




Yoga FOR KIDS

A 4-H Healthy Living Program







- What is 4-H?
- Program background and research
- Yoga Basics
- Pose practice
- Evaluation results
- Resources



What is 4-H?

- The youth development program of the Cooperative Extension Service
 - Largest YDP in the nation
- Head, Heart, Hands, and Health
- Mission:

4-H empowers youth to reach their full potential, working and learning in partnership with caring adults.

4-H Healthy Living Initiative



The 4-H Healthy Living mission engages youth and families through access and opportunities to achieve physical, social, emotional well-being.



What is Yoga?



- Yoga is one of the oldest forms of physical activity.
- More than just stretching
 - Combines breath, physical postures (poses), and mindfulness to help strengthen & calm the body & mind.
- 4-H Yoga for Kids is for people of all ages, the flexible & inflexible.

Why Yoga?



- Non-competitive
- Implementation is flexible
 - Can be done by anyone
 - Requires little to no equipment
 - Inexpensive
 - Can be done almost anywhere for any length of time
- Numerous health benefits



Benefits of Yoga for Kids



Improve fitness

- Muscle endurance, flexibility
- Improves aerobic capacity

Research suggests yoga for kids:

- Improves motor performance, reaction time
- Improves spatial memory
- Reduces fear and anxiety; may improve emotional stability or emotional balance

Research on Benefits cont'd



- Improves body image and self-esteem
- Improve sleep, appetite, and general well-being
- Improves academic performance and classroom behavior
- Improves focus and concentration (ADD-ADHD)
- Shows promise as effective program for children with autism spectrum disorders.

Yoga Basics



Breathing



- Awareness of breath is one thing that makes yoga different from other forms of exercise.
- Focused breathing may improve:
 - Coordination, balance, and range of motion
 - Mental concentration
 - Learning capacity
 - Decision making
 - Digestion by calming the emotions that may interfere
 - Anxiety, stress, and the “fight or flight” response

Breathing



- How do YOU breathe?
- Chest vs. Belly Breathing



Guided Relaxation



- A form of relaxation that focuses on your breath and imagery to create calm and peaceful images in your mind to release stress and tension in the body.

Guided Relaxation



- Benefits:

Decrease or Lower	Increase or Improve
Blood Pressure	Sleep
Depression	Self-Confidence
Muscle Pain	Inner Peace
Stress	Relaxation
Nausea	Breathing
Anxiety	Immune System
Tension	Self-Control
Anger	Overall Health

General Instructions



To get the full benefits of each pose, it's important to balance each pose in your routine with a complementing pose.

- For example, if you do:
 - A pose standing on your right leg (e.g. Tree), do the pose standing on your left leg.
 - A pose with your right leg in front of your left (e.g. Warrior I), do the pose with your left leg in front.
 - A pose with a backbend (e.g. Camel), do a pose with a forward bend (e.g. Child's Pose).

Safety Tips



- Always warm the body up first
 - Gradually increase intensity.
- Stay within your fitness level limits – know what your body can & cannot do.
 - If a pose feels painful, stop doing it.
- Yoga is not a competition – don't compare yourself to others around you.
- Avoid bouncing or jerking into a pose.

Safety Tips cont'd



- Keep your knees and elbows loose or slightly bent.
- Remember to breathe.
- When doing balance poses, find a focal point.
- Wear comfortable clothing that won't bind or restrict movement.

Safety should always be your primary concern. If you have questions or concerns about whether a pose is appropriate for you, talk to your doctor.

Let's Learn Some Poses!



Evaluation Results



Program Results



- Piloted in **7 counties** in 2013 – 2014
- **1,600 youth** completed Healthy Living Common measures
 - **95%** increased knowledge of healthy food choices
 - **76%** reported eating more fruits and vegetables
 - **72%** reported eating less junk food
 - **79%** reported exercising 60 minutes each day
 - 40% of Arkansas YRBS respondents reported the same
 - **97%** had positive attitudes toward being physically active

From students...



“Helps us to be calm and focused.”

“It has helped me to focus on my work and not be overstressed about it.”

“It helped me on Benchmarks. I did deep breathing when I came to difficult questions.”

“I changed my stress level. I just breathe in and out.”

“It helps the teachers to not be stressed.”

“When I do yoga I can concentrate.”

“It relaxed you where you are not going nuts all of the time.”

From Teachers...




“I struggle with ADHD. For the first time, I have been able to clear my mind, focus, and find calmness within myself.”


“It helped the students calm down and mellow out during testing.”


“The kids requested to do Yoga during Benchmarks – before and during breaks. It helped them to stay focused and clear their minds. They handled Benchmarks much better this year than in previous years.”


“My students have more patience with one another.”


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Resources




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- Comprehensive Curriculum
- 3 Posters
- 2 Fact Sheets
- Yoga for Kids DVD


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