

Mindfulness Lesson Plan



What is Mindfulness?

MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

Not all exercises are suitable for everyone and it is recommended that you consult your doctor before beginning this or any exercise program. To reduce the risk of injury, never force or strain or attempt these exercises without the assistance of a trained yoga instructor. If you experience pain or discomfort during this exercise, stop immediately and consult your doctor. The instruction presented is in no way intended as a substitute for medical advice.

LESSON 1: Mindfulness vs. Mindlessness

Grades: Pre-K - 12

Equipment: Classroom Chairs

Theme	Mindfulness vs. Mindlessness
Concept	What is Mindfulness?
Time In (Breathing)	<p>Humming Breath / Ocean Breath</p> <p>Ask students to focus their attention on their breathing, the sensation of the inhale and exhale. If their mind wanders, it's ok. Just notice it is happening and gently bring their attention back to the breath.</p>
Discussion	<p>What is Mindfulness? What is Mindlessness?</p> <p>Mindfulness is when we are self-aware and in the present moment. Mindlessness is when we are focused on past events or future events and miss what is happening here right now.</p>
Yoga Postures	<p>Mountain, Blown Palm, Star, Triangle, Warrior I, Crescent Lunge, Pyramid, Tree, Seated Twist, Rainbow Spine, Forward Fold</p> <p>Ask students to focus their attention on the sensation or the breathing within the postures. If the mind wanders, let students know that it's ok. Just notice it is happening and gently bring their attention back to the postures.</p>
Game	<p>Stop the Rock</p> <p>Ask students to focus their attention on the way their sense of balance shifts throughout the game.</p>
Relaxation	Inner Mountain with Seated at Desk or Legs Up the Chair

HUMMING BREATH

Benefit:

- Focuses the mind
- Increases relaxation

Instructions:

1. Begin seated in your chair. Make sure both feet are touching the floor and you are sitting up tall in your body.
2. Inhale through your nose.
3. Exhale, making the sound “hmmm” like the sound of a bee.



OCEAN BREATH

Benefit:

- Calms the mind
- Releases tension in the neck and lower face

Instructions:

1. Begin seated in your chair. Make sure both feet are touching the floor and you are sitting up tall in your body.
1. Inhale through your nose.
2. Exhale, open your mouth “hahhh,” making the sound of an ocean wave.



MOUNTAIN



Physical Benefit:

- Aligns the spine
- Improves posture
- Strengthens the ankles, knees, quadriceps, buttocks, abdominals, and neck
- Reduces flat feet

Mental Benefit:

- Builds focus
- Increases alertness

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin standing in front of or behind your chair.
2. Inhale, allow your shoes to touch.
3. Exhale, extend your arms down, palms facing the sides of your legs.
4. Breathe.

Cues:

Allow your shoulders to melt away from your ears. #1

Bring your shoulder blades to touch at your back. #2

Creative Language:

Your feet and legs like the base of a mountain. The top of your head rises to the sky like the peak of the mountain. #4.1

You are strong and grounded in Mountain Pose. #4.2

Be still and strong in your Mountain Pose. #4.3

Modifications:

Notice	Reason	Modification
Collapsing or slouching in spine	Lack of awareness	See cue #1
Off balance	Difficulty finding balance or equilibrium	Feet hips distance apart

BLOWN PALM



BLOWN PALM 1



BLOWN PALM 2

Physical Benefit:

- Lengthens the spine
- Strengthens the ankles, knees, and quadriceps
- Stretches the sides of the torso and shoulders
- Tones the abdominals and buttocks

Mental Benefit:

- Builds focus

Gaze Point:

Up towards palm

Instructions:

1. Begin in Mountain Pose standing in front of or behind your chair.
2. Inhale, reach your arms up and overhead.
3. Exhale, bring your right hand over to your left wrist.
4. Inhale, find length.
5. Exhale, lean over to the right.
6. Inhale, come back up.
7. Exhale, bring your left hand over to your right wrist.
8. Inhale, find length.
9. Exhale, lean over to the left.
10. Inhale, come back to center with arms up and overhead.
11. Exhale to Mountain Pose.

Cues:

Keep space between your ears and your arms by utilizing the strength of your neck. #5/#9

Creative Language:

Imagine your body is strong like the base of the palm tree. #1

Imagine your arms are blowing in the wind like palm fronds. #5/#9

Modifications:

Notice	Reason	Modification
Off balance	Difficulty finding balance	Feet hips distance apart
Shoulders lifting up	Tight shoulders	Arms slightly bent
Head falling to either side	Weak neck or lack of awareness	See cue #5/#9

STAR



Physical Benefit:

- Aligns the spine
- Strengthens the ankles, knees, quadriceps, abdominals, back, and neck
- Stretches the arms

Mental Benefit:

- Builds focus

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin standing in front of or behind your chair in Mountain Pose with your feet hips distance apart.
2. Inhale, bring your hands to your hips.
3. Exhale, step your right and left feet an entire leg's distance apart.
4. Inhale, extend your arms out to the side.
5. Breathe.
6. When you are ready step back into Mountain Pose.

Cues:

- Make sure you can draw a straight line from your left foot across to your right foot. #4.1
 - Make sure your toes point forward. #4.2
 - Stand tall in your body #5.1
 - Allow your head to reach long. You now have 5 points to your star. #5.2
- Creative Language:**
- Count out the five points of your star. #5

Modifications:

Notice	Reason	Modification
Legs too far apart	Lack of awareness	Step feet in closer together

TRIANGLE



Physical Benefit:

- Lengthens the spine
- Strengthens the ankles, knees, quadriceps, abdominals, and neck
- Stretches the calves, hamstrings, groin, hip flexors, chest, spine, and shoulders

Mental Benefit:

- Builds focus
- Develops willpower
- Stimulates the mind

Gaze Point:

Thumb

Instructions:

1. Begin standing in front of or behind your chair in Star Pose.
2. Inhale, bring your hands to hips.
3. Exhale, turn your right foot out and keep your left foot as is.
4. Inhale, reach your arms to a “T”.
5. Exhale, bring your right hand to your shin and your left arm up to the air.
6. Breathe.
7. When you are ready, inhale and return to Star Pose.
8. Repeat on the other side.

Cues:

Make sure your right foot is aligned with the arch of your left foot. #3

Keep your ear lifted away from your arm by utilizing the strength of your neck. #5

Creative Language:

Face your palm away from you like you are going to give a high five. #5

Grade:

Pre-K to 12

Modifications:

Notice	Reason	Modification
Straining in the front leg	Hyperflexibility in the knee or tightness in the front leg	Bend the front knee
Bent back leg	Tight hip flexors	Bend the front knee
Head falling to either side	Weak neck	See cue #5

WARRIOR I



VARIATION 1



VARIATION 2

Physical Benefit:

- Increases endurance
- Strengthens the ankles, knees, quadriceps, hamstrings, abdominals, back, and arms
- Stretches the calves, quadriceps, hamstrings, hip flexors, chest, and shoulders

Mental Benefit:

- Builds focus
- Develops willpower

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin standing behind your chair in Mountain Pose with your feet hips distance apart.
2. Inhale, bring your hands to your hips.
3. Exhale, step your left foot back an entire leg's distance keeping your right foot facing forward.
4. Inhale, bend into your front right knee, with your back leg straight.
5. Exhale, bring your arms to the chair (Variation 1) or reach your arms up to the sky (Variation 2).
6. Breathe.
7. When you are ready, bring your hands back to your hips and step your left foot forward to Mountain Pose.
8. Repeat on the other side.

Cues:

Turn your left toes to face at a 45-degree angle. #3

Make sure that the bent knee faces directly forward over the ankle. #4

Your hands are shoulder-width apart. Your pinky fingers turn in slightly towards one another and your shoulders melt away from your ears. #5

Be firm and strong as you stand here in your Warrior I Pose. #6

Creative Language:

Imagine you have headlights on the front of your hips and you want to shine them on the front of your mat. #4

Modifications:

Notice	Reason	Modification
Off balance	Difficulty finding balance	Keep hands on the chair
Bending in the back leg	Tight hip flexors	Lessen bend in the front knee
Front knee turning in or out	Lack of awareness or weak inner thighs	See cue #4
Shoulders lifting up towards ears	Tight shoulders	See cue #5

CRESCENT LUNGE



VARIATION 1



VARIATION 2

Physical Benefit:

- Strengthens the ankles, knees, quadriceps, hamstrings, abdominals, back, and arms
- Stretches the calves, quadriceps, hamstrings, hip flexors, chest, and shoulders

Mental Benefit:

- Builds focus

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin in Mountain Pose behind your chair.
2. Inhale, bring your hands to your hips.
3. Exhale, lift your left heel off of the ground so you are on the ball of your left foot.
4. Inhale, find length in your spine.
5. Exhale, gently bend your right knee and step your left foot back.
6. Inhale, place your hands on the back of your chair find length and balance (Variation 1) or reach your hands up to the sky (Variation 2).
7. Breathe.
8. Inhale, step your left foot back to Mountain Pose.
9. Repeat on your left side.

Cues:

Check to make sure your right knee is directly over your right ankle. #3

Creative Language:

Imagine you are wearing a high heel on your back foot. #4.1

Imagine you are pushing a button behind you with your back heel. #4.2

Modifications:

Notice	Reason	Modification
Off balance	Difficulty finding balance	Hands to chair
Back foot heel on floor	Tight hip flexors or lack of awareness	See creative language #4.1
Bending in back knee	Difficulty finding balance, tight hip flexors, or lack of awareness	See creative language #4.2

PYRAMID



VARIATION 1



VARIATION 2

Physical Benefit:

- Lengthens the spine
- Strengthens calves, quadriceps, hamstrings, and back
- Stretches the sides of the torso and shoulders
- Tones the abdominals and buttocks

Mental Benefit:

- Builds focus

Gaze Point:

Shin

Instructions:

1. Begin in Mountain Pose behind your chair.
2. Inhale, find length in your spine.
3. Exhale, step your left foot back turning the left foot to a 45 degree angle.
4. Inhale, reach your arms up and overhead.
5. Exhale, bring your hands to the back of your chair (Variation 1) or to the ground (Variation 2).
6. Inhale, find length.
7. Exhale, lean over toward the right leg.
8. Breathe.
9. Inhale, come back up.
10. Exhale, bring your left foot back to stand in Mountain Pose.
11. Repeat on the other side.

Cues:

Step about half of a leg's distance apart. #3.1

Make sure that your hips are squared forward. #3.2

Press equally into the front and back foot, squaring your hips forward. #8.1

If you want a bigger stretch, reach your hands towards your front-facing foot. #8.2

Creative Language:

Imagine your body is like a pyramid. #8

Modifications:

Notice	Reason	Modification
Falling over	Difficulty finding balance	Shorten the distance of the feet
Overextension in front knee	Tight hamstrings	Micro bend in the front knee

TREE



Physical Benefit:

- Lengthens the spine
- Strengthens the ankles, calves, knees, hamstrings, abdominals, back, and neck
- Stretches the quadriceps, hip flexors, chest, and shoulders

Mental Benefit:

- Builds concentration and focus

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin in Mountain Pose in front of or behind your chair.
2. Inhale, bring your hands onto your hips.
3. Exhale, step your right foot to the inside of your left leg.
4. Inhale, stand tall in your tree body.
5. Exhale, extend your arms up towards the ceiling.
6. Breathe.
7. When you are ready, bring your hands back down to your hips and return to Mountain Pose.
8. Repeat on the other side.

Cues:

Your right shoe is like a kickstand. Your left foot keeps you rooted to the ground. #3

Spread your hands wide allowing your fingers to turn in slightly and your shoulders to melt away from your ears. #5

Breathe smooth and steady to keep yourself balanced and focused. #6

Creative Language:

Your toes are the roots of your tree. They help you to stand strong and balanced. #3

Stretch your arms up like the growing branches on a tree. #5

SEATED TWIST



SEATED TWIST 1



SEATED TWIST 2

Physical Benefit:

- Strengthens the back
- Stretches the groins, chest, spine, and shoulders

Mental Benefit:

- Calms the mind

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin seated in your chair with your feet on the floor sitting up tall in your spine.
2. Inhale, reach your arms up.
3. Exhale, reach your right hand to the outside of your left knee.
4. Inhale, sit tall.
5. Exhale, bring your left hand behind you. Twist to look over your shoulder.
6. Breathe.
7. When you are ready, untwist and come back to seated.
8. Repeat on the other side.

Cues:

Gaze over your back shoulder. #5

Creative Language:

Like you are going to give a double high five. #2

Like you are doing a back stroke, bring your left hand behind you. #5

RAINBOW SPINE



RAINBOW SPINE 1



RAINBOW SPINE 2

Physical Benefit:

- Warms up the spine

Mental Benefit:

- Integrates the mind, body and breath

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin seated in your chair with your feet on the floor sitting up tall in your spine.
2. Place your hands on your knees. Inhale and rock forward, pressing against your knees with your hands and arching your back like a rainbow.
3. Exhale and rock backward, pressing your hands into your knees and rounding your back.

Cues:

Draw your shoulder blades together to touch at the center of your back. #2

Round your spine as you press it towards the wall behind you. #3

Creative Language:

Imagine your spine is the arc shape of a rainbow. #2

SEATED FORWARD FOLD



Physical Benefit:

- Strengthens the abdominals
- Stretches the hips, calves, hamstrings, and spine

Mental Benefit:

- Calms the mind

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin in seated in your chair with your feet on the floor sitting up tall in your spine.
2. Inhale, reach your arms up to the sky.
3. Exhale, hinge from your hips and extend your arms forward, placing your hands on the outsides of your legs.
4. Breathe.
5. When you are ready, inhale and come back up to seated.

Cues:

Tuck your chin to your chest as you come up to seated. #5

STOP THE ROCK

(Individual)

Directions:

Students stand in Star Pose behind or in front of their chairs. When the teacher starts the music, students rock back and forth, shifting weight from one foot to the other. When the teacher stops the music, students stop rocking and hold whatever position they are in, even if a foot is off the floor. If a student topples over, he or she quietly reassumes a standing position and waits for the music to start again.

Teaching Note:

When first teaching this game, try to use a fun, three-count rhythm.

Some schools may have a “no-touch” policy, so it’s important that you check in with your school before playing this game.

Skills:

- Balance
- Centering
- Coordination
- Focus
- Physical awareness
- Spatial awareness

INNER MOUNTAIN



Have students come to lying in Legs up the Chair or Forward Fold at the Desk.

“Close your eyes, breathe, and rest. As if you’re falling asleep, let go of all thoughts. Just feel your breath. I’ll wait for everyone to settle, sigh and melt, release any wiggles, movement and tension. When you’re silent and still, I’ll know you are ready to listen. With every breath, you become more and more relaxed... great.

“Imagine that you see a mountain. Notice everything you can about this mountain: its shape and height, its colors and qualities. Notice how calm, strong, steady, wise it is.

“Now imagine yourself as the mountain. Let yourself become strong, steady, solid and still. Whatever happens, bad weather or good, friendly hikers or not, you, the mountain, stay the same. Your foundation is rooted deep into the earth and you are unshakable. Trust in your foundation and the strength that comes from being able to be with whatever comes, knowing that it will pass. Breathe and be. Breathe and be. Let everything come and go. You notice the world change, but you do not change with it. Thoughts and feelings come and go, but you, the mountain, remain... seeing, knowing, and being who you are: whole, perfect and magnificent.

“Now it’s time to come back to the room. Gently begin to wiggle your fingers and your toes. Take any final stretches that feel good to you on your back or your side. When you are ready, come back to a comfortable seated position at the top of your mat.”

LEGS UP THE CHAIR



Physical Benefit:

- Reduces fatigue in the legs and feet
- Relieves minor backaches and headaches
- Gently stretches the calves and hamstrings

Mental Benefit:

- Calms the mind

Gaze Point:

Up or eyes closed

Instructions:

1. Begin lying down on your back, facing toward your chair.
2. Inhale, lift your legs up to the air.
3. Exhale, bend at the knees and place your legs on the chair.
4. Inhale, flex your toes towards your shins.
5. Exhale, bring your hands to rest on your belly.
6. Breathe.
7. When you are ready, bring your legs off of the chair and bend your knees as you turn to one side.
8. Calmly return to seated in your chair.

Cues:

Allow your eyes to close gently. #5.1

Become as silent and still as you can become. #5.2

Soften your gaze and look towards the ceiling. #5.3

SEATED FORWARD FOLD AT DESK

Physical Benefit:

- Stretches the back

Mental Benefit:

- Calms the mind

Gaze Point:

Down the nose

Instructions:

1. Begin in seated in your chair with your feet on the floor sitting up tall in your spine.
2. Inhale, reach your arms up to the sky.
3. Exhale, bend your elbows so your hands stack on top of opposite elbows.
4. Inhale, sit up tall.
5. Exhale, fold forward to your desk, allow your head to rest on top of your arms.
6. Breathe.
7. Inhale, come back up to seated.

Cues:

Allow your eyes to gently close. #6.1

Become as silent and still as you can become. #6.2

Soften your gaze and look towards the ceiling. #6.3

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