

# LAUGH UNTIL IT HELPS!

Are you looking for a way to instantly lift your mood? Laughter has a positive impact on our physical and emotional health in so many different ways. It boosts our immune system, helps our heart health and protects our body and mind from the damaging effects of stress. Studies have shown that laughter can reduce anxiety and depression and make people happier. Laughter also has the potential to bring people together and strengthen bonds.

Many adults who are busy with everyday struggles and other anxieties say that they do not laugh as much as they used to. The common reasons shared by them are the lack of opportunities such as family events, gatherings with friends and lunch break chats in workplaces. Some also indicate that they do not have the time and often face language issues and cultural differences in understanding humor. Finding activities and outlets for laughter can be more challenging for seniors, those with disabilities or new mothers who are homebound for most of the day.

With laughter being such a powerful, free tool to help our wellness and to heal, here are a few simple things you can do to increase laughter in your life:

**Surround yourself with things and people who make you laugh:** We are all different and different things make us laugh. A funny poster / joke book / funny face photo in your room can give you the needed humor boost. Spending time with people who are lighthearted, silly and funny can be very uplifting.

**Laugh at yourself:** If you have had experiences that were embarrassing, laugh it out. Slipping and having a light fall in snow, mispronouncing a word, taking a wrong turn may seem serious but laughing can help. Making a conscious effort by visualizing funny events from the past can also make you laugh.

**Enroll in Laughter Yoga:** This unique style of yoga combines yogic breathing and laughter. It starts as forced laughter and since it is contagious, it then becomes real. [www.laughteryoga.org](http://www.laughteryoga.org)

**Try something new and playful:** Visiting a comedy club, taking an amusement park ride, playing with little kids or pet sitting can lighten your mood. You may also think of throwing a laugh party occasionally for friends (you can even consider doing it virtually during COVID).

**Find laughter online:** In this digital age, you may want to try checking out resources and people who are in the job of making others laugh. Find a comedy show on TV or follow a comedian on YouTube. A chuckle or a loud laugh on your own can serve as a daily dose for your mental health.

**Laugh with others:** Make time and create opportunities to laugh together. Have fun with your family by sharing your funny experiences, watching Just for Gags Laughs / Mr. Bean videos together or making your own funny videos to create fun memories and help you laugh too. If you live alone, invite a friend over to watch and laugh together.

With the current Covid-19 crisis prolonging and continuing to be stressful, we may not have enough reasons to laugh and some of us may have forgotten what it is like to have a good, hearty laugh.

It is very important that we create opportunities to laugh and reap its benefits. After all, laughter is the best medicine that does not require a prescription and is within reach. Laugh your way to better health in 2022!

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# Laughter Yoga Session

**DURATION: 20 minutes**

## Introduction to Laughter Yoga.

### Step 1

**Clapping in a rhythm 1 - 2 ..... 1 - 2 - 3**

Along with chanting of Ho Ho .....Ha Ha Ha then raise hands in the air and say YES!

The sound should come from the navel and one should feel the movements of the tummy in and out (Maximum 10 - 15 times)

### Step 2

**Deep breathing with inhalation through the nose and prolonged exhalation through the mouth and slight bending at the end (5 times)**

### Step 3

**Shoulder, neck and stretching exercises (5 times each)**

### Step 4

**Hearty Laughter** - (Medium tone) laughter by raising both the arms in the sky and looking at each other's faces and then turning towards another person in the group. (More emotion and less force, followed by clapping 2 - 3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 5

**Cell Phone Laughter** - Holding one hand to the ear As if holding a cell phone and greeting at least 4 - 5 people in the group in medium tone laughter (Followed by clapping 2 -3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 6

**Silent Laughter without sound** - With mouth wide open and asking each other - How are you? . . . Fine . . . Very fine . Followed by clapping 2 - 3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 7

**Humming Laughter with mouth closed** Laughter with closed mouth, making gestures with the hands and a humming sound. (Followed by clapping 2 - 3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 8

**Decent Laughter or Medium Laughter** - Laughter in a medium tone by striking each other's hands above the head and below the chest and looking into the eyes of 4 - 5 participants. (Followed by clapping 2 - 3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 9

**Swinging Laughter** - Starting with Ae ... Oa Ee ... Ooh the participant will bend slightly as if picking up the laughter and throwing it up in the sky by waving Bye ... Bye. (Followed by clapping 2 - 3 times & deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 10

**One Metre Laughter** - Measuring one metre with both arms and stretching out in three jerks Ae...Ae...Ae...Ha - Ha-Ha. (Followed by clapping 2 - 3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 11

**Dancing Laughter** - Laughter with the funniest possible dancing gestures, while looking at each other.(Followed by clapping 2 - 3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 12

**Lion Laughter** - Extruding the tongue fully with eyes wide open and hands stretched out like the claws of a lion and laughing from the tummy.(Followed by clapping 2 - 3 times and deep breathing 2 times)

### Step 13

**Gradient Laughter** - Gradient laughter starts with bringing a smile on the face slowly gentle giggles are added and the intensity of laughter is increased further. And then the members gradually burst into hearty laughter.

### Step 14

**Closing with Good Hearted Living & announcements. Shouting 3 Slogans** - We are the happiest people in the world Y...E...S...! I am the healthiest person in the world Y...E...S...! I love to Laugh Y...E...S...!