the shop and more. They in turn will cheer up others, and so on. By having tens of thousands of Laughter Clubs all over the world, it will create a positive energy which will change the



consciousness of the globe for the better. Actually, the formula for world peace is very simple – one person at a time multiplies it and spreads it...

Format

The usual format of WLD celebration is the congregation of Laughter Club members, their families and friends at some important landmark in their city like big squares, public parks or auditoriums and laugh collectively. They pray for world peace and read out the message from Dr. Kataria.

In India, Laughter Club members gather in public parks and take out a procession or a Peace March. They carry banners and placards such as -

“World Peace Through Laughter”,

“The Whole World Is An Extended Family”,

“Laugh & Make Others Laugh”,

“Join Laughter Club – It’s FREE!” etc.



During the march all chant “ho, ho, ha, ha, ha” and “very good, very good, yeah!” clapping and dancing. After walking some distance, they stop to do a few Laughter Yoga exercises and then move on. At the end of the march, they assemble on a stage or platform where laughter leaders conduct laughter session followed by reading of Dr. Kataria’s message for World Peace.

This is followed by a variety entertainment program of music, dance and laughter contests. One can organize contests with prizes like: Best laughing man / woman / child / senior, Horrible singing contest, etc. Winners are those with the most infectious, natural and effortless laughter for no reason.

CHAPTER 16

Different Types of Trainings at Laughter Yoga International

Different types of Trainings at Laughter Yoga International

Since group laughter without reason is a new concept, one is required to understand the basic philosophy and learn different skills in order to conduct a successful laughter session. We need proficient laughter leaders who can lead a group of people through Laughter Yoga exercises along with yogic breathing and Laughter Meditation. To facilitate knowledge and skills, we have developed different types of trainings, seminars and workshops conducted by trained Laughter Yoga professionals.

There are four levels of trainings:

1. Basic Learning Course: This is a one day experiential workshop which can be offered by certified leaders, teachers and master trainers. This is not a certified program but participants will get basic knowledge about the concept and philosophy of Laughter Yoga. They will learn how it works and what benefits it brings to the body and mind. Participants will also experience a Laughter Yoga session and Laughter Yoga Meditation, plus how to get involved in different areas of application of Laughter Yoga. They will also learn how to laugh alone at home and get practical ideas about how to bring more laughter into daily life. This course can be taught by Certified Laughter Yoga leaders, teachers and master trainers.

2. Two-Day Certified Laughter Yoga Leader Training (CLYL): This training is done by Certified Laughter Yoga Teachers for two days, at the end of which participants are certified as laughter leaders.

What you will learn in this training: This is a basic training on how to lead a laughter session for social clubs, corporate organizations, seniors, school children and people with special needs. You will acquire the basic facilitation skills of how to lead a group of people through laughter session and meditation. You will also learn the history, concept, philosophy and different steps of Laughter Yoga and Laughter Meditation. During this course, you will also learn why we need to laugh more today, scientific research on laughter and its effects on human physiology and behavior, essential link between yoga and laughter and the multi health benefits of Laughter Yoga.

3. Five- Day Certified Laughter Yoga Teacher Training (CLYT): During the course, you

will learn how to lead a group of people through simulated Laughter Yoga techniques and skills of converting this simulated laughter into real infectious and spontaneous laughter without using jokes, comedy or humor. You will be given an opportunity to lead a laughter session during practice sessions. You will also learn the powerful technique of real and deeper Laughter Meditation, where you do not have to make any effort to laugh, and laughter flows like a fountain. You will be taught how to lead the people through guided relaxation and other grounding techniques. You will get the opportunity to watch video presentations.

This is a five-day intensive training course for laughter leaders conducted primarily by Dr. Kataria and some authorized laughter teachers or master trainers. At the end of the training, laughter leaders are certified as laughter teachers and have been given an in depth knowledge about leading Laughter Yoga in different areas of application along with promotion, marketing, PR and training skills.

Who needs it: Anyone who is committed to spreading Laughter Yoga will benefit from this training. It will be of special interest to:

- » Yoga and fitness teachers
- » HR and management training professionals
- » Health care professionals
- » Teachers and sports coaches
- » Psychologists and psychiatrists
- » Entertainment professionals
- » Senior care workers
- » Marriage and family therapists
- » Life coaches and alternative therapists
- » Sales managers
- » Tourism professionals & tour guides

4. Certified Laughter Yoga Master Trainer - This is the highest level of certification and you will be authorized to conduct five- day Certified Laughter Yoga Teacher trainings. Master Trainer courses are conducted only by Dr. Madan Kataria, the founder of Laughter Yoga and are offered by invitation only at his discretion depending on the knowledge, experience and skills of the teacher.

CHAPTER 17

Guidelines for Conducting Basic Learning Course

As a Laughter Leader you are authorized to teach Basic Learning Course and give a certificate.

Course Objectives

Learning to Laugh More: The main goal of this course is to increase the amount of laughter and joy in your life by practicing laughter yoga on a daily basis and thereby gain physical, mental, and emotional benefits. It will enable you to perform laughter exercises at home and share them with your family and friends after you have learned the techniques.

Art of Laughing for No Reason: You can laugh for no reason without humor, jokes, or comedy and you'll feel the benefits on the very first session!

Mind Programming with Laughter: Programming your mind with laughter making laughter as a habit by repeating this practice.

Science of Breathing: By combining Laughter exercises and deep breathing techniques one can increase the breathing capacity which will bring more oxygen to the body and brain.

Duration:

In Person: 1 day (6 hours)

Online: 6 lessons of one hour each

Syllabus

Lesson 1

Five Reasons Why We Need to Laugh More Today.

What is laughter yoga? Why is it an ideal delivery system to obtain physical, mental, and emotional benefits?

Practice

5 laughter exercises names fake it until you make it milkshake. one minute laughter challenge

- Try the five latest laughter exercises to feel healthy and happy.
- Laugh your way to better health with the 40-Day Laughter Challenge!

Differences between the Basic Learning Course and Certified Leader Training.

Five Reasons Why We Need to Laugh More Today.

What is laughter yoga? Why is it an ideal delivery system to obtain physical, mental, and emotional benefits?

Practice

Lesson 2

These three key reasons will change your attitude toward laughter! Why laughter yoga is superior to humor, jokes, and comedy

Practice

- Learn Signature Laughter Yoga Pose for Sustained and Hearty Laughter, that produces rapid physiological changes.
- A variety of new laughter exercises will stimulate your laughter muscles.
- Cultivating the Four Elements of Joy: Singing, Dancing, Playing, and Laughing. Learn the steps to the all-time popular Bollywood laughter yoga dance music.

Lesson 3

How laughing and deep breathing increase breathing capacity? What is the link between laughter and yoga?

Practice:

Learn Yoga Nidra, a powerful relaxation technique that promotes efficiency and well-being.

Get your body oxygenated with these five breathing-based laughter exercises.

Lesson 4

Genuine vs. Voluntary Laughter - Understand why your brain cannot distinguish between real and voluntary laughter.

Discover the theory of the mirror neuron to learn more about why laughter is contagious.

Practice:

Learn the New Laugh and Dance Party: Integrate Aerobic-Style Dancing with Laughter Exercises.

Take your laughter muscles to the next level with a variety of new laughter exercises.

Lesson 5

Learn How LY Can Help with Depression, Anxiety, and Chronic Illnesses Like Cancer, Diabetes and Hypertension.

Learning LY as a Personal Development Program: Develop your self-confidence and communication skills.

Laughing during challenges and living life to the fullest.

Practice:

Enhance brain functions with five new brain gym exercises.

Lesson 6

Discover the health benefits of laughter yoga and why it is becoming increasingly popular worldwide.

A Cardio Workout and Immune System Boost: Laughter Yoga for Wellness.

Learn the guided techniques for laughter yoga so you can practice it alone.

Your daily chores can be made more enjoyable by laughing.

Explore strategies that will increase your level of laughter.

Appendix 1

The Importance Of Oxygen

Extracts from Scholars on the Importance of Oxygen

“Deep breathing techniques increase oxygen to the cells and are the most important factors in living a disease-free and energetic life. When cells get enough oxygen, cancer will not and cannot occur.” – Dr. Otto Warburg, President, Institute of Cell Physiology, Nobel Prize Winner (Dr. Warburg is the only person to ever win the Nobel Prize for Medicine twice and was nominated for a third).

“Breathing correctly is the key to better fitness, muscle strength, stamina and athletic endurance.” - Dr. Michael Yessis, Ph. D. President Sports Training Institute, Fitness Writer –Muscle and Fitness Magazine.

“Oxygenation through deep breathing boosts the immune system and can rid the body of chronic illnesses.” - Dr. Sheldon Hendler, MD, Medical Researcher Cell Oxygenation, author ‘The Oxygen Breakthrough’.

“All body functions are breathing-related. Proper oxygen delivery to all parts of your body is crucial to health and wellbeing. Aerobic exercise increases the body’s available oxygen and therefore promotes wellness. Delivering oxygen to the body is the responsibility of the respiratory system. Breathing is the process by which air enters the bloodstream via the lungs. Thus proper breathing and correcting common breathing disorders is the ultimate form of aerobics.” - Dr. Robert Fried, Breath Connection, Insight Books, 1990, p. 52.

“Oxygen tension in tissues enhances the action of some antibiotics — notably aminoglycosides — and the immune system and stimulates cellular metabolism.” – Linda Collison, Hyperbarics: When Pressuring Patients Helps, Health Index.

“Deep diaphragmatic breathing stimulates the cleansing of the lymph system by creating a vacuum effect which pulls the lymph through the bloodstream. This increases the rate of toxic elimination by as much as 15 times the normal rate.” – Dr. J.W. Shields, MD, Lymph, Lymph Glands, and Homeostasis. Lymphology, v25, n4, Dec. 1992, p. 147.

“Oxygen plays a pivotal role in the proper functioning of the immune system. We can look at oxygen deficiency as the single greatest cause of all diseases.” – Stephen Levine, a respected molecular biologist and geneticist, and Dr. Paris M. Kidd, Ph.D., Antioxidant Adaptation.

Appendix 2

Laughter Yoga Best Practices and Code of Conduct for Certified Leaders

Certified Laughter Yoga professionals agree that they shall promote and practice Laughter Yoga according to the principles and practices declared by Laughter Yoga International.

1. Have a sincere commitment to provide Laughter Yoga services of the highest quality to those who seek their service.

2. Acknowledge the confidential nature of all professional relationships and respect them accordingly and ensure that all persons' basic rights and privacy are upheld at all times.

3. Strive to keep international headquarters updated with the details on themselves, their Laughter Clubs and Laughter Yoga services and activities.

4. Make sure when non-Laughter Yoga ideas and practices are incorporated into a service that is described as Laughter Yoga, such ideas and practices will be clearly described as being different from and not part of Laughter Yoga.

5. Principle of Oneness: Laughter Yoga Leaders promote the principle of oneness – 'I belong to everyone and everyone belongs to me. No one is superior or inferior - we are all equal.' We are part of a global family with diverse cultural values bound together through the worldwide network of Laughter Yoga Clubs in a common pursuit of good health, peace and understanding.

6. Principle of Selfless Service and Respect: Laughter Yoga Leaders do not put personal interest before the need of others. They encourage discussion and differing opinions and do not allow personal ego to interfere with adopting good solutions regardless of where they originate. They do their utmost to make sure that all participants feel included and valued.

7. Unconditional Love for All: Laughter Yoga Leaders strive to make all persons feel welcome; they are patient and understanding with everyone. They readily adapt to the values of other cultures and countries and are sensitive and open-minded to individual concerns and differences. They do not tolerate any display of prejudice or bias related to gender, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion, ability, age or disability. They give unconditionally to everyone without judging or discriminating.

8. Continuing Education and Collaboration: Laughter Yoga Leaders must stay abreast of the latest information about the health benefits of laughter, new laughter exercises and current events in the global laughter network by reading press accounts and content from the Laughter Yoga website, <https://laughteryoga.org/>.

They readily share insights and information with others in the laughter yoga community and encourage collaboration, promotion and participation in Laughter Yoga events.

Appendix 3

40 Foundation Exercises

1. Greeting Laughter: Namaste Laughter – Since Laughter Yoga started from India, the first laughter exercise is to greet each other by joining both the hands and looking into the eyes and laughing. **Handshake Laughter:** Alternatively, one can shake hands with different group members and laugh as in the western way of greeting. We can also combine *Namaste* with handshake laughter.

2. Fake it until you make it: Start making different sounds of laughter, such as <ho ho ho>, <ha ha ha>, and <hi hi hi>, as if pretending to laugh. Continue faking laughter until you start laughing spontaneously. When you make eye contact with other people, fake laughter will transform into genuine laughter.

2. Milkshake Laughter: Hold two imaginary glasses of milk. Pour one into the other saying, “Aeee...”, pour the second into the first, saying (a little higher) “Aeeee ...”; then pretend to drink saying “Aah-ha-ha-ha-ha!”. **Variations:** 1. If you don’t like milk, just pretend to mix it and throw it behind you or onto the ground in front of you.

3. Cell Phone Laughter: Imaginary cell phones “rings,” put it to your ear and laugh as though you heard the funniest joke ever. Move around and share with others, laughing. You can also pretend to hold two imaginary phones in both your hands laughing alternately on each one.

4. Credit Card Bill Laughter: Hold an imaginary bill in your open hand (palms facing towards you) and laugh at what you see and show it to others.

5. Just Laughing: Imagine someone is asking you why you’re laughing and you don’t know. Put your palms up, shrug your shoulders and pretend as if saying, “I don’t know why I am laughing; I’m just laughing.

6. Argument Laughter: Laugh by pointing and wagging index fingers at each other as if you are arguing and laughing at the same time. **Variation:** This laughter can also be done between two groups facing each other and laughing competitively, while pretending to argue.

7. One Meter Laughter: In this exercise pretend to measure imaginary one meter of fabric. Left arm out to the right hand sliding over arm like shooting bow and arrow. Right hand slides over in three jerks, chanting “Aeeeh!” until both arms open outstretched. Tilt your head up and belly laugh. This cycle is repeated twice.

8. Lion Laughter: This particular laughter has been derived from a yogic posture known as *Simha Mudra* (lion posture). Stick your tongue out fully, while keeping your mouth wide open. Stretch both your hands like the paws of a lion, roar loudly and laugh from the belly.

9. Gradient Laughter: This laughter is practiced at the end of the session. The members are asked to come closer to the leader. Starts with a gentle giggle and then slowly and gradually increase the intensity of laughter and then burst into hearty laughter for about a minute.

10. Hot Soup Laughter: Stick out your tongue, shake your wrists up and down and wave the heat off your tongue as if you have just had very hot and spicy soup. Keep laughing as you do this.

11. Childlike Laughter: This is a breathing based exercise where you stretch your arms in front of your chest and take a long deep breath while bringing both the fists towards your chest. Hold your breath for the count of three and then laugh while breathing out and slap your thighs and run around like a child.

12. Swinging Laughter (aka Arm Swinging): Stand in a wide circle holding hands. On instruction from the laughter leader, move forward towards the center by mimicking prolonged vowel sound of Ae... Ae... Aeeeeee.....After a bout of laughter, move back to your original position. Second time, move forward by saying Eeee. Similarly, the third and fourth time make the sounds of Eh... Eh... E... and Oh... Oh... O...**Variation (a)**- For a large group, ask them to come forward as a big cluster of people not holding hands, raising the free arms to the sky.**(b)** - Use vowel sounds from other languages.

13. 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 forwards and backwards, looking at different members and laughing in a 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. **Variation:** put both hands in a thumbs up position and look at others as if appreciating and laughing.

14. Forgiveness / Apology Laughter: Indian way – Cross your arms and hold your ear lobes with index finger and thumb. Bend at the knee, bow down and laugh. **Western way** – spread both your arms out as if saying sorry and laugh.

15. Laugh At Your Own Self: Point one finger towards your heart and laugh. Move around and look at other people as if you are laughing at yourself. This is the best ego busting exercise.

16. Electrical Shock Laughter: Reach as if to shake hands and pretend that you've got an electrostatic shock from the other person's hand. Laugh at the surprise!

17. Silent Laughter: Laugh very quietly pretending as if someone is sleeping in the adjoining room and should not be disturbed. Open your mouth wide open, and look at each other while laughing without sound.

18. Guru Laughter: This is a value based exercise which conveys that one can learn from one's own mistakes as well as from the mistakes of others. Place one hand on your head saying, 'I learn from my mistakes ha ha ha'. Then put the other hand on your head and say, 'I learn from others' mistakes ha ha ha'. By placing both hands on your head keep laughing and moving and meeting other group members.

22. Oneness Laughter: This exercise is founded on the universal principle of oneness. As you open your arms, say, "I belong to everyone," and as you close them, as if embracing others, say, "Everyone belongs to me." Then, replace these words with laughter and continue opening and closing your arms.

23. Generosity Laughter: Imagine you are holding a bowl in your left hand, and with your right hand, make a gesture as if you are giving love and laughter to everyone. Keep laughing while moving your hand in a giving gesture.

24. Laughter Juice: Cup your left hand, and with your right hand, continue collecting problems and depositing them into the cup. Once it's filled, pour the problems into your left ear and laugh. Now, shape your right hand into a cup and keep laughing while gathering problems into it. Laugh while pouring them into your right ear. Imagine your head is brimming with problems. Visualize an imaginary glass under your mouth, and with your right hand, make a circular motion around your ear as if operating a manual juicer. Maintain laughter throughout these movements. Repeat the process with your left hand. Hold two imaginary glasses of juice, mix them twice, and then throw them away while exclaiming "aeeee...aeeee...ha ha ha ha." Food Blessing:

25. Laughter Yoga Food Blessing: Imagine you have a plate full of food in front of you. Place both your hands above the plate and move your palms up, down, left, and right while saying "ho ho ha ha ho ho ha ha." With this exercise, you acknowledge that the food given to you provides energy to your body – it is a source of prana (ENERGY). Then, move your hands in a circular manner above the plate thrice while laughing. This symbolizes that you are grateful to all the people who have worked behind the scenes to serve you this plate of food.

Note:- This exercise can be performed during the lunch break in laughter yoga trainings. Please encourage participants to practice it a few times at home. It will add a lot of fun to all laughter yoga events when people go out for lunch or dinner in restaurants.

BREATHING BASED EXERCISES

26. Signature laughter exercise: Extend your arms in front of your chest, inhaling deeply as you clench your fists and draw them closer to your heart. Hold your breath for three seconds as the leader chants, "Hold it, hold it, hold it," then burst into hearty laughter, throwing your arms skyward. Keep the laughter flowing, swinging your body and waving your arms from side to side for as long as you can.

27. Three lobes of the lungs: The lungs consist of three lobes: upper, middle, and lower. To enhance oxygen flow to the upper lobe, assume the reversed namaste position with your hands behind your shoulder blades. Inhale deeply, holding for three seconds, then exhale with prolonged laughter. For the middle lobe, adopt the mountain posture in Yoga by joining your hands in namaste position above your head. Inhale deeply, hold for three seconds, and exhale with laughter. Return your hands to the front of your chest. To target the lower lobe, extend your arms in front of your chest. Inhale deeply, folding your arms and fists, holding the breath for three seconds. Upon exhaling, stick out your tongue and laugh from the belly.

28. Breathe Stretch and Laugh: Interlock your fingers in front of your chest. With a slow, deep breath, extend your arms above your head, striving to straighten them fully. Maintain this posture for three seconds, then exhale, unleashing hearty laughter for as long as possible, while gradually lowering your arms back to your sides.

29. Childlike Laughter: This is a breathing based exercise where you stretch your arms in front of your chest and take a long deep breath while bringing both the fists towards your chest. Hold your breath for the count of three and then laugh while breathing out and slap your thighs and run around like a child.

THEMED EXERCISES

30. Laughing at Aches & Pains: Point to any part of your body that is hurting and uncomfortable (e.g. knee pain, backache, tummy ache, shoulder pain, neck pain and headache) and laugh your pain away.

31. Airport & Flight Laughter: Laugh at the following situations faced during flight:
AIRPORT:

1. Pretend you're late and run around with bags.
2. Get Boarding Card.
3. Wave goodbye to your bags, disappearing on the conveyor belt.
4. Board the airplane.

FLIGHT: Demonstrate:

1. Show emergency exits (in front; behind; two sides).
2. How to operate the seatbelt.
3. Pull down oxygen mask; put on self, then another.
4. How to inflate life jacket (blowing into it)...
5. Ask (and offer) directions at destination (all in gibberish).
6. Show pictures you took, but you left the lens cap on and they're all blank...throw them away, you're free!

32. Household Chores Laughter: Keep laughing as you pretend to do household chores like washing dishes, using the vacuum cleaner, cleaning windows and folding clothes etc.

33. Animal Kingdom Laughter: Imitate movement and sounds of different animals and laugh. For example, monkey, penguin, chicken, elephant etc.

34. Sports and Games Laughter: Imitate movement of different sports and games while laughing. For example, weight lifting, short put / discuss / javelin throw, archery, boxing, karate, swimming, volleyball and cricket etc.

2. Beauty Parlour Theme:

Imagine various beauty treatments typically done at a beauty parlour. For instance, you can style your hair with laughter, shape your eyebrows, wax your arms and legs, apply lipstick, put on a facial mask, and so forth. Maintain laughter throughout these activities.

FLOOR EXERCISES

36. Head On Belly Laughter: Lie down on your back, bodies at right angles (with your head on someone's belly, and someone else's head on your belly) and laugh.

37. Bull's Eye Laughter: Participants lie on the floor with heads towards the center of the circle and feet towards the periphery (looking like the petals of a flower or a target board) and do Laughter Meditation.

38. Centipede Laughter: Lie in a line on the floor with everybody's heads in the center and feet facing outwards. Every alternate person's legs should be placed in the opposite direction. Now kick your legs in the air like the multiple legs of a centipede. Variations:
1. Kick legs like riding a bicycle in the air. 2. Arms up, hold/touch others' hands. 3. Hold knees close to chest. 4. Arms up; kick legs and shake the arms/waggle the fingers of the outstretched hands.

39. Rowing Laughter: Sit in a straddling position with arms in front; pretend you are rowing a boat and say, "Aeee; aeee..."; after 2 to 4 times, lean back and laugh, resting on the belly of the person behind you.

CONCLUDING LAUGHTER

40. One minute laughter for world peace: As the laughter session nears its conclusion, all laughter club members come together to laugh for one minute, dedicating their laughter to world peace. Invite the group members to stand closer, placing both hands on their hearts. Begin laughing slowly and gently, gradually raising arms towards the sky. Sustain the laughter for one minute, sending out positive vibrations for peace across the globe.

Appendix 4

Guidelines for Laughter Yoga Session with Business People

As a certified Laughter Yoga Leader, you have the opportunity to conduct Laughter Yoga sessions for companies and corporations, providing valuable presentations for which you can charge. To thrive in the corporate world with Laughter Yoga, it's essential to cultivate professional skills. Following your training, it's beneficial to initiate social laughter clubs to gain practical experience in leading effective laughter sessions. By becoming a Prozone member, you can continually enhance your expertise, including integrating laughter yoga into corporate settings. Additionally, we provide standard brochures and flyers for your use when approaching companies.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind before conducting sessions within companies:

Talk less; laugh more:

"Less talk, more laughter" should be your motto when engaging with people in the business world. They're not seeking a lecture on laughter; rather, they crave the first-hand experience of laughter. Therefore, excessive talking at the outset of the session is unnecessary. Instead, provide them with basic information about the concept of laughter without a reason and the scientific theories supporting it as an exercise. Keep this introduction concise, avoiding more than 10 to 15 minutes of discussion. Then swiftly transition into the Laughter Yoga session. Once participants are engaged in laughter and experiencing its invigorating effects, they'll be more receptive to hearing about the scientific studies and benefits of laughter.

Dress Code for Laughter Yoga in Business:

When conducting business presentations, it's crucial to dress in attire that exudes professionalism. Avoid opting for casual or funky clothing adorned with humorous messages, as they may not align with the seriousness of the corporate environment. A good rule of thumb is to mirror the attire of your clients, as this fosters a sense of comfort and rapport. Additionally, encourage participants to wear comfortable clothing that facilitates ease of movement and allows them to comfortably sit on the floor if necessary. Remind them to loosen tight belts, as they can impede breathing during laughter exercises.

Venue: Selecting the appropriate venue is crucial for the success of a business session.

a) Flexible Seating Arrangement: Seminars or training sessions typically cater to groups ranging from 15 to 50 individuals. Prioritize venues equipped with movable chairs and a clean, comfortable floor suitable for seating. As a general guideline, a room designed to accommodate 50 people in theater-style seating will comfortably host 25-30 individuals for a Laughter Yoga session. It's essential to ensure that the exuberance of your session does not disrupt the activities of others working or residing nearby.

b) Fixed Chair Venue: In situations where fixed seating, such as in an auditorium or theater, is unavoidable, adapt your approach to ensure an effective session.

Begin by delivering any video presentations or slideshows, allowing participants to remain seated. Following this, transition to laughter exercises that can be performed without significant movement. Encourage participants to engage with their neighbors, maintaining eye contact throughout the exercises. Laughter exercises suitable for fixed seating include Milkshake Laughter, One-Meter Laughter, Mobile Phone Laughter, Lion Laughter, Handshake Laughter, Visa Bill Laughter, and Gradient Laughter.

If the room includes a large stage or an open area in front of it, consider inviting some or all participants to occupy these spaces for a more traditional Laughter Yoga session, while others observe from their seats. This allows for a dynamic and inclusive experience within the constraints of fixed seating arrangements.

Equipment: To enhance your session, consider using an LCD projector paired with a laptop or a DVD player connected to a TV. Displaying videos of others engaging in Laughter Yoga can significantly ease the group into participating themselves. For larger groups exceeding 40-50 people, utilizing a cordless lapel microphone is recommended. This wireless option grants you the freedom to demonstrate exercises and express playfulness through bodily movements without being hindered by cables or restricted movements

Time: Mornings are optimal for Laughter Yoga sessions, as the benefits can positively influence participants throughout the day. Short sessions focusing solely on exercises can be completed in 30 minutes or less. Introductory seminars incorporating exercises typically last an hour, while sessions that include laughter meditation may require up to 90 minutes.

Price: Pricing for Laughter Yoga sessions with business clients can be a nuanced process, influenced by various factors such as regional norms, client awareness, group size, presentation quality, and your experience level. Consulting with corporate or HR consultants in your area can provide insight into local pricing standards. Additionally, your pricing strategy should evolve as you build your portfolio and gain experience.

Initially, prioritize gaining experience over setting a specific price point. Focus on building your work profile and self-confidence through practice. When discussing pricing with potential clients, inquire about their budget for the session. Sometimes, they may offer more than expected, especially if they value your services.

Consider offering some free sessions initially, followed by paid engagements if the client is satisfied. Remain open to negotiation, as rigid pricing may deter potential clients. In many Western countries, laughter professionals typically charge between \$250 to \$1,000 USD for introductory seminars and full laughter sessions, with ongoing sessions often priced lower. As you accumulate experience and positive references, you can adjust your pricing based on market demand.

Entertainment: At times, you may receive requests to conduct Laughter Yoga sessions during social gatherings, such as cocktail receptions or dinners, typically held at the conclusion of conferences or seminars. While some may view your session as entertainment, it's advisable to avoid such engagements. These environments are often conducive to socializing and may not foster active participation in Laughter Yoga exercises.

Refuse assignments where the expectation is primarily entertainment focused. The likelihood of success in such scenarios is minimal, as attendees may prioritize socializing over actively engaging in the session. Emphasize to organizers that Laughter Yoga is a serious practice with profound benefits, requiring the full attention and commitment of all participants. While Laughter Yoga sessions can be enjoyable, it's essential to underscore that they are not intended solely for entertainment purposes

Filler Sessions: Incorporating brief 5-10-minute Laughter Yoga sessions can inject a significant energy boost into lengthy HR training sessions and conferences. For these shorter sessions, it's crucial to succinctly explain the essence of Laughter Yoga and its mechanisms within a 3-5 minutes timeframe. Following this brief introduction, engage participants in standing warm-up exercises, leading seamlessly into a series of quick laughter exercises.

These concise sessions can be repeated multiple times throughout the day, interspersed between longer training sessions. Doing so not only revitalizes participants' energy levels but also aids in improving their attention span and learning capabilities

Popular Corporate Laughter Exercises

- Milkshake (cocktail)
- Visa bill
- Cell phone (two cell phones at a time)
- Argument laughter
- Too much stress laughter
- Boss in/boss out laughter
- No Money Laughter
- Jackpot Laughter
- High Five/High Ten
- Wifi
- Mental Floss
- Brain Wash
- Zipper Laughter
- Serious laughter
- Winter car laughter
- Laugh at yourself
- I have lots of good qualities and very little weaknesses
- Welcome problems they will make you stronger
- Waxing laughter
- Laughter Juice
- Milking the cow
- Airport safety instructions
- All Brain Gym Exercises
- Double Double ho ho
- Clap Clap ha ha ha

Appendix 5

Laughter Yoga Liability Release

Laughter Yoga is a fun and healthy exercise regime with beneficial effects for the body, mind and emotions. Like any form of aerobic exercise, it should not be practiced by people with medical problems without first taking advice from their medical practitioner. Laughter Yoga should not be considered as a substitute for proper medical consultation for physical, mental and psychological illnesses. If during a session you feel sudden or new pain please leave the session immediately, or advise the leader if you require assistance.

Please read this carefully and give your consent:

The group is participating in Laughter Yoga sessions requiring physical exertion that may be strenuous and may cause physical injury. I will ensure that each participant is informed of the risks and hazards involved.

Group members are physically fit and have no medical condition that would prevent their full participation in Laughter Yoga sessions, or if they have medical problems or conditions these will be fully revealed to the Laughter Yoga leader before each session.

I assume full responsibility for any risks, injuries or damages, known or unknown, which might be incurred by all group members as a result of participating in the sessions, and knowingly, voluntarily and expressly waive any claim against the Dr. Kataria School of Laughter Yoga, Laughter Yoga International, their leaders, teachers, employees or assistants for injury or damages that may be sustained as a result of participation. Group members, their heirs or legal representatives forever release, waive, discharge and covenant not to sue for any injury or death caused by their negligence or other acts.

I have read the above release and waiver of liability and fully understand its contents. I voluntarily agree to the terms and conditions stated above.

Laughter Yoga News

To receive our e-newsletter please

Provide your email address:

Signature of adult: _____

Authorized to act on behalf of the Group.

Date (Day/Month/Year): ____/____/____

Appendix 6

Photo / Video Release Form

Project Description _____

I, _____, in consideration of your photographing, videotaping me / my children, or recording me/ my performance or voice for the above described project, hereby grant permission to Laughter Yoga International, which term shall include not only yourselves, but your employees, agents, successors, licenses and assigns, the irrevocable right and license to use my likeness and/or voice on videotape or film, photograph or audiotape; to edit such videotape or film or audiotape or crop photographs at your discretion, to incorporate the same in the above production and to use or authorize the use of such videotape or film, audiotape of photograph or any portion thereof in any manner or media at any time in perpetuity and to use my name, likeness, voice and biographical or other information concerning me in connection therewith, including promotion in all media.

I agree to hold Laughter Yoga International, harmless against any liability, loss or damage resulting from the use of my image and/or voice, and I hereby release and discharge them from any and all claims whatsoever in connection with such use of my image and/or voice.

I am signing this release freely and voluntarily and in executing this release do not rely on any inducements, promises or representations made by Laughter Yoga International.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Approval/Consent of Parent or Guardian

Family Member Names: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 7

Prozone Membership: Continued Education For Laughter Yoga Professionals

After taking this training, you will be certified as a Laughter Yoga leader. Laughter Yoga is spreading exponentially all over the world and is constantly evolving. We have a special section on our website called Prozone, which is dedicated to update your knowledge and skills of Laughter Yoga methods on an ongoing basis. As a certified leader you will get six months free Prozone membership. You will receive your user name and password as soon as your teachers submit your names to our admin team.

Highlights of Prozone membership

Laughter Yoga Prozone is a premium membership program dedicated for continuing education for Laughter Yoga professionals. It is a way to stay current with new concepts and programs of Laughter Yoga including, laughter exercises, techniques, business tips, training tips, articles on scientific research. It is also a way to connect to news about Laughter Yoga Foundation and Laughter Yoga International University. Use your membership to maximize your potential in the growing new fields of Laughter Yoga's different areas of application, such as social Laughter Clubs, seniors, schools, corporate, and special needs. In addition, you will receive a monthly newsletter from Dr. Kataria.

Value added services

We are enhancing several value added services for Prozone members. With the help of our designers at Laughter Yoga International University we offer complimentary design services for you in the following:

- » Your business card
- » General Basic Learning Course Flyer
- » Training Flyer
- » Corporate Flyer
- » E-Flyer / E-Brochure

You supply us with the text information and your professional photograph and we do the rest. Any artwork and design requested beyond this will be chargeable.

1. Leader will receive 6 months free membership while teachers will receive 1 year memberships. Each prozone member will receive unique registration number.

2. Please note that if you want us to customize your brochures, flyers or business cards you need to be a paid member for one year. This service is not available for free membership.

Here are other subscription options:

- 1 Year USD 49.99
- 2 Years USD 79.99
- 5 Years USD 199.99

Appendix 8

Laughter Quotient Form

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
6. I dance for no reason everyday 1 2 3 4 5
7. Every day, I express freely my positive and negative emotions 1 2 3 4 5
8. Every day, 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 laughier. 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.

Appendix 9

Laughter Friendly Songs

Laughter Yoga sessions are enhanced by spirited singing. Here are some songs I recommend.

If You're Happy and You Know it

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (clap clap)

Happy Ha Ha to You (Tune: Happy Birthday)

Happy ha ha to you, Happy ho ho it's true Happy heehee dear ----- Happy ha ha to you!

The More We Laugh Together

(Tune: The More We Get Together)

The more we laugh together, together, together

The more we laugh together, the happier we'll be!

I laugh with your friends and you laugh with my friends

We'll all be friends together and happier we'll be!

A Bicycle Built for Two

Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer do

I'm half-crazy all for the love of you

It won't be a stylish marriage

I can't afford a carriage

But you'll look sweet upon the seat of a bicycle built for two

The Hokey Pokey

(You know the words)

Simple songs to sing with "HA" instead of words:

- » Frere Jaques
- » Take Me Out to the Ball Game
- » Row Row Your Boat
- » William Tell Overture a.k.a. the Lone Ranger Song (gallop with this)
- » The Old Gray Mare
- » Roll Out the Barrel (polka with this) • Head and Shoulders, Knees & Toes • Skip to My Lou
- » Yankee Doodle Dandy
- » Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

Every Little Cell In My Body Is Happy

(Tune: Mama's Little Baby Loves Shortnin' Bread)

Every little cell in my body is happy

Every little cell in my body is well

Every little cell in my body is happy

Every little cell in my body is swell

Feel so good, feel so well

Every little cell in my body is well

Feel so good, feel so well

Every little cell in my body is swell (repeat part 1)

Do You Know How Much Your Love Means?

Do you know how much your love means?

(Bobble index finger at someone)

Do you know how many hearts you have lifted?

(arms go up in front of body)

Do you know your love is healing

(arms come down and hands wiggle in blessing)

What a wonderful feeling!

(roll arms in front of body and move to a new partner)



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