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**Kate:** Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Kate Colin and joining us today to help with some of the language in today's programme is Rebecca. Hi Rebecca. Now you may be familiar with the idea that laughter is supposed to be healthy! Have you ever heard before of this idea before Rebecca?

**Rebecca:** Well I have vaguely heard that laughing is meant to be good for stress levels and I know from personal experience that you always feel better after a good laugh – it just gives you a **natural high**. This expression means to feel happy or energetic without any artificial stimulants.

**Kate:** Indeed, well, this principle has led a Dr Madan Kataria in India to devise a new type of activity.... laughter yoga.

**Rebecca:** This is a type of exercise routine which combines laughter with yogic breathing and is carried out in a group with other people. There are now more than one hundred laughter clubs across India and they are increasing in number all the time.

**Kate:** But before we find out more, let's have the question for this week. Are you ready? In which city in India did laughter yoga originate? Was it:

- a) Delhi
- b) Darjeeling
- c) Mumbai

**Rebecca:** answers

**Kate:** Well, according to research laughing releases **endorphins** into the body which bring on a natural high. **Endorphins** are a chemical naturally released in the brain which can reduce pain and make us feel relaxed or energetic. Before we listen to the next extract about the benefits of laughing, let's go over some of the health-related vocabulary we might come across. First, **immune system**. What does immune system mean?

**Rebecca:** Yes, the **immune system** is the ability of our body to protect itself against infection. If we have a strong immune system we are able to fight off illnesses and remain fit and healthy most of the time. To **boost** means to make stronger so if something **boosts our immune system** it means that it helps it become more powerful and therefore prevents us from getting ill so often.

**Kate:** And **anesthetic**?

**Rebecca:** An anesthetic is a substance which make your pain disappear.

**Kate:** And the expression **burning off calories**.

**Rebecca:** A calorie is a unit of energy which is used as a measurement for the amount of energy which food provides. So to **burn off calories** is often used to refer to an activity which helps you lose weight.

**Kate:** A BBC reporter, Rob Crossan tried laughter yoga while he was in India and we're going to hear him talk about the health benefits that laughter can bring. Have a listen and try to hear the words and expressions we've just learnt.

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It's got incredible health benefits. The fellow who started up the whole concept of laughter yoga, Dr Gore Bredan Getaria believes that laughter can boost the immune system, it can act as an anesthetic, it burns off calories, it's exercise, it's a muscle relaxant...'

**Rebecca:** So he said that that the health benefits of laughter yoga include boosting the immune system, acting as an anesthetic, burning off calories, it's good exercise and it's also a muscle relaxant.

**Kate:** Well it all sounds good to me! But how does it work? Does everyone just wait for someone else to say something funny? What actually causes people to laugh in the first place?

**Rebecca:** Well, apparently people all round the world are learning to laugh for no reason. You don't need a sense of humour or indeed any jokes...

Insert 1

You know, rather than just waiting for someone to say something funny which often can take quite a while, let's just do it deliberately.

**Rebecca:** The idea is that you laugh deliberately at silly and trivial things. Let's hear a bit more about how our reporter dealt with it. Did he feel awkward or embarrassed to be laughing at things which he might not normally find that funny?

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Well, I did think I'd be awfully British about it and feel incredibly uncomfortable. It's amazing, when you have a group of thirty or forty other people all doing incredibly silly things with you. All they really have to do really is look you in the eye and laugh and it's incredibly **contagious**. Suddenly I'm just **convulsed in laughter**.

**Rebecca:** He said that so many other people were doing it that he found himself **convulsed in laughter**. Convulsed is a word we often use when describing uncontrollable laughter. He said he thought he was going to feel uncomfortable but when it came down to it, he was in a large group and he found that laughter was **contagious**. **Contagious** means something that spreads easily from one person to another. So usually we talk about illnesses being contagious but we can also use it for actions or in this case, laughter.

**Kate:** Well, it seems to work and Rob seemed to really enjoy his laughter yoga. Is this someone you might be interested in trying Rebecca, or is there enough laughter in your life already?

**Rebecca:** answers

**Kate:** We're nearly at the end of the programme but before we go, could you take us through the vocabulary we've come across today?

**Rebecca:** Certainly, so first we had **natural high, endorphins, boost the immune system, anesthetic, burning off calories, contagious and convulsed.**

**Kate:** Thanks and now to the question I asked you earlier. Which Indian city did laughter yoga originate in?

**Rebecca:** answers

**Kate:** It was in fact started in Mumbai and is spreading fast across the world. In fact, it's already reached over 60 different countries so far.

That's all we have time for today. Thanks for all your help Rebecca and until next week. Goodbye!