

Virtue of the Week

Yoga postures and Virtues adapted from *Yoga for Little Bears* by Monica Batiste. Subscribe to our virtue of the week via our website www.monicaBatiste.com.au



Divergence

Yoga postures to grow divergent thinking:

Curiosity - inventing postures

Encourage children to create and name their own postures. Example, what would owl pose look like? What would monkey pose be? Explore any and all ideas for about 15 minutes, and then invite children to combine postures to build lateral thinking.

Lateral thinking - combining postures

Ask two children to name any posture. Put them together. For example, *cloud pose* with *rain pose* (they are fictitious) or warrior one with dancers pose, how can it be done? Children will have a lot of fun combining postures.

The goal here isn't to create a posture that works, but to invite the brain to lateralise and build pathways. Any posture, all postures, even the ones that don't work will all build pathways. If the children find this fun and laugh, that is a positive sign because it means the child's brain is relaxed and able to absorb new information and grow.



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Here is an example of two postures combined to form one. *Tree pose* combined with *Eagle pose*. I call it 'Eagle in a Tree'

Eagle in a Tree



Begin in *Mountain pose*, feel your balance and shift weight to one foot. Tuck other heel in front of ankle for option one, foot below knee for option two and above knee for option three for *Tree pose*.

Stay centred—tummy in, tail bone down, heart forward, shoulders back.

For *Eagle* arms, open arms and breathe in, as you breathe out right arm swoops under left and twines around right.

For a softer option keep palms and forearms together.

Hold *Eagle in a Tree* for up to thirty seconds. Breathe in to release and repeat on the other side.

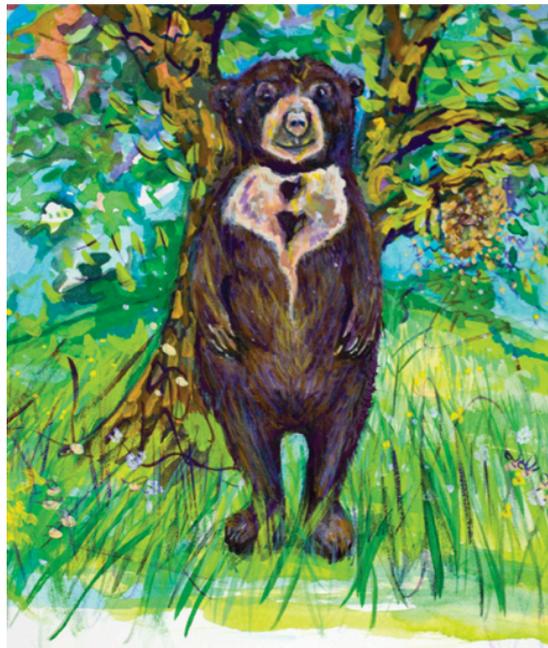
During the combination and creation of new and old yoga poses, children will demonstrate confidence, curiosity, joy, playfulness, enthusiasm and innovation. As you acknowledge these virtues, they will be planted and grow. The following three postures are an example of balancing, opening the heart, strengthening confidence and building emotional skills.

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Confidence

Mountain pose



Like a mountain standing strong

With my earth, I do belong

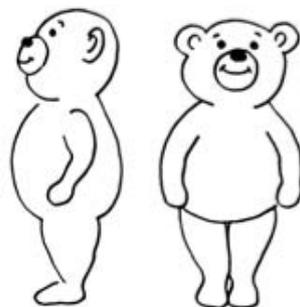
Benefits of Mountain Pose

Postural alignment, core support, kinaesthetic connection of mind and body.

Virtues Developed

Confidence, mindfulness, centredness, focus.

How to do Mountain Pose



Feet together or slightly apart, soft knees, tuck tail bone down, lift up pelvic floor, tummy in, lengthen spine, heart forward, press shoulders back and down, arms by side. Imagine there is a golden cord running through your spine, and feel it lifting your spine up. Lift the back of neck and notice chin tuck in slightly. Breathe into whole of lungs: from tummy, to the side of ribs, then into the chest.

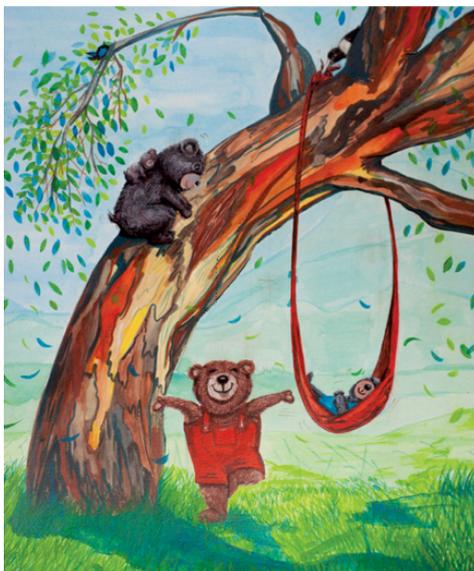
Stay in *Mountain Pose* for up to thirty seconds. *Mountain Pose* is the beginning of most standing postures.

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Creativity, balance, focus

Gum Tree Pose



Sway and balance look at me I'm a Eucalyptus tree

Benefits of Gum Tree Pose

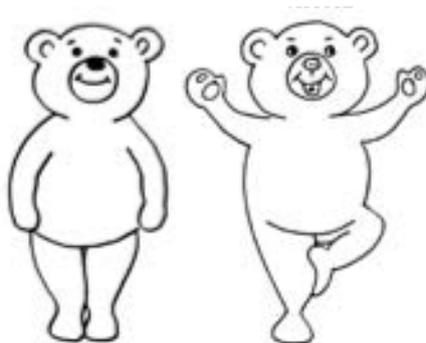
Gum Tree Pose helps children stay focused and calm. It improves co-ordination, core strength and balance. Practise *Gum Tree Pose* when children are scattered and need to re-focus. This is a challenging but fun exercise which will boost self-esteem.

Gum Tree Pose promotes body awareness, kinaesthetic intelligence and spatial awareness.

Virtues Developed

Focus, clarity, mindfulness, groundedness.

How to do Gum Tree Pose



Start in Mountain Pose. Lengthen spine, tuck in tailbone, and relax shoulders. Keep core strong and stay focused on one spot to help with balance. Breathe deeply. Stand on one leg and rest the other foot in front (option 1), or on the leg like a stork (option 2). Bring hands together in prayer position in front of heart or raise them above head or open them out.

‘Imagine you are a beautiful tree, grounded to the earth and as high as the sky. Open arms and pretend they are branches. Sway in the wind, side to side, around your trunk, knowing you are flexible, sturdy and strong. What kind of tree are you? Can you visualise green leaves and strong branches?’

After a minute or so, changes sides and be a Gum tree on the other leg.

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Courage, focus, grounded, strong

Fierce Teddy pose (Warrior two)



Strength and courage never part Peace and love are in my heart

Benefits of Fierce Teddy Pose (Warrior 2 Pose)

Core strength, thigh strength, postural alignment, lower back release, opening hips.

Virtues Developed

Confidence, assertiveness, strength.

How to do Fierce Teddy Pose (Warrior 2 Pose)

Take a large step to the side. Keep right foot facing ahead and left foot to the front. Breathe in and open arms, keep shoulders relaxed. Breathe out and bend right leg, straighten left leg and press whole foot onto earth. Encourage courage and peace in the heart as the child stands firmly in this pose. As they gaze down the front arm, remind them of how confident they are.

Warriors are peaceful, strong, smart and confident

If knees are uncomfortable, adjust feet. Press right knee out to open hip. Hold for a few breaths, then change sides.



About Monica

Monica writes stories, paints pictures, and teaches yoga. She is passionate about personal development and believes emotional intelligence is *the key* to helping you create a happy and successful life; whatever that means for you.

She lives in North Brisbane with her lovely husband, Andreas, and between them they have four beautiful daughters, and seven awesome grandchildren.