Animal Yoga

Instructions:

Use this guided yoga practice in your class to practise being in different animal yoga poses. These poses can be beneficial for mindfulness and help bring on a feeling of calm as well as reducing anxiety. You could discuss each pose with your class and show them the picture before you read the guided practice.

Yoga poses:

• Cat/cow breathing

• Eagle pose

• Swan pose

• Puppy pose

Read aloud:

Life can be busy, exciting and fun - which is great! We need to make sure we take time to pause and be still, to look after our bodies and minds amongst all the busy fun times. A great way to do this is by doing mindfulness and yoga - we are going to pretend to be some animals now and do some yoga poses.

Cat/Cow Pose

Let's start with some cat/cow breathing. Get yourself onto your hands and knees, and take a deep breath in as you drop your belly towards the floor and look up toward the sky. This is the cow pose. Now as you breathe out, tuck your chin towards your chest and arch your back up to the sky. Try and tuck your tummy in towards your back while you do this. This is the cat pose. We are going to do this a few times, focusing on how your breath feels moving through your body while you stretch.

While we do this, think about how graceful and smoothly cats move. They are able to slink about and use every muscle in their body. How does your body feel while you do these poses?

Cows are also wonderful creatures in their own way. They have best friends and look after each other. They are very caring creatures. Can you think of the people you care most about and how spending time with them makes you feel?
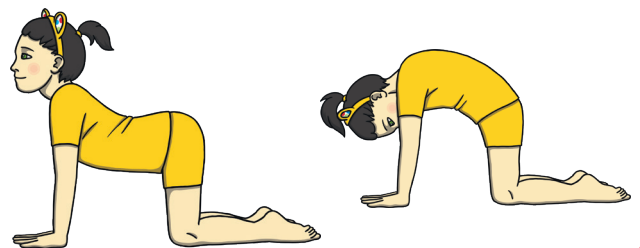
Eagle Pose

Think about mighty eagles, soaring freely through the air without a care in the world. We are going to twist ourselves into Eagle Pose now and feel our bodies and brains unwind when we untwist out of it.

Start by standing up nice and tall, like a mountain. Bend your left leg and cross your right leg over, like when people cross their legs in a chair. Cross your legs again, by tucking your right ankle behind your left calf. Reach your arms out in front of you, cross your left elbow over the right, and bend your elbows so your fingers reach up to the sky. Try to tuck your hands around each other so you're holding your own hand. Try to lift your head up towards the sky as you are all twisted up! Lift your hands up towards the sky so that your elbows are in line with your shoulders, and try to keep your shoulders down. Hold this for a few deep breaths, thinking about how your body is feeling all twisted up, and then on an out-breath, gently unwind yourself, letting your body and brain relax like an eagle flying free.
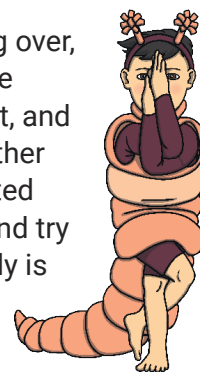
Swan Pose

Swans are graceful birds that float smoothly on the water. They are beautiful and majestic, like kings and queens. We are going to be like swans for a few moments. Begin on all fours, and lower your hips to the ground. Point your toes up towards the sky, and lift your chest tall and proud. Lengthen your graceful neck, like a swan, holding your head proud and high. Keep your shoulders down, and your arms strong holding you up. Take a few deep breaths, and think about how your breath feels as you breathe in through your nose and breathe out through your mouth. Take a moment here to close your eyes and think of yourself as the swan, graceful and beautiful, sailing through troubles easily.

Puppy Pose

Puppies are playful and always looking on the bright side of life. They are excited and happy about almost everything. We are going to open our hearts, just like puppies, and melt down to the earth. Start on all fours, and walk your hands forwards. Keep your hips high but let your chest and your heart melt towards the ground. Lower your forehead to the ground and let your neck relax. We will spend a few moments breathing here, focusing on feeling the stretch in your arms and back. Maybe, like a puppy, you could wag your tail up in the air and feel playful while you breathe.

Think about how excited puppies are about everything. What would it be like if you were like a puppy?