

Why is yoga for children important?

We are living in the busiest, most stressful time in history and our children are too! Children, without a doubt, are affected by the speed at which their family goes through life. Children and babies are affected by stressful events. For example, a death in the family, or moving to a new school. Babies and children need a way to manage this stress and anxiety. Yoga for children is a wonderful way to teach them how to be calm while gaining an awareness of their body, self-control and discipline.

A 5,000-year-old art of fusing the body and mind, yoga is today transforming not just adults today. Because of its amazing benefits, yoga for children is increasingly popular and is spreading rapidly around the world.

There are hundreds of reasons for enrolling your children into yoga classes but outlined below are some of the key advantages.

Children are born with an innate flexibility and yoga poses help to extend this gift. Asanas like dog pose aid in developing strength in their growing body. Strength and flexibility allow for far fewer and less-severe injuries, especially when children are engaged in sport and playground activity
Children's yoga improves concentration

Part of the positive changes that teachers have found from using yoga in classes is the improvement they see in concentration. After a yoga session, teachers have seen improvements in attention, focus and even behaviour too. Using yoga as a 'brain break' between classes or subjects can help allow children to better focus, which in turn means more learning.

Yoga encourages kindness, empathy and thoughtful interaction with peers. Yoga teaches children that we are all the same inside, despite our outward appearance, race, and religion. We all have bodies that move, hearts that beat, and emotions that feel. Yoga inspires children to be kind, patient, accepting, and empathetic with both themselves and their peers.

Regular practice provides tools for stress management. Practicing yoga provides children with an immediate outlet to reduce stress in a safe and nurturing environment. It is a physical exercise that produces happy endorphins. While breathing exercises can slow down the heart rate, relaxation techniques are powerful sources for calming the mind and the body. Yoga teaches non-judgment and non-competition toward oneself and one another. These are all tools that a child can carry into any difficult life situation.

Yoga activities can be used to help children to relax and focus. Speaking and listening are integral part of the Yoga experience. Yoga can be used to enrich lessons, concepts which are difficult to explain are worked out in a kinaesthetic way and learning is reinforced. Workshops are physically challenging and mentally stimulating. Some of the overall benefits to the children are improved concentration levels, better sleep patterns, greater self-esteem, and a stronger immune system.

Benefits of yoga for children

Mind

- Builds self –esteem and confidence.
- Increases focus, attention and concentration.
- Stimulates imagination and creativity.
- Releases physical and mental tensions

Body

- Develops body awareness, strength and flexibility.
- Builds balance, coordination and agility.
- Stimulates internal organs.
- Promotes health.
- Improves posture
- Boosts immune system
- Aids relaxation (stimulates parasympathetic nervous system)

Spirit

- Promotes self-awareness
- Teaches us to respect self and others.
- Builds discipline and a love of learning

Overall

- Improves overall performance, including listening skills and concentration.
- Assists with performance of other sporting activities.
- Relieves stress and provides sense of well-being.