



Yoga Games Compendium

24 yoga games for kids





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Yoga Games for Kids

Here are 24 games that work well in a kids yoga class, holiday club, summer camp program and yoga birthday party. Having a few 'game' props on you and knowing a few of these games means you'll never be short of a yoga related activity to add fun variety to your class. You can adapt the games to relate to a theme, and they can be used as a warm-up or finishing activity. I'd suggest these games are best suited to children aged 4 years + as younger children can find game rules difficult to understand and play by!

Top tips for successful game play

- Keep instructions brief. Do one instruction at a time so that everyone stays with you.
- Stay slow and steady as you give instructions and keep your language easy to understand.
- Give glowing feedback throughout to everyone. Your encouragement increases the children's engagement and effort.

Airball

This game helps children understand the power of their breath and how to control it. It is also a great team building exercise as you pass the paper . I find it also calms everyone down as we lie down to play it!

What you need

- Straws (paper ones are good as they are biodegradable)
- Scrunched up piece of paper - around the size of a grape (Alternative to paper - a feather, leaf or ping pong ball)

How to play

In small groups (I'd suggest around six per group), the children lie in a circle on their tummies, heads facing into the middle. Each person has a straw and uses it to blow a piece of paper scrunched into a little ball round the circle. They can vary it by sucking the straw and holding the ball and passing it onto the next person too. Can also use feathers, leaves (during autumn this works well) or ping pong balls.



Football-oon

This game is great for strengthening the ankles and feet as well as the core. It also helps with coordination.

What you need

- 1 or 2 balloons depending on the size of the group.

How to play

In small groups (I'd suggest around six to eight per group), the children lie in a circle on their backs, heads in the middle. Keeping arms down by their sides, palms flat for support, the children must use their feet and ankles only to pass the balloon all the way round the circle. Doing this with socks on is really hard, so bare feet are essential! You start by placing the balloon into the grip of one of the children's feet. If the balloon is dropped, you can make a rule that takes it back to the start to make it more challenging. If you want to increase the difficulty, try it with 2 balloons!

Animal Dip

A fun way to help children remember the yoga postures and relate them to the animal kingdom. This is a great game for younger children.

What you need

- Selection of plastic/wooden toy animals - ideally choose ones that relate to yoga poses (although it's always fun to try and come up with new poses for 'non-yoga' animals!)
- A box, bag (sack) or bucket.



How to play

Give each child a turn at picking an animal out of the box. They then do the relevant yoga pose that matches the animal and offer an appropriate sound effect. If the animal can be hidden from the other children, the others can guess what it is by the pose they see being performed.

You can build on this game by getting the children to pick several animals and then string together a little story which links the poses together. For example - The Lion met the Crocodile and they went to the Fish's birthday party.

Candle Gazer

This is an ancient meditation method that works to help kids learn how to focus. It also helps them learn how to notice - to be observant - as they watch the candle, see how it moves and flickers and the colours that it gives. It brings a very peaceful and calm energy to the session, so is a great way to steady everyone at the start of class or create a very gentle vibe to send everyone home with.

What you need

- Candle
- Matches or lighter
- Candlestick/candle holder

How to play

Have everyone sit cross legged on their mats in a big circle. Light the candle in the middle of the circle. Invite everyone to gaze at the flame, noticing it's movement and colour. Then after a minute or so ask everyone to close their eyes and see if they can continue to see the candle flame in their mind's eye. They will be delighted as they realize they can still see it with their eyes shut! Magic! If they don't see it, then open the eyes again to look again into the flame. Ask the children to notice how they feel after gazing at the candle. Help them to understand what the exercise is doing for them. When it's time to finish, have everyone do a big blow/breath towards the candle to blow it out (you may have to help!) or if it's someone's birthday, they can blow it out.

Yoga Whispers

A quick way to bring peace to a large group of children! This is the game 'Chinese Whispers' (UK) or 'Telephone' (US) and here is adapted for kids yoga.

What you need

- at least 3 children to play

How to play

Start by whispering the name of a yoga posture into the ear of one of the children. This then gets whispered around the circle/along the line to the final child who then has to 'perform' the posture. Hopefully it will be the one you started with! You can also whisper an affirmation which the last child has to say out loud. Beware! Kids love changing it, but it's lots of fun whatever!





Yoga Statues

Also known as Yoga Freeze. Hugely energising and fun and a great way to learn postures. I sometimes play this as part of a story. See class plans 'The Princess and the Wizard' and 'Kickapoo the Kangaroo'.

What you need

- Music
- Space to dance

How to play

Play the music and everyone dances around the space. Press pause and call out a yoga pose. All the kids take the pose and freeze in it. This is a great way to help the kids learn the postures as well as test them to see how well they can remember them. Alternatively you can let the kids choose what posture they want to take when the music stops. This is a great yoga party game - you can award a sticker for the best held postures and have fun seeing if you can make them move - try pulling a silly face to make them laugh!

Namaste or Om Bumps

Very similar to the Yoga Statues, but easier for little ones to grasp. This is a nice complimentary game to play after Yoga Statues to rinse out any left over energy in your group.

What you need

- Music
- Space to dance

How to play

Play the music and everyone dances around the space. Press pause and everyone immediately has to sit down with their legs crossed, hands in prayer and say 'Namaste' or 'Ommmmm'.

In a kids party scenario you could give the quickest one down a sticker for being fastest to the floor. Increase the frequency of stopping and starting the music if you want to tire everyone out. I always encourage the children to be gentle when they 'bump' down, so there aren't any bruised bottoms!



Colouring, Drawing and Mandalas

Giving the children something creative to do or take home that relates to their yoga session really helps them remember the experience. After their yoga adventure have the children spend time drawing their favourite character or part of the story. You can also offer colouring pages that relate to it or mandalas are super useful for this. Mandalas are also wonderfully peaceful and meditative to colour and decorate.

What you need

- Printouts
- Colouring pencils/pens (if doing it in situ)

How to play

Mandalas are especially good and everyone becomes incredibly focused and quiet as they do them. You can find and print all sorts of colouring in/mandala templates from the web. Try this link http://www.coloring-book.info/coloring/coloring_page.php?id=209



Yogi Says

Like Simon Says but with Yoga!

What you need

- Space for everyone to spread out so they can see the Yogi

How to play

There's a little song that describes the way this game works - you can make up a tune that will fit.

"If Yogi says, 'Yogi Says,' you must do what Yogi says; and if she doesn't say 'Yogi Says,' you must not do what Yogi says!"

Pick someone to be Yogi. They have to think of a yoga pose and then call it out. As the song explains, if they start with 'Yogi Says (name of yoga pose)' everyone has to do it. If they just say the name of the pose and no 'Yogi Says' nobody should do it. Keep changing the person being Yogi, so everyone gets a turn. If someone does do it by mistake - you could have them do 3 bunny hops as a forfeit (although kids love bunny hops so might enjoy this!!)



Toe-ga

Great for focus and strengthening toes!

What you need

- Coloured craft pom poms
- Small bowls or containers



How to play

Give everyone a little bowl or container and tip out all the pom poms into the middle of the space. The children have to use their toes only to pick up the pom poms and put them in their bowl. They keep going until all the pom poms have been collected. The winner is the one with the most pom poms in their bowl. You can also do this with other small objects – conkers, marbles or acorns. Pom poms are nice and squidgy though, so are easier to pick up with small toes.



Grandmothers YogaSteps

Fun to play with yoga stories like Little Red Riding Hood. Great for listening and controlling movement.

What you need

- Space



How to play

Stand one person at one end of the space, facing away from the others in the group. This person is 'Grandma'! The others make a line (side by side) some distance (a good ten paces ideally) back from Grandma. When Grandma isn't looking the line of others has to tiptoe quietly, without running towards her. Every time Grandma turns around everyone freezes into a yoga pose – so all she sees are trees, houses, flamingos, dogs surfers etc!

Pass the Chimes

A lovely peaceful way to seal the class.

What you need

- Chimes



How to play

This game works best if everyone is sat in a circle. Choose a child to start. Each child rings the chimes and passes them to the next person without letting them chink together. They really have to concentrate on being careful with them and passing them gently so it's very stilling. You can have each child say a special wish as they ring their chime too or if you are using affirmation cards, they can say their affirmation out loud after they make their ring.

Yog-aboard

A great energising game that works well as a warm-up. This is a great game to play when you've got an ocean related story or even better, a Pirate theme.

What you need

- Space

How to play

This is a yoga version of the game port and starboard. Start by teaching all the actions, then move on to calling them out for the kids to do. Start slowly and as the game goes on you can pick up the pace.

The actions you need to teach are as follows:

- Port - run to the left side of the space
- Starboard - run to the right side of the space
- Bow - run to the front of the space
- Stern - run to the back of the space
- Climb the rigging (climbing march)
- Scrub the deck (cat pose)
- Land ahoy (tiptoes and binoculars)
- Submarine (submarine pose)
- Shark attack (shark pose)
- Mermaid (mermaid pose with Ooo la la).



There's never really anyone out. It's a physical memory game that gets everyone familiar with the poses and warmed up for their yoga session.

Human Knot

A fun way to twist, turn and stretch with a bit of problem solving along the way.

What you need

- A small space
- Group of 6-10 children (if more, you can separate them into smaller groups)

How to play

Choose one person go out of the room and the others stand in a circle holding hands. While the person is out of the room the main group has to get themselves tangled up into a big knot involving stepping over joined hands, twirling arms round each other, crouching down etc without unclasping hands. Then the person has to come back in and try and unravel the knot, so everyone is back in the circle again. Hands must stay clasped remember! This is really fun and extra challenging to do in silence - so the person coming back in has to physically indicate who he/she wants to move and how.

Hula Hoop Wiggle

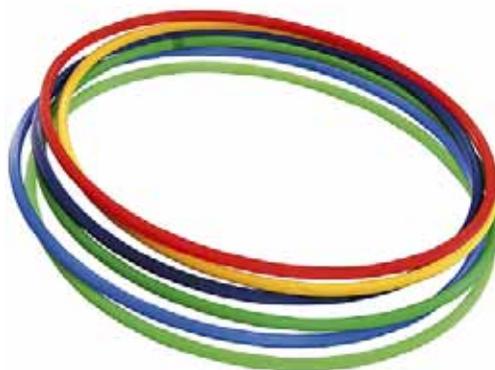
Great for coordination and body awareness as well as working in a team.

What you need

- Space
- One or two hula hoops

How to play

Ask the children to stand in a big circle and slip a hula hoop onto one child's arm. Then have them all join hands. They then must use their bodies to move the hula hoop all the way around the circle without letting go of each other's hands. You can make this more challenging by adding another hula hoop at a second point in the circle. This game works well with 6 children +.





Keeper of the Keys

A fun sensory game that requires keen listening and silent, well controlled movement.

What you need

- Space
- Group of 4+ children
- Blindfold
- Key/s
- Chair
- (optional) hat/pot/bowl/container for the keys to be placed inside

How to play

Have the children sit in a semi-circle with a chair in the middle of the flat edge of the semi-circle. Place the keys underneath the chair - you can put them into something if you like - I suggest a plant pot or hat. One child is nominated to be the keeper of the keys. The Keeper of the keys has locked our friend up in a dungeon and is keeping the keys beneath his/her guard chair. He/She cannot see very well when it is dark therefore he/she is blindfolded.

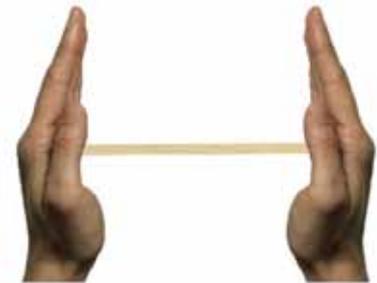
The others are the brave boys and girls who are hoping to free our friend from the dungeon. The children round the edge take turns crawling forward from their place in an attempt to get the keys out of the pot without being heard. If the keeper hears that person, he/she must point to where the noise is coming from. If they manage to point at the child crawling towards them, that person goes back to their start position. If a child manages to rescue the keys he/she becomes the next keeper of the keys. Make sure you tie the blindfold well and make a rule about the pointing - the finger must point then go back to their lap. Otherwise you have the keeper constantly pointing, swinging their arm from side to side hoping to catch all! That's cheating!!!

Mirror Sticks

Good for working together and sensing each others movement.

What you need

- Coffee stirrer sticks (I've collected these from a few major coffee shops!)



How to play

Give each child a coffee stirrer stick. They get into pairs and sit cross legged, opposite one another. Start with the sticks between their palms so that it sticks into each palm and is wedged there. Then carefully and gently each partner takes turns moving their hands and the other partner has to mirror their movement in order to keep the stick stable and balanced. It requires concentration and sensitivity to keep the sticks in place.

Pamper Train

Lovely alternative relaxation game.

What you need

- Space



How to play

Have the children sit cross legged in a line, one behind the other. First they rub their hands together to make them warm, and then place warm hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Then pitter-patter rain using the finger tips all over their shoulders and back. Then, using a flat hand, draw an arc or rainbow on their back one way and the other. Have everyone close their eyes and breathe in imagining a colour, and then as they breathe out they whisper their colour. This is a lovely calming activity and you can incorporate other massage techniques - drawing circles, waves, shoulder squeezing, drumming etc

Yoga my name

Making creative shapes with our bodies to spell out a name

What you need

- Space



How to play

This is a great game to learn how to spell! Each child takes a turn at spelling out another child's name using their body to make the shapes of the letters. The name that is spelt out indicates the name of the next child to have a go. It brings about creative physical movement and can prompt a new range of alphabet yoga postures! Can also be done in pairs.



Sandwich Race

This game is really energising and quite sporty!

What you need

- Space



How to play

Have the children line up and sit opposite a partner in sandwich pose or seated forward bend with their feet touching. This makes a ladder of sandwiches with one line of children sat one side and a second line sat opposite. Call one side the A team and the other side the B team. Number each pair 1 to however many pairs you have. When you call out a number that pair have to jump up, run up the 'ladder' to the top, down the outsides of their line then back up the 'ladder' from the bottom to sit down in their original place. The first one back gets a point for their team. Do enough number call outs to make sure everyone gets at least one race up the ladder. Keep score for each team and award the winning team a sticker each.

Newspaper Balance

Working as a team and learning how to balance and support one another.

What you need

- Space
- Broad sheet sized newspaper - one sheet per pair
- Music

How to play

Ask the children to pair up and find a space to sit with their partner. Place an open piece of big broadsheet newspaper (in the UK, the Telegraph or FT are perfect for this) in front of each pair. Ask each pair to stand on their piece of newspaper. Explain that when the music plays they are to dance anywhere BUT on their piece of newspaper. And when the music stops they are to step back on to their piece of newspaper. Once they've done this, commend them for doing brilliantly but say that you think 'this is far too easy peezy, lemon squeezy'. Have each pair fold their newspaper in HALF. Play the music again and they dance off the paper. When you stop the music they once again jump on to the halved piece of newspaper. Say again how wonderful they are, but still think 'this is far too easy peezy, lemon squeezy'. EACH PAIR FOLDS THE PAPER IN HALF AGAIN. Repeat and repeat until newspaper is tiny and they are all doing interesting balancing acts to stay on their paper. Keep reminding them, you are looking for a winning pair for the best balanced, most effective methods.

King of the Jungle

This game requires concentration and will help everyone learn and remember the animal yoga postures. It works best with older children aged 6+.



What you need

- Space
- Group of 6 -12 children

How to play

The children sit in a semi-circle. At one end is the 'King of the Jungle' - the Lion. This person does 'Lion Pose'. Then the next along the line is the Elephant (they do Elephant pose), the following is Gorilla (Gorilla pose), then Crocodile (Crocodile pose), then Zebra (Horse pose), then Giraffe (Giraffe pose), then Parrot (Parrot pose), then Butterfly (Butterfly pose), then Snake (Snake pose) then Frog (Frog pose), then Fish (Fish pose), then finally Monkey (Monkey pose). Feel free to swap in any others or take some out if you have less than 12 in your group, but each place in the line has a set animal. Starting with the Lion (the King), kids do two poses - their pose then the pose of another animal in the line. That animal then does their own pose and also performs another pose to pass it on. And so this repeats. For example: (Lion) 'LION POSE' - 'ZEBRA POSE'

(Zebra) 'ZEBRA POSE' - 'MONKEY POSE'

(Monkey) 'MONKEY POSE' - 'PARROT POSE' etc

If someone makes a mistake, or doesn't notice that their pose has been made, they have to swap places with the person next to them, moving down towards the monkey. They then take on the pose of the seat they now occupy, and the person who moves up a place takes their pose. The aim is to move all the way up to take up position as King of the Jungle. If you need help with the poses check out the Cosmic Kids Big Yoga Posture Book.

Pass the Pulse

Great game to focus and energise the group at the same time.

What you need

- Space

How to play

You all sit or stand in a circle and hold hands. You start by sending one or a series of pulses round the circle by discreetly squeezing the hand of the person next to you. You can choose to do both sides at the same time if you like! The children then pass this pulse round to the person next to them, until it returns back to you. They have to focus exactly on what they are feeling in one hand and transfer it to the other to pass it on. For the person opposite you, if you passed to both sides at the start - they may receive pulses in both hands at the same time. They simply have to remember what they received in one hand and pass that on and vice versa for the other hand! Easier said than done! This is great with kids aged 6 years +.



Tower of Terror

A fun one for Halloween or a kids yoga party. A variation on the traditional game - Oranges and Lemons.

What you need

- Space
- Group of 6 -12 children

How to play

Get the kids to choose a partner and choose a pair to form the first tower. Stand the pair facing opposite each other and have them hold hands and arms up creating an arch. This is the partner yoga posture called 'Towers'. Get all the other kids in a line behind the arch, ready to go through. You can teach them this little rhyme to sing while the line of children pass through the arch.



*Come into the Tower of Terror
Don't be afraid, you'll have some fun.
Who can we trap in our Tower of Terror?
Who will get caught when the gates come down?
Tower of Terror Ha ha ha!
Tower of Terror Ha ha ha!
Tower of Terror Ha ha ha!
Now the gate comes DOWN!*

When the rhyme finishes the arm arch comes down and 'traps' whoever is caught inside. They join the tower next to one of the original pair, making a temporary arch of three. The rhyme begins again and the line moves through the tunnel again and when the song is done, the next one is caught. You will now have 4 and therefore two arches, two little towers of terror. Continue until you have a row of tower pairs and only a few left in the line. Keep going until only one child is left and they are the winner. It's good to create a no running or crouching rule, and as an alternative to the rhyme you can always play music.