

YOGA ACTIVITIES

4-6

ENCOURAGES A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



INCLUDES

- Practical activities that develop flexibility, strength and focus

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Yoga Activities Grades 4–6

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Yoga

Activity Level: moderate

Yoga is a wonderful form of exercise to calm the mind, and warm, stretch, and strengthen the muscles and body. Slow movements gently increase breathing and blood flow, which in turn fuels the muscles and tissues and increases flexibility. Children benefit from gentle stretching and movement that is done in a calm and quiet manner, leaving students feeling calm, peaceful, flexible, and ready to take on more vigorous and strenuous activities. Remember that every body is different, so each child's pose might also look a little different from their neighbor's pose. The emphasis should not be on performing perfect poses, and should be adapted as needed for individual children.

Getting Started

- Ideally, children should wear comfortable clothing and practice in bare feet on individual yoga mats or on a smooth non-slippery surface.
- You may want to set the tone for yoga by playing soft, soothing music.
- Ensure that children have enough personal space to participate.
- Be a good role model and always demonstrate the poses for students, rather than just explaining what to do.
- Do not expect children to remember how to do the various poses. Be patient and review. You may ask children to show and explain the poses they know.

About Breathing

- Breathing deeply and steadily is important in yoga because it gives us energy for our body, and keeps us calm and focused.
- Remember to breathe in through your nose, down into your belly. Feel your belly get bigger as you breathe in, and get smaller again as you breathe out.
- Try to always breathe out through your nose. If you are working really hard, you may need to breath out through your mouth.

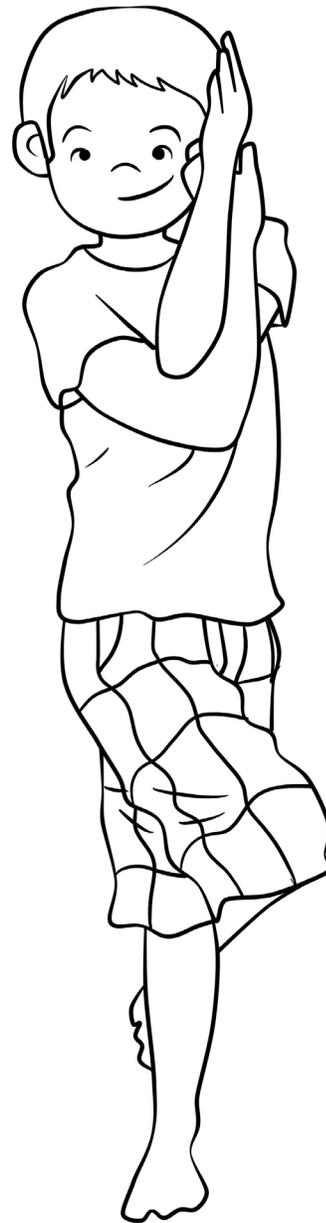
More Ideas

- Encourage children to be creative and invent their own unique poses and movements. Invite children to teach their peers their creations.
- Tell imaginative stories as a springboard for doing different yoga poses. For example, pretend you are going on a trip through the forest. Do poses such as a Eagle, Frog, etc., as they come up in the story.

Eagle Pose

In Eagle Pose, we will twist our arms and legs around each other, stretch our upper back, and challenge our balance.

1. Stand tall with your arms at your sides.
2. Place your right arm over your left arm and bend your elbows upward.
3. Twist your arms around each other; try to make your palms touch. If they don't reach all the way, that is okay. (Option: The back of your left hand against the outer side of your right elbow.)
4. Bend your knees and lift your left foot off the floor.
5. Twist your left leg around your right leg.
6. Hook your left foot around the lower part of your right leg if you can. (Option: The toes of your left foot can be on the floor for balance.)
7. Lift your left hip up slightly to square your pelvis, then squeeze your inner thighs together for balance. Pull your belly button to your spine and tuck your tailbone under to help you stay strong and steady.
8. Breathe deeply and try to sit down lower into your legs, keeping your weight in your heel. Try to lift your arms higher to stretch your upper back.
9. Keep looking straight ahead.
10. Breathe in to return to standing. Breathe out to unravel your body.
11. Repeat the pose with your left arm and your right leg.



Downward-Facing Dog Pose

We are going to get down on the floor, lift our hips up high, and let our head hang underneath our bodies, like a dog stretching.

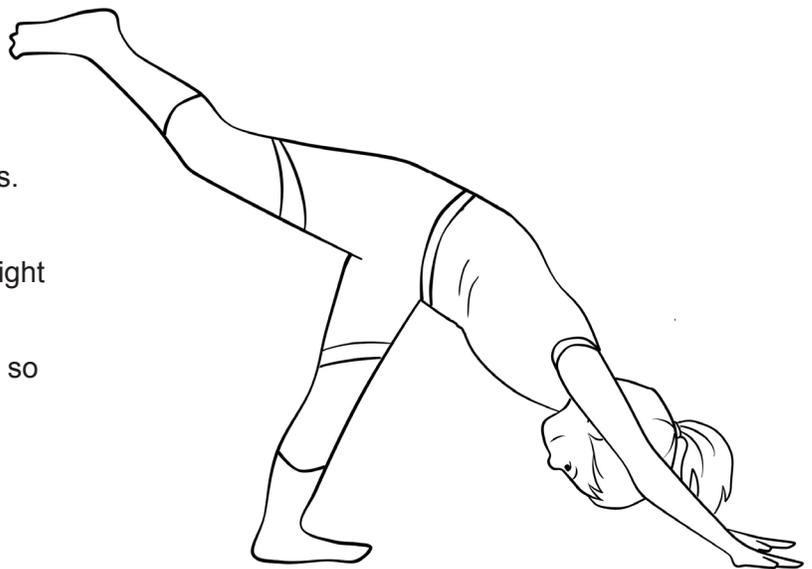
1. Go down on your hands and knees like a dog.
2. Breathe out, curl your toes under, and straighten your legs. Lift your dog tail into the air.
3. Breathe in, lift your bottom higher.
4. Breathe out and press your heels and hands into the floor.
5. Pretend you are a dog stretching its front legs and wagging its tail.



Three-Legged Dog Pose

We are going to get down on the floor, lift our hips up high, then lift one leg up off the floor like a dog stretching its leg.

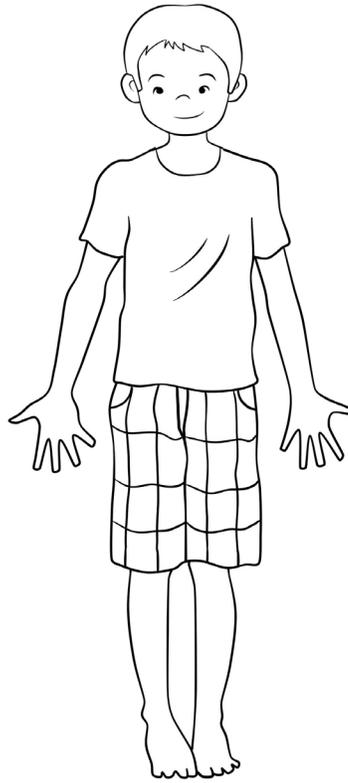
1. Go down on your hands and knees.
2. Breathe out, and curl your toes under as you straighten your knees. Lift your hips so your bottom is up.
3. Breathe in and lift your left leg straight out behind you. Hold it up.
4. Breathe out and lower your left leg so your foot is back on the floor.
5. Repeat with your right leg.



Mountain Pose

Let's stand tall like a mighty mountain.

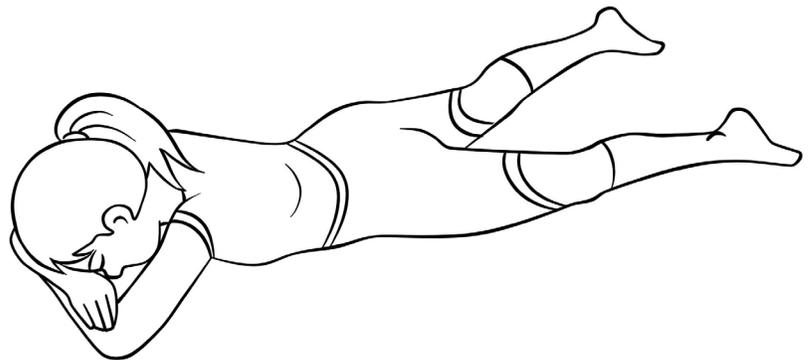
1. Stand tall with feet together, or feet wider apart. Point your toes forward.
2. Have your arms down at your sides.
3. Press your shoulders back.
4. Make your body tall, straight, and strong, like a mighty mountain.
5. Breathe in and out deeply and slowly.



Crocodile Pose

Let's lift our chest like a crocodile opening its mouth.

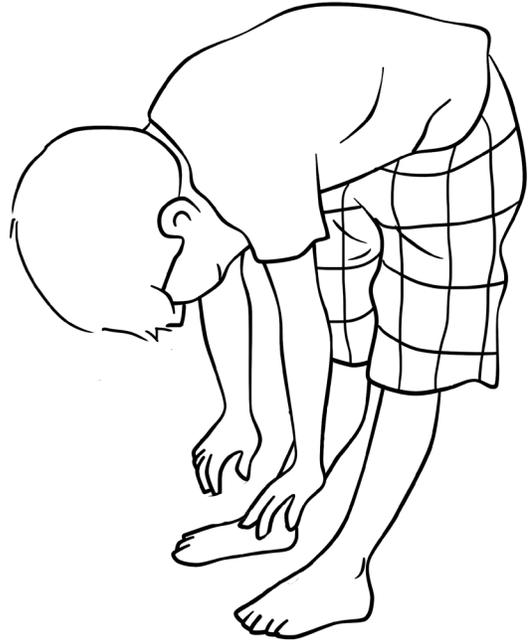
1. Lie on your belly with your forehead touching the ground, your feet stretched out behind you, and squeezing your bottom.
2. Bring your arms in front of your head, then place each hand on your arm at the elbow. Rest your forehead on your arms.
3. Breathe in through your nose as you lift your chest from the ground nice and high like when a crocodile is opening its big mouth.
4. Breathe out as you bring your upper body back to the floor.



Ragdoll Pose

Let's fold our chest down over our legs and let our upper body hang loose like a floppy ragdoll.

1. Stand up straight and tall.
2. Breathe in and reach your arms up to the sky. Lift your kneecaps up with the front of your thighs to make your legs strong.
3. Breathe out and fold your upper body forward. Tip your hips and pelvis forward to keep your lower back straight. Lift your belly button up toward your spine as you fold to protect your back.
4. Let your arms and head hang loose toward the floor like a floppy ragdoll. Nod your head "yes," then shake your head "no" to relax your neck.
5. Ideally, your legs should be straight, with the front of your thighs strong and your pelvis tilting forward. If you cannot do this, bend your knees a little to be more comfortable.
6. Take deep breaths into your lower back. As you breathe out, let your arms and body drop closer to the floor.
7. To come back up to standing, bend your knees, breathe in, and slowly roll your body back up until you are standing straight.



Camel Pose

Let's lift up our chest high like the hump of a camel.

1. Go on your knees on the floor with your feet flat out behind you, toenails on the floor.
2. Keep your body straight.
3. Place the palm of your hands on your lower back. Squeeze your bottom as you push your hips forward. Try to keep your hips over your knees.
4. Gently look up and arch your back and reach back behind you until your hands are touching your heels or the bottoms of your feet.
5. Lift your chest like a camel's hump.



Shooting Stars Breathing Exercise

Let's make stars twinkle as they shoot through the sky.

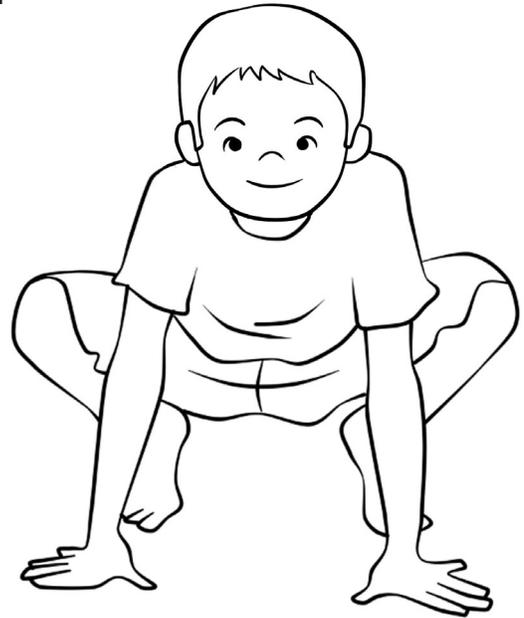
1. Sit strong and tall, and pull your belly button to your spine. Cross your legs.
2. As you breathe in, reach your hands up above your head, palms facing each other.
3. As you breathe out, wiggle your fingers like little stars twinkling, while you slowly bring your hands back down with your arms out wide.
4. Repeat.



Frog Pose

Let's squat like a frog ready to leap over a log.

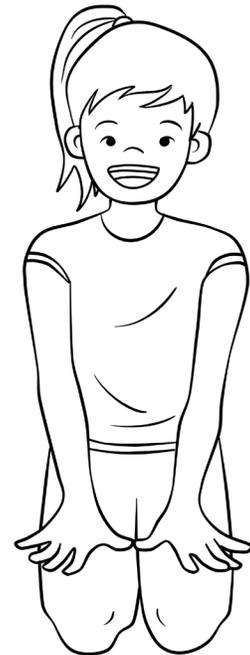
1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, and squat down.
2. While balancing on your toes, keep your knees spread wide apart.
3. Put your hands on the floor between your knees.
4. Look straight ahead and breathe in.
5. As you breathe out, keep your hands on the floor while you straighten your legs so your bottom goes up. Lower your head toward your knees.
6. Come back to the squatting position, and repeat.



Lion Pose

Let's become a lion, the mighty king of the jungle.

1. Kneel on the floor and sit back on your feet.
2. Place your hands on your thighs and stretch your arms.
3. Spread your fingers, flare your nostrils, and open your eyes wide.
4. Open your mouth wide like a big lion yawning and stick out your tongue.
5. Curl the tip of your tongue toward your chin. Breathe in deeply.
6. Exhale with a roar just like a mighty lion!

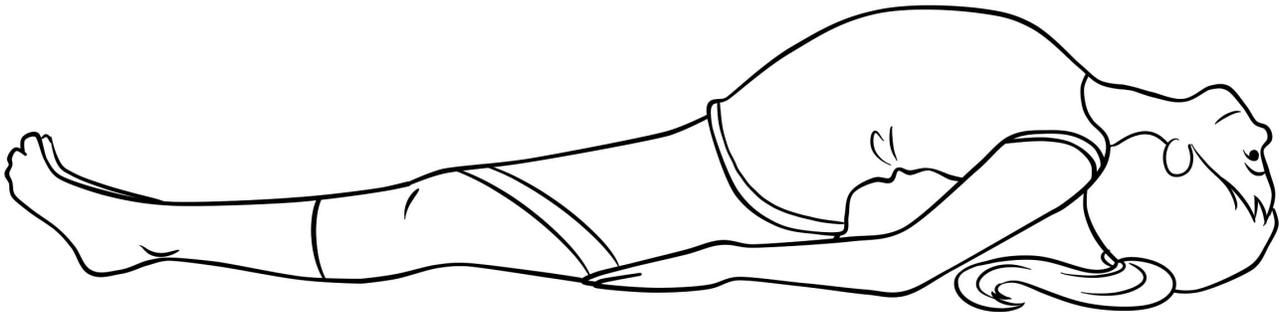




Fish Pose

Let's puff out our chest like a fish breathing through its gills.

1. Lie on the floor on your back, with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.
2. Lift your bottom slightly off the floor. Slide your hands, palms down, under your bottom and move your arms under your body. Lower your body so your bottom sits on the backs of your hands.
3. Press your forearms and elbows firmly against the floor. Squeeze your shoulder blades together.
4. Take a breath in. Arch your back to lift your back and head away from the floor.
5. Gently let the crown or back of your head rest on the floor. Keep your head touching the floor only very lightly to avoid hurting your neck. Press your heels forward. Keep the weight on your elbows to keep the weight off your head.
6. Imagine you are breathing through fish gills.
7. Breathe out. Press into your elbows again and slide your head gently back, returning your body and head to the floor.

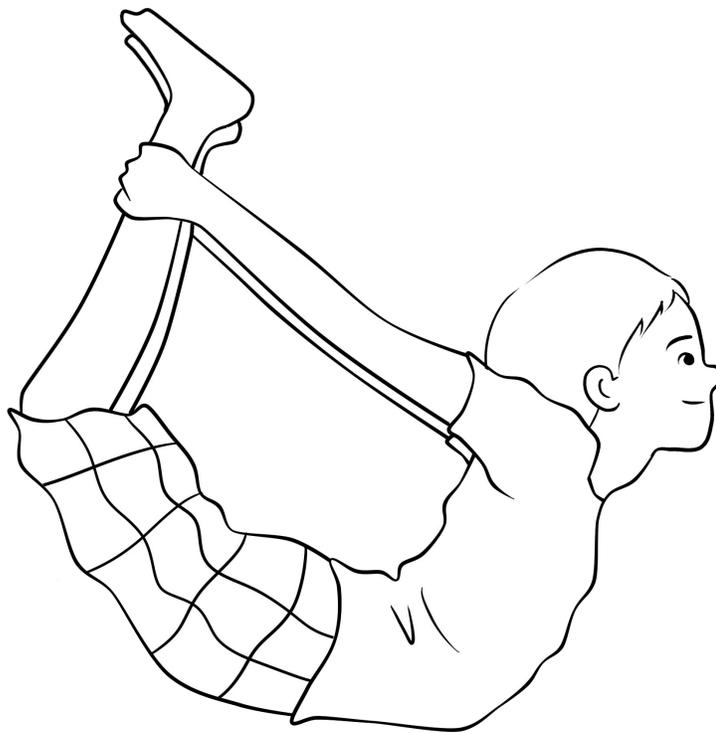




Bow Pose

Let's turn our body into a bow that is getting ready to shoot an arrow.

1. Lie on your belly with your arms beside your body and your palms facing up.
2. Breathe out and bend your knees, bringing your feet as close to your bottom as possible. Squeeze your bottom to lengthen your lower back.
3. Reach back with your hands and grab hold of your ankles. Keep your knees hip-width apart.
4. Breathe in. Lift your heels toward the sky, and lift your thighs, chin, and chest.
5. Look forward as you arch your back like a bow. Now you just need an arrow!



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