

## ② March Lesson: Flexibility and Yoga

**Goals:**

- *Student will understand how flexibility helps the body*

**Audience:** 2nd

**Materials:**

- *Flexibility and Yoga Visuals*

**Common Core Standards:**

- English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening: 2.1
  - Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
  - Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.
  - Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.
- English Language Arts: Speaking and Listening: 2.3
  - Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

**Lesson:**

Last month we talked about exercise. Who can tell me why exercise is important? Exercise helps your body stay healthy! It strengthens your heart, lungs and muscles. It helps you feel energized, prevents disease, and enables you to maintain a healthy weight. Who remembers how much exercise we should get every day? (At least 60 minutes.)

There were three types of exercise we discussed.

1. Cardiovascular exercise helps build a strong heart
2. Strength exercises help build strong, sturdy muscles
3. Flexibility exercises help lengthen and 'loosen' our muscles.

Raise your hand if you know what it means to be flexible.  
(It means that you move your muscles with ease).

When we sit for long periods of time, the muscles in our legs, hips, neck, and back can become very stiff. In order to loosen our muscles, it is important to stretch them!

Practicing yoga is a great way to remain flexible and to reduce stress. Yoga is a combination of breathing exercises, physical postures, and meditation that has been practiced for more than 5,000 years. Today we're going to do some yoga poses.

Stand in a spot where there is at least 2-3 feet of open space ahead and behind you, and at least an arms length of open space on each side. When we practice yoga we want to breathe deeply, focus on one spot, and not talk. This helps us concentrate and relax.

(You can repeat the Sun Salutation as many times as you like based on the amount of time you have for this exercise. Repetition builds endurance, increases energy and helps you greet the day with vigor.)

### **Mountain Pose/Arms Over**

**Head:** Begin by standing still with your arms at your sides (at right). Then stretch your hands above your head (below). Fill your body with breath on a big inhale as you stretch upwards.



**Forward bend:** Exhale as you bend forward from the waist/hips, keeping your legs slightly bent if your hamstrings (back of legs) are a bit tight. Let your arms dangle or fold at the elbows and clasp the opposite elbow.



**Monkey pose:** From your forward bend, lift your head and look forward as you inhale. Flatten your back as you put your tips of your fingers on the floor or on your shins. Make a monkey sound: “ooo ooo”—this is the monkey pose!



**Plank pose:** Draw both legs back into plank pose. Make sure the hands are under the shoulders and the back is straight—this pose makes your arms strong! Pull in your tummy muscles to stay strong!



**Cobra pose:** Lower your chest to the floor and your chest forward and up. Feel the stretch in the front side of your body. Make a cobra “hiss”.



**Downward dog:** Press into your hands and feet to raise your tush into the air. Keep your core (or tummy area) strong. Bark like a dog if you want...“woof woof!”



(Once you have done this sequence, you can step one leg forward at a time and return to “Mountain Pose”. Repeat as many times as you like. After the first time through, be creative by using animal sounds to cue the poses. Have fun! If you have extra time, see if the kids have any favorite stretches or yoga poses they want to show to the class.)

Ok. Everyone take your seats. What did you think of the yoga? Do you think you know it well enough to teach your family a few poses? Who can remember why it's important to stretch? (When we sit for long periods of time, the muscles in our legs, hips, neck, and back can become very stiff.) Yoga is a great way to relax at the end of the day. Maybe you can try doing some yoga with your family before you go to bed!