

Creating a Healthy Bedtime Routine with Yoga

Bedtime can be a very stressful and hectic time for most families. A routine for children is an essential part of encouraging a peaceful and relaxing time before they lay their heads down to rest. Yoga is a great relaxing option for kids to incorporate as a bedtime ritual.

Below is a bedtime routine that parents can follow with their child.

- Explain the instructions to your child while doing the poses.
- Repeat each pose for three breathes.
- The poses outlined below include animals, mountains, the sun and moon.
- Younger children- Create a story so that they can imitate the poses along with the story. Use a story that will interest your child by including aspects of their lives that interest them.

Moon Breathe Pose



Start by calming down the body by inhaling and exhaling.

Directions: Stand tall and strong, with the crown of your head reaching high, and shoulders back. Inhale and bring your hands over your head, exhale and bring your hands down.

Tree Pose



Balancing poses require you to concentrate, which is restful for the mind.

Directions: Stand on one foot and begin by lifting your other foot slowly to your thigh by bending your leg. Press your foot against your inner thigh and stand tall and strong. Once you are balanced you may raise your arms over your head and breathe. Sway your arms as branches slowly in the air. Ensure that you do both leg's as it is important to do both sides in yoga.

*For beginners ensure that you start by lifting your leg only to your ankle. Progress by bringing it a bit higher to your calf. Ensure that you are not balancing your foot on your knee. You need to have your foot above or below your knee. Not resting against your knee.

Crescent Moon Side Bend Pose



This is a stretching pose that opens the connective tissue of the side body which aides breathing.

Directions: Stand tall, inhale and lengthen your arms over your head. Exhale and bend to one side. Inhale to come up to centre and exhale to the other side.

Butterfly Pose



Opens the hip flexors for a more comfortable nights rest.

Directions: Sit on the floor, back straight, roll shoulders back and press the soles of your feet together.

Cat Pose



Releases the tension in your neck, shoulders and spine contributing to a wonderful sleep.

Directions: Start in a tabletop position with hand and knees on the ground. Inhale chin up, and let your spine drop low. Exhale chin down, curving your chin to your chest and let your spine lift high.

Legs on Wall Pose



Is a great pose for older children that they can do in bed. It is a very nourishing pose for the body and mind. It relieves the body of stress and tension.

Directions: Lie on your back with your sit bones as close to the wall as you are comfortable and place legs against your wall or headboard. Spread your arms out and breathe.

Child's Pose



This pose can be done in bed or on the floor. This is a restorative pose that calms the nervous system. It stretches the lower back, hips and thighs.

Directions: From your tabletop position, press back on your knees and stretch your arms over your head.

Savasana, Relax Pose



This is a calming pose that can be done in bed that will bring on sleep naturally through breathing. Have your child make a wish upon a star while he is imagining the moon.

Directions: Lie on your back and take nice slow deep breaths.

Younger children: Tummy Ride:

1. Choose a stuffed animal or small pillow.
2. Lie down and place your animal (pillow) on your tummy. Let your arms rest loosely by your sides
3. Breathe normally and watch your animal ride up and down. Pretend it is riding an ocean wave
4. Count as you breathe: "breathe in-two-three", "breathe out-two-three", "breathe in-two-three", and "breathe out-two-three"
If your animal falls off don't worry. You can put it on your tummy again and start counting Does your breathing feel like a rolling wave?



Spaghetti Test:

You will ensure your child's body is fully relaxed

Directions: Ask them to tense up their legs and arms and hold it for 3 seconds. Then ask them to relax. You can test their body by giving their arms and legs (make sure you support the knee) a light jiggle. This will ensure that the last little bit of tension is released.

