

Laughter Yoga is a unique exercise routine which is fast sweeping the world and is a complete wellbeing workout. It is the brainchild of Dr. Madan Kataria, an Indian physician from Mumbai who started the first laughter club in a park on 13th March 1995, with just 5 people. Today, it has become a worldwide phenomenon with more than 6000 social laughter clubs in 65 countries.

Laughter Yoga combines unconditional laughter with yogic breathing (Pranayama). Anyone can laugh for no reason, without relying on humor, jokes or comedy. Laughter is simulated as a body exercise in a group but with eye contact and childlike playfulness, it soon turns into real and contagious laughter.

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

This innovative concept has been widely accepted all over the world and has been written about in prestigious publications like TIME Magazine, National Geographic, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Daily Telegraph (UK) and many others. Laughter clubs were also featured on Oprah Winfrey Show, BBC, CNN, ZDF (Germany) NHK (Japan), ABC news (USA) and many other TV networks in the world.

### **Why Laughter Yoga - 3 Reasons**

1. In order to get the scientifically proven health benefits of laughter, we need to laugh continuously for at least for 10 to 15 minutes. Since in Laughter Yoga we do laughter as an exercise, we can prolong our laughter as long as we want. On the other hand, natural laughter comes for just a few seconds here and there and is not enough to bring about physiological and biochemical changes in our body.
2. To reap the health benefits of laughter, laughter has to be loud and deep coming from the diaphragm. It should be a belly laugh. It might not be socially acceptable to laugh loudly, but Laughter Yoga clubs provide a safe environment where one can laugh loudly and heartily without any social implication.
3. Natural laughter that courses through our life depends upon many reasons and conditions,

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

### **Life Changing Experience**

In India there are thousands of Laughter Yoga clubs that meet every morning in public parks. Club members proudly report that they haven't missed a day in five years or more. They say it makes them happy, healthy and energized - in effect, it has changed their lives.

They are full of positive energy that makes it easy to cope with stress and impossible to be depressed. In fact, the impact of laughter is so profound that many practitioners claim they no longer need anti depressants. The sustained positive emotions keep them coming back for more.

Participants report significant health improvements. Many felt a reduced frequency of respiratory infections like common cold and flu, while others reported depression lifting, chronic medical problems improving or even disappearing. As the word spread, it was obvious that Laughter Yoga was helping people to become healthier.

### **Scientifically Proven**

Clinical research on Laughter Yoga methods conducted at the University of Graz in Austria, Bangalore (India) as well as in the United States has shown that laughter lowers the level of stress hormones (epinephrine, cortisol, etc) in the blood. It fosters a positive and hopeful attitude. One is less likely to succumb to stress and feelings of depression and helplessness if one is able to laugh away the troubles.