



## Classroom yoga (Elementary and Middle school)

Yoga helps children (and teachers!) focus, relax and be mentally alert. Take 5 or 10 minutes out of your day to share all or some of these easy exercises with your students. They can be done with no special equipment, just sitting or standing at the desks. Breathing is done through the nose unless noted otherwise.

### 1. Windmills:



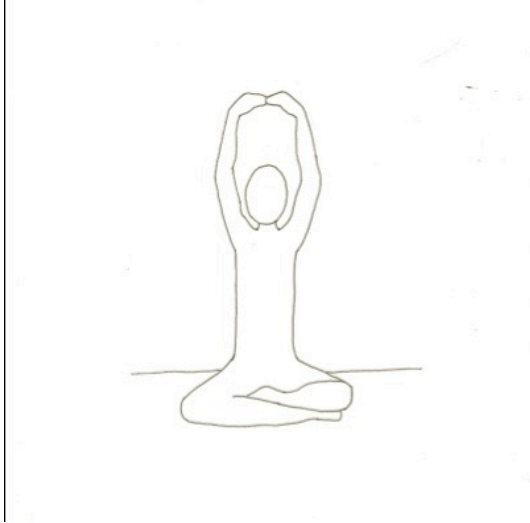
Crossing the midline of the body has been known to help activate the communication



between the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Stand up with legs straddled comfortably. Bring the arms out to the sides. Exhale and touch the opposite hand to the foot (or leg). Inhale and return to the original position. Exhale and do the same on the

other side of the body. Continue for a minute or so.

## 2. Balloon Breath:



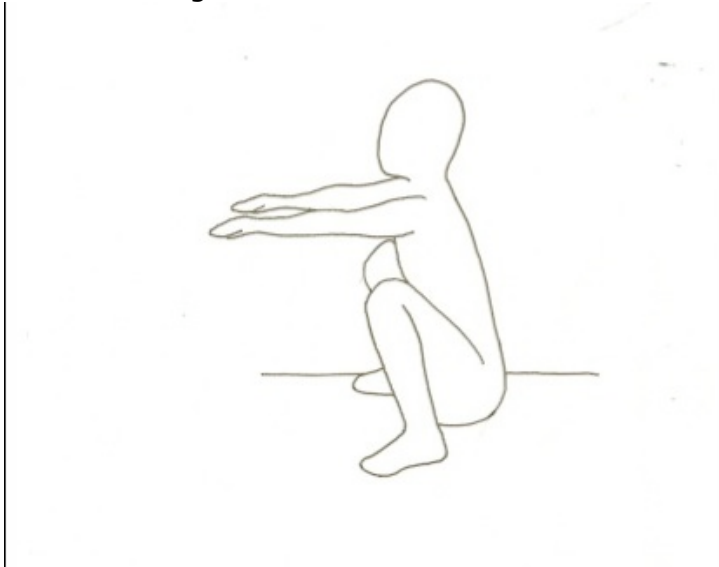
Explain how your lungs are like balloons, and when you inhale they fill up with air. Explain how air is our vital life energy, and something that our bodies cannot live without. Inhale and bring their arms up overhead in the shape of a balloon, then exhale (can be through the mouth with a sound), and make the balloons get smaller until the hands return down to the sides.



**3. Feel your heart:** For feelings of appreciation. Simply sit with the hands over the heart (or at the center of the chest) with closed eyes. Feel your heart beating and appreciate the work your heart does for you every moment. Thank your heart, and feel it thank you back!

**4. Crow Squats:** Good for relaxing the back and hips after sitting for a long

time. Talking with



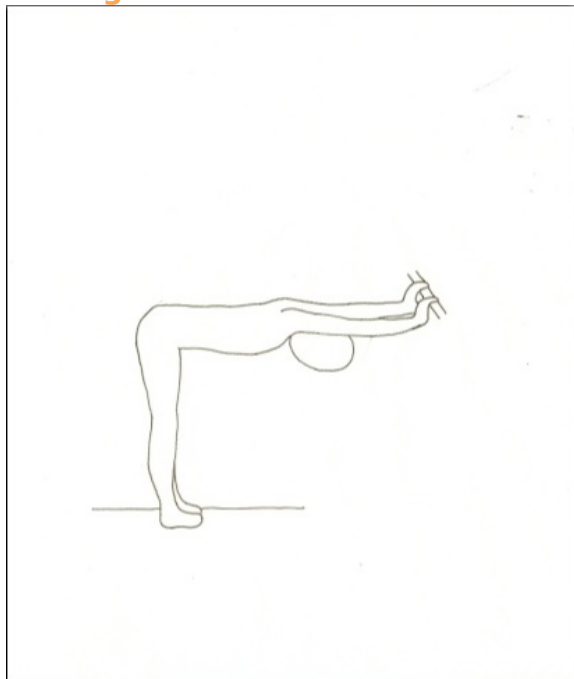
the partner gives the children permission to talk in an organized way. Stand up with feet shoulder width apart. Bring your arms straight out in front of you. As you exhale, squat down as far as you can go. Inhale and come back up. Keep your eyes open if you need to, for balance. Try it holding hands with a partner, face to face. Talk to your partner as you go up and down. (Recommend Peace Like a River song and movement on the Yoga In Motion DVD)



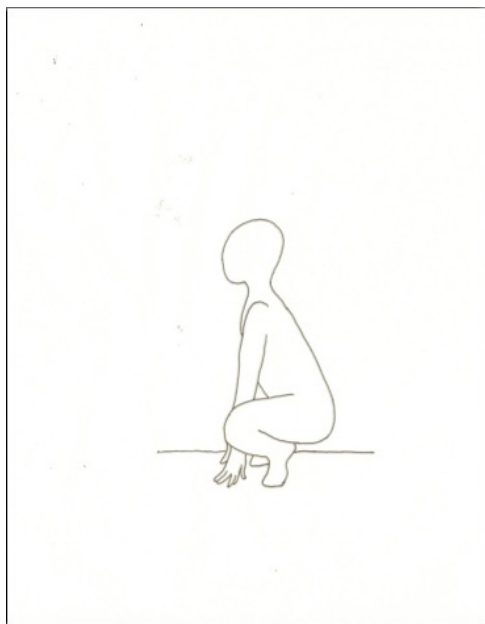
**5. Tree pose:** For good posture, balance, and mental focus. Stand up and bring one foot onto the other leg. For "low branch" tree (easier for 6 and under), bring the foot to rest near the ankle of the other leg. For "high branch tree", the foot is placed close to the upper inside of the leg. The palms are pressed together and resting at the center of the chest. The eyes look straight ahead and focus at a point on the wall. When steady,

stretch the arms up overhead, palms still together. Take five deep breaths and then switch sides.

### 6. Dog stretch:



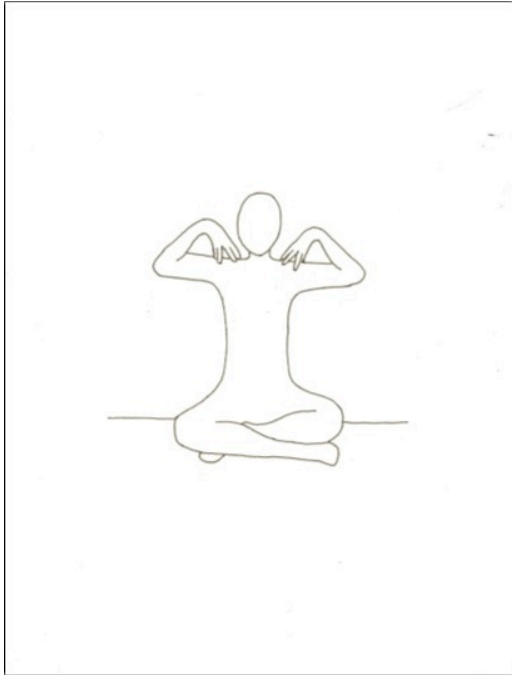
Good for stretching out after a long time of sitting. Holding onto the back of a chair or desktop, bend forward, keeping the legs straight but not locked. Let your head stretch down between your arms and inhale. Concentrate on lengthening the spine by pushing your hips away from your hands. Then exhale as you straighten your spine and lean your weight into your hands so that you feel the leg muscles lengthen and stretch. Repeat several times.



**7. Frog pose:** Helps with mental alertness and gives positive attitude. Squat with hands on the floor between the knees. Heels are together if possible, and stay slightly off the floor the entire time. Inhale and straighten the knees, bringing the head as close to the

knees as possible. Exhale and return to the "frog" position, bringing the head up straight as you squat. Continue for 10-26 frogs, inhaling up, exhaling down.

### 8. Shoulder twists and rolls:



To relax and release tension in the shoulders and upper back. Sit at the desk with the spine straight. Put your hands on your shoulders with fingers in the front and thumbs in the back. Begin twisting the upper body side to side in a swinging motion. Inhale as you twist left, exhale right. Do this for one minute then inhale to the center. Exhale and begin rolling the shoulders with the arms in the same position as before. Inhale as the arms circle upward, exhale as they circle around the back and down. Imagine you are drawing circles in the air with your elbows. Do this for one minute.

### 9. Neck rolls:



To relax the neck, jaws, face and open up channels to the brain. Drop your head to the front. Begin to roll the neck around to the right as you inhale, arc the head back and exhale as it comes around to the left. Do this several times and then reverse the direction. Make sure to relax the jaws at the same time by allowing the mouth to be slightly open and jaws slack.

**10. Ocean Breath:** This is a relaxation technique, good to do sitting or lying down. It also brings awareness of the breath. Close your eyes, and let the body relax. Inhale and

imagine that the waves of the ocean are coming up to the shore. Exhale and the ocean waves go back out to the sea. 5-10 times.

**11. Drinking Water:** Have children drink water often during the day. Water rebalances the electrical system in the body, and helps to balance the brain and emotions. All academic skills are improved by adequate hydration, which is best provided in small amounts often during the day.

Further reference: [Radiant Child Yoga training course](#)