

Movement Techniques for Adolescents

Hands to Foot Pose

Direct Aim: To bring about a sense of wellbeing and quiet to the mind; to tone, strengthen and lengthen the muscles of the body; to establish union within mind, body, soul, Spirit and environment.

Indirect Aim: To achieve, maintain, and preserve health and prevent disease in both mind and body.

Procedure:

1. Stand in **Mountain** pose: feet are parallel to each other hip distance apart; active (engage) your quadriceps and ground (press) your feet into the mat connecting all sides of your feet into the mat; make sure your shoulders are over your hips and you are standing tall extending the crown of your head to the sky. Hands may be at your heart or by the sides of the torso.
2. Exhale, sweep your arms out and downwards and bend forward from the hips into **Hands to Foot** pose.
3. Make certain you bend from your hips and if you can't put your hands on the mat next to your feet, bend at the knees as needed.
4. Notice that your belly touches your thighs and hands are flat on the floor next to the outside of your feet.
5. Take several breaths here – each time you exhale try and lengthen your torso further.
6. To come out, place your hands on your hips and make sure your hips are square, lengthen your tailbone down.
7. Slowly rise up keeping a long front torso.
8. When you get used to coming out of this pose correctly, try to sweep your arms out and upwards bringing your hands back to prayer position at your heart in **Mountain** pose.

Notes:

In Yoga **Forward Bends** are believed to have the following benefits: stretch the hips, hamstrings, and calves, and strengthen the thighs and knees and keep the spine strong and flexible. Reduces stress, anxiety, depression, and fatigue and calms the mind, while relieving tension in the spine neck and back. These bends also activate the abdominal muscles. Added benefits include stretching/massaging of the

kidneys and adrenal glands are also stimulated, so these poses are thought to have benefits for those experiencing adrenal fatigue and for those with high cortisol levels.

Extensions:

Seated Forward Bend – on a chair:

1. Sit with your legs bent at 90 degrees and your feet flat on the floor. Keep your feet hip distance apart.
2. Inhale and bring your arms out and upwards to above your head. Exhale and bend forward bringing your arms out to the sides and then touching your shins or feet.
3. Make certain that you are hinging at the hips and your back is straight.
4. Eye gaze can be to the floor or about 3-4 feet ahead of you.

Seated Forward Bend – on the floor:

1. Sit with your legs extended out in front of you with your toes flexed (pointed to the ceiling).
2. Inhale and bring your arms out and upwards to above your head.
3. Exhale and bend forward from your hips reaching your hands towards your calves, ankles, or toes – whichever position works best for you.
4. Continue to breathe deeply and on your exhales attempt to extend forward from your hips towards your toes, extending your crown towards the upturned toes.
5. Relax into the pose.
6. Take about 3-5 breaths in the pose.
7. To come out inhale and then exhale lifting back up to sit evenly on your sit bones.

Middle and High Schoolers:

Often students of this age are not flexible in their hamstrings. Make sure that if students have tight hamstrings they bend their knees whenever doing forward bends.

These poses are very useful poses to help calm and reduce stress levels as they stimulate the adrenal glands and assist in reducing cortisol levels.