

Laughing Yoga

This next section is an ENTIRE style of Yoga. Laughing Yoga has its own books, DVDs and entire websites and trainings. We're just sharing a BIT of the fun of this with you. After all kids like to laugh. As a matter of fact, and **this is** a fact!! Adults laugh approximately 12 times a day. Kids laugh 300 times a day. What's the difference? 288 jokes about Farting! Haha... made you laugh didn't we?

Laughing Yoga-as written in Wikipedia

In March 1995, Dr. Madan Kataria was writing an article 'Laughter - The Best Medicine' for a health journal. In his research, he discovered many modern scientific studies, that described in depth, the many proven benefits of Laughter on the Human mind and body. In particular, Dr. Kataria was impressed by Norman Cousins' book Anatomy of an Illness and the research work by Dr. Lee Berk. Profoundly inspired and being a man of action, Dr. Kataria immediately decided to field-test the impact of laughter on himself and others.

Starting with just a handful of (5) persons, at 7 am on March 13, 1995, at a public park in his neighborhood in Mumbai, India; and managed to persuade four people to support him in launching a 'Laughter Club'. They laughed together in the park that day to the amusement of bystanders; and the small group quickly grew to more than 50 participants, within a few days. In the initial meetings, they stood in a circle with one person in the center, to tell a joke or a funny story. Everybody enjoyed and felt good for the rest of the day.

After two weeks, the Laughter Club hit a snag. The stock of good jokes and stories ran out, and negative, hurtful and naughty jokes started to emerge. Two offended participants complained that it would be better to discontinue the Club than to continue with such jokes. Dr. Kataria asked the Club members to give him just one day to develop a 'breakthrough' that would resolve the crisis.

That night, Dr. Kataria reviewed his research and finally found the answer he was looking for: Our body cannot differentiate between pretend and genuine laughter. Both produced the same 'Happy Chemistry'. The next morning he explained this to the group, and asked them to try to act out laughter with him, for one minute. Amid skepticism they agreed to try... The results were amazing.

For some, the pretend laughter quickly turned into real laughter - this was contagious and in no time others followed. Soon the group was laughing like never before. The hearty laughter that followed persisted for almost ten minutes. This breakthrough was the birth of Laughter Yoga.

Realizing that there are ways other than humor to stimulate laughter, Dr. Kataria developed a range of Laughter Exercises including elements of role-play and other techniques from his days as an amateur theater actor. Giving a thought to the importance of childlike playfulness, he developed further techniques to stimulate this within the group.

As Yoga practitioners, Dr. Kataria and his wife Madhuri, Co-Founder of Laughter Yoga, saw the similarities between Laughter and Pranayama exercises, and incorporated elements from this ancient form of Yoga into Laughter Yoga, including the deep breathing exercises now used between Laughter Exercises, to deepen the impact.

The result - Laughter Yoga: A blend of Yogic Deep Breathing, Stretching, and Laughter Exercises that cultivate child-like playfulness.

Here are some facts that you might find interesting:

*In our society unfortunately we were raised to believe that we should only laugh when there is something funny to laugh at. But that robs us of A LOT of laughter!

*Medical science has proven that after 15 minutes of laughter we release endorphins.

*Fake it till you make it... eventually you will be REALLY laughing and if you're going for the endorphin rush... it's certainly easier on the knees than running!

The Four Parts to Laughing Yoga:

1. Clapping rhythm: (To the left) "ho ho" (to the middle) "ha ha ha" (to the right) "ho ho" (to the middle) "ha ha ha."
2. Emphasize eye contact: it's social medicine... eye contact enhances that.
3. Laughing itself: We take in more oxygen and expel carbon dioxide. It's a form of PRANAYAMA.
4. Childlike playfulness!

The "closing" is: "Very good (clap to the left), very good (clap to the right), YAY!!(arms up over head)."

Here are a few laughs that we enjoy doing with kids (ALL end in the "closing")

The Sneeze Laugh: Inhale as if you're sneezing/exhale laughter.

Balloon Laughter: Take a deep breath in and blow up your balloon with laughter.

Lion Laughter: Prowling the jungle looking for laughs...crawling around on your hands and knees, reach your arms out in front of you wide and roar/laugh.

Eastern Greeting Laughter: Pick a partner, hands in Namaste, bow and laugh.

Western Greeting Laughter: Same thing but shake hands.

HaHa Cha Cha Cha: Clap twice and say "Ha Ha," then dance and say "Cha Cha Cha".

Polite/Chummy hug: First say goodbye with a tidy polite hug/walk away/turn around scream and laugh and give a second BIG hug.

Laughter driving license: You can joke with the kids that they aren't old enough to have their drivers license but they can have their laughter driving license. Start up the car: "A HA HA HA HA" (slow and quiet, using your hand to start ignition) "A HA HA HA HA" (louder). Keep going and eventually start driving all over the room!

Monster laugh and Witchy laugh: Exactly what they sounds like they'd be!

Laughing Meditation

Four Stages:

1. Have the kids lie on the floor and stretch their bodies out. Arms, legs, belly, etc.
2. Have them relax the facial muscles like you would in The Secret Garden.
3. Laugh your butt off!!!! You as the teacher need to inspire the kids to laugh laugh and laugh some more. Tickle them if you have to. Snort loudly, HO HO HO like Santa. Get them to laugh at you and then they will be laughing at each other and before you know it everyone will be laughing. Do this until you can't do it anymore. We suggest a full 2-3 minutes JUST before the Secret Garden. It will poop them out.
4. When it's time to go into the Secret Garden say "OMMMMMMMM..."