

Benefits of Yoga for Kids

Yoga is a form of exercise, meditation, and breathing practices with Indian roots designed to bring unity to the mind, body, and spirit. Adults have vouched for yoga for years, saying it makes them feel better physically, enhances their ability to concentrate, and brings tranquility to their lives. Now parents and yoga instructors are looking at the possible benefits of yoga for kids.

First, children experience many of the same physical benefits adults do from practicing yoga. Yoga strengthens them and helps them become more flexible and coordinated.

Second, yoga for kids also enhances self-awareness. Children who practice yoga learn early on to tune into their bodies. Self esteem is bolstered as the children gain control over their bodies and minds.

Third, yoga for kids enhances imagination and empathy. Children are asked to strike poses from nature. They might assume the pose of a snake, or a tree, or a dog. Then they are asked to imagine what it would be like to be those life forms. In this way, children learn early on to connect with all the life on the planet and realize that similarities far outweigh differences.

Fourth, yoga teaches children to have fun and move their bodies in a non-competitive environment. Yoga isn't about being right or wrong, or being best or worst. It is about bringing unity to one's own life. Children can work together to help each other reach this goal.

Fifth, yoga for kids teaches self-discipline. As part of the practice of yoga, kids need to slow down, hold certain postures, breathe or think in a certain way. Yoga encourages children to master themselves rather than wait for an adult to control them.

Sixth, yoga for kids can also be a way to strengthen families. Yoga is an exercise that parents and children and even grandparents can practice and talk about together. As children participate in yoga with their families, they feel closer to their loved ones.

Seventh, through practicing yoga, children can learn ways to relax and get control of stress in their lives. A child worried about a test, for instance, might use the meditation or breathing techniques of yoga to help her calm down and focus.

Yoga for Special Needs Kids

By teaching self awareness, self control, and concentration, yoga can also help to manage children who have been diagnosed with ADHD - attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder. Yoga has also been used with some success to help children with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and autism. Yoga for kids has also been used to help kids with cancer cope with their diagnosis and with scary medical procedures.

Overall, children seem to derive great benefits from doing yoga. The next time you put on the DVD for your own workout, think about including your little one in the fun. Chances are you'll be glad you did.

(from one of our yoga parents)

www.hotyogawellness.com