Teaching Children and Teens Yoga in Academic Environments

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About

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YOGA ed.
embody • empower • educate
Professional Institutes
The Professional Institute is a comprehensive training program designed for individuals inspired to integrate yoga for children and teens into academic environments. Our 4 day Institutes are modular and include a 360 page curriculum and 24 complete lesson plans per grade group.

Professional Development
Yoga Ed. Tools for Teachers is designed for educators, health professionals, and parents. These workshops empower participants to effectively utilize 5 to 15 minute classroom yoga sessions or “yoga breaks,” to increase self-awareness and self-regulation for students and teachers. Professional Development workshops are inclusive of our Tools for Teachers manuals.

Manuals and Lesson Plans
Tools for Teachers Manuals and Lesson Plans are for sale.
Learning Goals

1. Understand the components of a yoga class
2. Understand the broad physical, cognitive, social and emotional benefits of integrating yoga into the academic setting
3. Discuss yoga class themes and concepts that will teach students how to use yoga tools to support their own health and well-being on and off the mat
Yoga Tools Are For You
(and Your Students)
Yoga Education

Self Awareness
The ability to identify who and how you are being
Noticing the imbalances mentally, emotionally, physically

Self Care
The ability to shift into who and how you want to be
Utilizing yoga breathing, yoga poses, yoga games, yoga relaxation
Yoga
Your Tool Belt
Sample Yoga Class

1. **Time in:** Sunshine arms with ocean breath
2. **Discussion:** Observation
3. **Warm-Up:** Animal Walking
4. **Yoga Postures:** Frog, Cobra, Turtle, Butterfly, Tree, Rainbow Spine, Seated Twist
5. **Partner Pose:** Lizard on a Rock
6. **Relaxation:** Rainbow Shower
7. **Reflection:** Draw or write about your special color and why that is your special color.
Lesson Planning

• The goal of yoga class is to teach students how to use yoga tools to support their own health and well-being
• Students need ample opportunities to practice, understand, and apply these tools within your class in order to confidently utilize them off the mat and in their life.
Theme & Concept

• Effective lessons explore multiple facets of a theme as a metaphor for a central concept, and integrates appropriate components to actively practice your theme and concept.

• Theme:
  – The organizing idea that ties all components of the class together. Metaphors serve as wonderful themes because they prompt students to connect abstract ideas to physical sensations or life experiences.

• Concept:
  – What you would like your students to take away from class. Concepts can be facts, like how the spine moves, or skills, like using finesse rather than force.
Structures & Components

1. Time-In (Breathing) 1-3 minutes
   1. *Time-in is a tool to help students become “yoga-ready.”*

2. Discussion (Introduce theme and concept) 3-5 minutes
   1. *Discussion introduces them to the theme and concept*

3. Warm-Up 5 minutes
   1. *Prepares the mind and body for yoga class.*

4. Yoga Poses 15-20 minutes
   1. *Active opportunities for students to practice using yoga tools*

5. Game or Partner Work 5-10 minutes
   1. *Develop intrapersonal and interpersonal skills*

6. Relaxation 3-5 minutes
   1. *Invites students to shift from external awareness to internal focus*

7. Reflection 5-15 minutes
   1. *Promotes self-awareness, self-reflection, and class relatedness*
Yoga Sequencing

- Breath / Seated
- Warm-Up
- Standing
- Balancing
- Back-bending
- Forward Folding
- Hip Opening
- Twisting
- Inversion
- Relaxation
Yoga Stories

• Yoga stories engage Pre-K students by infusing yoga class with creativity and imagination.
• Effective yoga stories encourage students to act out and make up their own poses within the narrative.
• Be creative, funny and silly when creating yoga stories
Yoga Stories

• Think of a theme and concept
• Choose five to ten yoga postures to use in the story. Sequence the postures to flow like a yoga class and transition your students through them safely.
• Think of how the story will begin and end.
• Examine the beginning, sequence and end. Ask yourself these questions:
  – What image or event connects the beginning of the story to the poses?
  – What images or events connect the poses to the end of the story?
• Connect the poses, actions and images together to create a story that your students will be able to act out with the yoga poses.
Yoga Breathing

• Increases students’ readiness to learn by increasing oxygen rich blood to the brain.

• Increases self-awareness, attentiveness, and emotional regulation.
  – Recent research demonstrates that students who voluntarily regulate their emotions in response to stress show greater ability to regulate their actions and better control their stress (Davidson, 2008).

• Empowers students to regulate their inner state.
  – Since the way we breathe affects how we feel, yoga breathing helps reduce stress and increase relaxation.
  – This calmer state is more conducive to learning.
Ocean Breath
Yoga Poses

• **Reduce perceived stress and increase self-compassion.**
  – Helps the mind deal with stress more effectively and lessen its toll on the body (Gard et al., 2012).
  – Creates a learning-ready state.

• **Help the brain to produce serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine.**
  – These neurotransmitters can directly influence our ability to learn.
  – Serotonin keeps the brain activity under control and regulates mood, impulsivity, and aggression.
  – Norepinephrine directs attention, perception, and motivation.
  – Dopamine modulates reward, learning, and movement.

• **Helps balance these neurotransmitters, enriching the brain and increasing mental clarity.**

• **As a form of exercise, creates new brain cells and helps these brain cells integrate into the brain.**
  – Research suggests that exercise creates more cells for the brain to remember and learn new information. Academic stimulation encourages these cells to integrate in the brain (Ratey, 2008).
Utility of Yoga Poses

- **Standing Poses:**
  - Strengthen, energize and focus the mind and body. They require students to practice focus, grace, and endurance.

- **Balancing Poses:**
  - Cultivate focus, concentration, and attention. These poses are empowering because they present a challenge and encourage students to overcome the challenge. Regularly practicing balancing poses encourages students to develop a connection with their core.

- **Backbends:**
  - Energize the mind and increase spinal, hip and shoulder flexibility. For these reasons, backbends are especially good for the health. Breathing is very important in backbends. Struggling, grunting, and groaning are clear signs that students are pushing too hard.

- **Twists:**
  - Cleansing postures that activate blood flow and squeeze our toxins. Use twists to unwind the back after backbends or forward folds, or to clear the mind after periods of intense concentration.
Utility of Yoga Poses

• **Forward Folds:**
  – Relax the body and mind and invite students to find calm and release. Forward folds can be very challenging because they can trigger overwhelming sensations in tight. Large muscle groups like the hamstrings. Remind students not to force forward folds. They should extend gently, allowing gravity and their breath to soften their bodies.

• **Restoratives:**
  – Help students to relax and are very important in academic environments. Students often act out or disengage because they are tired. When students are tired, they cannot concentrate or meet physical challenges. When teaching restoratives, remind students to be aware of the need for balanced work, play and rest.
Yoga Games

“Play is nature’s biological plan for learning.”
- Dr. Joseph Pierce, Magical Child.

• Encourage students to engage in active exploration of the world.
  – Builds and strengthens many pathways in the brain.

• Increase the brain’s flexibility and potential for learning by developing problem solving, cooperation, imagination, and social emotional skills.

• Offer students a non-competitive way to experience joy in the classroom.
  – Joy and pleasure activate the brain’s reward system.
  – Results in greater flexibility in executive attention, which is associated with better working memory, behavior, decision-making, and judgment (Jensen, 2005).
  – Students naturally associate these positive feelings with learning.
Relaxation

• Increases readiness to learn by giving students the opportunity to let go of stress and anxiety.

• An effective way to improve the tone and quality of the classroom’s atmosphere.

• Actively triggers the relaxation response and interrupts the stress-feedback loop.
  – Recent research demonstrates that students who voluntarily regulate their emotions (self-regulation) in response to stress show greater activation in their prefrontal cortex, better modulation of activity in the amygdala, and lower levels of cortisol in the body (Davidson, 2008).
Upcoming Learning Opportunities

Yoga Tools for Teachers and Parents
Saturday, December 5, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Yoga Ed. Professional Institute 1: Teaching Children’s Yoga
Includes 350 page standards-based yoga curriculum
March 12-15, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Yoga Ed. Professional Institute 2: Teaching Teen’s Yoga
Includes 350 page standards-based yoga curriculum
June 9-12, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Ongoing:
Mentorship, professional development and consultation for schools
Contact

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