

## **Laughter a Hit at Yoga and Fitness Studios**

Are you hearing giggles, guffaws, shrieks, and snickers, or even cackles and hoots at your local yoga center or fitness club? Laughter Yoga is sweeping the world, and your local gym or fitness club might be next. Could laughter be the next big thing?

Scientists are using cutting-edge research to understand how our bodies work and why we get sick. And guess what they're finding? We need to laugh!

But this isn't about funny movies or comedians telling jokes. An Indian medical doctor has figured out how we can laugh without jokes or humor through a system called Laughter Yoga. Don't be surprised if you find yourself laughing soon!

### **Laughter Yoga – The Experience**

My Chinese friend in Malaysia, Ho (yes, that's his real name), invited me to a Laughter Yoga session. At first, I thought he was joking. Laughter is fun and loud, while yoga is quiet and... well, yoga.

We met at a third-floor yoga studio at 7 PM. I had no idea what to expect, but it had to be a laugh, right? The group was eclectic—ranging from kids to seniors, some in suits, others in casual workwear or yoga gear.

Dr. Kataria, the creator of Laughter Yoga, arrived. He's an Indian medical doctor who developed Laughter Yoga in 1995. Friendly and relaxed, he has become a global media sensation. I could sense the presence of greatness.

“Let’s get started,” he said. We began with gentle stretches, clapping, and chanting. “I’m warming you up,” he explained. Most of us were newcomers, unsure of what was coming next.

Then he said, “We’re here to laugh, so let’s do it. No jokes tonight. I’ll show you the exercises, and you follow. Stretch, deep breath, exploding laugh. Stretch, deep breath, exploding laugh.” It felt okay—but not exactly funny.

“Now, hold an imaginary mobile phone and laugh into it. Move around, make eye contact, and laugh with others.” I felt silly at first, but soon, I couldn’t help myself. Everyone’s contagious laughter swept me up. Eye contact brought waves of hilarity. Before I knew it, I was laughing uncontrollably.

We did “one-meter laughter,” “laughter pills,” “laughter cream,” and “lion laughter.” The exercises became a cascade of joy. Between the laughter, we stretched, chanted, and breathed deeply. It felt liberating and childlike—a pure expression of joy.

Finally, we sat down to relax. As we tried to quiet our minds, laughter bubbled up again spontaneously. Dr. Kataria joined in, rolling on the floor with us. It was a release—no exercises, just unbridled waves of laughter.

By the end, we were exhausted but exhilarated. My sides ached, my throat was sore, and my eyes were streaming with tears of joy. I felt like I had unlocked something primal, something transformative.

## **Laughter Yoga Facts**

- Laughter Yoga was developed in India by Dr. Madan Kataria in 1995 and is now practiced in over 120 countries.
- It involves yogic breathing exercises combined with specially developed laughter exercises—no jokes or humor required.
- Just one session can deliver benefits that might take years to achieve through traditional yoga.
- It's a full-body workout: hearty laughter exercises the diaphragm, abdominal muscles, respiratory system, and more.
- Twenty minutes of laughter is equivalent to 10 minutes on an exercise bike!
- Scientific studies show that laughter improves cardiovascular health, reduces high blood pressure, and treats depression. It boosts immunity, reduces stress hormones, and releases endorphins.
- Laughter is nature's antidote to stress—it heals and energizes the body.

## **Join the Movement**

Laughter Yoga is a great value addition to traditional yoga practice and 10 minutes of Laughter exercises can be added at the end. If you are a yoga teacher or running a fitness center you must learn Laughter Yoga.

Laughter clubs meet in public parks across India, with over 20,000 clubs worldwide. You can also join the free online Laughter Club on Zoom every day. [Click here for details.](#)

Want to become a certified Laughter Yoga leader? [Learn online here.](#)

Check out Laughter Yoga on [YouTube](#) or visit [www.laughteryoga.org](http://www.laughteryoga.org) to find a session near you.

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