

Laugh for  
wellbeing, no  
joke?

## Home Instead finds out how

When was the last time you or the person you care for had a prolonged, hearty belly laugh?

That's the question posed to **Home Instead CAREgivers** recently by Queensland laughter wellbeing practitioner and global ambassador of **Laughter Yoga** International, **HeatherJoy Campbell**.

As we age, we tend to associate laughing with good times, good company, fun and humour. Together with all that goes on in life, laughter can seem inappropriate or out of place when we're frustrated, angry, anxious, sad, depressed or even grieving.

"With that sort of thinking, we leave laughter to chance: the chance of something funny, something good," explains HeatherJoy.

"Whereas laughter as an exercise, a physical function, is as natural as breathing."

**Laughter yoga** is a gentle regimen of clapping, deep slow breaths and playful stretches and movement combining intentional laughter (no jokes) and engagement of the diaphragm. It was developed by an Indian physician 25 years ago.

Adaptable and accessible, laughter yoga can be a light cardio session that doesn't seem like exercise, even when done seated.

Here, HeatherJoy explains two exercises to get you started. Always smile while doing laughter yoga.

### LAUGHTER CREAM

Take an imaginary jar of lotion, scoop a dollop out and 'rub' it into your skin — face, ears, neck, arms, legs, belly —and laugh. The tapping of your body awakens acupressure points. (In the shower, giggle as you 'lather' up!)

### ONE METRE LAUGH

Stand with feet slightly apart, both hands stretched out to the left. Slide the fingers of the right hand over the left arm to the elbow while saying 'Aeeeeeeee'. Slide your right hand to the left shoulder saying "Aeeeeee" and continue sliding your fingers across the chest to the right shoulder, again saying "Aeeeeee". Uncurl the right arm so that both arms are full outstretched, tilt your head back and laugh heartily, from the belly. Repeat for the right side. Do three times each side.



HeatherJoy delivers 2-day certified *laughter yoga* leader training for people wanting proficiency and understanding of this exercise. Aged care workers, nurses, DTs, OTs, teachers, psychologists, HRs and 'just people wanting more joy' enrol to laugh more. Details of the training are at: <https://www.thehappydemic.com.au/laughter-leader-training/>.

*Shorter group experiential playshops are offered on demand.*

**If the proverb is true that the body heals with play, the mind heals with laughter and the spirit heals with joy, laughter yoga may be the missing piece to wellbeing for you or your client.**

More information:

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Read about the many proven health benefits of *laughter yoga* at:

<http://www.thehappydemic.com.au/25-ways-laughter-yoga-benefits-body-mind-and-spirits>.