



Month 3: YOGA

** Adapted From Yoga Kit for Kids by Imaginazium*

School Age Activities

These principles will help ensure your children receive all the benefits yoga can offer.

- **Be present** – focus on what you are doing.
- **Be gentle** – keep checking that you are breathing and moving smoothly.
- **Be sensitive** – let your feelings guide your movement. If it hurts, STOP. Stretch only to where it feels good. If you can't do a pose, just move in the direction of the shape and breathe.
- **Be positive and proud of yourself for trying** – you will become strong and steady.
- **Make friends with gravity** – you must first release down to stretch up or out.
- **Imagine you are VERY BIG** – let the pose make more space inside you.

Since everyone's body is different, everyone's abilities will be different. Some poses will be easy and some more difficult. Success in yoga is not that you do the pose well, rather it is that you feel the stretch or shape of the pose.

It's important to invite children to pretend! Children learn easily and naturally through imitation and imagery. Ask children to FEEL LIKE or PRETEND TO BE the animal or object after which the pose is named. This acting out engages the whole child and supports the union of movement, breathing and focus.

Yoga Games

Try using the poses listed in the following fun ways:

- **Randomly** – just pick a pose without looking.
- **In a specific sequence** – such as from sitting poses to standing ones.
- **In categories** – all animals or all objects.
- **As the choreography for a yoga dance** – choose 3 – 6 poses and move from one pose to another without stopping like you would a dance. Add music and practice until it really flows!
- **As a guessing game** – each player takes a card and then, one at a time, does their pose while the others try to guess the name.
- **As a transition** – use just 1 or 2 poses between other activities to give kids a break, help them focus, energize or relax.

(Child instructions are in italics)

Mouse



- Kneel on shins and sit back onto heels
- Fold torso onto thighs.
- Let forehead rest on floor in front of knees.
- Lay arms on floor along side of body – palms face up.
- This is a good pose for resting and going inside to recharge or just be quiet.

*Chest on thighs
My chin tucked in
I close my eyes
I rest within
Just like a mouse
Curled in a house
Where nobody has been*

Squirrel



- Sit on shins with hands resting on thighs.
- Rise to kneeling position and bring hands together in front of chin.
- One arm at a time, reach as high as possible and then lower again like a squirrel gathering nuts
- After several reaches, lower back to sitting position.

*When I stand upon my knees
And pause to look around
I can gather lots of things
To store beneath the ground.*

Cat



- Start from hands and knees. Hands should be directly under shoulders, knees under hips.
- Spread fingers wide and point them straight ahead.
- Keeping arms straight, press down through hands into floor and exhale as you round back as much as possible and look at your bellybutton.
- On the inhale, arch your back, look up and reach one leg behind you. Imagine you are a cat stretching all the way through your tail.
- Repeat with the other leg stretching back.
- Do as many times as feels good.

*From all fours
I round my spine
So I can see my tummy
Then with a stretch
I arch myself
It makes my back
feel yummy.*

Dog



- Start from hands and knees.
- Hands should be directly under shoulders, knees under hips.
- Spread fingers wide and point them straight ahead. Curl toes under.
- Press down through hands and feet into floor and push hips as high up as possible.
- Let your head hang down so you can look at your legs.
- Lengthen your back and straighten your arms and legs.
- Reach heels toward the floor as you pull back and yawn just like a dog!
- Hold pose for 3-6 breaths and then lower back to hands and knees.

*I am dog
And when I yawn
I push into the ground
My tail goes up
My back gets long
My arms stretch straight
My head hangs down.*

Cobra



- Lay on floor on tummy, legs straight.
- Place palms of hands on floor close to and on either side of chest.
- Looking straight ahead, lift chest as high as possible.
- Shoulders should be wide and down away from ears.
- Then, arch and lift chest even higher by pressing down into hands.
- Keep elbows pinned into sides of body and pull chest forward and up. Neck should be long and chin parallel to floor.

*I press my hands
I lift my chest
I send a slither up my back
My shoulders wide
In kingly stance
Beware to all!
I might attack.*

Lion



- Start my kneeling on shins and resting chest onto thighs.
- Place forearms on the floor with elbows touching knees and look straight ahead.
- Be a lion in hiding, silent and still, preparing to pounce.
- When ready, spring ferociously forward onto hands and roar with mouth and eyes wide open.
- Press hands down into floor, arms straight and push chest forward. Make sure shoulders are down away from ears and that legs are extended straight out behind you.
- If not quite strong enough, adapt pose by resting hips on floor and bending elbows.

*I can hide
Silent and still
When I crouch down low
But when I pounce
I roar out loud
So everyone will know.*

Butterfly



- Sit with soles of feet together so that legs form a diamond shape.
- Rest hands lightly on shoulders.
- Lift and spread elbows wide.
- Lengthen torso tall and gently flap legs and arms like butterfly wings.

*When the soles of my feet
are kissing
My legs form a diamond shape
When I spread my elbows
like wings
A butterfly I do make.*

Pretzel



- Sit cross-legged on the floor with back straight.
- Hold outside of left knee with right hand and twist torso and head to the left.
- Rest fingertips of left hand on floor behind you.
- Inhale and let your body grow tall.
- As you exhale, stay tall and twist further around by pushing right hand against left knee.
- Inhale and exhale 3-5 times, twisting a little deeper each time.
- Only go as far in the twist, or in any of the poses, as feels good. Then unwind slowly and twist to the other side.

*Sitting criss-cross applesauce
My right hand to left knee
I can twist my torso 'round
And see what's behind me.*

Turtle



- Sit with soles of feet pressed together so that legs form a diamond shape.
- Touch elbows together in front of chest.
- Then bending forward bring elbows down toward the floor between knees.
- Slide forearms under legs and rest hands on floor palms down.
- Round over and, if possible, rest forehead on feet.
- Pull head in and down when IN your shell and reach head out and up when peeking OUT of your shell.

*I hook my arms under my knees
And rest them on the floor
I round my back to form my shell
And peek out of the door.*

Peacock



- Sit tall with legs straight.
- Flex feet and spread legs as wide apart as is comfortable.
- Place hands on floor in front of you and press down to widen shoulders.
- If you want more stretch in legs and hips, walk hands away from body lowering torso toward floor.

*When I fan my tail out wide
I spread my colours side to side
I stretch my back and legs out, too
So I can say
Hello to you.*

Frog



- Squat with feet wide enough apart that heels can touch or are close to the ground.
- Arms come inside of knees, hands rest on floor shoulder distance apart.
- Use arms to help spread knees wide.
- Let hips drop low while back lengthens up, chest lifts and shoulders are wide.

*I am frog
I sit in squat
I wait for flies
That I can spot
Then I flick my tongue so fast
The fly is gone within a flash.*

Mountain



- Stand with feet and ankles together.
- Press down into the floor through while foot and let top of head rise toward the ceiling.
- Eyes rest on one point at eye level. Lengthen back of neck.
- Chin draws down and in slightly as chest lifts and shoulders widen.
- Arms and hands reach down gently touching sides of body.
- Head, shoulders, ribcage and hips should all be aligned.
- Hold for 3-6 breaths.

*Head, shoulders,
Hips and feet
All aligned
with my heartbeat
Rooted down yet rising tall
I'm a mountain,
big or small.*

Waterfall



- Stand in MOUNTAIN. Raise straight arms up, fingertips reaching for the ceiling and upper arms along side ears.
- Look up at hands. Then pressing down through feet, lengthen torso, lift chest and reach up and back as far as possible. Make sure you continue to breathe.
- Hold 1-3 breaths and return to standing.

*From mountain high
Hands touching sky
I arch from head to toe
The water runs
It feels so fun
Just to let it flow.*

Bird

- From standing, raise arms diagonally out behind you like wings.
- Then, keeping eyes on one point in front of you, press up onto the balls of feet and balance.
- When balancing, imagine that you are rooting deeply into the earth while simultaneously growing longer and taller.
- Don't look away from your point. Keeping your eyes focused will help you balance.

*Perched on toes
Away up high
I like to spread my wings*



Tree



- Stand with feet parallel and together or just a few inches apart.
- Imagine being a tree. Grow long roots out of the bottom of your feet and let your body extend very tall.
- Check to feel if your feet, hips, shoulders and head are all lined up like the trunk of a tree.
- Press the palms of your hands together in front of your chest and find something at eye level to focus on. Without moving your gaze, shift weight to one foot.
- Lift the other foot on top of the standing foot or to the knee or inner thigh of the standing leg.
- Press the sole of the foot into standing leg while pressing down through the standing leg into the floor to help you balance.
- Feel as though you continue to grow. If your balance is steady, lift your hands above your head and open them like the branches of a tree.
- Breathe and hold as long as is comfortable. Do the other side.

*When I send my roots down deep
I let myself grow tall
I focus on a single point
I hold my center strong
Then I can balance on one leg
And stretch my limbs out long.*

Hero



- Stand with feet wide apart. Turn the front foot out 90 degrees and the back foot in 45 degrees.
- Bend the front leg keeping the knee in line with the foot (aim the centre of the knee toward the second toe- the one next to the big toe). Press the back leg straight keeping the heel on the floor.
- Raise both arms wide and perpendicular to the body. Hold arms parallel to floor. Turn head toward the front arm and look at the tips of the fingers.
- Be as strong and straight as an arrow flying through the sky aimed directly at a bull's-eye.
- Breathe and hold as long as feels good. Do the other side.

*I am warrior
Brave and true
My legs stand wide apart
With front knee bent
And back leg straight
My arms reach from my heart.*

Windmill

- Stand with feet wide apart and parallel, legs straight.
- Bend forward with back stretched out long and flat and place right hand on floor in front of face.
- With both arms straight, swing left arm up to reach for ceiling.
- Look up at your left hand and enjoy the twist in the torso.
- To deepen twist, press into the floor with right arm and reach further up and over with left arm.



Bridge



- Lie on your back with arms resting at your sides. Place soles of feet on the floor hip distance apart about 6" from buttocks.
- Press hips and back off the floor as high as you can by pressing into feet. Shoulders remain on the floor.
- Roll shoulders back and tuck them under you. Wriggle arms close together underneath you and interlace fingers.
- Press into arms as well as feet for a deeper back bend.
- Relax neck and face and keep head in the centre facing ceiling.
- Hold pose for 3-8 breaths and then lower slowly.

*From on my back
Knees bent, feet down
I press my hips
Up from the ground.
My hands meet underneath of me
So I arch even higher – see!*

Table



- From a seated position, place hands on floor about 6" behind you.
- Place soles of feet directly in front of hips about 8-12" in front of you.
- On an exhale, press into hands and feet and lift torso parallel to floor.
- Hands should be under shoulders and ankles should be under knees.
- Eyes can look at feet, the ceiling or back behind you depending upon what feels comfortable for your neck.
- Hold pose and breath in and out 3-6 times before gently lowering yourself back to sitting.

*With soles and palms upon the floor
My calves and arms are legs
Off of the ground I press my seat
So you can place a vase.*

Fish



- Lie on back with arms at sides and legs straight and together.
- Press elbows into floor and arch chest toward ceiling. Let head fall back until top of head is resting on the floor.
- Breathe into chest, letting chest open and neck lengthen.
- Hold 3-5 breaths.
- To come out of pose, press elbows into the floor to lift head and then roll back down onto back.

*I push my elbows down
I puff my chest up high
My top touches the ground
My heart is open wide.*

Shark



- Lay on floor on tummy, legs straight and together.
- Roll shoulders back and reach arms behind you. Clasp hands and interlace fingers behind back.
- Reach clasped hands up and back toward feet.
- Lift head and chest as much as possible. Lift legs as well keeping them straight.
- Breathe 3-5 times and then lower slowly.

*With my hands held tight
Behind my sight
I roll my shoulders back
I lift my fin
And then my chin
To bit into a snack.*

Flower



- Sit with soles of the feet touching, legs in a diamond shape.
- Touch elbows together and then bend forward moving arms down between legs. Hook forearms under knees.
- Sit back up bringing feet toward body until just toes are touching floor.
- Lean back, lift feet off floor, one foot at a time and balance on seat.
- Breathe and hold for as long as possible. Come out of pose gracefully.

*I slide my arms inside my legs
I scoop my elbows under knees
I lean way back and lift my feet
So I can balance on my seat!*

Bug



- Squat with feet wide enough apart that heels can stay on or near the floor.
- Lift bottom to make room for arms to go in between legs and wrap around to the outside of ankles.
- Place palms of hands on the floor a little behind and to the outside of feet.
- Wriggle upper arms behind knees. Knees should bend over upper arms.
- Bend elbows and lower thighs down. Take weight into hands, lift feet off floor, one foot at a time and balance.
- Breathe and hold for as long as possible.

*When my hands crawl through my legs
And rest next to my feet
I can sit upon my arms
As if they were my seat.*