

{ WELLNESS ACTIVITIES }

Yoga Breathing and Yoga Poses

Overview

Yoga helps kids develop physical strength, balance and flexibility. It also improves concentration and self-control and gives kids lifelong tools for managing stress and emotions. Just as with adults, yoga can bring a sense of calm and balance to a child's busy day. Over time yoga can also improve body awareness and boost self-esteem. All in all, yoga combines all the best principles of health literacy. The physical activity of yoga increases the body's core strength. Doing yoga in a group setting provides the opportunity to improve social skills. And the mental/emotional benefits of yoga include increased coping skills and reduced stress.

Yoga breathing is a lifelong skill that can be used anytime, anywhere. The theme of breathing in and breathing out helps keep minds, bodies and emotions in balance.

Grades K-2

BALLOON BREATHING, PART 1

- Sit on the floor "pretzel style," with knees bent and ankles crossed.
- Imagine your body is a balloon. Pick a color of balloon, but don't tell anyone. Just quietly picture this in your mind.
- Place your hands around your belly button. Breathe in through your nose, slowly and deeply, so that your lower belly expands like a balloon. Count to 5 while you breathe in.
- Now breathe out through your nose and feel your belly deflate. Count to 5 while you breathe out.
- Repeat several times.

BALLOON BREATHING, PART 2

Before beginning this activity, blow up a balloon and release it so it twists and flutters in the air. Ask kids to observe the movement of the balloon as it inflates and deflates.

- Squat on the floor with your rear end perched just a few inches above your feet.
- Imagine your body is a balloon, any color.
- Hug your knees tight while breathing out. Squeeze all the air out of your "balloon."
- Now breathe in as you stand up, and stretch your hands high over your head, slowly filling your balloon (body) with lots of air.
- Now imagine you've been untied, or pricked by a tree branch or bumble bee. You slowly breathe out as you slowly deflate, twirling and fluttering in slow motion until you flop on the floor.
- Rest for 30 seconds and repeat.

activity BASKET

Grades K-5

YOGA BALANCE POSES

Here are three basic “balance” poses for kids to learn and practice. Give kids the option of leaning on a wall or chair if they feel they need it, or suggest they try poses with a partner for added support and fun.

TREE POSE

- Stare at one object straight ahead in the distance to stay focused. Take a deep breath (inhale slowly in, exhale slowly out).
- Pretend you are a tree in a forest. Your feet will be roots, your legs will be trunks and your arms will be branches.
- Stand on your right leg, and imagine that leg is a tree trunk. Bring your left foot to rest on your “trunk,” above or below the knee. Raise and reach out your arms like tree branches.
- Focus on planting your roots (your standing foot) deep into the ground. Feel the sun on your face and hear the wind rustling through your leaves. Imagine birds, chipmunks and squirrels living in your branches.
- Do this pose on each leg. Is one easier than the other? Take equal turns standing on both to create balance.

EASIER: Begin by leaning on a wall or chair for support. Or stand two feet from a wall, in case you need it for support.

HARDER: Close your eyes and see if you can keep your balance without falling over. Pretend it’s a windy day and wave your arms (*branches*) gently in the wind. Hold hands with two or three other “trees” and make a forest!

EAGLE POSE

- Pretend you are an eagle.
- Fix your talons (feet) firmly on the ground.
- Breathe in and bend your knees.
- Breathe out and spread your wings (arms) out wide to both sides.
- Repeat as you soar through the sky!
- Now breathe in and bring your hands to your hips. Cross one leg over the other leg and try to hook your “talon” behind your calf. (Easier: Let your toes touch the ground.)
- How long can you stay in your perched position?
- Hold for as long as you can and then repeat with the other leg for balance.

EASIER: Rest your back against a wall while doing this pose. Or do part one of the Eagle Pose (*soar*) only, but not part two (*the perch*).

HARDER: Bring your arms out in front of you. Bend your elbows, cross one arm over the other and have your hands touch palm to palm. Now do the perch position with your legs.

DANCER POSE

- Pretend you’re a ballet dancer on a stage.
- Stand with both feet firmly on the ground. Picture your feet in delicate ballet slippers.
- Breathe in and lift your left heel up towards your rear end.
- Breathe out and clasp your left foot.
- Breathe in and stretch your left arm straight up to the sky. Feel your body stretch.
- Breathe out as you lean forward and raise your left leg high behind out.
- Hold for as long as you can, breathing in and out slowly.
- Now repeat with the right side for balance.

EASIER: Lean on a chair for balance.

activity BASKET

Grades K-2

TIGHTROPE TRICKS

Time: 15 minutes • Materials: length of rope stretched out in a line (or use masking tape on a bare floor), a beanbag, book, apple and miscellaneous objects

- Practice walking heel-to-toe in a straight line on the floor, with arms extended for balance and grace, focusing straight ahead.
- Now walk on the “tightrope” while focusing on your posture and balance.

Making it harder with each round:

- Balance a beanbag or book on your head as you walk.
- Balance an apple or piece of plastic toy fruit on your head as you walk.
- Halfway down the rope, place an object and challenge students to slowly bend and touch or pick up the object and continue to end of line.
- Do the same as above, but with a beanbag, book or paper plate on your head!
- Make a wavy path with the rope and see if you can walk it without losing your balance.



{ PLAY TOGETHER ACTIVITIES }

What do these physical activities have in common?

- They can be played at home or at school—anytime, anywhere.
- They require few, if any, materials or equipment.
- They can be played with a few people or several people. (Some can be played solo.)
- They accommodate varying levels of ability and fitness.
- They exercise a variety of muscle groups and a mix of the three main types of exercise: aerobic, bone-strengthening and muscle-strengthening.
- They are about fun and play; the “exercise” part happens along the way.

Grades K-2

“WALK THIS WAY”

Have students form a single line on one side of a room, hallway, gym or outdoor play area. Explain that you’ll start as the line leader and call out instructions for “silly walks.” Call out one action at a time, then turn around and do the action yourself. Have kids copy the action until you call out the next one.

Start with simple locomotor commands, like march, gallop, hop, skip or walk backwards. Then try an animal theme with commands like “Walk like a duck,” “Jump like a frog,” Vary the tempo with different kinds of animals: e.g., “Move like a sloth” (slow) followed by “Run in place like a jaguar” (fast).

Ask kids for their own ideas for silly walks. Give a couple examples and demonstrate, then encourage kids to brainstorm and use their imaginations! Here are some ideas:

- “Walk like an Egyptian.”
- “Walk like the Abominable Snowman.”
- “Walk like a basketball player.” (pretend you’re dribbling a basketball ball with your hand while walking)
- “Walk like a soccer player.” (pretend you’re dribbling a soccer ball with your feet while running slowly)
- “Walk like a king or queen.”

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- “Walk like a penguin.”
- “March in a marching band.” (pretend you’re playing an instrument)
- “Walk like a ballerina.” (walk on your toes)
- “Walk like a zombie.” (with arms outstretched in front of you)
- “Walk like a crab.” (backwards, on all fours, with palms on floor behind you)

For added fun, play music in the background. Vary the tempo and style of music to keep things interesting and to vary the pace for those who might have a hard time keeping up. Time permitting, give everyone a turn to call out a “silly walk.”

Grades K-5

FREEZE DANCE PREPARATION:

Materials: Playlist with pre-selected songs

As enrichment class teacher, you’ll be in charge of the music. Choose a few fun, fast-tempo songs for this activity. Time permitting, have students offer suggestions or vote on favorites in advance. (Also be sure to listen to and screen the songs in advance, and to look for parental warning labels.) This can be played in a room, hallway or gymnasium.

- Outstretch your arms and make sure you can turn in a full circle without hitting anyone around you.
- When the music starts, dance! (The crazier the better!)
- When the music stops, freeze in your position.
- Anyone who moves after the music stops is out!
- Repeat again and again until one person is left.
- The last person standing gets to choose the next song!

BOX OF TRICKS!

What do kids do when they’re bored at home? Brainstorm some ideas upfront to encourage them to think of physically active, rather than passive, activities.

If they were bored on a desert island, what would they want in their “bag of tricks”? A ball? A hula hoop? Sidewalk chalk? Rather than automatically turning on a television or computer or game station, encourage them to be resourceful and to draw on these ideas.

Now ask kids to help you make a “box of tricks” for your Wellness – EZ class. Gather materials and fill a box with basic items and play equipment to have on hand during free play time. Encourage kids to play with these on school grounds, and hopefully they’ll copy the idea back home—and share the fun with kids and family members in their neighborhoods, living rooms and their own back yards.

Fill a box with miscellaneous items. See if you can borrow some from PE classes or share with other classrooms. Also ask if kids would like to donate or lend any items from home and be sure to label them.

Ideas:

- Balls of all types: tennis balls, playground balls, volley balls, soft balls, beach balls, basketballs
- Hula hoops
- jump ropes—single and long
- Sidewalk chalk and masking tape
- Tennis racquet and tennis balls; badminton racquet and badminton birdies
- Frisbee, or snap top lids to plastic containers

activity BASKET

- Kite
- Bean bags
- Balloons and scarves or plastic shopping bags for juggling
- Playlist of upbeat songs

SOLO GAMES AND SPORTS TRAINING

There are many drills and fun exercises you can easily do on your own with minimal space and equipment. Make a list of these (on your Wellness mural, if you like) and ask kids to add more ideas.

PLAY HOPSCOTCH:

- This is an easy game to play by yourself. The more you practice, the steadier you'll be on your feet!

JUMPING JACKS:

- How many can you do? Keep a chart and try to increase the amount at a go each week.

JUMPING ROPE:

- How many jumps can you do at a time? Can you do "hot peppers?" Can you perform tricks? String some together and create a routine. For jump rope rhymes, click here: <http://www.streetplay.com/thegames/jumprope/jumproperhymes.html>

HULA HOOPS:

- Count each "loop" as you hula hoop. See how high you can go! Can you can beat your own record?
- Use a hula hoop like a jump rope. Try "jump hooping" and count how many times you can jump in a row.

TENNIS BALL TOSS:

- How many times in a row can you toss a tennis ball in the air and catch it underhand?
- Can you throw it up with one hand and catch with the opposite hand? Can you let it bounce once before catching with the opposite hand?
- How many tennis balls can you juggle? Two? Three?
- Try hitting a ball against a wall with a tennis racquet. Let the ball bounce once before hitting it. How many times in a row can you hit the ball?
- Don't have a racquet? Play hand ball against a wall instead. Try it two ways, allowing yourself one bounce per play and no bounces. Which is easier?

WALL BALL:

- Bounce a playground ball against a wall. Let it bounce once before hitting it back with your hand. How many times in a row can you keep it up?

BASKETBALL DRIBBLING and shooting hoops

SOCCER DRIBBLING and footwork drills Links to more activities:

BAM! BODY AND MIND ACTIVITY CARDS <http://www.cdc.gov/bam/activity/cards.html>

Find out more about physical activities, from ballet to skateboarding. Learn how to play and what gear you'll need to get started.

AFTER-SCHOOL FUN FITNESS ACTIVITIES / FUEL UP TO PLAY 60

<https://www.fueluptoplay60.com/playbooks/last-season-plays/after-school-drills-and-skills>

COMMUNITY PLAYTIME – IT'S GOOD FOR EVERYONE

<https://www.fueluptoplay60.com/playbooks/current-seasons-playbook/community-play-time-its-good-for-everyone>

JUMPROPE FOR HEART AND HOOPS FOR HEART PROGRAMS <http://www.shapeamerica.org/jump/>

Try a couple of the combinations below, and then encourage kids to invent a salsa recipe of their own! Serve with pita chips, corn tortilla chips or whole-grain crackers. Be sure to keep out the cracker boxes or bags so kids can note the ingredients and nutrients listed on the Nutrition Panels.

SALSAS

FRUIT & VEGGIE SALSA

- chopped cantaloupe
- chopped honeydew melon
- chopped pineapple (canned)
- chopped green peppers
- chopped yellow peppers
- splash of pineapple juice (reserved from can)

GREEN FRUIT SALSA

- chopped kiwis
- chopped Golden Delicious apples
- squeeze of lime juice

PINEAPPLE-PEPPER SALSA

- chopped pineapple
- chopped red bell peppers
- squeeze of lemon juice

PEACH-TOMATO SALSA

- chopped peaches
- cherry or grape tomatoes, quartered
- green onions
- squeeze of lime juice
- drizzle of honey

SNACK MIXES

SNACK MIX

This snack mix is perfectly proportioned to provide a good variety and balance of healthy grains, salty and sweet flavors. By measuring portions and serving them in individual cups, this recipe also reinforces good lessons about portion control, balance and variety.

- 2 cups cereal
- 2 cups air-popped popcorn, snack crackers or pretzels
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- ½ cup nuts
- ½ cup raisins, sweetened dried cranberries or other dried fruit
- ½ cup milk chocolate candy pieces or chocolate chips

SWEET TREATS

Craving something sweet? Pump up the energy and nutrients by adding fruits and veggies to the mix. These snacks satisfy your sweet tooth and let you tick off several food groups on your chart at the same time.

FRUIT BURRITOS

Spread, sprinkle and roll up a wrap (wheat tortilla), using ingredients like:

- Low-fat cream cheese, chopped apples, cinnamon and light sprinkle of brown sugar or drizzle of maple syrup
- Peanut butter, banana slices and a drizzle of honey
- Peanut butter, shredded carrots, raisins and a drizzle of honey

SIMPLE BANANA SPLITS

- sliced bananas (1/2 cup per person)
- strawberries, fresh or frozen (1/2 cup per person)
- low-fat vanilla frozen yogurt (1/2 cup per person)
- whipped cream in a can (optional)

SWEET TREATS *continued ...*

BANANA OR BLUEBERRY PUDDING IN A BAG

Use one small box of pudding mix per two children, or one large box per four children. Follow the instructions for milk quantity on the box, using either fat-free or 1% milk.

Ingredients:

- instant pudding mix (see above)
- fat-free or low-fat milk (see measurement on pudding box)
- zipper/resealable sandwich bags (one per child)
- bananas (1/2 per child) or blueberries (1/2 cup per child)

Instructions:

- Measure and pour half a small box of pudding (or a quarter of a large box) into each Ziploc bag.
- Read directions on the pudding box to calculate milk quantities. Measure enough milk to make half a small box or a quarter of a big box of pudding and add it to the pudding mix in your baggie.
- Seal the bag tightly!
- Gently squish the bag around with your hands, mixing the pudding mix and milk until smooth and thick.
- Open the bag, add sliced bananas or blueberries, and eat with a spoon!

PUMPKIN PIE IN A CUP

Let each student mix the following ingredients in an individual cup. Serve with two whole-grain graham crackers each (and a knife for spreading).

- ½ cup canned pumpkin
- 2 tablespoons marshmallow creme
- 2 tablespoons whipped topping or whipped cream
- dash of cinnamon

WELLNESS PUDDING SHAKE-UP

Follow the same instructions as above with the Banana or Blueberry Pudding in a Bag, but use a jar with a lid rather than a zipper/resealable sandwich bag. Shake jar vigorously for one minute.

WELLNESS BEVERAGES

FRUIT JUICE SHAKE-UP

- ½ cup low-fat yogurt
- ½ cup cold fruit juice

Measure ingredients and pour into a covered jar or container. Shake for 20 seconds, then pour in a cup. Or, stick a straw in your jar and enjoy!

FRUIT SPRITZERS

Mix one cup of 100% fruit juice with one cup of sparkling seltzer water. Garnish with a piece or slice of fruit on the rim of the cup. Same fruity flavor but half the calories. Cheers!

EZ FROZEN FRUIT

Stick fruit on skewers or recycled popsicle sticks, wrap with a plastic sandwich bag and twist tie, and stick in the freezer for a few hours or overnight. Banana halves and watermelon chunks or spears work especially well. Ideas:

- Banana-on-a-stick
- Watermelon-on-a-stick
- Frozen fruit kabobs (use any sturdy fruit that can stay on a stick!)
- Frozen fruit salad (fill a paper cup with fruit, freeze... and eat!)

CHIPS

MICROWAVED POTATO CHIPS

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 4 medium waxy potatoes (like Yukon gold), unpeeled
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt, or more to taste

Instructions:

KIDS:

- Wash your hands.
- Scrub potatoes and dry them.

EZ TEACHER:

- Carefully cut into very thin (1/8") slices.
- Dab moisture from slices with a paper towel.

KIDS:

- Place slices in a bowl and add olive oil. Toss with your hands until all slices are thinly coated.
- Arrange slices in a single layer on a microwave-safe plate or a paper plate or parchment paper.
- Sprinkle evenly with sea salt.
- Cook in a microwave oven for 3 minutes, then take dish out and turn over potato slices. Cook for 2 minutes on the other side. If still not crisp, cook one additional minute.

BAKED SWEET POTATO CHIPS

You can try these in the microwave, following the Microwaved Potato Chips instructions. However, they'll be crispier if done in the oven.

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons olive oil or olive oil cooking spray
- 3 large sweet potatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt, or 1/2 teaspoon of sugar mixed with 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon

Instructions:

EZ TEACHER:

- Slice sweet potatoes in advance, making them as thin as possible – 1/8" or thinner.
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

KIDS:

- Place the sweet potato slices in a bowl with a drizzle of olive oil and toss with your (clean) hands. Then arrange in a single row on a foil-lined baking tray.

OR

- Arrange them on a baking tray and spray them on both sides with olive oil cooking spray.
- Bake for about 15 minutes and cool.

(Optional: Sprinkle with a dash of sea salt or cinnamon and sugar before baking.)

RAINBOW RECIPES

RAINBOW FRUIT SALAD

Divide students into five groups and have each wash, cut and prepare a different color fruit. Put them all together in a big bowl and let kids scoop out their own servings with paper cups.

- Red: strawberries or pink grapefruit
- Orange/yellow: oranges, mango or papaya
- Green: kiwifruit or green grapes
- White: bananas or coconut
- Blue/purple: blueberries purple grapes

RAINBOW COLE SLAW

- chopped red peppers
 - shredded carrot
 - shredded green cabbage
 - shredded purple cabbage
 - Optional additions: chopped red onion, chopped pineapple, chopped green pepper or yellow pepper
- Quick dressing:
- 1 cup low-fat mayonnaise
 - 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - 2 tablespoons sugar
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - Mix with 6-8 cups of chopped vegetables.

RAINBOW RECIPES *continued ...*

RAINBOW PIZZA

Try some different veggie toppings on your pizza. Make mini bagel pizzas or English muffins pizzas, each of one color, or make one large pizza with rows or sections of different colors.

- **Red:** fresh tomato, sun-dried tomatoes
- **Green:** broccoli, green peppers, green olives
- **Orange/Yellow:** pineapple, yellow and orange peppers
- **White:** onions, mushrooms
- **Blue/Purple:** eggplant, red onion, black olive

RAINBOW STIR FRY

Kids wash, chop and prepare veggies and then watch EZ teachers sauté them in a wok or frying pan. Come up with your own creative combination, using all the colors in the fruit-and-veggie rainbow of colors.

- red peppers, red kidney beans
- carrots, orange peppers
- green onions, broccoli, pea pods, bok choy
- white onions, fennel, cauliflower
- red onions, purple cabbage, black beans

Graphics for Make-Your-Own Murals

MyPlate Graphic Resources: Downloadable graphics and printables

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/printable-materials>

USDA: Fruits and Vegetables Bulletin Board Resources

<https://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/resource-library/bulletin-board-resources/fruits-and-vegetables-bulletin-board-resources>



Other Resources

Fruit and Veggie Color Champions / Produce for Better Health Foundation

<http://www.foodchamps.org/>

Printables calendars, stickers, activity worksheets including “How Much Is a Cup?” pages to teach about serving sizes.

Nourish Interactive

<http://www.nourishinteractive.com/nutrition-education-printables>

A variety of free printables, including charts and activity pages on the Five Food Groups, Rainbow Foods, Fitness Goals Tracking Sheets, etc.



PLU (Product Look-Up) Codes

Use these links as reference for the optional Produce Sticker Chart activities in Unit 2 (“Eat Together”). Organic produce has a 5 digit PLU number that begins with the number 9.

Conventional produce has a 4 digit PLU number that begins with the number 4.

Produce Lookup Codes / Supermarket Page

<http://supermarketpage.com/prucodes.php>

This helpful chart has corresponding pictures of each item of produce.

Alphabetical PLU Code List

<http://www.innvista.com/health/foods/plu-codes-alphabetical-order/>

International Federation for Produce Standards

<http://www.ifpsglobal.com/>

Everything you could ever want to know about PLU Codes! (Helpful for answering curious kids’ questions.)

Home Connections

Together Counts: Home Activity Sheets

<http://www.togethercounts.com/at-home>

Try new foods and fun physical activities at school and back home with your family. Activities include “I Heart Moving!” and “I Heart Balance!”

Parents’ Guide to an Active Lifestyle / Fuel Up to Play 60

https://www.fueluptoplay60.com/tools#tab_parents-guide-to-an-active-lifestyle

Tools, resources and activities to get the whole family involved in family games and fitness.

“10 Tips” Nutrition Education Series / Printables to Bring Home

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips>

Helpful tips to hang on the family fridge.



Fruits and Veggies Color Charts

MAKE-YOUR-OWN COLOR CHART: Write or type the five color groups down the left side of your chart: red, yellow/orange, white, green and blue/purple. Create columns with students’ (or family members’) names across the top. Or get creative and draw a big rainbow shaped chart. Keep track of the fruits and vegetables you eat or drink in each color category, using check marks, hand-written notes or stickers.

Color My Plate Printables

<http://www.nourishinteractive.com/nutrition-education-printables/category/3-free-nutrition-month-kids-eating-healthy-colorful-foods-activity-pages-worksheets>



Diagrams for Playground Games

Peaceful Playgrounds Stencil Kit

<http://peacefulplaygrounds.com/stencils-2/>

