



TEDDY BEAR YOGA

Here's a fun routine for little yogis that may be too scared or shy to try yoga on their own but can bring their teddy bear along for emotional support. It is low-key, low-risk, and low-stimulation. We get down on our hands and knees and use the universal languages of touch, breath, and movement. The best part? Teddy bears are great at doing yoga, so they can take over when you need a sensory break!



1. Bean Bag Balance (a) Have the student lie on a mat. Place a bean bag on the student's belly. Their teddy bear can sit on top of the bean bag if they'd like. Have them notice that the bean bag goes up when they breathe in and goes down when they breathe out. (b) Try balancing the bean bag on each foot. (c) Try balancing the bean bag on the head while standing. (e) Try balancing the bean bag while walking.



3. Butterfly Have the child sit with their feet touching and knees bent to the side. If it is more comfortable, they can place a block under each knee for support. Have them bring their hands to heart center and close their eyes. Take 5 deep breaths.



5. Bow and Arrow (a) Have the child stand with their feet touching. Have them bend their knees and raise their arms in the air in front of their chest. (b)

Have them make a fist with their right hand, take a deep breath in, and bend their arm back like they are pulling on a bow string, looking over their right shoulder. Then they exhale and release their arm, shooting it forward like an arrow. Repeat with the left arm. Then repeat 4 more times each side. If they get tired from squatting, let them do it standing.



6. Rabbit (a) Have the child come into a kneeling position with their toes curled under and their head on the floor. If they don't like their toes curled, they can be flat. (b) Have them reach back and touch their feet. You can apply gentle pressure on their lower back if they like this. Some will find it soothing; others won't. (c) Have them come forward on their hands and stick out their tongue. This helps release tension.



7. Down Dog Have the child push into their feet and stick their hips in the air, coming into an inverted V position. They can shake their head from side to side to release tension in the neck. Take 5 breaths and then lower the knees to the floor.



9. Puppy Have the child straighten their back and lift their hips in the air, pressing down through their hands, forehead resting on the mat. Take 5 breaths.

2. Lion's Breath Sitting in an easy crossed-leg position, have the child take a very deep breath and scrunch up their face and make fists with their hands, tightening their whole bodies. Then have them breathe out hard and stick out their tongues and spread their fingers wide. This helps release tension in their bodies. Repeat 3 times. They can also do this lying on their back or sitting in a chair.



4. Self-Hug Have the child cross their arms over their chest and give themselves a hug. Ask them to try squeezing harder or softer

to discover what level of pressure they like. Have them give their teddy bears a hug. Ask them if their teddy bears like soft, medium, or hard hugs.

8. Child's Pose From the kneeling position have the child lower their head to the ground and round their spine, lowering their seat to their feet if possible. Take 5 breaths



10. Frog Have the child lower down like a frog squatting on its hind legs. Ask them to balance by lifting their hands off the mat and holding their knees. They can also hold their teddy bear for an extra challenge. Their heels can be planted on the mat or lifted. Take 5 breaths.



11. Toe Stretch From a kneeling position, have the child curl their toes under and sit back toward their heels. If they find this uncomfortable, they can try placing a rolled up mat between their thighs and their calves. Take 5 breaths.



a



b



c

13. Strap Stretch (a) Have the child hold a strap or belt in their hands as far apart as is comfortable for their shoulders. Take 5 breaths. (b) Have the child reach their arms overhead, leaning against a wall for support if necessary. Take 5 breaths. (c) Lean the arms and torso to one side and then the other. Take 5 breaths.



12. Tree From a standing position have the child raise the right foot to their left ankle, calf, or thigh. They can lean against a wall for support. They can bring their hands to heart center or raise their arms overhead like branches. Take 5 breaths and then lower the foot and repeat on the left side.



14. Ear Pull Have the child reach up and find their earlobes. Have them take a deep breath and gently pull down. Ask them if they like the sensation. Ask them to gently pull on the other parts of the ears while taking deep breaths. This is very soothing for the nervous system and helps them with sensory self-regulation. Now it's the teddy bear's turn. Be gentle!



15. Legs Up the Wall Have the child lie on their back with their legs up the wall. They can also lie on the floor with their knees bent at a 90° angle and their calves resting on a chair. Their arms can be at their sides or out wide in a T shape. Take 5 breaths.



a



b

16. Happy Baby (a) Have the child lie on their back and bring their knees toward their chest. Have them reach their arms between their legs and hold their own feet. Take 5 breaths. (b) For more of a challenge, they can lower their knees to the floor and reach their hands toward their lower backs.



17. Plow Have the child lie on their back and rock their hips forward, bringing their toes over their head. They can lower their toes toward the floor or rest them on a block. Their hands can rest on the mat or come to their lower back.



18. Uplifting Pose From a cross-legged position, have the child place their hands on the mat next to their hips. Option to place blocks under their hands for comfort. Have them lift their knees toward their chin and press into their hands, lifting their seat off the ground.



19. Burrito Have the child lie across the mat, with their feet and head off the surface of it. Gently roll them up in the mat, applying an even amount of pressure. Once they are all rolled up, have them close their eyes and breathe in and out through their nose. For those that don't like the Burrito, they can lie in traditional *Savasana*.



20. Storytime

Read the child a story such as *Hug Me, Please!* by Przemyslaw Wechterowicz, *I Am Yoga* by Susan Verde, or *Knuffle Bunny* by Mo Willems. Then they can practice reading a story to their teddy bear, a friend, or a sibling. If the child isn't reading yet, they can explain what is happening from looking at the pictures.



Jenn Carson is a physical literacy expert, yoga instructor, librarian, and the author of *Get Your Community Moving: Physical Literacy Programs for All Ages*.