

## Laughter Yoga Regulates Breathing

from Dr.Madan Kataria's International Website

[www.laughteryoga.org](http://www.laughteryoga.org)



Breathing is fundamental to good health. It is responsible for almost all the oxygen and energy supply. Scientific studies have shown a direct connect between breathing and the state of mind. Incorrect breathing can cause several physical and mental complications such as asthma, allergies, hypertension, depression, anxiety, exhaustion, headaches, heart problems, sleep trouble, obesity, stress, lack of vision and clarity plus many lesser known but equally harmful conditions. All diseases

are caused or worsened by poor breathing.

According to Nobel Laureate Dr. Otto Warburg, **“Deep breathing techniques increase oxygen to the cells and are the most important factors in living a disease-free and energetic life. When cells get enough oxygen, cancer will not and cannot occur.”**

### Laughter Yoga Increases Oxygen

Laughter is the fastest and easiest method of regulating the breathing pattern and increasing the net supply of oxygen by exhaling longer and flushing the lungs. Dr. Madan Kataria the founder of laughter clubs worldwide effectively combined the art of laughing with deep yogic breathing. His new exercise routine, Laughter Yoga has benefited hundreds and thousands of people who have reported an enhanced sense of well being. Yoga breathing exercises or Pranayama recharges the body and controls the mental state by regulating the flow of Prana - the life force. This generates a sense of calmness and makes one more focused. It also increases the energy levels.

### Factors affecting breathing – how laughter helps

**Lack of oxygen:** Oxygen plays an important role in the circulatory and respiratory systems. It purifies the blood by removing the toxic wastes in the blood stream. Irregular breathing restricts this process and leads to accumulation of toxins, which in turn affects the digestive tract leaving tissues and organs undernourished.

Laughter Yoga encompasses the principles of deep diaphragmatic breathing which is the easiest way to counter unhealthy effects of stress.

**Stress:** When under stress or acute anxiety and depression, the oxygen level decreases and breathing becomes faster, shallow and irregular. Sometimes people hold their breath under stress which leads to accumulation of carbon dioxide in the blood.

A combination of laughter and breathing exercises increases the net supply of oxygen in the blood and maintains a physiological balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide. It improves detoxification through increased exchange of carbon dioxide and oxygen.

**Anxiety and depression:** The rigors of daily work, family, or financial pressures take its toll on the breathing pattern. Using only the fraction of the lungs results in lack of oxygen and may lead to different complications. Heart diseases, sleep disorders, and fatigue are some of the effects of oxygen starvation.

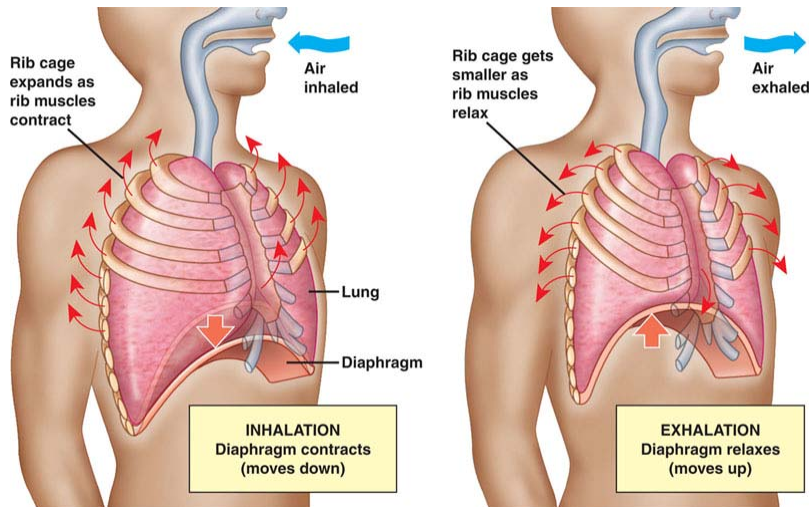
Laughter Yoga is a complete workout for optimum functionality. It helps in alleviating physical, mental and emotional stress. Breathing is the only function of the autonomic nervous system that can be consciously regulated or changed. It encourages deep diaphragmatic breathing which stimulates the para sympathetic nervous system. This is the cooling branch of the autonomic nervous system and is the opposite of the sympathetic stress arousal system. This helps in relaxing the aroused state of a person and provides a sense of calmness.

**Accumulation of stale air:** To keep the lungs healthy and provide enough oxygen for the body to perform at peak levels, one needs to take deeper breaths and flush the stale air from the lungs. A normal inhalation fills just 25% (tidal volume) of the total lung capacity. The remaining 75% (residual volume) remains filled with old stale air. Respiration becomes even shallower when compounded by stress.

Hearty extended laughter helps to provide longer exhalation, thus ridding the lungs of residual air which is then replaced by fresh air containing a higher level of oxygen. The secret to breathing deeper is to exhale more fully.

**Sedentary lifestyle:** Lack of regular exercise and a physical fitness routine is a cause of many problems which may cause shortness of breath, raised cholesterol and blood pressure, immobility and stiffness. The more physically active one is, the lower the risk for heart disease.

Laughter Yoga is fun and a simple form of exercise that provides a good workout. Twenty minutes of laughter is equivalent to 10 minutes on an exercise machine, but this gentle aerobic workout is a lot more fun than treadmills and exercise bikes. Blood and all major organs are fully oxygenated leaving one bursting with energy.



Laughter Yoga using the yogic technique of breathing promotes proper breathing. It brings more oxygen to the blood and to the brain; it controls Prana and re-energizes the body. Most laughter and yogic breathing exercises are intended to

stimulate the movement of the diaphragm and abdominal muscles that help activate the parasympathetic system. The stress arousal sympathetic system can be turned off simply by learning to move the diaphragm.

While breathing is a function most people take for granted, rarely is it practiced in a proper fashion. The purpose of Laughter Yoga technique is to develop a good, relaxing breathing method. It may be practiced anytime, especially during stressful situations to provide a sense of wellness.