



Yoga for Kids

Supplies:

- Mat (if available)
- Peaceful background music (suggest looking up yoga playlist)
- A quiet, mostly dark space
- Prewritten or recorded guided relaxation script

Age or Grade: All

Time: 30-45 Minutes



Background: Yoga is an excellent way to exercise both the body and mind. In our Yoga for Kids program, we focus on three elements to achieve relaxation: breathing, stretching, and guided relaxation.

Project Goal: The short-term goal of this project is to bring the body and mind to a state of relaxation through the three elements. Continued practice and repetition can also help with focus, anxiety, flexibility, and strength.

What to Do:

1. Play soft, gentle background music. This can be nature sounds, soft flute tones, chimes ringing, etc. Keep the lights turned low or off and find a nice quiet space. Participants can use a mat or the floor.
2. Start participants in a comfortable position, either sitting or standing, and begin taking deep, long breaths in and out. A great way to help visualize their breathing is by pretending their hands are a deflated balloon. When they are close together, their air is pushed out of their lungs.
3. As your participants take a deep breath in, their hands spread apart as a balloon would grow until they have filled their lungs entirely with air.
4. As they breath out, their balloon deflates until it is completely empty. Repeat these two to four times to get their oxygen flowing. Tell them to imagine air flowing to all parts of their body as they focus on their breathing.
5. Once you feel their lungs are expanded and stretched, you are now ready to start stretching their other muscles.
6. Start by showing them how to stretch their upper body by reaching and stretching up and working your way down various muscle groups—neck, arms, back, legs, etc.



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7. Think of different ways you can move muscles to get a good stretch. Remind them to continue taking long, deep breaths as they stretch different parts of their body. Your stretches can be simple to more immediate if they are able.
8. Continue stretching for 10 to 15 minutes.
9. Now it is time for the guided relaxation portion of your session. Have participants lay flat on their backs or sitting in comfortable position with their eyes closed.
10. Remove any possible distractions. Speak softly as you read your script or have a video or sound clip playing softly. Take lots of pauses and articulate clear, vivid imagery. Guided scripts can be as short as 5 minutes or as long as 20 minutes.
11. When you conclude your script, slowly bring your participants back by having them stretch on their own. It is good to keep a quiet voice and follow with a low energy activity.

Reflect:

1. How did you feel during the breathing exercises?
2. What muscles could you feel yourself stretching most?
3. How did the guided relaxation make you feel?

Apply:

1. How can continuing the practice of yoga help your physical health?
2. How can continuing the practice of yoga help your mental health?
3. What other ways can you decrease stress and improve physical or mental health?

Notes for Parents or Helpers:

There are many free guided relation scripts and videos available online for you to continue at home. You do not have to be strong or flexible to participate in yoga.

Look up different stretches ahead of time. Yoga does not have to consist of complicated posing. Find stretches that range from easy to difficult depending on your audience. Hold poses for several breaths and do not rush through it.



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