

Cooling Down ***Your Classroom***

Using yoga, relaxation and breathing strategies
to help students learn to keep their cool

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with

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MINDFUL
PRACTICES

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Cool Down Breathing Activities

USE THESE ACTIVITIES TO CALM and focus students before they take a stressful test!



*Italicized
Script*

1

Bee's Breath

FIRST, sit at your desk with your shoulders rolled back and your feet flat on the floor.

THEN, close your eyes, and put your hands over your ears.

NEXT, take a deep inhalation. Exhaling to the count of four, make a buzzing sound together like a bunch of bees.

LAST, have students keep their eyes closed and repeat four times.



2

Lion's Breath

FIRST, sit at your desks with your shoulders rolled back and feet flat on the floor.

THEN, close your eyes, and lay your hands flat on your desks, palms down.

NEXT, take a deep inhalation. Exhaling to the count of four, stick your tongue out, and roar like a lion, as you let go of any stress or tension you may be holding in your body.

LAST, have students keep their eyes closed and repeat four times.



Pass the Cool Clap

THIS EXERCISE KNITS A GROUP together, induces focus and energizes the group. Students will recognize their own progress as a group as, over time, they become more proficient at sending a rhythmic, speedy clap around the circle.

- 1** **STEP ONE:** Ask students to stand in a circle. Include yourself in the circle, as well.
- 2** **STEP TWO:** Turn to the student on your left, make eye contact and pass a clap to that student.
- 3** **STEP THREE:** The student who received the clap now turns to the student on his left and passes the clap in the same way: Make eye contact, and then clap!

The clap moves around the circle, from one person to the next. All eyes must remain on the clap. If someone drops the clap, he is responsible for restarting it.

GAME VARIATION #1

When students become proficient, they can reverse the clap. Whoever receives the clap sends it right back to the person who passed it to him while maintaining eye contact. The person who was the giver becomes the receiver and then sends the clap in the opposite direction! This requires careful attention and practice!

GAME VARIATION #2

When the students have mastered the activity, they can begin creating patterns to pass around the circle. The patterns can be simple, like catch the clap high (above the head), and send the clap low (down by the knees). The patterns can also be more advanced, like stomp (right foot) – clap – stomp twice (left foot). The teacher chooses one student to start the pattern. The pattern passes from student to student (similar to the game “Telephone”) until the teacher says, “Switch,” and then a new pattern is created by whichever student is next in the circle. Because eye contact is often difficult in this version of the game, the students must rely on their memory and group cohesion to effectively pass the pattern around the circle.

TEACHER TIP

It will take some time for the group to master both variations – perhaps an entire semester, but they will have a great sense of accomplishment when they do!

Adapted from Viola Spolin’s *Theatre Games for the Classroom: A Teacher’s Handbook*



Cotton Ball Breathing

LESSON PLANS

TEACHING BREATHWORK IS OFTEN DIFFICULT because students do not have a visual cue for the breath. Including a cotton ball in the instructions helps illustrate the power of breath. This activity is ideal for cooling down overly excited students and can be repeated again and again.

Talk to the students about their inhalations and exhalations as you teach this lesson. If they use a powerful exhalation, the cotton ball travels farther. If they use a soft exhalation, the cotton ball travels a shorter distance. Have the students observe the length of their inhalations compared to their exhalations.

Math can be incorporated easily into this activity by having the students use yardsticks or rulers to measure the distance the cotton ball travels. Students can work together to find the mean, median, mode and range for the values recorded.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

*A Bag of Cotton Balls
Rulers or Yardsticks
(optional)*

1

STEP ONE:

Pass out one cotton ball per student, and assign each student a partner.

2

STEP TWO:

Depending on their height, have the partners stand 3 to 5 feet apart and face one another. Both students place the cotton ball in the palm of their hands and **remember to always keep the palm flat.**

3

STEP THREE:

The partners then take turns blowing the cotton ball and aim to have it land between their partner's feet. Using the verbal cue of "*between the feet*" helps to prevent inappropriate behavior. Repeat three times.

TEACHER TIP

Keep a bag of cotton balls in your desk drawer to calm anxious students during state testing week.



LESSON PLANS

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Yoga Pose Cards
Music

Musical Cards

THIS GAME RESEMBLES MUSICAL CHAIRS, so have fun inventing variations. You can also establish a winner to heighten the stakes of the game.

1

STEP ONE:

Arrange the yoga cards in a large circle.

2

STEP TWO:

Have each student stand in front of one yoga card and perform that yoga pose.

3

STEP THREE:

Start the music, and instruct the students to begin walking around the circle while the music plays.

4

STEP FOUR:

When you stop the music, instruct the students to do the yoga pose on the card where they have landed.



WORKSHEET

Starfish Pose

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS: Read the sequence below to learn the yoga pose. Once you have practiced each step, draw a picture of yourself doing the pose in the box labeled My Pose Picture.

MATH TERMS

How do these terms relate to the pose?

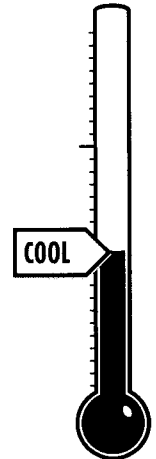
1. *Midline*
2. *Horizontal*
3. *Direction*



Starfish Pose

RELAX

- FIRST:** Begin with your feet parallel, hip-width apart, arms in a horizontal "T" position. Step your feet out so the heels are below the midline of your forearms.
- THEN:** Make sure your feet are parallel. Raise your arms above your head so your body makes an "X."
- NEXT:** Ground your shoulders below your ears with energetic, high-five hands.
- LAST:** Extend energetically in all five directions (down into the floor through your feet, out through both hands, and up out of the crown of the head). Close your eyes, and take deep, slow yoga breaths.

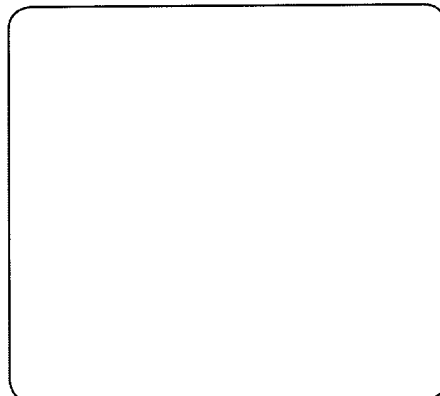


BRAIN STRETCH

Is this a tall, medium or low pose? Hint: check out the Yoga Dictionary on page xx.



My Pose Picture



YOGA TIP

Visualize yourself as a starfish floating in the ocean. Notice the plants, fish and sea life you pass as you float along.



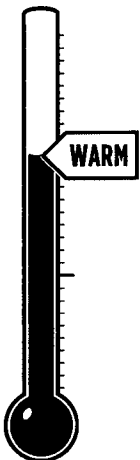
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Horse Pose

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS: Read the sequence below to learn the yoga pose. Once you have practiced each step, draw a picture of yourself doing the pose in the box labeled My Pose Picture.



  **Horse Pose** ENERGIZE

FIRST: Begin with your feet parallel, hip-width apart. Separate your feet so the heels are below the midline of your forearms.

THEN: Turn both feet out so the heels are in and the toes are out (moving in the direction of a 180-degree angle).


NEXT: Press the palms together with the fingers toward the sky in pancake hands.


LAST: Bend the knees, and sink the torso down. Make sure to keep the spine long and tall.

MATH TERMS


Use the following terms in a sentence to describe Horse Pose:

1. Midline
2. 180-Degree Angle
3. Symmetrical

 **My Pose Picture**



YOGA TIP
Make the pose more challenging by adding the arms from Eagle Pose. Repeat twice, so each arm is in front.

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SEQUENCING

When linking several poses together, Horse Pose pairs nicely with Wide Waterfall Bend.



WORKSHEET

Warrior Two Pose

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS: Read the sequence below to learn the yoga pose. Once you have practiced each step, draw a picture of yourself doing the pose in the box labeled My Pose Picture.

MATH TERMS

How do these terms relate to the pose?

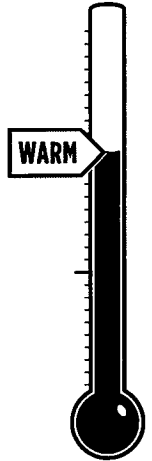
1. Right Angle
2. Perpendicular
3. Width



Warrior Two Pose

ENERGIZE

- FIRST:** Begin with your feet parallel, hip-width apart. Extend your arms to a horizontal "T" position.
- THEN:** Step your feet out so the heels are below your wrists.
- NEXT:** Turn your right foot perpendicular to your left foot. Bend your right knee, and keep the knee above your ankle. Keep your hips facing the same direction as your left foot.
- LAST:** Lift your chest, and turn the head to look over the right fingertips. Repeat on the left side.

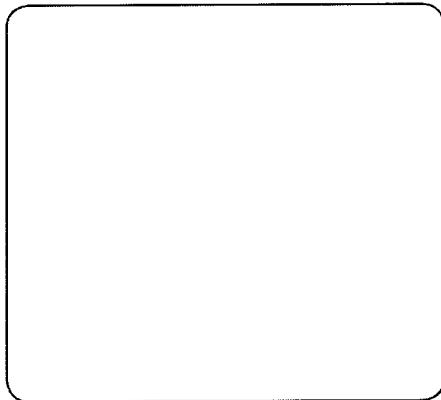


SEQUENCING

When linking several poses together, Warrior Two Pose can be grouped with Triangle Pose or Half Moon Pose.



My Pose Picture



YOGA TIP

Be sure to keep the front knee at a right angle.

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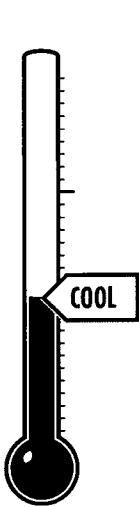




Tree Pose

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

DIRECTIONS: Read the sequence below to learn the yoga pose. Once you have practiced each step, draw a picture of yourself doing the pose in the box labeled My Pose Picture.



Tree Pose CONCENTRATE

FIRST: Stand with big toes together, feet parallel. Focus your gaze on a point in front of you.

THEN: Shift your weight onto your right leg. Lift your left leg, and turn it out to the side while you keep your hips facing forward.

NEXT: Place the left foot above or below the knee. Press your foot into the leg as the leg presses back into the foot.

LAST: Lift your arms overhead like the branches of a tree. Repeat on the left side.

MATH TERMS


Use the following terms in a sentence to describe Tree Pose:


1. Open Triangle
2. Turn
3. Facing

My Pose Picture

YOGA TIP

To help balance, pick a spot in front of you to focus your gaze. Don't forget to breathe.



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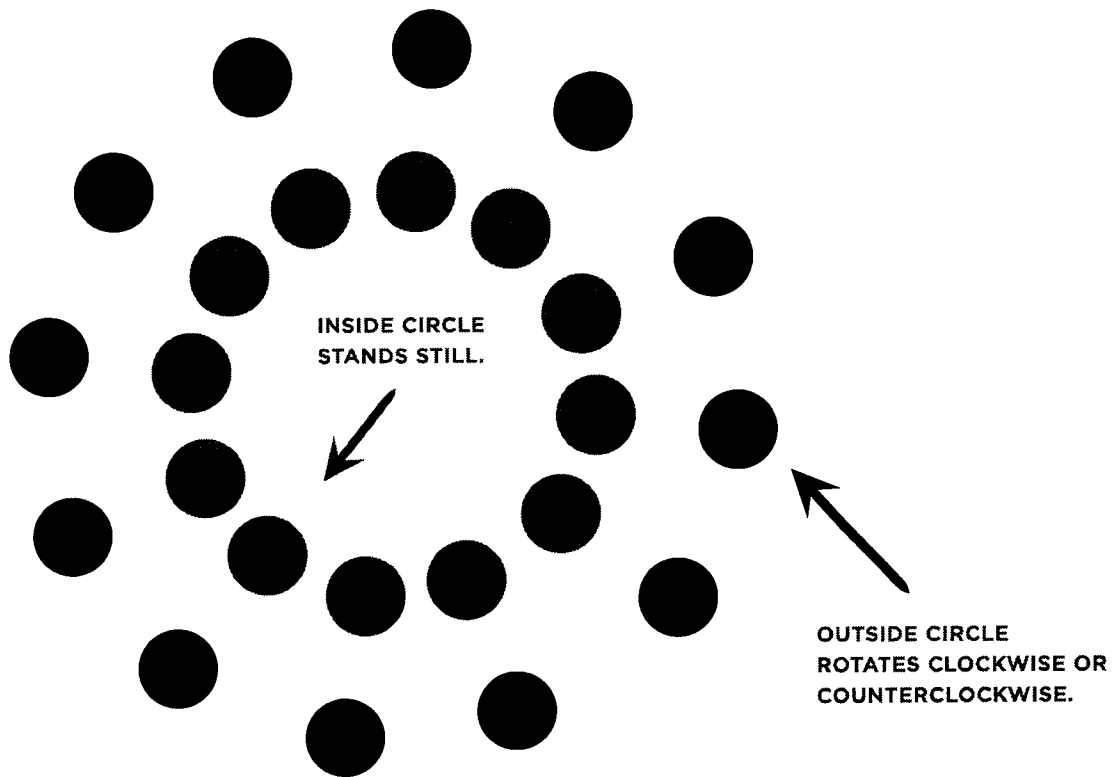
FOCUS TIP

Choose something very specific for your focus, like the center of a letter O on a bulletin board.



Compliment Game Fish Bowl

LESSON PLANS



BUILD COHESION IN YOUR CLASSROOM as students develop respect and understanding for each other.

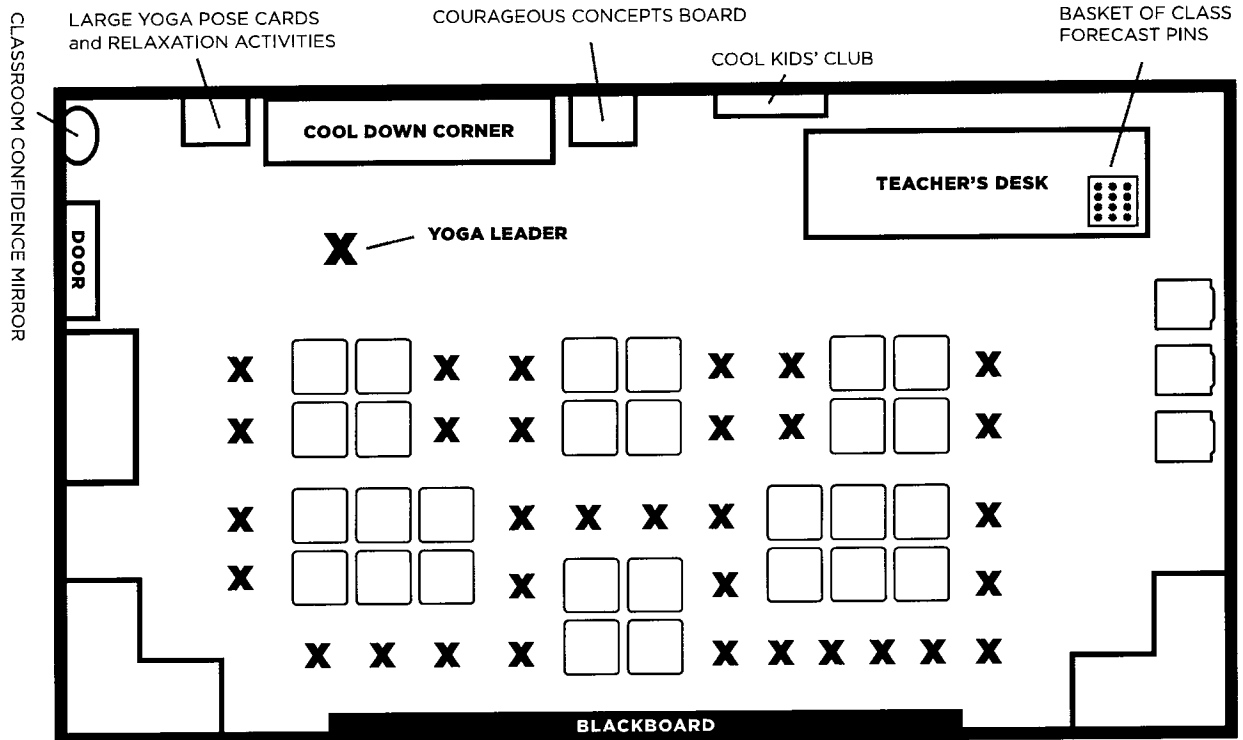
- 1** **STEP ONE:** Place your students in two circles: an inner circle and an outer circle. Ideally, both circles will have the same number of people. The circles face each other.
- 2** **STEP TWO:** Maintaining this formation, the students exchange compliments. Instruct the students in the inner circle to think of two compliments to give to their counterparts in the outer circle. The outer circle does the same. (To keep things simple, always have the inner circle begin.)
- 3** **STEP THREE:** Before the students share verbally, frame the activity by giving some concrete examples of a true compliment. For example, “*You are a cool kid because you are always on time,*” instead of “*I like that you are on time more now because you used to be lazy and show up late, and that was really annoying.*”



Your Cool Classroom

LESSON PLANS

USE **YOGA, BREATHING AND RELAXATION** strategies to help students learn to keep their cool, improve behavior and enhance achievement!



YOUR COOL CLASSROOM INCLUDES:

- Cool Down Corner*
- Courageous Concepts Board*
- Classroom Confidence Mirror*
- Class Forecast Pins*
- Cool Kids' Club*

KEY:
 = STUDENT DESK **X** = STUDENT YOGA SPOT

SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Bulletin Boards and/or Pocket Charts*
- Large Yoga Pose Cards*
- Baskets and Pins*
- Velcro™*
- Sentence Strips*
- Mirror*
- Copies of Cool Classroom Lessons, Relaxation, Breathwork Activities*
- Cool Classroom Thermometer*



Memory Minute

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS ACTIVITY is to have students clear their minds of absolutely everything for one minute.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Clock or Stopwatch

1

STEP ONE:

Dim the lights. The room is quiet.

2

STEP TWO:

Instruct the students to sit down with their eyes closed, both feet flat on the floor and hands folded on their desks.

3

STEP THREE:

Instruct the students to visualize a blank sheet of paper and to clear their minds of all thoughts.

4

STEP FOUR:

Set the timer for one minute, and instruct the students to remain quiet.

5

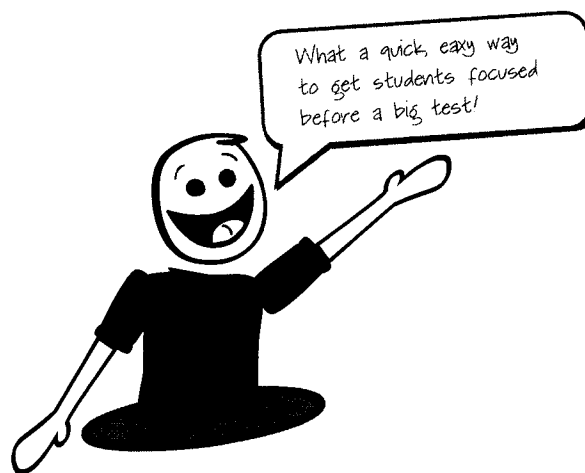
STEP FIVE:

For one minute everyone, including you, the teacher, is quiet and focused.

6

STEP SIX:

At the end of the minute, turn up the lights to signal that instruction will resume.





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This certificate entitles the bearer to 10% off her book *Cooling Down Your Classroom* and **Professional Development Services** with Carla Tantillo the Founder of *Mindful Practices*.

Carla Tantillo is the author of *Cooling Down Your Classroom* and has worked with schools across the United States in innovative relaxation and classroom management strategies.

Mindful Practices offers innovative professional development, after school and recess programming in yoga and wellness strategies. We work with schools across the country to honor the needs of the whole child through mindful classroom management practices that bring relaxation, movement and breath work to the classroom. Our programming offerings for early elementary, elementary, middle school and high school include: Hip-HopYoga, Cool Corps, Kindness Lab and Cool Down Club which is a specialized program for students with aggressive behavior and/or special needs. All of our programs are offered as options for recess, after school or embedded day programs. We also offer effective and fun professional development workshops for faculty, staff and parents.

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