

LAUGHTER YOGA: BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

Laughter Yoga-The Best Prescription for Wellness

A new study in India has confirmed that laughter exercise is a powerful tool to reduce stress levels and heart rate in business professionals.

The brainchild of Indian physician, Dr. Madan Kataria, Laughter Yoga is a new exercise technique sweeping the world with major health benefits. It started in 1995 in Mumbai, India with just five people --- today, it is a worldwide movement with hundreds of thousands of people laughing together every day in India and 55 other countries.

Many practitioners report reduced stress levels and changes in their physical, mental and emotional wellness, even after their first laughter session.

By treating laughter as a form of an exercise, anyone can laugh without jokes, humor or comedy. "We do not laugh because something is funny, but just for the sake of laughing. This is how young children laugh during play and is called unconditional laughter".

In group laughter sessions laughter is first simulated, but with eye contact and playfulness it soon turns into real and contagious laughter. Both simulated and real laughter provide the same physical, mental and emotional benefits.

Laughter Yoga combines fun and easy aerobic exercise with physiological and emotional benefits and stress reduction for a unique wellbeing workout. It is now spreading into schools, offices, aged care facilities, hospitals, factories, supermarkets and even prisons and mental institutions.

Laughter yoga is different from other forms of exercise in important ways:

- It's fun & easy – no postures or skills to learn, no special clothes or equipment required – you are an expert from your first session.
- It provides a fast and powerful no-sweat cardiovascular workout.
- Stress levels quickly reduce by 75% or more and stay down as it helps build stress resistant.
- Blood pressure drops, circulation improves and pulse rate drops.
- Lungs are well exercised and flushed of stale residual air – healthier deep breathing is learnt.
- Blood & major organs are fully oxygenated leaving one bursting with energy.
- Hearty laughter improves mood within minutes by releasing Endorphins that act as mood enhancers and natural pain killers.
- It lifts depression – even chronic depression may be cured.
- It boosts self-confidence, creativity and improves communication skills.

LAUGHTER REDUCES STRESS AND PEAKS PERFORMANCE

The Laughter Yoga study showed that laughter significantly improves work effectiveness and functionality of the staff. Another study conducted in the US also corroborates the efficacy of

laughter. Both studies used unconditional laughter generated by Dr. Kataria's techniques in group laughter sessions. It is the first technique that reliably allows laughter on demand, regardless of participants' mood.

With these findings the business world stands to gain tremendously as work and productivity can be enhanced to the maximum. Laughter sessions can have a profound impact on business performance, even making companies more profitable. Companies in different countries have reported a happier workplace, increased motivation, better communication, and increase in sales and creativity and better teamwork. It is the ultimate answer to business woes.

HEART HEALTH THROUGH LAUGHTER

Hearty laughter is one of the fastest ways to accelerate heart rate and provides an excellent cardiovascular workout and heart massage. Dr. Michael Miller discovered that laughter expands the blood vessels promoting circulation and reducing blood pressure.

Dr. Miller – a leading heart researcher and Associate Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine Director, Center for Preventive Cardiology at University of Maryland Medical Center – will work together with Dr. Kataria to increase awareness of the cardiac benefits of laughter exercise.

LAUGHTER SESSIONS AT SCHOOL

Today's children increasingly face a new and very different childhood reality: the intense period of learning through play that was normal for thousands of years is cut short. Group socializing is replaced with time alone and electronic socializing, parent contact is diminished and parenting skills diminish, adult behavior is demanded at an earlier age, and powerful new academic pressures create high stress levels.

Laughter sessions bring more laughter into children's lives, help alleviate stress, provide tools for dealing with increased stress, boost learning skills and enthusiasm and provide much-needed exercise.

It has already been implemented in some schools in India and other countries. Teachers report improved attention spans, reduction in absenteeism and presenteeism, and improved aptitude and attitude. Some schools are also considering it as a replacement for more expensive schools sports.

LAUGHTER FOR SENIORS

Experience in India and abroad confirms that Laughter Yoga is especially beneficial for older people.

People live longer than ever before, but quality of life is a major concern. Seniors are highly stressed by retirement, moving home, loss of social networks, independence, purpose and mobility. Aging often brings aches and pains, loneliness and depression, and a reduction of cognitive abilities.

In India where hundreds of thousands of people laugh together daily, laughter sessions deal squarely with these problems and often transform their lives for the better. Sessions reduce stress, provide physical and aerobic exercise, counter depression, provide a new social network, and provide emotional release through painless catharsis.

Laughter sessions often bring meaningful improvements in hypertension, arthritis, heart disease, diabetes, depression and asthma – all stress related diseases that are common among seniors.

Laughter sessions provide a fun, inexpensive and effective way of improving quality of life.

LAUGHTER SESSIONS AT FITNESS & YOGA STUDIOS

Yoga and fitness studios in many countries are starting to offer laughter sessions – a fast growing trend that may become the new health craze.

“This is a great way to provide access to laughter sessions at convenient times and in convenient places” says Dr. Kataria. “It has very high publicity value and brings many new clients to their studios.”

“Because it is such fun and also a serious exercise, it provides real health benefits and also a much higher ‘stick-to-it-iveness’ than other forms of exercise.”

LAUGHING ALONE

In most western countries laughter sessions are only available weekly. Because many people wish to laugh daily Dr. Kataria has developed a new system of Laughter Yoga Alone. This distinct practice helps people to laugh daily and maximize health benefits. It proves that laughter not only heals when practiced in a group but also when practiced alone.

For further information: please contact Bill Gee at Laughter Yoga International email billgee@laughteryoga.org or call US 305 517 7688 (rings in Mumbai India) or India phone +919833871010.