



Using Yoga for Stress Management

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Relaxing music (optional)

Brainstorm

Ask students: What healthy ways do you use to relax when you're stressed out?

Discuss

Those are some great healthy strategies we can use when we're stressed. Many of us have experienced instances of stress. **Stress** is the feeling you might experience when you are worried, frustrated, or overwhelmed. Sometimes stress can be a positive thing - such as making the game-winning point or being part of a drama performance. Sometimes stress can be negative, but manageable, like wanting to go out on a Saturday night with friends but having to work, or preparing to take a college entrance exam. What are some examples of stress that you might be dealing with lately?

Dive in!

Detail: Too much stress can be bad for you and it may cause physical and/or emotional problems. Fortunately, there are healthy strategies you can use to help you manage stress. It's important to note that the stress concept is as varied as instances of many other emotion concepts. So something that works for you might not work for your friend, or something that works for another person might not be best for you. We talked about some of those strategies earlier in class. Does anyone use exercising as a way to relax? Today, we're going to use yoga to help us de-stress. Yoga is the practice of using breath control, meditation, and specific body postures for health and relaxation. Yoga has been around for thousands of years and has documented positive effects on mental health, including decreasing stress, depression, and anxiety, and increasing self-regulation, creating a sense of well-being, and improving mood. Some researchers suggest that yoga can be linked to increases in health-promoting behaviors, such as healthy eating and physical activity. Yoga can be a low-impact activity that does not require equipment, physical fitness, or flexibility. In fact, yoga encourages practice that is individualized to meet each person where they are at. There are many different kinds of yoga, and some are more intense and vigorous than others, but there are many gentle poses that can



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be performed without prior practice or skill. For this reason, yoga is an activity that can be practiced in most places and by most people.

Activity

Distribute the worksheet to students and practice the yoga moves together. If you're able, play soothing music during this activity. Or, you may want to try one of the yoga activities in the link below.

Yoga for Teens With Adriene: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kgZnJqzNaU> (20 mins)

Yoga for Beginners: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6kJgTouHHeE> (15 mins)

Yoga for Teens: Meditations to be your true self:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ylr5WSxU_r0 (7 mins)

Reflect

Ask students the Reflect question verbally: Did you find the practice of yoga relaxing and soothing? Do you think this is a strategy you might use again in the future?

Extend and Enrich

Everyone has different ways of relaxing when they're stressed. Challenge your students to find their favorite healthy ways to de-stress and share them with the class. Possible examples include: Decorating mandalas, creating zentangles, practicing mindfulness, meditation, and exercising.

Optional Home Connection → Have students pick a relaxing strategy and practice using it at home as a way to de-stress. Ask volunteers to report back on which strategies worked best and whether or not the strategies helped them feel less stress.

Professional Development

Take 5 minutes and reflect on your favorite healthy ways to de-stress. What works best for you? Are there any unhealthy strategies that you'd like to replace?

For Further Study:

- Learn how to make a zentangle: <https://zentangle.com/pages/learn>
- Mandalas in the Classroom: <https://nelrc.org/managingstress/mandalas.html>
- Free Headspace access for teachers to build mindfulness practices: <https://www.headspace.com/educators>