



Baby yoga



Grab a mat and try some of these suggested yoga activities. You and your baby will enjoy it!



Baby Yoga



You are never too young to start doing yoga. Even your baby can practice yoga. Yes, babies can practice yoga with you!

Baby yoga exercise provides sensory-motor stimulation which enhances brain development. Activities that cross the midline of the body, such as crawling, coordinate both hemispheres of the brain. Yoga with babies also supports neuromuscular development, body awareness, and self-confidence. Yoga provides special one-on-one cuddle time, and studies have shown that the more cuddle time you share with babies before rest, the more likely they are to sleep. Breathing together is a wonderful way to ease the transition into sleep or to calm crying babies.

At New Horizon Academy, our teachers incorporate baby yoga activities from our curriculum into their daily lesson plans. We thought you would enjoy practicing some of these activities, too.





Yoga Moves for Babies 3-6 Months Old





Hello, Baby



- Sit on a soft mat or blanket with your legs open. Place your baby on his back between your legs. Be sure your baby can see your warm smile and say, “Hello, (baby’s name). It’s yoga time.”
- Gently hold baby’s legs (around the knees) and rock them in and out towards his chest without putting any pressure on the joints. This will relax baby’s hips and help calm and center him.
- Say this little rhyme as you slowly and gently rock your baby’s legs.

Hello, baby.
It’s yoga time.
Hello, baby.
You look so fine.

- You can also gently rock baby’s feet, arms, or hands.



Rhythm Feet



- Play upbeat music. As you hold your baby in your arms, match your footsteps to the rhythm of the music.
- Stomp your feet to the beat or march in time with the tune.
- Take your baby for a rhythmic walk around the room, choosing the step that feels comfortable for your baby and you. Draw your baby's attention to the rhythm by saying, "Can you feel the beat? It makes my feet move like this..."
- Your baby will begin to associate the beat of your walk with the sound of the music. This is the beginning stage of learning rhythm patterns.



Balance Point



While at this stage, your baby is learning to just “be” on his tummy; he is also learning about balance. Balance games create awareness of his own balance point and prepares him for all future movements.

- Play fun music to create a backdrop for this game.
- Invite your baby to play by saying, “Do you hear the music? Let’s roll!”
- Place your baby on her tummy over a rolled towel or bolster pillow. Be sure to find the balance point on her torso.
- Start by lightly rolling back and forth to the beat of the music.
- Roll your baby forward (so that his hands touch the ground) and stop. Say, “You touched the floor with your hands. Let’s go the other way.”
- Roll backwards so that his feet touch and rest. Say, “You touched with your feet.” Rolling and stopping helps your baby feel his balance point.



Animals Move Like This!



At 3-6 months, your baby loves to feel you gently moving his body. In this animal movement game, you will guide your baby in simple arm and leg bends and stretches.

- Play the song “Kookaburra” to set the mood for a stretching yoga game.
- Place your baby on his back on a mat or blanket, and make eye contact with him as you say, “Let’s move like a dog.”
- Gently hold you baby’s lower arm as you “walk the dog” by moving his arms back and forth in an alternating movement to the beat of music. “You are walking like a doggie. Walk, walk, walk.”
- After a while, hold you baby’s lower legs and move them in a walking movement. Remember to smile and encourage. Never force a movement.



Flying Swan



In the later part of the 3-6 month range, your baby may be comfortable enough on her tummy that she naturally pulls her arms and legs off the ground in a swan-like flying position. This is much like the locust pose.

- Play the classical lullaby “The Swan”. The beautiful music will create a backdrop to this yoga game.
- Place your baby on her tummy on a soft and stable mat. Notice if your baby naturally arches her back to raise her arms and/or legs off the floor. Say, “You are flying, just like the swan!”
- If your baby does not naturally start to “fly” get down on your tummy in front of your baby and demonstrate. Raise your slightly outstretched arms and legs. Say “I am flying like a swan. Can you do it, too?”
- Don’t expect your baby to lift both arms and legs at first. Celebrate all attempts by saying, “You are flying!”
- End the session with a hug.



Yoga Moves for Babies 6-9 Months Old





Breathe With Me



Breathing is an important part of yoga. Say “ujjayi (oo-JAH-ee) breathe.” This calms and centers both the listener and the doer. This simple yoga exercise is excellent for soothing a crying baby and yourself.

- Hold your baby close to your body. Slowly and audibly breathe deeply in and out through your nose, keeping your mouth closed.
- Inhale and exhale in slow rhythmic pattern making each breath easy for baby to hear and feel.
- Walk or rock slowly in the rhythm of your breath to a place where your baby can rest. Shh!



Seeing Eye-to-Eye



Yoga is a wonderful way to make eye contact with baby. The comfort of being held and touched encourages baby to look at you—a winning combination for all kinds of skill development.

- Sit comfortably on the floor with your legs stretched out and lay a soft blanket over your legs. Place baby on her back in your lap so that she is facing you.
- Make physical contact by placing your hand on your baby's tummy as you say, "Look at me! I'm smiling at you!"
- As you gently massage your baby's arms and legs, try to maintain eye contact by making interesting faces and sounds. Notice if your baby begins to imitate what you do.



Be a Butterfly



- Play some gentle movement music, such as “Minuet in G”, as you share this yoga pose with your baby. The goal of the pose is gently open your baby’s hips.
- Sit on the floor with your legs open.
- Place your baby comfortably on her back between your legs on a soft blanket or mat.
- Gently hold your baby’s feet and slowly put the soles of her feet together. Then gently press your baby’s joined feet toward her tummy as you say, “Butterfly, butterfly...fly, fly, fly.”
- Allow baby’s legs to come down gently. Repeat this pose several times.



Lamb Rides



By 8-9 months, your baby is able to hold herself up and balance on your ankle. Let's take a Lamb ride!

- Play the song "Mary Had a Little Lamb".
- Sit in a chair and hold your baby on your lap as you bounce and sing along with the nursery rhyme.
- Invite your baby to play a yoga movement game by saying, "Let's take a lamb ride on my leg. Climb on; let's go!"
- To create the lamb, cross your ankles and sit your baby (facing you) on the place where your ankles intersect. Support your baby around the torso or gently hold her wrists or hands.
- Replay "Mary Had a Little Lamb" as you gently bounce your baby to the beat. Try other nursery rhymes. Stop when your baby appears to tire of the game.



Happy Baby Bird



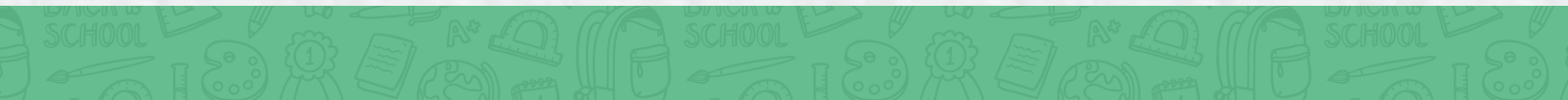
At this stage of development, your baby is very interested in his feet. He naturally likes to grab them when lying on his back. This is the happy baby pose! While adults need to work at creating the happy baby pose, it is natural for your baby. In this yoga game, your baby can use the pose to be a baby bird.

- Get down on your back with your baby and demonstrate the pose by reaching for your feet and rolling them up to meet your hands. You will create a rounded spine that helps you rock. Say, “Can you do it, too?”
- After demonstrating, assist your baby in grabbing his toes and notice if he starts to rock in position. He may also flop from one side to another.
- Add a song to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.”

The happy baby bird is rolling all around.
Safe and happy in his nest. He never touches the ground.



Yoga Moves for Babies 9-12 Months Old





Side-to-Side



- Hang a mobile or small toy above and to the side of the changing table or crib.
- Place your baby on his back and invite him to make eye contact with you as you say, "Let's stretch. It's yoga time!"
- Gently bring your baby's left leg over his right leg. Notice if your baby continues to look at you or if his eyes follow the movement of his body.
- Bring his leg back to center and draw your baby's attention to the hanging mobile. Notice if he rolls his body towards the mobile or just turns.
- Invite him to stretch again, this time with his right leg over his left. Watch to see if he stays focused on the mobile when you stretch.



Tense and Release



- Play relaxing music to set the mood for relaxation, then sit on the floor with your legs stretched out in front of you.
- Place your baby on her back on your lap. Making eye contact, invite your baby to do some yoga by saying, "Time to relax those feet."
- Pick up your baby's feet and gently raise her legs a short ways upwards. Hold for a second of time, then gently let her legs drop down naturally.
- Repeat raising her legs and letting them gently drop as a means for relaxing your baby. As you do this say, "Up, up, up. Down, down, down."
- After your baby seems relaxed, enjoy some cuddle time together before laying her down to rest.



Sideways



A big development in this stage is your baby's increased ability to lean to one side or the other in a sitting position without falling over. In the early months of life, your baby's movements are mostly focused forward. But now your baby's balance and ability to twist and turn is becoming strong enough that he can enjoy moving sideways.

- You can use a favorite stuffed toy (such as a duck puppet) to inspire your baby to move and reach to his side.
- Play Chopin's "Nocturne".
- Sit on the floor with your baby. Place a toy to his side. Invite your baby to play by saying, "Can you get Duckie? He is right next to you."
- Once your baby has success grasping the puppet, invite him to hold it. Repeat, placing Duckie farther away so that he has to reach to grasp.
- Repeat the game moving the puppet away more and more, but not too far that he will topple. Try the other side. Is it much easier for him to turn?



Flop Around the Clock



Pulling up to stand and cruising are important milestones in the 9-12 month stage. Of course, there is a lot of “flopping” at this stage, too. Why not make it a game?

- Play the song “Hickory Dickory Dock”. The musical rhyme’s up and down movement is perfect for this game.
- With your baby sitting on the floor in front of you, put out your hands to invite her to pull herself up to a standing position. Support her standing and praise her as you say. “Hickory, Dickory, Dock. The mouse ran up the clock. Look at you, you are standing up.” Then gently let her flop back down to a sitting position as you say. Hickory Dickory Dock. The mouse ran down the clock.
- Enjoy the fun of standing and flopping to the sound of the music.



Cat and Dog



Your baby naturally does the traditional yoga dog position, standing on all fours as she lifts her head to look around. Introduce the similar yoga cat position in which she looks down.

- Play calming music.
- Crawl around with your baby while the music plays.
- Demonstrate the dog and cat position by standing on all fours and alternating between looking up (dog) and down (cat).
- Narrate what you are doing by saying, "Oh, I see a butterfly." (Pause and look up in the dog position.) Then change and say, "I see a little mouse." (Look down and round your spine in a cat position.)
- Invite your baby to shift from one position to the other by holding a small toy above your baby's head, then bring it down between her arms.
- Add this rhyme to accompany the movements.

Look up, (baby's name). There's a butterfly above your nose.
Look down, (baby's name). There's a mouse between your toes.