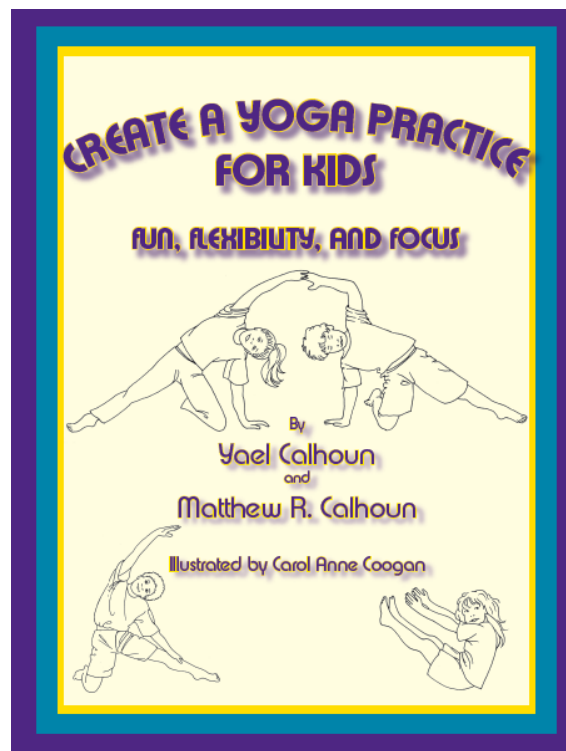


Create an introductory yoga class for kids or families!



Excerpted from *Create a Yoga Practice for Kids: Fun, Flexibility and Focus* (Sunstone Press, 2006. www.sunstonepress.com) by Yael Calhoun and Matthew Calhoun, Illustrations by Carol Anne Coogan (www.cafepress.com/natureartspirit).



General Note:

If you have mellow music playing in the background, you can use the music as a way to keep the group's attention at various times during the practice.



“Let’s listen for the music. Stand with your hands folded, your thumbs pressing into your chest. Lightly press your palms together in prayer pose. Close your eyes and listen for the music. Take several breaths here.”

~ Getting Started ~

1. Have everyone find a comfortable way to sit.

How many of you like to laugh? (show of hands). Well, that’s great! I like to laugh too, and yoga makes me laugh.

- Who knows what yoga is?
- Who has done yoga before? Why do you like yoga?
- How many of you do sports? (Ask everyone to say the sport they do -- this makes a nice chorus of showing kids are active)
- Who knows why athletes really like yoga? (stretching, strengthening, mental focus, body awareness so when they fall or jump and land or get hit...)

Well, I like yoga for all those reasons, but I also like it because it’s fun.

2.



“Doing this silly pose can help you fight off a sore throat or just give you some energy. Do you know how far away a lion cub can hear his mama lion roar? (get some guesses) Well – it’s five miles!”

“Sit back on your heels with your toes tucked under. Open your mouth as wide as you can, stick out your tongue as far as you can, and roar as loud as you can. Now watch me. I am not sure the lion cub could hear you. Let’s try that again.” (do it about 3 times)

3. Practice “Listen for the Music”



and then stand up.



4. **Color the Room**

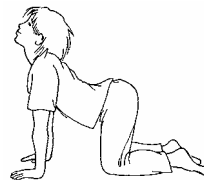
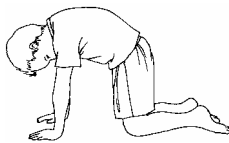
“Yoga is a wonderful way to stretch your mind and body. Let’s play a yoga game called Color-the-Room. Reach out your hand and pretend to grab your favorite color crayon. As you breathe in, stretch your hand over your head as high as you can and draw three big, colorful circles. Feel the stretch on your sides. What colors do you see on the ceiling? Now draw in the opposite direction. Put that arm down, and raise the other arm and grab a color that makes you feel silly. Again, stretch up high and make three wide circles in each direction. How does the ceiling look?”

“Now, let’s do the walls. Reach a hand out and grab a color that makes you feel happy. What color makes you feel happy? Draw a big circle reaching from over your head to the floor. As you move up, breathe in through your nose. As you move down, breathe out and bend your knees so they are soft. Do this three safe times, and then we can change colors and reverse direction.”

“Then with the other hand, reach out and grab a color that makes you feel quiet. Draw the three circles, remembering to breathe. Now how does the room look?”

5. **Cat/Cow**

This pose is fun to do facing one or two people!



“Animals have a lot of wisdom in their bodies, and you do, too. We need to get our spines warmed up before we start doing other poses. Get on your hands and knees with your hands under your shoulders and your knees under your hips. Take a deep breath, and as you breathe out, arch your back and drop your head and hiss like a fierce cat. Why is the cat feeling fierce? Take another breath and lift your back a little higher. Breathe out and come back to Flatback. Take a breath in through your nose as you drop your back and raise your head like an old cow. Give a sorry-sounding “moooo” as you drop your back a little more. Why is the cow feeling so sad and sorry?”

~ Math Yoga: Poses you can Double ~

6. Butterfly to Kaleidoscope of Butterflies



“Picture a special place you would like to be a butterfly. Imagine how it smells and sounds.”

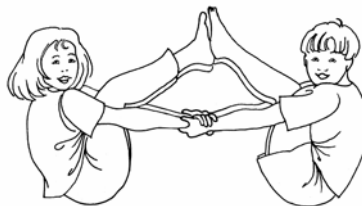
“Let’s be butterflies by sitting with straight spines and pulling our legs in so that the soles of our own feet touch. Our legs become flapping butterfly wings as we gently raise and lower our knees. I am flying to a rainforest--where would you like to fly?”



“Have you ever seen a group of butterflies on some flowers or resting in a tree? Let’s see if our group can make a group of colorful butterflies. Do you know what a group of butterflies is called? A kaleidoscope.”

“Let’s sit in a big circle with our knees almost touching. As we gently flap our butterfly wings, let’s go around the circle and tell where we would like to fly. Now close your eyes and visualize a new place to fly!”

7. Boat to Double Boat



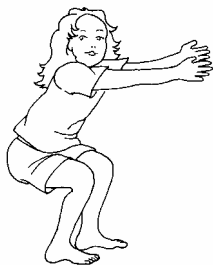
“We are going to be a boat with a deep “V” shaped bottom. Imagine you are on a calm, peaceful lake. What do you see around you?”

“Sit with your legs out in front of you. Slowly bend your knees and lift your feet off the mat. You can wrap your arms around the backs of your legs so you can balance on your seat! When you extend your arms out does the boat start to rock? If it feels good, you can straighten your legs so your body is in a “V” shape, like the hull of a boat. How can you make your body calm and peaceful, just like the lake you imagine you are in? Maybe you want to bend your knees and hold your legs to calm the boat. You practice yoga by listening to your body.”

“Picture in your mind how this pose would look if you doubled it. Let’s see if we can do it.”

“Find someone who has legs about the same length as yours. Sit facing each other, with your knees bent and feet flat on the mat. With your arms on the outside of your legs, grab hands so that your fingers are wrapped around each other’s wrists. Now slowly raise one leg so that the soles of your feet touch. Straighten the legs up, just like in boat pose. Now do the same thing with the other legs, so that both of your legs are raised. Breathe together for three breaths. Come down, shake out your legs, and double your boat again.”

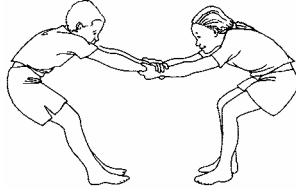
8. Chair to Hanging Bridge



“We may not have a chair, but let’s take a seat anyway.”

“Let’s stand in Mountain Pose (Tadasana) with our feet about a foot apart. Roll your shoulders back and take a deep breath in through your nose. Stretch your arms out in front of you and pretend you are holding on to a bar. Now as you breathe out, begin to sit down. Do you feel how your weight shifts to your heels? See if you can sit a little bit more. Stay here for two breaths and then breathe yourself back up to Mountain Pose. Let’s do that again. If you would like the challenge of a balance, try to lift your heels off the floor as you sit in your chair.”

“Picture in your mind how it would look if we doubled that pose.”



“Let’s practice all breathing in and out together. Find someone who is about your height. Reach toward each other and wrap your hands around the other person’s wrists. At the same time, both take a deep breath in and then let the breath out. Let’s do this again.”

“Now, slowly bend toward each other as you each lean back, keeping your legs straight. Remember to breathe as you stretch your shoulders. After two breaths here, bend your knees at the same time and sit back. After two more breaths, each come down to a squat. Now slowly rise back up to the starting position. Let’s try this again, remembering to breathe in and out together.”

OPPOSITES!

9. Snowball to Star

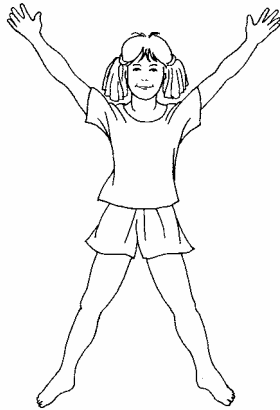
Snowball Pose

“Snowball is a silly pose because we roll our bodies around like snowballs.”



“Lie on your back, pull your knees into your chest, and wrap your arms around your legs. Pull your head up so your body is in a tight ball. Now you can either rock from side to side, or you can rock with more energy so that your body moves around in a circle. We are going to do this three times in each direction. See how big you can make your snowball!”

Star Pose



“We were just rolling around in a tight ball. How could we do the opposite with our bodies?”
“Let’s stand up and spread our feet apart. Press your feet into the earth. Let’s raise our arms and reach out, as if someone is gently pulling our arms into space. Raise your head tall. Now everything is spreading your energy out, like a star burning bright and hot. Take a deep inhale through the nose and slowly release the breath.” Repeat twice.

10. Down Dog to Boat



Down Dog

“How many of you know a dog? You may have seen the dog do this pose after she gets up from a nap. That’s why it is called Down Dog.”

“Let’s start on our hands and knees with a flat back. Your paws are right under your shoulders. Curl your toes under, push your hips up, and reach your bottom up to the sky. Stretch your heels down toward the mat. What shape are we making? Let’s stay here for several breaths. Now lower your knees to the floor and sit back on your heels and rest.”

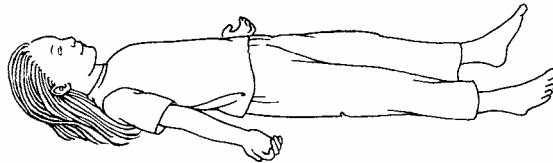


Boat Pose

“How could we make the 'V' shape of Down Dog go in the opposite way? What is sticking up in the air when we are in Down Dog? So that is the part of our body we need to have on the floor now.”

“Sit with your legs out in front of you. Bend your knees and lift your legs off the mat. You can wrap your arms around your legs if that helps you to find a balance spot on your seat! Can you stretch your arms out in front of you? If it feels good, you can straighten your legs so your body is in a “V” shape. Remember, you can bend your knees if that feels better--listen to your body.”

11. Final Relaxation



“Let’s lie down with our arms out the sides, palms facing up. Our feet fall open to the side. Allow your eyes to close. On your next breath in, tense the muscles in your hands as tightly as you can. Now as you breathe out, let them relax. On your *next* breath in, tense the muscles in both your hands and feet. As you breathe out, let everything relax. And on your next inhale, tense every muscle in your body--even the 80 muscles in your face--as tightly as you can! And as you breathe out, relax everything.

Lie quietly for about 5 minutes. Come back to sitting with eyes closed.

The book has several wonderful relaxation ideas that you can try!

Disclaimer

This information is intended as a general guide for practicing yoga. It is to be used with the understanding that the authors and publisher are not giving advice to individuals who should seek professional medical services before engaging in physical activity. If you are uncertain about your physical abilities, please consult an

appropriate health care professional. Therefore, the authors and publisher take no responsibility for any liability, loss, or risk taken by individuals as a result of applying the suggestions put forth in this book.