

Laughter Yoga

With more than 400 laughter clubs across the United States alone, and 6000 groups worldwide, laughter yoga is growing in popularity. Besides being easy to do, laughter yoga can help to reduce stress, encourage a more positive outlook, and help you feel more refreshed and energetic. Laughter yoga can be practiced alone or with a partner. You can also join a laughter yoga club or class in your area to practice it with a large group of people

Practicing Laughter Yoga on Your Own



Warm up by clapping your hands.

Most laughter yoga sessions begin with warm-up exercises that involve clapping and synchronizing your movements. Begin by clapping with your hands parallel to each other, which will stimulate the acupressure points on your hands and increase your energy level.

- Continue to clap with a 1-2-3 rhythm, moving your hands up and down and swinging them from side to side as you clap.
- You can then try your first chant, in rhythm with your hands. Say “ho-ho, ha-ha-ha”, breathing from your belly with deep inhales and exhalations.
- You can continue clapping and chanting as you move around the room in a circle or from side to side. Make sure you are breathing from your diaphragm with deep inhales and exhales as you clap and chant.

Laughter Yoga



Do lion laughter exercise.

Another warm up you can try is lion laughter, which is derived from the Lion Posture. Stick your tongue out fully and keep your mouth open. Stretch your hands out like the paws of a lion and roar, then laugh from your belly. You should feel a nice stretch in your facial muscles, your tongue and your throat. It will also help you to loosen up and play around.



Practice deep breathing exercises with laughter.

Another key element of laughter yoga is stimulating deep breathing to help you release big belly laughs. You should practice deep breathing throughout your entire laughter yoga session to allow you to access deep laughs.^{[4][5]}

- Activate your breath in your diaphragm, which is located just below your ribs. Place your hands on your diaphragm and focus on taking full inhales and exhales through your nose, expanding and contracting your diaphragm.
- Inhale deeply for the count of four and then exhale through your nose to the count of four. As you exhale, release one to two big belly laughs. Continue to do this, deepen your breath equally on your inhales and your exhales with an even breath cycle, with laughter at the end of every exhale.
- You can also chant a mantra as you inhale and exhale, such as Forgive / Forget, Live / Let live, Release/Heal.

Laughter Yoga



Do playful exercises.

Loosen up by trying playful exercises to encourage laughter and joy. The idea is to motivate yourself to laugh for no reason other than out of joy and fun.^[6]

- Sing a playful song that goes “Every little cell in my body is happy/ Every little cell in my body is well/ Feel so good, feels so swell”. As you do this, tap your head, shoulders, knees, and toes. You can also add a deep laugh after you sing each line.
- Do a vowel laughter exercise, where you pick up your right hand and say the letter “A” by drawing out the vowel. Then, pretend to toss the letter “A” aside. Continue with the letter “E”, picking up your right hand and drawing out the vowel. Then, pretend to toss the letter “E” aside. Do this for “I,O, and U”.
- Try the electric shock laughter exercise by pretending every surface and object you touch gives you a shock of static electricity, from touching a wall to touching a part of your body. Jump back every time you touch something, smiling and laughing as you do this.
- Chant “Very good” and “Yay” after every exercise to cultivate playfulness and joy. You can also swing your arms in a V shape as you say these chants.

Laughter Yoga



Try value based laughter exercises.

These laughter exercises are made to help you practice laughing and deriving positive feelings from certain emotions or situations. In these exercises, you will confront a strong emotion and learn to laugh at it, finding the fun and joy in negative emotions.

- Start with the embarrassment laughter exercise, where you think of an embarrassing incident and retell it out loud in gibberish, laughing as you re tell it. You may raise your hands and clap as you do this, focusing on speaking only gibberish and laughing as you “tell” the embarrassing story.
- Do the applause exercise, where you clap quietly and make quiet humming noises to signal approval. Let the humming get louder until you are laughing and clapping faster and wilder. Try to be as loud as possible to show your approval and really applaud as you laugh.
- Try an apology or forgiveness exercise, where you think of a person you would like to apologize to and say “I’m sorry”, or think of a person you would like to forgive and say “I forgive you”. You can then laugh after you show forgiveness or accept an apology. You can also do this with actions by holding your ear lobes, crossing your arms, bending at the knee and laughing.