

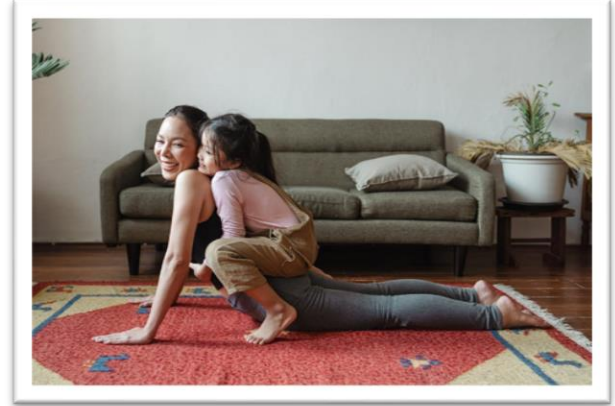


Yoga with Your 3- to 5- Year-Old Child

Introduction to Yoga

Yoga is a practice involving a combination of poses, breathing exercises, meditation, and relaxation techniques. It can be thought of as meditation in motion. Yoga has a long history, and there is a style for everyone.

Doing yoga is a simple and powerful way to support your physical and mental well-being. When you and your child do yoga together, you can focus on breathing, stretching, attention, or relaxation, depending on what you need. It is easy to start enjoying yoga with your child, and you can do it for free.



The Benefits of Yoga

First and foremost, spending one-on-one time with your child nurtures your relationship. Doing yoga can create a special opportunity to spend quality time together and be playful! Yoga can benefit both of you in many ways, some of which are listed below.

Self-Regulation

- Calm down and self-soothe
- Manage daily emotional ups and downs
- Recognize sensations in one's body
- Reduce anxiety by providing a predictable routine

Attention and Focus

- Bring attention to the present moment
- Focus on bodily sensations, such as feelings in the belly, chest, and muscles
- Improve concentration and focus

Other Benefits

- Improve your balance, coordination, and flexibility
- Have fun and get creative by coming up with new poses



Focusing on your breathing during yoga may bring added benefits. Deep breathing may stimulate the vagus nerve, part of the parasympathetic branch of our nervous system, which is responsible for rest and relaxation. This stimulation could lower blood pressure and heart rate.





Yoga with Your 3- to 5- Year-Old Child

When can you do yoga?

- As a morning routine to start your day off on the right foot
- Before meals or story time to wind down
- To get settled before bedtime
- When your child needs help to calm down – or when you’ve had a long day!

Where can you practice?

- At home, at the park, at school
- On the grass or at the beach
- Your bed can be a great place to practice breathing exercises!

How do you do yoga?

- No special equipment needed – practice on the floor or a mat
- Turn on a favourite song if you like!
- Practice with a teddy bear or move like an animal – think of how dogs and cats stretch. What poses can you invent?
- Make animal noises! Ask your child: how does a lion roar? Can you moo like a cow? What sounds does a monkey make?
- To get ideas for poses and routines, try some of the resources below, especially our [Bear Yoga video!](#)

How is yoga different from other exercise?

Like other forms of exercise, yoga involves movement, but it is also about breathing, relaxation, and awareness. The connection between your mind and your body is important in yoga. Yoga is a journey – don’t worry about getting it “right” or competing with anyone. Have fun!



Resources

More from the Reading Bear Society:

- [Belly Button Breathing](#)
- [Yoga Book List](#)
- [Bear Yoga](#) (video)

Other resources:

- [Kids’ Yoga for Emotions](#) (video)
- [Nighttime Yoga Routine for Kids](#) (video)
- [Teddy Bear Yoga Adventure](#) (video)
- [Cosmic Kids Bear Yoga Adventure](#) (video)
- [We’re Going on a Bear Hunt](#) (video)

Developed in collaboration with the UBC Medicine FLEX program by Alexandra Jamieson (UBC MD 2024) and Lauren Gingerich (MD 2022) in spring 2022. A special thank you to Lisa Sanson, Registered Professional Counsellor and Canadian Yoga Alliance Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher, for reviewing this pamphlet.



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