

Stretch Break

Nutrition Lesson(s) Supported:

-Flexibility

Supplies needed: none

Length of Time to Complete:

5 minutes to introduce activity

10 minutes to practice poses

Audience (grades): 2nd

Common Core Standards Taught:

- 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.

Background: Yoga is a healing spiritual, mental and physical practice to promote balance in life. It is a combination of breathing exercises, physical postures, and meditation that has been practiced for more than 5,000 years. Sun salutations are designed to warm up the body and get the heart rate up by moving the entire body.

Lesson:

Leader: This month we've talked about the importance of flexibility. 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! Today, we are going to take a quick 10 minute stretch break.

Directions: Have each child stand in a spot where there is at least 2-3 feet of open space ahead and behind him/her, and at least an arms length of open space on each side. 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 you're 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 are done with this sequence, you can step one leg forward at a time and return to "Mountain Pose". Repeat as many times as you like, and be creative by using animal sounds to cue the poses. Have fun!