

POSES, ASANAS

There are many yoga poses out there, more than I can possibly put in this little book! But here are many of the basic poses used in this book. Children will vary greatly in their flexibility and ability to perform the poses. Always see the beauty in the child's original pose and effort and honor that, while directing the child into the full alignment of the pose. Introduce adjustments with the attitude of moving toward something in process, while we celebrate and rejoice in the present and our practice of yoga and completely accept and love our current situation.

You will find a lot of hyper-extended elbows and knees, wobbly legs, etc. But that's OK! Guide children into discovering their bodies. In time and practice they will improve. For ideas on more poses, consult B.K.S. Iyengar's classic, *Light On Yoga*.

BOAT POSE

Navasana

Begin seated with knees bent. Bring arms out straight in front near knees. Use stomach muscles to draw legs in and up. Extend legs out for full position.

Benefits

Strengthens abdominals. Improves digestion. Tones kidneys.

What it looks like

A boat with oars, the letter V, a bowl of soup, a train.

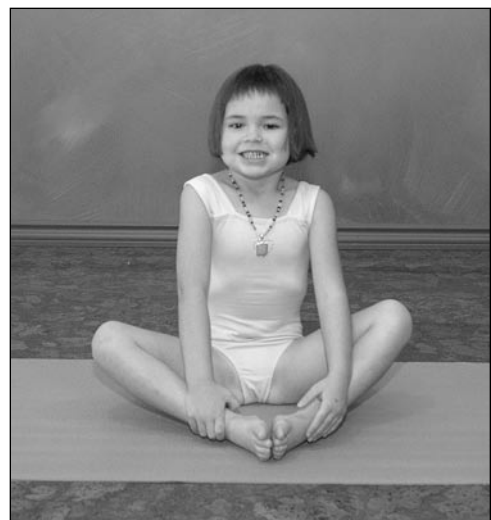
BOUND ANGLE POSE

Baddha Konasana

Seated, bring feet together. Press feet together energetically, then extend out through the knees. Bow forward.



Boat Pose



Bound Angle Pose

Benefits

Aids lower abdominal organs in functioning. Good for hip and knee joints. Helps with bladder control.

What it looks like

A butterfly, a plant, a flower pot.



Bow Pose

BOW POSE

Dhanurasana

Begin lying face down. Bend knees. Bring shoulders on the back and grab ankles. Tuck the tailbone and arch up. Rock side to side for variation.

Benefits

Stretches the spine and keeps it flexible. Tones the abdominal organs

What it looks like

A bow, a circle, a bug, a ship.

BRIDGE POSE

Setu bandha sharvangasana



Bridge Pose

Begin lying on back. Bend knees and bring feet toward buttocks. Press hips up. Walk shoulder blades underneath and then clasp hands. Not all children will be able to clasp hands. Keep inner thighs moving toward each other and tuck the tailbone.

Benefits

Opens the chest and upper back. Develops the buttocks.

CAMEL POSE

Ustrasana

Kneeling with toes curved under or flat on the floor, place hands on hips. Extend and lift the spine as you arch the back. Drop the hands back onto the heels, press the hips forward, tuck tailbone.

Benefits

Develops hamstrings and inner thighs. Calms the mind and removes fatigue. Removes stiffness in neck and shoulders.



Camel Pose

What it looks like

A tunnel, a mountain, going down a well to fetch water, any pose when a heart-opening realization occurs.



Cat Pose



Cow Pose

CAT/COW POSE

Beginning in **table pose**, inhale. Exhale and arch back up like a cat. Inhale again and drop down like a cow.

Benefits

Good for the spine. Develops the wrists and arms.

What it looks like

A cat, a cow, a moving vehicle, a bumpy road, a bicycle pump, waves.

CHAIR POSE

Utkatasana

Begin in **mountain pose**. Raise arms over head, bend knees and bring together and sit as if sitting in a chair.

Benefits

Strengthens ankles, calves, inner thighs, back. Stretches the shoulders.

What it looks like

A princess with a puffy dress, a chair, a lightning bolt.



Chair Pose

CHILD'S POSE

Balāsana

Have child spread knees and extend arms forward in front of them. Also may move arms to the sides.

Benefits

A good resting pose. Good for the lower back.

What it looks like

A ball, somebody praying, begging, sleeping.



Child's Pose

COBRA POSE

Bhujangasana

Begin lying flat on stomach, hands back by the base of the breastbone. Uncurl toes and press into floor. Bring energy to the legs. Inhale up, shoulders on the back. Hiss like a snake.



Cobra Pose

Benefits

Good for strengthening the back and spine. Expands the chest.

What it looks like

A snake, a piece of rope, a walrus.



Demon Pose

DEMON POSE

Bhujapidasana

Come into a squat and place the hands on top of the feet. For variation, place hands on floor, shrug the shoulders and melt the heart. Keep the arms and hands strong as you squeeze with the inner thighs and lift off, balancing on the hands.

Benefits

Strengthens hands and wrists. Creates strong abdominals. Develops the leg and arm muscles.

What it looks like

Good for antagonist characters, demons, dragons, silly or scary creatures, tricksters.

DOWNWARD DOG POSE

Adho Mukha Shvanasana

Begin in **table pose**. Lean back toward heels, then press hips and buttocks up and back. Straighten legs.



Downward Dog Pose

Benefits

Removes fatigue. Develops the ankles, arms and abdominals. Strengthens and relieves stiffness in shoulders. Good for digestion.

What it looks like

A tunnel, a mountain, a house, a dog stretching, an upside down V, a magic portal.

EAGLE POSE

Garudasana

Begin standing in **mountain pose, *tadasana***. Entwine left leg over the right leg. Extend left arm out, then cross right arm over it. Bend the elbows and entwine the two together and bring hands together. Release and fly out like an eagle. Reverse sides.



Eagle Pose

Benefits

Strengthens ankles. Stretches the shoulders. Removes cramps in calves.

What it looks like

A bird flying, twisted noodles.



The birds fly!

EXTENDED LEGS POSE

Prasarita Padottanasana

Spread legs wide, feet and toes pointing forward. Bend forward, palms down on the floor. Can do “windmills” with one hand on the floor and the other extended, twisting from the navel area.

Benefits

Develops hamstrings and inner thighs. Calms the mind and removes fatigue.

What it looks like

A tunnel, a mountain, going down a well to fetch water, a windmill.

FEATHER DANCER POSE

Natarajasana

Begin standing on one leg and bring knee to hands. Bring right hand to hold right big toe. Then arch back and tuck tailbone. Press foot into hand. Extend left hand out and bow forward, balance. Reverse sides.



Extended Legs Pose



Windmill



Feather Dancer Pose

Benefits

Strengthens leg muscles. Develops poise. Stretches the shoulders and expands the chest. Benefits the spine.

What it looks like

A dancer, a tea pot, a lightening bolt, a hunter, a gazelle.

FISH POSE

Matsyasana

Sit on hands, preferably palms facing down. Legs are extended. Drop elbows down to floor and arch back. Slide back enough so that head will touch the floor.



Fish Pose

Benefits

Good for the abdominal organs.

What it looks like

A fish, a sleeping mermaid.



Forward Bend

FORWARD BEND

Uttanasana

Feet fist-width apart, bending over at the hips and hands touching the floor. Make feet, ankles, knees and legs strong.

Benefits

Good for concentration, removing fatigue. Good for stomach, liver, kidneys and heart. Stretches the hamstrings.

What it looks like

A folding chair, a sleeping praying mantis.



Frog Pose

FROG POSE

Bekasana

Begin in **table position**. Spread knees out toward edges of mat and bring heels together. Bow forward onto stomach and elbows. Press feet into each other and extend out through the knees.

Variation: Lower legs are perpendicular to upper legs and feet out.

Benefits

Abdominal organs are toned. Stretches the hips and thighs.

What it looks like

A frog, a diamond, a minnow, a swimmer under the deep sea.

HALF-MOON POSE

Ardha chandrasana

From **triangle pose**, bend right knee and take a small step with left foot. Balance on right foot, extend left leg out. Right hand is on the floor, left hand extends upward. Try looking at fingertips.



Half-Moon Pose

Benefits

Good for legs and lower spine. Strengthens core. Develops balance. Opens pelvis.

What it looks like

A moon, a wheel, a merry go round, scissors.

HANDSTANDS

Kids love to do handstands! Emphasize that this is NOT a HEADSTAND. These poses give kids confidence to do something that they usually don't do and the confidence to be in a situation where things may be turned upside down.

Start with an L handstand. They won't be able to be at an L, and their legs will be high on the wall. Over time their arms, tummies and legs will build up strength.

For regular handstands, children usually can't get themselves up. Big kids can kick up, or may need assistance. Little ones I assist, and just plain pick up their legs and hold them with their hands giving support.



Handstand

HANDSTAND

Adho Mukha Vriksasana

Begin in **table position** facing the wall. Shrug shoulders up and melt the heart. Keeping arms strong and shoulders on the back, press up into **downward dog**. From **downward dog**, take a step forward with and kick up with the back leg. Squeeze in with the inner thighs and extend feet up into the air.

BENEFITS

Strengthens shoulders, arms and wrists. Expands the chest. Tones the organs.

L-HANDSTAND

Begin seated with back against the wall, legs extended straight out. Let hands reach where heels were. Place hands, come into **table position**, then into **downward dog**. Step up with one



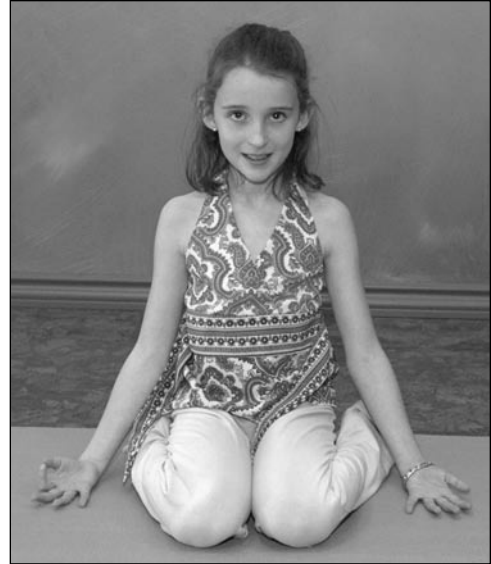
L-Handstand

foot against the wall, then press the other into the wall, both together.

HERO POSE

Virasana and Supta Virasana

Begin by kneeling. Bring legs and feet slightly out to the side of the leg, toes pointing straight back, then gently sit back as far as comfortable. Make ankles and toes active.



Hero Pose

Benefits

Removes fatigue. Stretches quads and thighs. Relieves stomach problems. Calms the mind. Encourages deep breathing and a rested heart. Good for the knees. Opens the chest.

What it looks like

Somebody who is tired and wants to take a nap, a frog king, a smiling fish, a heart.



Reclining Hero Pose

LION POSE

Simhasana

Start in **child's pose**, *balasana*, with arms and hands extended. Then press forward and let face go wild. Squish it up. Roar like a lion!



Lion Pose

Benefits

Good for the speech and stammers. Releases tension in the face, jaw and body. Revives expression.

What it looks like

A lion, an alien, monsters, giant squids, dragons, witches.

LOTUS POSE

Padmasana

Seated, lift each foot and cross onto each thigh. Try both sides.

Benefits

Helps with relaxation and calms the mind. Opens the hips.

What it looks like

Lotus, any flower, a fairy, a meditating Genie.



Lotus Pose

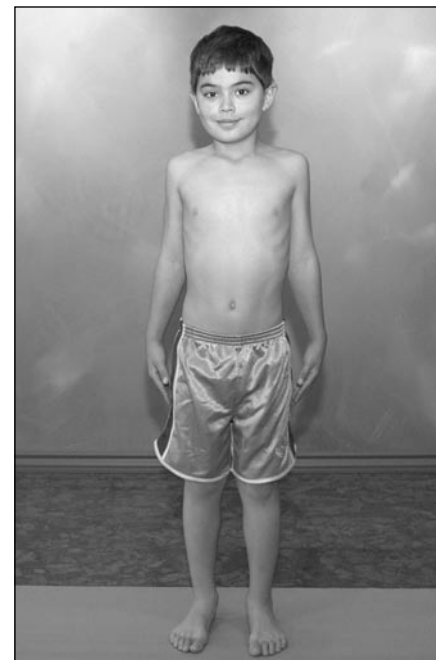
MOUNTAIN POSE

Tadasana

Stand with feet fist-width apart. Weight evenly distributed through all four corners of the feet. Muscles of the ankles, calves, knees and thighs engaged and hugging the bones. Inner thighs are back, tailbone tucked. Shoulders are on the back, hands pointed down. Feel the energy from the earth and feet drawing up into the core and extending out through the hands and head and feet.

Benefits

Naturally aligns the entire body. Spinal alignment. Teaches proper standing. Develops concentration. Makes back strong. Relaxing.



Mountain Pose

What it looks like

A steady mountain, a torpedo.

ONE LEG HEAD TO KNEE POSE

Janu Shirsasana

Begin sitting and bring one bent knee in and extend other leg out. Draw in with the inner thighs and extend out through the feet. Extend forward and bring chest to thigh.

Benefits

Stretches and strengthens hamstrings. Tones kidneys and liver. Heart is at rest.



One Leg Head to Knee Pose

What it looks like

Branches, an arrow.



Pigeon Pose

PIGEON POSE

Eka Pada Rajakapotasana prep

Begin in **table position**. Bring one knee forward and extend back leg out, activate back leg. Extend up. Bow forward. Switch sides.

Benefits

Opens the hips. Stretches the legs. Opens the heart.

What it looks like

Someone crawling on the ground, a seal, a pigeon, ice skating.

RABBIT POSE

Begin in **table position**. Place hands on ankles, then arch the back and tuck head under. Place gentle weight on head.

Benefits

Stretches the back, arms and neck.



Rabbit Pose

What it looks like

A rabbit, a butter ball, a bomb, a seed.

RAINBOW POSE

Urdva Dhanurasana

Place hands behind shoulders before pressing up into **bridge pose**. Come up onto head, draw shoulders on to back, curl under, then press up with hands into full pose.

Benefits

Good for rounded shoulders and back. Aids respiration. Improves energy. Opens heart. Strengthens arms, shoulders and wrists. Makes back flexible.



Rainbow Pose

What it looks like

A wheel, a rainbow, a tunnel, a magic portal through an invisible door in the wall.



Runner's Lunge

RUNNER'S LUNGE

Begin in **table position** or **downward dog**, and lunge right foot forward with knee at a right angle above the ankle. Bring shoulders on the back and extend out through back foot.



Seated Forward Bend

SEATED FORWARD BEND

Paschimotanasana

Sit on floor with legs extended. Activate legs and inner thighs. Bow forward and touch toes.

Benefits

Tones the abdominal organs, kidneys and is good for the spine. Lengthens hamstrings.



Seated Twist

What it looks like

A flower getting ready to bloom, a shy animal.

SEATED TWIST

Ardha Matsyendrasana I

Begin seated with legs extended. Bend left knee and place foot over the opposite leg. Bring opposite foot in toward buttocks. Cross right elbow to left knee and leverage back. Reverse.

Benefits

Stretches neck muscles. Tones the internal organs. Good for the spine and shoulders. Releases toxins.

What it looks like

A pretzel, a mixed-up professor, looking this way and that way.

SIDE ANGLE POSE

Parsvakonasana

Begin with legs wide apart on the mat. Turn left foot in 60 degrees, and extend right foot out straight. Bend right knee to about a 90 degree angle, bring arm and elbow either down to the right knee or down to the outside of the right ankle. Extend left arm up over head, pinky pointing down. Reverse.



Side Angle Pose

Benefits

Builds stamina. Good for toning ankles, knees and thighs. Develops the chest and opens the shoulders.

What it looks like

Traveling up and down hills, going places, a leaning tree.

SPLITS

Hanumanasana

Begin in **runner's lunge**. Slowly walk front leg out in front, maintaining muscular energy.

Benefits

Tones leg muscles. Good for sciatica.



Splits

What it looks like

A cheerleader, a monkey, a road runner, a ballerina.

TABLE POSITION

Begin on hands and knees, toes untucked, fingers spread wide, wrist joints straight across. Back with natural curve.



Table Position

TREE POSE

Vrksasana

Begin in **mountain pose**. Put weight onto left leg and then lift right foot to the left thigh, toes pointing downwards. Balancing, lift arms up over head, palms together. Flower the tree by opening the hands and bring arms down to the sides again. Switch sides.

Benefits

Develops balance and concentration, and tones the leg muscles.



Tree Pose

What it looks like

A tree, a rocket ship.

TRIANGLE POSE

Trikonasana

Spread legs wide on the mat, left foot turned in at 60 degrees and right foot pointing straight out. Inhale arms up to shoulder height. Bring muscular energy to the legs and arms, then extend trunk over to the right leg and bring the right hand toward the right shin, ankle or mat. Left arm extends straight up. Look at the fingertips. Switch sides.



Triangle Pose

Benefits

Strengthens leg muscles and ankles. Builds and opens the chest.

What it looks like

Traveling places, a triangle, a magic wand.



Upward Boat

UPWARD BOAT

Urdva Navasana

Lying on stomach with both arms extended out front, arch back and lift off arms and legs from ground. Extend out through hands and feet.

Benefits

Good for the back. Tones the abdominal organs.

What it looks like

A magic carpet, a flying fish, a boat, Superman, Superwoman.

WARRIOR I

Virabhadrasana I

Spread legs wide. Turn left foot in 60 degrees and right foot out 90 degrees. Turn hips. Bend left knee to a 90 degree angle, extend arms up over head. Reverse sides.

Benefits

Opens up and strengthens shoulders, back and neck. Develops good breathing in the chest. Builds stamina, strengthens legs, ankles and knees. Stretches thighs.



Warrior I

What it looks like

Any major or minor character, proud warrior, victorious runner.

WARRIOR II

Virabhadrasana II

Spread legs wide. Turn left foot in 60 degrees and right foot out 90 degrees. Bend right knee toward a 90 degree angle, extend right arms out in front and left arm behind. Look toward right fingertips. Reverse sides.

Benefits

Opens up and strengthens shoulders, back and neck. Develops good breathing in the chest. Builds stamina, strengthens legs, ankles and knees.



Warrior II

What it looks like

Any major or minor character, proud warrior, Egyptian dancer.

WARRIOR III

Virabhadrasana III

Begin in **Warrior I** position. Take a small step forward with back right foot. Balance on left foot. Interlace hands together, index fingers and thumbs together and extend arms and hands out in front. Lift and extend right leg straight out behind. Arms can also be at the side. Reverse sides.



Warrior III

Benefits

Opens up and strengthens shoulders, back and neck. Develops good breathing in the chest. Builds stamina and balance, strengthens legs, ankles and knees.

What it looks like

Any major or minor character, an arrow, an airplane, a flying warrior.

WIDE ANGLE POSE

Upavistha Konasana

Sitting on floor with legs straight in front, open legs to the side, toes pointing up if possible, and bow forward.



Wide Angle Pose

Benefits

Stretches the hamstrings and legs.

What it looks like

A lazy princess, a doorway to another world.

This is a chapter from *Storytime Yoga: Teaching Yoga to Children Through Story* by Sydney Solis. To purchase the entire book visit <http://www.StoryTimeYoga.com>.