

Our Feelings Matter

Activity: Making Shapes with Yoga



Yoga uses focused breathing and movement to find balance, calm and mindfulness. It can be calming for children feeling stressed or anxious. We like this routine developed with Members of Children's Parliament.

Links to Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes

- I am developing my understanding of the human body and can use this knowledge to maintain and improve my wellbeing and health. *HWB 1-15a/HWB 2-15a/HWB 3-15a*
- I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them. *HWB 1-02a/HWB 2-02a/HWB 3-02a*
- I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss. *HWB 1-07a/HWB 2-07a/HWB 3-07a*

Learning Intentions

- Learners challenge themselves physically through balancing and co-ordination.
- Learners access breathing and yoga techniques when feeling worried, anxious or stressed.

Duration

Initially start with 20 - 30 minutes as a morning or afternoon warm up by practising five or six of the moves. Over time you can increase this to incorporate all the moves which will take around 45 minutes. Whichever version, always end with 'All is Well'.

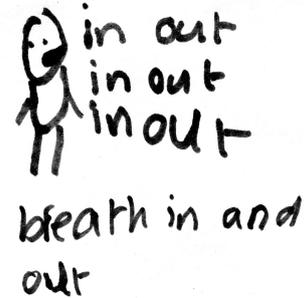
What You Need

- Loose, comfy clothes or what children wear for a PE session
- A soft floor such as mats, carpet or grass

Activity

Ask the children to start by lying down or sitting comfortably, eyes closed or lowered. Explain that yoga is about focusing inwards. This means not worrying or thinking about the day so far or about what is going to happen later on. It is about paying attention to the present.

To help do this, ask the children to begin to focus on their breathing. Explain that they don't have to change the way they are breathing at all. Instead, notice the flow of breath and the rises and falls it makes in the body. Now ask the children to begin to make their inhales and exhales a little longer – each for a count to three. Relax and concentrate on making these slower inhales and exhales.



These are the yoga positions that you can now explain and do with the children:

Sitting up/prayer breaths. Breathe in and reach both arms up above your head palms together and now bring arms down (still palms together) in front of face until they reach in front of heart as you breathe out. Repeat three times.

Sitting up/side stretches. Stretch the right arm up and over your head leaning slightly to the left as you breathe in. As you breathe out, bring your arm back to where you started. Do the same on other side, and then repeat on both sides.

Sitting up/legs apart for side stretches. Raise right arm and stretch it over your head to try and reach left foot. Repeat on other side.

Butterfly. While sitting, place the soles of your feet together in front of you. Gently lift knees up and press down to floor like butterfly wings.

Cat stretch. Start on all fours with hands under shoulders and knees under hips. Breathe in and arch your back and raise your head. Next, breathe out as you round your back and look at belly button. Repeat several times - do this slowly and match the movements to the breaths.

Dog stretch. On all fours, curl your toes under, lift up your knees (putting weight on your hands), and press your hips up and back. Now stretch legs straight, heels down and strong arms. This is downward dog. Stay here and do three of the long breaths. Now walk your feet forward so they are in between your hands.

Elephant breaths. Stand with your feet hip width apart and link your hands, dangling your arms in front of you like an elephant trunk. Inhale through your nose as raise your arms high above your head and lean back. Exhale through

your mouth as you swing your arms down and through your legs. Repeat 3 or 4 times.

Gorilla. Come down to a squat with your hands on the ground in front of you. Now come up a bit (still knees bent) and rest your elbows on your thighs. Now straighten your legs as (still bending over) you swing your arms to the right and then to the left. Make the movements slow. Come up to standing now.

Warrior. Take a big step back with your right foot turned out and keep your left foot facing forward. Keep facing forward while you raise both your arms (left straight and pointing forward, right arm straight and pointing backward). Bend the left knee. Keep arms and legs strong. Focus forward. Long breaths. Repeat on other side.

Flying bird. Standing tall feet parallel. Bring your palms together in front of chest and keep focus as you stretch back your right leg. Now slowly tip forward so you are parallel with the floor. Spread your arms/wings and focus on the breaths to help balance. Repeat on the other foot.

Bridge. Lie on your back with knees bent and feet on floor. Arms beside you palms down. Now on an in breath curl your spine up (pressing down with hands and feet) join your hands and wiggle your shoulders in to arch up and make the bridge higher. Stay still and imagine a river flowing beneath you. Take long deep breaths. Come down gently rolling your spine.

Lying down twist. Lie on your back knees bent. Now hug your knees into your chest. Lower your knees to the right and stretch your arms out to each side, keeping both shoulders on the floor. Turn your head to the left to deepen the stretch. Repeat on the other side.

All is well. Lie down on your back. Arms by your sides palms up. Feet should be apart. Close your eyes and go inside. Make sure all of your body feels very relaxed. Just do your normal breathing and when you feel really relaxed and still say silently to yourself:

*May I be safe and loved
May I be happy and healthy
May I be kind and caring
May I know that all is well*