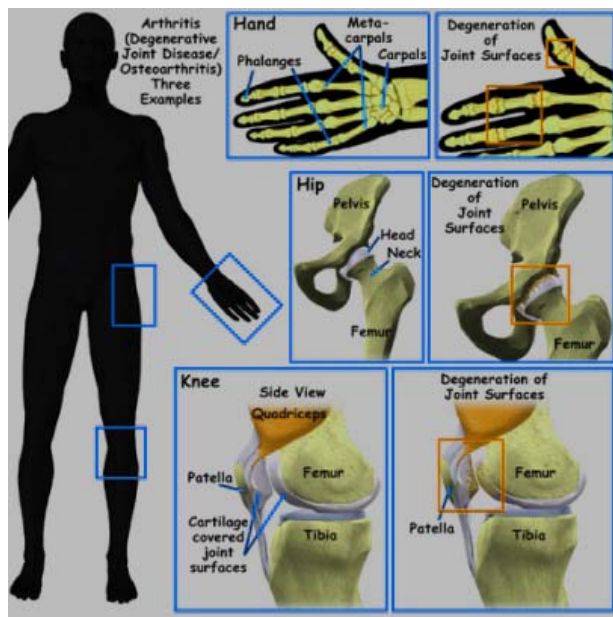


Laughter Yoga And Arthritis

from Dr.Madan Kataria's International Website

www.laughteryoga.org

Laughter may not be the most scientific alternative, yet it has proved right the old adage that it is the best medicine. A good laugh has the ability to ease pain as a result of disease or injury. Laughter offers respite from arthritis stress and provides both physical and mental relief.



Approximately 350 million people worldwide have arthritis and almost the same number suffers from spondylitis. Nearly 40 million persons in the United States alone are affected by arthritis, including over a quarter million children!

Both arthritis and spondylitis are debilitating disorders with inflammation of the joints. Arthritis is frequently accompanied by joint pain and the common symptoms include pain and limited function of joints. Inflammation of the joints in arthritis is characterized by stiffness, swelling, redness, and

warmth.

The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis caused by the wear and tear of cartilage and the other is rheumatoid arthritis which is an inflammation resulting from an overactive immune system. Among the spondylitis family, Ankylosing spondylitis is the primary disease and is a form of chronic arthritis that primarily affects the spine.

Documented research has proved that laughter has enormous benefits on one's physical, mental and emotional health. It is more than just a physical response. It is a great workout that boosts the immune system, increases circulation and the threshold for pain.

Scientific studies show that laughter has positive effects on the heart, blood vessels, stress hormones, mental health and family relationships. These health benefits of laughter all contribute to smoother overall functioning, which in turn speeds injury healing and helps manage chronic pain.

Laughter Yoga – a healing force

Positive emotions: It has been proven by psychoneuroimmunologists that negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression and anger, weaken the immune system of the body, thereby reducing its capacity to fight infections. Laughter helps to increase the count of natural killer lymphocytes in the bloodstream and also to raise antibody levels.

Realizing the significance of laughter, Indian physician Dr. Madan Kataria started laughter clubs and developed Laughter Yoga, a unique exercise routine followed by millions worldwide. It combines laughter exercises with deep yogic breathing to provide a complete workout for health and wellness. People who participate in laughter clubs have reported remarkable reduction of pain and improvement in physical mobility and flexibility.

Laughter is a Natural Pain Killer

Laughter increases the levels of endorphins – the body's natural pain killers. Norman Cousins, an American journalist who was suffering from an incurable disease of the spine, benefited from laughter therapy in a situation when all painkillers were ineffective. Cousins found that 10 minutes of laughter gave him an extra two hours of pain-free sleep.

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. This provides immediate pain relief typically lasting for 2 hours. It can relieve headaches, muscular and joint pain and is powerful enough that a number of practitioners have undergone surgery using laughter instead of anesthetics!

The release of these beta endorphins also causes the adrenal glands to manufacture cortisol, which is natural anti-inflammatory and is wonderful for arthritis.

Laughter increases mobility

Arthritis is often aggravated by lack of exercise and movement, particularly later in life with retirement and reduced physical mobility. Laughter Yoga provides a complete massage of all mid-body organs and is the most effective method to promote circulation in the lymphatic system. The combination of natural pain killers with movements in laughter exercises makes Laughter Yoga a powerful tool for physiotherapy. Many practitioners have reported reversal of 'frozen shoulder' and other movement limitations due to stroke, arthritis, and injury.

Benefits of laughter have thus been recognized and prescribed. Belly laughter as practiced in Laughter Yoga is a great way of activating deep breathing facilitating

better control of chronic diseases. Laughter is a safe, easy and economical method to enhance good health and longevity.