

LESSON 1: PRINCIPLES OF YOGA

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcomes

Fitness activities: Demonstrates competency in 1 or more specialized skills in health-related fitness activities. (S1.H3.L1)

Engages in physical activity: Participates several times a week in a self-selected lifetime activity, dance or fitness activity outside of the school day. (S3.H6.L1)

Embedded Outcome

Challenge: Chooses an appropriate level of challenge to experience success and desire to participate in a self-selected physical activity. (S5.H2.L2)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- practice proper yoga and classroom etiquette.
- practice breathing techniques.
- practice the class warm-up.
- track, in a journal, self-selected lifetime activity practiced outside of class.

Equipment and Materials

- Yoga mat for each person
- Appropriate yoga music

Introduction

Today, we start a new module on yoga. In most of your physical education classes, you work in groups and have developed those skills over time. This module is different because you will work on your own. You'll focus on your body, listen to your body, and adjust for what it needs and what it can do. During our lessons in yoga, no one will do something "better" than anyone else; you will just do it differently. Everyone's body is different, and everyone has different strengths and limitations. Let's start by watching a few video clips of yoga in action.

Instructional Task: Introduction to Seated Position

■ PRACTICE TASK

In their own personal space, students place a mat on the floor and perform an easy pose (seated position).

What to Look For

Walk around the room and give feedback on students' positions:

- Are their legs crossed?
- Are their backs straight?
- Are their shoulders relaxed?
- Are their wrists resting on their knees?
- Are their heads in neutral spine position?
- Are their eyes closed (when cued)?

Extension

Students can challenge themselves to have their feet on their thighs when legs are crossed.

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S5.H2.L2. This is a good opportunity to talk to students about selecting an appropriate level of challenge for themselves.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Students may have their ankles crossed farther out in front of them, or one leg extended, if they are uncomfortable (back should still be straight regardless of legs).

Instructional Task: Ground Rules and the Five Principles

■ PRACTICE TASK

Review yoga concepts while in a seated position. Then review the ground rules:

- Keep your own space.
- Maintain a quiet classroom.
- Do everything slowly.
- Once you have the move, close your eyes to experience it fully.
- Use introspection (push yourself to your limit; what does your mind do).
- Compare yourself to yourself, never to others.

The Five Principles of Yoga

1. Relaxation
2. Exercise
3. Proper breathing
4. Proper diet
5. Positive thinking and meditation

Guiding questions for students:

Have students give examples of each principle. Ask questions such as the following:

- What similarities and differences do you see with the yoga principles and those of general physical activity?
- You can add to the ground rules and make it a social contract.
- What other ground rules will help make this experience positive?

Student Choices/Differentiation

If students are uncomfortable, have them sit straight, working the core muscles (back/spine, abdominals) and self-assess the core area of their bodies.

What to Look For

- Are students engaged?
- Are they making self-modifications?

Instructional Task: Breathing (Pranayama)

■ PRACTICE TASK

Have students close their eyes while seated and breathe through the nose.

- Breathing is life.
- *Prana* = vital life energy; *yama* = discipline/control.
- We exhale carbon dioxide and expel all toxic waste from our bodies.
- Talk about using breath to control stress.

Extensions

- Through the nose, inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 4 counts. (You count, then students do it on their own.)
- Repeat, inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4.
- Repeat, inhale for 8, exhale for 8.
- Repeat, inhale for 8, hold for 4, exhale for 12.

Student Choices/Differentiation

- If students have trouble, have them stay on the level where they are comfortable.
- If students cannot keep their eyes closed, you can provide blindfolds.

What to Look For

- Are students keeping their eyes closed (this is very hard for students to do and practice)? Cue or give blindfolds.
- Are students keeping proper seated position? Cue.
- Are students controlling their exhale?

Instructional Task: Warm-Up Asanas

■ PRACTICE TASK

Discuss the importance of warming up the spine. Repeat the exercises on both sides, emphasizing smooth and slow transitions. New poses are in italics in the Practice Task, Refinements, and Extensions sections. If you are not familiar with a pose, look up the skill descriptions online.

- *Seated spinal twist*
- *Neck circles*
- *Cat/Cow*
- *C stretch*
- *Thread the needle*
- *Seated angle*

Refinements

Seated spinal twist:

- Pull navel into back.
- Go as far as it is slightly uncomfortable and hold (do not overtwist).

C stretch:

- Spine should look like a letter C from above.

Thread the needle:

- Encourage students to lift arm a little higher if they are balancing well.

Seated angle:

- Reach forward one more inch.

Extensions

- *Extended spinal twist:* Seated spinal twist with one hand behind the back on the floor to deepen the stretch.
- *Seated angle:* Modify to change stretch—feet pointed or flexed, chin forward or back rounded, eyes closed or eyes open.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Cat/cow:

- Move to breath.
- Start together with cues and then at own pace.
- Encourage eyes closed so that students are not comparing.

Thread the needle:

- If uncomfortable, students may put same-side leg out for balance.
- Arm should be pointing directly up; students may change the angle of the arm if painful.

What to Look For

Spinal twists:

- Are students pulling their shoulders around?
- Are their heads looking behind on the twists?

Neck circles:

- Are students moving slowly through the circles?

Cat/cow:

- Are the hands under the shoulders?
- On the inhale, is the back up and rounded?
- On the exhale, are the head and tailbone up?

C stretch:

- Is the back flat?
- Are students exhaling as they turn to center?
- Are they looking over the shoulder as they form the C?

Thread the needle:

- Are they able to hold their balance while reaching up?

Seated angle:

- Are they holding the stretch, not bouncing?

Instructional Task: Cool-Down

■ PRACTICE TASK

Have students get onto their backs into *corpse pose (savasana)*.

Cue breathing.

Student Choices/Differentiation

If uncomfortable, students may bend the knees and put the feet flat on floor, or put a towel under the lower back.

What to Look For

- Are students eyes' closed?
 - How many students had to modify their position?
 - Students are relaxing visibly.
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Formal and Informal Assessments

- Teacher observation and correction
- Journal assignments (see homework): Students may keep journals on paper or electronically; students could do this in a blog as well.

Closure

Quiet the mind; chime the gong. Have students listen and focus on the sound as long as they can.

Reflection

- Did I use appropriate voice tone?
- Did students have trouble with any poses?

Homework

You will keep a journal throughout this module. You will have some questions to address each time, and you also will record your physical activity outside of class so that we can see how active you are and whether you are meeting the physical activity guidelines. Review the scoring guide for how the journal will be evaluated. Questions:

- How easy/difficult were the breathing techniques for you today? What was easy/difficult?
- How did your body feel after the warm-up?
- Log your physical activity outside of class. Include the type of physical activity and how long you did it.

Resources

Brown, C. (2003). *The yoga bible*. Cincinnati: Walking Stick Press.

Martin, K., Boone, B., & DiTuro, D. (2006). *Hatha yoga illustrated*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Stephens, M. (2012). *Yoga sequencing*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Internet keyword search: “seated spinal twist,” “cat/cow,” “corpse pose,” “c-stretch pose,” “thread the needle pose,” “seated angle pose”

10-POINT RUBRIC FOR JOURNAL ENTRIES

10 points: answered the questions thoroughly, included personal insight, and showed understanding of topic area by supporting opinions well

7-9 points: answered the questions using some personal insight and showed some understanding of the topic area

5-6 points: answered the questions vaguely, using a little personal insight, and showed they know what the topic area is

3-4 points: put little effort into the questions, answered the minimum, and showed little understanding of the topic area

1-2 points: put no effort into the questions, did only a small part of the questions, did the questions but did not follow directions, did not understand the questions and did not ask for help or clarification

0 points: the questions were not completed or done at all