



Yoga for Children

Overview: What is Yoga?

Yoga practice combines breathing exercises and body poses which are used to improve our ability to function and stay focused. Yoga is not based on any religious beliefs; rather, it promotes the idea that using specific poses and activities will enhance the way the mind and body work together.

For children, yoga can be a fun way to improve body awareness, coordination, strength, flexibility, and stability, as well as overall self-esteem. Not all yoga positions are suitable for children under the age of 16, so poses need to be selected and/or adapted for each child's needs and abilities.



What are the benefits of yoga?

- Improve overall strength, flexibility and coordination/balance
- Increase self-awareness and self-esteem / confidence /self-respect
- Improve focus concentration and self-control
- Foster body awareness
- Facilitate creativity
- Strengthen mind-body connection
- Yoga is portable, do anywhere
- Self-discipline

Yoga also engages children in non-competitive physical activity, teaches self-calming and relaxing techniques and helps children regulate emotions and manage stress.

Yoga & Children with Special Needs

Many physicians today recommend yoga for children with special needs. For children diagnosed with autism or attention deficit disorder, yoga can provide an outlet for energy. For those diagnosed with Downs Syndrome or low tone, yoga can help build core strength, develop body awareness, and refine motor skills. Yoga practice can also lead to improved articulation and social skills. Poses can be modified for children who have physical limitations if necessary.



Where can I Learn More?

Videos/DVDs

- *YogaKids* – Marsha Wenig
- *Yoga Kids, Vol.2: ABCs* – Marsha Wenig
- *Yoga Kids, Vol. 3: Silly to Calm* – Marsha Wenig
- *Once Upon A Mat* - Jessie Forston
- *Cosmic Kids Yoga* - Jaime Amor
- *Yoga for Kids* - Jodi Komitor
- *Yoga for Families: Connect With Your Kids* - Ingrid Von Burg
- *Kids Yoga World* - Bridget Van Block



Websites

- www.childlightyoga.com
- www.specialyoga.com
- www.americanyogaassociation.org
- www.yoga-centers-directory.net/usa/new_hampshire.htm (Lists yoga centers in NH)
- www.angelbearyoga.com
- www.giggleyolates.com
- www.kidsyogastories.com
- www.pinkcoatmeal.com

Books

- *YogaKids* by Marsha Wenig
- *Yoga Kit for Kids*, Imagination, LLC
- *Yoga Games for Children* by Danielle Bersma and Marjoke Visscher
- *Yoga For Children* by Lisa Flynn
- *Kids Yoga Stories* by Giselle Shardlow
- *Good Morning/Good Night Yoga* by Mariam Gates
- *Yoga for Kids and Their Grown-Ups* by Katherine Ghannam

Games/Sets

- Yoga Spinner
- Yoga Pretzels
- Yogarilla Exercise and Activities
- Yogi Fun
- Kid's Yoga Deck
- Yoga Dice

Apps

- Super Stretch Kids Yoga
- Sing Song Yoga
- Kids Yoga Deck
- Go Go Yoga for Kids
- Yoga by Teens
- Simply Yoga

As with any form of exercise, please consult with your child's pediatrician if you have any concerns about his/her ability to participate in yoga.

The references and recommendations above are offered as ideas and resources and are not specifically endorsed by Exeter Hospital's Pediatric Rehabilitation Department.