



Action Schools! BC



Instructional Example

# Muscles and Mind

## Subject: Physical and Health Education (PHE) Grade: 4

### OVERVIEW

Schools are vital places to raise students' awareness about how to build healthy muscles and a healthy self through physical activities (PAs). This instructional example is designed to engage students to learn about yoga as a means to increase knowledge about movements, with the overall goal of building healthy muscles and a healthy self, which helps enhance their mental well-being.

### BIG IDEAS

- Knowing what we enjoy doing and knowing about our opportunities to participate in those activities helps us develop an active lifestyle (e.g., adopting yoga as a fun means to increase students' knowledge about non-locomotor skills such as balancing and bending, build healthy muscles, and a healthy self).
- Understanding ourselves and the various aspects of health helps us develop a balanced lifestyle (e.g., teaching students about yoga, which is a form of mind-body exercise that incorporates various forms of movement to enhance awareness of the self, the breath, and energy).

### CORE COMPETENCIES

#### Communication (C)

- Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments.
  - Students tell about their experiences—especially their learning experiences—and reflect, and share what they learned (e.g., helping students to be cognitively and experientially aware of the mind and body connection through yoga).

#### Thinking (CT)

- Novelty and value.
  - Students get creative ideas that are both novel and have value. There are degrees of novelty—an idea may be new to that student or it may be new to their peers; it may be novel for their age group,

or it may be novel to a larger community (e.g., teaching students to understand how yoga can help build healthy muscles and a healthy self).

## Personal and Social (PS)

- Personal strengths and abilities.
  - Students acknowledge their strengths and abilities, and explicitly consider these as assets that can help them in all aspects of their lives (e.g., teaching students to perform yoga poses during class, learn about movements, and share their learning with parents).

## LEARNING STANDARDS

### PHE Curricular Competencies (What Students Will Do)

#### *Physical Literacy*

- Develop and apply a variety of fundamental movement skills (e.g., learning about non-locomotor skills such as balancing and bending) in a variety of physical activities (e.g., yoga) and environments.

#### *Mental Well-Being*

- Describe factors that positively influence mental well-being and self-identity (e.g., explaining the benefits of practicing yoga such as building healthy muscles and having positive effects on mental well-being).

### PHE Content (What Students Will Know)

- How to participate in different types of physical activities (e.g., yoga), including individual and dual activities, rhythmic activities, and games.
- Movement concepts and strategies (e.g., introducing yoga to students as a creative means to increase their body awareness (such as the mind-body connection), spatial awareness (such as general spacing directions through body movements) and effort awareness (such as self-reflection during and after the yoga activity)).

## COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH PILLARS

### Relationships and Environments:

- Schools make efforts to engage students socially, academically and intellectually (e.g., students adopt and practice yoga after periods of concentration such as learning in class).

### Teaching and Learning:

- Interactive approaches are used to provide time for student-to-student interactions and student-to-teacher interactions about learning (e.g., teaching students about the benefits of yoga and actively participate in a teacher-led yoga activity).

## Community Partnerships:

- Schools develop coordinated approaches that address the needs of students (e.g., teachers create yoga lessons/poses for students that are fun, interactive and engaging and asked students to share their favourite yoga poses with parents so that they can practice the pose together – parent-child involvement).

## School Policies:

- Adopt healthy self as a school-wide practice that engages students in building healthy muscles through yoga.

## CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS

### Language Arts

- Comprehend and connect (reading, listening, viewing).
- Exchange ideas and perspectives to build shared understanding (e.g., increasing students' knowledge about muscles and movements through yoga, and exchanging ideas about how yoga can help students to be reflective about their being).

### Arts Education

- Reasoning and reflecting.
- Reflect on creative processes and make connections to other experiences (e.g., teaching students about body, space, and movement with the goal of showing how yoga can help students improve muscles and create a healthy self).

## FIRST PEOPLES PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place) (e.g., teaching students about how yoga can be a form of self-discipline, which allows them to explore movements in relation to space in their environment, and take full responsibility for where they are in the moment and how that affects their thinking, feelings, and behaviours in the environment).
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity (e.g., teaching students about the value of family, which is an important social structure in First Peoples cultures. Gathering information from personal experiences such as learning yoga posts in class and share that knowledge as oral sources with their parents).

## TIMEFRAME

- 50 minutes

## MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

- An open classroom space or a gym
- A board and markers
- Feathers
- A CD/DVD player, iPod with speaker, etc.
- A piece of calm relaxing music (of teachers' choice)
- Yoga mats
- Yoga mat cleaners and sanitizers (optional)

## TEACHER TIPS

- Review KidsHealth (2016) for yoga pose ideas (<http://kidshealth.org/en/teens/yoga.html?ref=search>), or any of the yoga resources available online, or consult with Action Schools! BC trainers for further resources.
- Inform students about dress codes and rules the day before the lesson.
- Wear appropriate clothing and shorts in accordance with the school dress code.
- No wearing jewelry and metal items to the yoga lesson (such items must be removed and stored in lockers or desks before class).
- Consider reviewing additional physical activity and mental well-being benefits highlighted in a featured article, entitled Take a Stand for Yoga Today, written by Khoshab (2013), instructional resources (e.g., Action Schools! BC – [www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources](http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources)) and research findings (e.g., Galantino, Galbavy, & Quinn, 2008).

## STRATEGY

- Begin with the posing the inquiry question- "What movements can strengthen our muscles and calm our minds?" Allow think time for students to generate thoughts around this question. Invite student volunteers to share their answers.
- Focus on the message that there are many ways to be physically active but that yoga is one that addresses both muscles and the mind. Yoga is a self-reflective process that leads to increased awareness of mind-body. Yoga also helps improve cognitive functions such as concentration. Yoga helps energize, activate our body, and develop healthy muscles and a healthy self.
  - **Body:** Yoga is a system of body movements.
    - ✓ Yoga poses invoke a range of motions and movements, which contribute to muscle flexibility.
    - ✓ Stretching and poses improve breathing and relaxation.
    - ✓ Yoga poses develop muscle strength, which supports life-long active living.

- **Mind:** Yoga is also a means to practice being reflective in the moment, which requires us to take full responsibility for being aware of where we are at in the moment and how it affects our thinking, feelings, and behaviours.
- Walk students through the benefits of yoga in relation to the mind-body connection and mental well-being.
  - Distribute sticky notes and ask students to write as many benefits individually as possible.
  - Ask students to post sticky notes on the board and extend their ideas about other benefits.

Other benefits for the body can include:	Other benefits for the mind and mental well-being can include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Improve our body → strengthen our muscles.</li> <li>✓ Improve our body → develop healthy bones → reduce bone fragility or risk of broken bones.</li> <li>✓ Build up body strength.</li> <li>✓ Develop a healthy heart → improve blood circulation.</li> <li>✓ Increase burning calories and decrease body fat.</li> <li>✓ Increase body awareness, balance and coordination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Calm and clear our mind → increase awareness about ourselves.</li> <li>✓ Bring us into the present → aware of what we are thinking/feeling in the moment.</li> <li>✓ Improve concentration, focus and attention span.</li> <li>✓ Improve thinking and memory.</li> <li>✓ Enhance imagination and creativity.</li> <li>✓ Reduce stress and anxiety.</li> </ul>

- Introduce the "Feathery Fun" activity (adapted from Little Lotus Yoga, 2014).
  - By using a feather students will be able to evoke their senses and learn the power of breathing.
    - ✓ Start by having students wake up all parts of their body.
      - Use feather to tickle their cheek, head, ears, shoulder, and make their way down towards their feet.
    - ✓ Practice breathing and blowing.
      - Place feather in front of their mouth and gently blow on it.
      - Now place one hand on their belly and see if they can feel their belly moving as they blow on to their feather.
      - Next close their mouth and blow through their nose to see if they can make it move.
  - Have a brief group discussion about the "Feathery Fun" activity (e.g., "what did you learn/observe as you worked on your senses and breathing?").
- Using the Action Schools! BC - *Yoga Activity Gr 4-7* (available from: <http://www.actionschoolsbc.ca/resources>) have students build on their understanding of the benefits of practicing yoga.
  - Use calm relaxing music and set the volume low. Reduce brightness of the classroom lights (optional).
  - Introduce poses one or two at a time; gradually create a sequence of poses.
  - Remind students frequently to breathe. Learning to use breath to consciously relax (e.g., in through nose, out through mouth).
  - Ask students to attentively "listen" to their bodies, understanding the healthy sensation of stretching and breathing.

- Ask students which yoga pose(s) they liked and why, and what they noticed about their body while practicing yoga poses. Ideas can include: Yoga has a calming effect in our body; yoga helps improve muscular strength, flexibility, and balance and coordination, etc.
- There are many ways to be physically active and yoga is one of them. There are positive benefits about yoga. For example, yoga is a self-reflective process that leads to increased awareness of mind-body. Yoga also helps improve cognitive functions such as concentration. Students are asked to share their favourite yoga pose with parents, and invite their parents to practice the pose with them. Yoga helps energize, activate our body, and develop healthy muscles and a healthy self.

## ASSESSMENT

- Student's Verbal Reflection
  - Identify their favourite yoga pose and explain their reasoning.
  - Share their observation about what they noticed about the mind-body connection during the yoga activity.
- Active Participation
  - Demonstrate a willingness to participate during the lesson and the yoga activity with open-minded, curiosity, and enthusiasm.

## ADAPTIONS/MODIFICATIONS

- Invite yoga masters/instructors to teach staff-students about yoga during a school assembly or during the Mental Health week in May (school and community engagement).

## SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure there is adequate space for all participants.

## RESOURCES/REFERENCES

- Galantino, M. L., Galbavy, R., & Quinn, L. (2008). Therapeutic effects of yoga for children: A systematic review of the literature. *Pediatric Physical Therapy*, 20(1), 66-80. Retrieved from [http://journals.lww.com/pedpt/Abstract/2008/01910/Therapeutic\\_Effects\\_of\\_Yoga\\_for\\_Children\\_A.10.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/pedpt/Abstract/2008/01910/Therapeutic_Effects_of_Yoga_for_Children_A.10.aspx)
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