

# Animal Yoga

*A fun way to integrate physical fitness into the day; students will increase flexibility while learning about animals.*

## Curriculum Connection

**Alberta Education Program of Studies: Physical Education (2000)**

**Basic Skills—Nonlocomotor; e.g., turning, twisting, swinging, balancing, bending, landing, stretching, curling, hanging**

**ECS:** AK–3 experience and develop nonlocomotor skills through a variety of activities

**Grade 1:** A1–3 perform nonlocomotor skills through a variety of activities

**Grade 2:** A2–3 select and perform nonlocomotor skills involved in a variety of activities

**Grade 3:** A3–3 respond to a variety of stimuli to create nonlocomotor sequences

**Grade 4:** A4–3 select, perform and refine simple nonlocomotor sequences

**Grade 5:** A5–3 select, perform and refine more challenging nonlocomotor sequences

**Grade 6:** A6–3 select, perform and refine challenging nonlocomotor sequences

## Materials

- Gym mats (if available)
- *Animal Yoga Activity Sheet*.

## Activity

### Animal Yoga Week

This can be used to help fulfill the Daily Physical Activity requirement.



There are five days of 15 minute activities that will help your students learn new stretches, increasing flexibility along with learning interesting facts about animals.

#### Day 1: Learning

Using the *Animal Yoga Activity Sheet*, create each pose, with students following along. Ask students to share one fact that they know about each animal. Go through each of the positions twice.

#### Day 2: Practice

Review all the animal positions with the students.

Then, call out one of the animal positions to the students. Ask students to create that position and hold it for 10 seconds. Allow students to take turns choosing an animal and creating that pose.

#### Day 3: Animal Quiz

**Test time:** See if your students remember the positions by calling out the animal pose and asking students to create that position.

Read some/all of the following questions. Instead of answer the question verbally, students get into the yoga animal position.

Reminding students that there may be more than one response, have them make the position of an animal that:

- Has wings (bird or stork)
- Is a pet (bird or cat) - *We have a responsibility to take good care of our pets! We do this by giving them food, water, shelter, veterinary care, exercise, playtime and lots of love.*

## Animal Yoga (continued)

- Is a wild animal (camel, lion, monkey)
- Has no arms or legs (cobra)
- Lays eggs (frog, snake)
- Does not make a good pet (all wild animals) - *Wild animals can take care of themselves so the best thing that people can do is leave them alone! Wild animals can carry diseases or bite so you should never try and pet a wild animal!*
- Lives in the water (jellyfish)
- Is an animal this is best kept inside (Cat) - *Cats live a lot longer inside because there are far fewer dangers such as cars and toxic substances. As long as you provide your cat with all their needs, inside is the best place for your cat.*

Feel free to create your own questions based on students' knowledge.

### Day 4: Game

Ask students to form groups of 5 to 9 people. Sitting in a circle, each student in the circle selects an animal position as "their position" and demonstrates it to the rest of the group. Each group member must have a different animal.

Ask students to go around the circle twice to help them remember what animal each person selected.

Once everyone is ready, the student with the closest birthday starts by forming his or her position followed by the position another group member. That group member must then

make his or her position then form another group member's position

If a student doesn't notice, or hesitates to form "their position" after it was created by another student, that student is out of the game. The game goes until there are just two players left or time is up.

### Day 5: What I've learned

Have students get into groups of 4. Each student does a pose and the other students copy. The student then says two new things they have learnt about that animal.

### Extension

Students can research one of the animals in the "Animal Yoga Position" and find out how this animal is active. Is it active during the day or night? What body parts does it use to move around? How far does it travel in a year? How do you compare to this animal? Students can create a Venn diagram or a poster to demonstrate the similarities and differences between themselves and the animal.

Using stretches learned in class, make up new animal poses that will help you become more flexible and stretch different muscle groups.



# Animal Yoga



**FLY LIKE A BIRD:** Hang your arms loosely at your sides. Lean forward and slowly lift your arms up behind you as high as possible. Hold, then relax in a standing position.



**RELAX LIKE A JELLYFISH:** Lie on your back. Shut your eyes, and relax all the muscles in your body. Pretend your body is made of jelly. Breathe slowly and deeply for several minutes.



**YAWN LIKE A LION:** Sit on your feet. Put your hands on your knees. Lean forward while opening your eyes and mouth wide. Stick out your tongue as far as possible. Let out a loud roar! Sit back and relax.



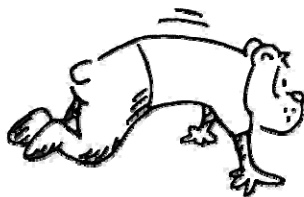
**KNEEL LIKE A CAMEL:** Kneel on the ground with your right hand resting on your right heel and left hand on your left heel. Raise your chest up, bend your head back, push your chest toward the sky, and hold. Return to a kneeling position and take your hands off your heels. Bend back slightly. Move one arm up over your head and hold it straight. Then try your other arm. Relax in a kneeling position.



**WALK LIKE A MONKEY:** Stand very straight. Bend forward until your hands touch the ground while your legs remain straight. Walk around on all fours, keeping your legs as straight as possible (don't let your knees touch the ground!). Stop. While you keep your legs straight, slowly push yourself upright, lift your hands off the ground, and return to a standing position.



**BALANCE LIKE A STORK:** Stand up straight with your arms at your sides. Slowly lift up one leg and balance on the other leg. Slightly bend the leg you're balancing on; bring your index fingers from both hands to your nose. Then lift up your bent arms. Hold. Return to a standing position and reverse legs.



**STRETCH LIKE A CAT:** Stand on all fours, with your back straight. Slowly raise your back up high and hold. Lower your back. Stretch out one leg until it's straight and hold. Then stretch the other leg. Relax on all fours again.



**POSE LIKE A COBRA:** Lie on your stomach. Move your hands under your shoulders. Push up on your hands and lift your head up and back. Push up until your arms are straight. Hold, then relax.



**SIT LIKE A FROG:** Sit with knees bent out and the soles of your feet touching each other. Use your hands to gently pull your feet in toward your body. Keep your back straight and flex your knees downward. Relax and sit comfortably.

Yoga positions from: *Science Is... A source book of fascinating facts, projects and activities.*

Susan V. Bosak. Scholastic Books, 1991