

# Mental and Physical Benefits of Laughter Yoga (Joy is your Birth Right)

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**Abstract:** *Laughter yoga, also called hasya yoga or sometimes, Laughter yoga has become popular in the modern world due to its immense benefits. Laughter yoga is an effective stress buster for people living in bustling cities. Usually, deadlines at work, pressure on performance and the material possessions one is judged by in society, all add to the stress and have an adverse effect on health. Stress can increase blood pressure, cause digestive problems, diabetes and heart problems. It also cause skin problems and hair fall in some. Laughter yoga is an easy and effective solution for stress and other health problems. There is nothing complicated about it and it can be done anywhere.*

**Keywords:** Laughter yoga, mental and physical benefits

## 1. Introduction to laughter yoga

Among the different styles of yoga, there is a fun part of it too, which is known as laughter yoga or 'hasya' yoga. It is said laughter is the best medicine and laughter yoga makes the best use of it. Laughter acts as a tonic for a tense mind and stressed body.

Laughter yoga is traced back to the history of 'yog' in India, mainly practiced by the sages at that time. Today, laughter yoga is very popular in India. Every morning you can see the parks in the cities full of men and women sitting in groups and practicing Indian laughter yoga together. There are more than 500 laughter medicine clubs all over the country, having million of members.

To practice healing by laughter yoga, one first needs to sit on a comfortably laid mattress in an open area, say a garden. As this yoga is mostly practiced in groups, one can sit in lotus position in unison. Sitting in a calm position, you should normalize your breath and consciously start taking gentle breaths. Then place your hands (with palm upwards) on your knees. Afterwards, by healing, you should take the hands in the air (side by side to your head) and laugh in rhythm (Ho, Ho, and Hah-Hah-Hah! Ho, Ho-hah-Hah-Hah) in a group.

Laughter yoga (Hasyayoga) is a practice involving prolonged voluntary laughter. Laughter yoga is based on the belief that voluntary laughter provides the same psychological and physiological benefits as spontaneous laughter. Laughter yoga is done in groups, with eye contact, jokes, and playfulness between participants.

## 2. Definition

Laughter yoga is a practice involving prolonged voluntary laughter. Laughter yoga is based on the belief that voluntary laughter provides the same physiological and psychological benefits as spontaneous laughter. It is done in groups, with eye contact, jokes and playfulness within participants.

### Ten Mental and Physical health benefits of Laughter yoga

#### 1) Stress reliever

Laughter is an effective anti-stress emotion –filled activity and one of the best muscle relaxants. Laughter dilates the blood vessels and supplies more blood to the muscles all over the body. A good laugh also reduces the levels of stress hormones epinephrine and cortisol. Laughing does not require any conscious thought process .our senses effortlessly combine harmoniously resulting in joy, peace, and relaxation .Laughter is the easiest form of medication, which brings instant relaxation.

#### 2) Immune system booster

Laughter helps to increase the count of natural killer cells, a type of white cell. It increases antibodies. Members of laughter clubs have noticed a reduction in common colds, sore throats and chest infections.

#### 3) Cardiac health

Laughter is an effective method to control blood pressure by reducing the release of stress related hormones and promoting relaxation. Experiments have demonstrated that a 10 minutes laughter session leads to a reduction of 10-20mm in blood pressure .Laughter may be the best preventive medicine for those who are at risk developing heart disease , as it improves the blood circulation and oxygen supply to the heart muscles(reduce the clot formation).

#### 4) Effective exercise

A 15 minutes laughter session in the morning can keep you alert and fresh throughout the day. The reason for this is that you inhale more oxygen while laughing. It is equivalent to aerobic exercises. According to some experts a minute of laughter is equal to 10 minutes on the rowing machine.

#### 5) Respiratory ailments

Laughter is one of the best exercises for those suffering from asthma and bronchitis. Laughter therapy increases the antibody levels in the mucous membranes of the respiratory passages, which helps reduce the frequency of the chest infections.

#### 6) Mental health conditions

Mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, nervous breakdowns, and insomnia are at an all time high. Laughter has caused positive changes in many people who take antidepressant pills and tranquilizers. Laughter has helped such patients achieve better sleep and helped to overcome depression. Even people with suicidal tendencies begin to see hope and learn to be happy.

#### 7) Natural pain killer

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Laughter increases the levels of endorphins, in our bodies, which are natural painkillers. Endorphins released as a result of laughter may help in reducing the intensity of pain in those suffering from arthritis, spondylitis and muscular spasms of the body.

8) **Breathing control**

Laughing helps to take more air and activate the lungs completely. Laughter therapy can immensely benefit singers and actors. It increases lung capacity and exercises the diaphragm and abdominal also enhances self confidence and helps overcome stage fear by relaxing the body.

9) **Increase Stamina**

A good bout of laughter before commencing any competitive sports activity can increase the relaxation levels and performance. Laughter can be beneficial as an exercise in any kind of sports activity.

10) **Exercise Facial Muscles**

Laughter is an excellent exercise for facial muscles. It tones the muscles of the face and improves facial expressions. Laughter also increases blood supply to the face, which nourishes the facial skin and makes it glow. Laughing makes people more cheerful and attractive. Laughter exercises the facial muscles and makes one appear young and healthy.

**The laughter pledge**

I here by make an unconditional commitment to have fun in all times & in all places, to live with joy in my heart & contribute to world laughter. Yippee ha ha ha ha ha....

**3. Conclusion**

It is an aerobic exercise, where 100 laughs equal 10 minutes of rowing, giving our internal organs a massage. Laughter also brings the people together. It helps to open our hearts and feel connected, first with each other, then with ourselves, our body, mind, emotions and spirit. With regular laughter also comes the ability to renew one's sense of humour, get in touch with the inner child and increase feelings of joy.

Regular laughter also comes the ability to renew one's sense of humour, get in touch with the inner child and increase feeling of joy. Our subconscious mind doesn't recognize the difference between fake laughter and real laughter. So any kind laughter can be used as a practical daily exercise to improve our health and well being.

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