



# OVERVIEW

High School

Curriculum

Grades 9 - 12

# **YOGA ED.**

## **HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

### **Health, Self-Awareness and Life Skills**

#### **Grades 9 - 12**

#### **MISSION**

Yoga Ed. develops and produces health/wellness programs, trainings and products for teachers, parents, children and health professionals that improve academic achievement, physical fitness, emotional intelligence and stress management.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Yoga Ed. High School Curriculum is an educational program that combines the science-based exploration of the body, mind, and self with the exercise system of yoga in order to support and enhance adolescents' physical, mental, emotional and social development. In the following 36-week program, the practice of yoga (defined here as a methodology for integrating movement and breath to strengthen, align, and balance the body, focus the mind, and soothe and recharge the nervous system) is informed by and integrated with a study of the body's systems, the mind-body interface, the impact of one's behavior choices, as well as an education in health, nutrition and life skills. Yoga Ed. presents this program as an effective and measurable methodology to achieve lifetime physical and mental health.

Yoga is an ancient form of exercise that focuses on the unification of body, mind and breath while practicing a variety of physical postures and movement sequences. Yoga methodology provides proven tools for deepening and enhancing self-awareness, health, achievement, and well-being. As students learn how to move gracefully, breathe smoothly and deeply, and sustain their concentration, they simultaneously develop strength, flexibility, balance, mental clarity and emotional stability. The yoga process of linking or unifying thought, breath, and movement develops focus and an awareness of the fundamental interconnectedness of intention, action, and consequence. The cultivation of this kind of personal integration deepens one's relationship to and respect for oneself, others, and life on all levels.

#### **PHILOSOPHY**

The focus of the Yoga Ed. Program is the transference of yoga practices to personal awareness and life skills. Yoga Ed. presents the principles and techniques of yoga as an effective means for supporting teenagers in navigating the challenges of this tumultuous and transformational time in their lives.

At the core of adolescents' development in high school are their relationships – physical, mental, emotional, inter-personal, social and sexual. Teens are in the process of

separating from their parents and establishing their own senses of self. In their quests to discover and determine their own destinies, they are innately and intensely motivated by the questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is my unique contribution to the world? How will I express and be responsible for myself in the looming world of adulthood? Who are my friends? What do I like? What talents do I have? What are my beliefs, values and principles?

Adolescence is a time of brain restructuring and therefore, a critical period for establishing physiological, emotional and cognitive regulation. Regular yoga practice can enhance and stabilize the processes of the autonomic nervous system. With more stability, adolescents gain self-worth and self-efficacy. Enhanced self-regulation has direct positive correlations with enhanced attention, focus, and concentration, and it supports more flexible problem-solving strategies.

The Yoga Ed. High School Curriculum supports students in understanding themselves and embracing their growth at every level. We believe that there is a direct correlation between physical, mental, and emotional health and enjoying fulfilling relationships and a successful life. Yoga provides ideal structures and practices for maintaining health, exploring identity questions and navigating universal human issues. Our high school curriculum offers students a comprehensive conceptual and experiential education in basic hatha yoga, anatomy, body-mind physiology, nutrition, wellness, and stress and emotional management, as well as tools for accessing intuition, connecting with inner resources, and developing conflict resolution, communication and reflection skills. Lesson plans address and nurture adolescent inquiry through pertinent information, a safe, supportive environment, and activities that facilitate the discovery of their own answers.

The goal of Yoga Ed. is to help adolescent youth embrace life with confidence, calm and clarity. The practice of yoga teaches them how to embody those qualities in the face of challenges. They learn how to work with their bodies, thoughts, fears, feelings and questions to create coordination, grace, unity and harmony. Teens take this ability with them “off the mat” and become able to respond to the issues in their lives with that same strength, flexibility and grace. Through yoga, they develop physical fitness, a strong connection to their inner wisdom and a methodology for maintaining both. They leave high school feeling balanced and equipped for independence.

**CONTEXT** Assumptions that inform the program philosophy:

- We are each whole, unique beings deserving of understanding and respect.
- We are all always doing the best our current awareness and abilities allow.
- We are all ever-growing and learning.
- We are all connected to a greater community; our actions make a difference and impact others.
- We are responsible for taking care of ourselves. We can all maintain a lifetime of health and learning through self-knowledge, self-management, and self-care.
- As yoga educators, it is our responsibility to create safe, stimulating environments, and to facilitate the experiential learning of each individual.

## **YOGA PRACTICE GOALS:**

1. Support students in finding enjoyment and success in physical activity
2. Improve physical fitness and health
3. Develop self-awareness, self-control, focus and concentration
4. Develop self-esteem and understanding
5. Enhance mental and emotional stability and well being
6. Inspire students to establish and maintain a lifetime of wellness
7. Facilitate the transference of yoga education and tools into life skills

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

1. Basic body mechanics, alignment, and proper posture
2. Holding postures and stretches with grace
3. Center, integrate, and balance themselves
4. Regulate breathing in challenging situations
5. Focus on a given task
6. Slow down and connect with their inner selves
7. Balance effort and receptivity – finesse
8. Relax and release tension
9. Maintain and improve cardiovascular fitness and health
10. Utilize specific techniques to manage stress
11. Formulate and accomplish self-created goals
12. Observe, identify, accept and work with thoughts and feelings
13. Make positive choices that respect and support themselves and others
14. Tolerate conflicts and creatively, compassionately resolve them

## **OUTCOMES**

### **Physical Fitness:**

Kinesthetic awareness and control  
Strength and flexibility  
Balance and coordination  
Cardiovascular and circulatory health  
Relaxation and renewal

### **Mental Fitness:**

Focus  
Development of visual, auditory and kinesthetic intelligences  
Critical thinking and creativity  
Perseverance and confidence  
Respect and tolerance

### **Emotional Fitness:**

Awareness and understanding of feelings  
Appropriate processing and expression of feelings  
Self-esteem and awareness of choices  
Stability and self-control  
Supportive self-care and stress management

**Social Fitness:**

- Personal responsibility
- Understanding of one's impact and contributions
- Respect for different perspectives and for the greater community
- Communication and conflict-resolution skills

**CROSS-CURRICULAR CONNECTIONS**

Yoga Ed. does not expect physical education teachers to directly and explicitly teach the instructional standards of the Health and Life Skills curriculum. Yoga Ed. and the required Health and Life Skills classes do, however, have goals and objectives that are intrinsically inter-disciplinary, creating the opportunity to provide integrated instruction which addresses overall health and wellness, and ultimately benefits everyone, teachers and students alike. For example, all three curricula stress the importance of developing positive social interactions and self-image, effective conflict resolution, physical fitness, stress reduction, self-management, self-determination and effective decision-making.

As stated earlier, the goal of Yoga Ed. is to support students in developing lifelong physical, mental, emotional and social health by providing them with the knowledge, tools and opportunity to practice these skills in a safe and supportive environment. These outcomes align themselves with the standards of both the Health and Life Skills curriculums which can lead to a natural integration of disciplines.

**LIFE SKILLS**

In many public schools, Life Skills is a mandatory ninth grade class, which emphasizes three main areas of instruction: interpersonal skills, academic pathways, and career/post graduate options. Interpersonal skills include character education, the development of attitudes and values, anger and stress management, interpersonal relations, understanding cultural perspectives and ethnic backgrounds, conflict resolution skills, active listening, and behavior-management. Academic pathways includes graduation requirements, test awareness and test-taking skills, time management, and study skills. Career/post-graduate options include career planning and post-graduate options, setting goals, determining values, and assessing abilities and aptitudes.

The practice of yoga, which unites the body, mind, and breath, provides students with an opportunity to take on challenging physical postures and focused self-exploration and discovery, which simultaneously maintaining calm and steady breath. The ability to remain non-reactive and focused in the face of the physical challenges of yoga requires the development of self-control and management, finesse, alignment, balance, stability, stamina and concentration. These abilities, when applied to various life challenges and events, contribute to teens' creativity, clarity, problem solving, stress management, goal setting, health, relationships and general success.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION STANDARDS**

The Yoga Ed. High School Program is in alignment with the National Physical Education Standards and provides a viable and exciting physical education alternative for teachers and students.

## **Movement Skills and Movement Knowledge:**

**Standard 1:** *Demonstrates competency in many movement forms and proficiency in a few movement forms.*

**Poses:** Students hold as well as flow through forward bending, back bending, twisting, balancing and inverted postures.

**Games:** Students apply learned and created movements in fun and individual ways.

**Partner Poses:** Students work together in new movement challenges of balance, trust and coordination.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students learn how to be still and to balance activity with passivity by allowing their bodies and minds to rest and recharge.

**Standard 2:** *Applies movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.*

**Time-in:** Students learn how to be still, quiet, and focused which deeply rests the body and mind, enhancing calm, balance, attention and clarity.

**Discussion:** Students learn the purpose, value and benefits of movement participation.

**Poses:** Students learn to use poses as tools for self-care. They deepen and improve poses by applying the information they receive in coaching and adjustments.

**Games:** Students learn to improve at games through applying information and coaching.

**Partner Poses:** Students develop their ability to work together to perform and improve partner poses.

**Class Projects:** By reflecting on their experiences, students develop an awareness and understanding of their process and how to improve it.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students experience the potential of conscious relaxation to enhance health, skills, behavior and creativity.

**Standard 3:** *Exhibits a physically active lifestyle.*

**Time-in:** Students learn to use this quiet time to support inner balance, health and concentration.

**Discussion:** Students share information and create personal goals for fitness.

**Poses:** Students learn how to use poses as tools for self-care and how to deepen and improve poses through applying information, coaching and receiving adjustments.

**Games:** Students learn to maintain health through movement, fun and laughter.

**Partner Poses:** Students develop their ability to work together to enhance health and fitness.

**Class Projects:** students choose ways to enhance and maintain health and fitness through participation in creative projects.

**Rest and Visualization:** students balance exertion and rest, integrating information and experiences, and developing their imagination and creativity.

## **Self-Image and Personal Development:**

**Standard 4:** *Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.*

**Time-in:** Students develop greater awareness of themselves - how they feel and why; they also gain clarity about healthy choices and activities they truly enjoy.

**Discussion:** Students receive information about how yoga can help them improve in other physical activities.

**Poses:** Students develop a non-competitive, personal practice even as they develop greater awareness of the physical and mental effects of yoga.

**Games:** Students have the opportunity to express themselves through other ways of moving and playing.

**Partner Poses:** Students learn to trust each other and cooperate while working together creatively.

**Class Projects:** Students design and complete creative projects, both individually and in small groups, which support their own goals, expand their understanding of the challenges and benefits of physical activity and fitness.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students learn to release stress physically and mentally as well as to use imagination to improve performance and progress towards goals.

**Standard 5:** *Demonstrates responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.*

**Time-in:** Students practice respecting others by remaining still and quiet, developing focus and concentration.

**Discussion:** Students practice listening, taking turns, and participating respectfully.

**Poses:** Students learn what behavior is safe and unsafe during yoga and follow those rules with themselves as well as others.

**Games:** Students practice moving and playing safely and cooperatively, and are able to work through problems or conflicts with and without teacher supervision.

**Partner Poses:** Students practice working together safely and cooperatively.

**Class Projects:** Students practice building teamwork as they work independently.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students are able to hold still, respecting others' personal space and creativity.

## **Social Development**

**Standard 6:** *Demonstrates understanding and respect for differences among people in physical activity settings.*

**Time-in:** Students practice respecting others by remaining still and quiet.

**Discussion:** Students practice listening, taking turns and participating respectfully.

**Poses:** Students learn what behavior is safe and unsafe during yoga; they follow those rules with themselves as well as others.

**Games:** Students practice moving and playing safely and cooperatively; they are able to work through problems or conflicts with and without teacher supervision.

**Partner Poses:** Students practice team-building with each other while moving, playing and communicating independently, safely and cooperatively.

**Class Projects:** Students practice working independently and building teamwork through the completion of a project.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students are able to be still, respecting quiet reflection time as well as others' personal space and creativity.

**Standard 7:** *Understands that physical activity provides opportunities for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.*

**Time-in:** Students try different forms of personal reflection and ways to cultivate

concentration that have evolved throughout history and cultures.

**Discussion:** Students share their growing understanding of the similarities and differences between yoga and other exercise.

**Poses:** Students learn that yoga movements are the bases of many other physical disciplines, and that they can use what they learn in yoga to help most other movement activities.

**Games:** Students experience the influence of different backgrounds as they share and create their own games.

**Class Projects:** Projects that link yoga and other areas of study encourage cross-curricular understanding.

## HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARDS

The Yoga Ed. Program also directly addresses and supports the standards as outlined in the Health Education Challenge Standards as set forth by the California Department of Education.

### Acceptance of Personal Responsibility for Lifelong Health

**Standard 1:** *The student understands and demonstrates ways in which his or her health and well-being can be enhanced and maintained.*

**Time-In:** Students learn how to slow down, breathe and reconnect with their inner world in order to identify feelings with calm awareness - leading to long-term stress and self-management.

**Discussion:** Students discuss nutrition and its impact on our overall health and well-being.

**Poses:** Students develop an exercise practice that can be practiced anywhere, anytime. In addition, participating fully in new activities contributes to self-confidence and self-esteem.

**Partner Poses:** Students develop trust and open communication as they navigate difficult poses together.

**Rest and Visualization:** By reflecting on their experiences and processes, students learn to identify practices that bring them into balance, promote mental clarity and emotional stability, and support effective decision-making.

**Standard 2:** *The student understands and demonstrates behaviors that prevent disease and speed recovery from illness.*

**Time-In:** Students learn how to slow down, breathe and reconnect with their inner worlds in order to identify feelings with calm awareness, leading to long-term self and stress-management.

**Discussion:** Students discuss and practice various breathing techniques which aid in stress management and help to energize, stimulate, balance or soothe the body and nervous system.

**Poses:** Participation in yoga on a regular basis develops physical strength, stamina, and flexibility - all of which contribute to the prevention of disease.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students learn to imply this powerful tool that integrates mind and body, leading to balance, rejuvenation and self-awareness.

**Standard 3:** *The student will understand and demonstrate behaviors that reduce the risk of becoming involved in potentially dangerous situations and will know how to react to situations in ways that help to protect his or her health.*

**Time-In:** Allows students to develop self-awareness and self-control by quietly turning their attention inward, resulting in non-reactive acceptance and observation of their thoughts and feelings.

**Discussion:** Students discuss setting an intention, making choices and consider the impact and consequences of their behavior.

**Poses:** Students find their edge, and observe their response to difficulty; for example, do they give up quickly, do they overexert themselves, do they complete the task half-heartedly? Students observe themselves “off the mat” and discover if their response is the same and if that response is serving them well.

**Partner Poses:** Inherent in partner poses are interpersonal and communication skills, which are essential to conflict resolution, effectively responding to negative social influences and peer pressure.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students experience groundedness and connection to self, a foundation from which they may analyze the impact and consequences of their behavior and effectively determine the healthiest course of action.

## **Respect for and Promotion of the Health of Others**

**Standard 4:** *The student will understand and demonstrate how to play a positive, active role in promoting the health of his or her family.*

**Time-In:** Students reflect on how the world impacts them and how they impact the world.

**Discussion:** Students discuss interdependence between themselves and their families.

**Poses:** Students take poses home and share what they’ve learned with their families.

**Partner Poses:** Students become aware of themselves and how they are feeling and doing in a pose as well as learning to communicate that clearly to their partner.

**Standard 5:** *The student will understand and demonstrate how to promote positive health practices within the school and community, including how to cultivate positive relationships with peers.*

**Time-In:** Students practice respecting themselves and others by remaining still and quiet.

**Discussion:** Students practice turn-taking, deep listening, and tolerance for the ideas and opinions of others.

**Poses:** Students find understanding and connection to themselves, reflecting upon their actions and how their actions impact others - resulting in positive actions and relationships with others.

**Partner Poses:** Students interact and connect with one another in a supported environment through positive activities.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students are still and quiet, respecting others’ personal space and creativity.

## **An Understanding of the Process of Growth and Development**

**Standard 6:** *The student will understand the variety of physical, mental, emotional, and social changes that occur throughout life.*

**Time-In:** Students reflect on the changes that are currently happening in their physical, mental, emotional, and social environments.

**Discussion:** Students discuss these changes in a safe and nurturing setting and gain support for their concerns.

**Poses:** Students experience poses that can calm, stimulate, focus, cleanse, energize, balance, and nurture as well as suitable poses to do while menstruating.

**Partner Poses:** Students have the opportunity to work with various partners in various stages of growth and development.

**Rest and Visualization:** Regardless of what is happening/changing in the world around them, students can access this resource and maintain their internal sense of balance and calm.

**Standard 7:** *The student will understand individual differences in growth and development.*

**Time-In:** Students develop greater awareness of themselves, deepening their self-acceptance.

**Discussion:** Students receive information about individual strengths and weaknesses, developing an understanding that yoga is non-competitive, and that everyone is unique, aiding in the development of a healthy body image.

**Poses:** Students learn to maintain their strengths and improve their weaknesses - creating balance in the areas of strength and flexibility. In addition, students learn that yoga practice is accessible to everyone regardless of his or her weight, body type, or level of physical fitness.

**Partner Poses:** Students learn how to accommodate and adjust to the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students reflect on their individual growth and development in all areas of their life: physical, mental, emotional, and social.

**Standard 8:** *The student will understand his or her developing sexuality, the benefits of abstinence from sexual activity, and how to be respectful of the sexuality of others.*

**Time-In:** Students develop greater awareness of themselves - how they feel and why; they also gain clarity about which choices serve them best.

**Discussion:** Students receive information about the human body and its physiology, allowing them to become more conscious of their physical, mental and emotional states as they relate to their developing sexuality.

**Poses:** Students develop awareness of their body, how certain activities make them feel, how their bodies move in space, how to share the space with the opposite sex and respect one another.

**Partner Poses:** Students interact in physically appropriate ways in an environment with clear boundaries - practicing physical intimacy without sexuality, with support and self-control.

**Rest and Visualization:** Students balance and center - providing an opportunity for deep inquiry about their sexuality and sexual beliefs.

## **Informed Use of Health-Related Information, Products, and Services**

**Standard 9:** *The student will know how to identify products, services, and information that may be helpful or harmful to his or her health.*

**Time-In:** Students learn how to use quiet time to reflect on and define their personal standards.

**Discussion:** Students discuss the media and its messages, standards of beauty, nutrition, and fad diets, etc., as a way to evaluate their feelings and values as well as determine healthy choices that create balance, well-being and informed decision-making.

**Poses:** Students connect to themselves and reflect upon personal values.

**Class Projects:** Students will research and present new yoga poses to the class; students will research studies on the effectiveness of a regular yoga practice and its impact on health and wellness.

## **ORGANIZATION OF CURRICULUM**

The curriculum includes 36-weeks of lesson plans and homework handouts, a Teacher's Guide and a reading and resources list. The material is organized into four units of nine weeks. Each unit includes five themed lessons. The first lesson of each unit is introductory and to be covered in one week. The other four themes are to be covered in two weeks.

### **Unit One: CORE**

These first nine weeks introduce students to the philosophy and practice of yoga. Students quickly move into physically challenging routines that build core strength, balance, flexibility and focus.

### **Unit Two: WELLNESS**

The second unit of study focuses on the physiological components of wellness. Students learn the anatomy and function of the body's systems as well as how the mind and body interface. They evaluate their own levels of fitness and health and explore crafting new wellness conscious lifestyles for themselves.

### **Unit Three: SELF-AWARENESS**

In Unit Three, students explore deeper levels of their own thinking and feeling. They connect with their awareness and learn that they are more than the sum of their parts. They access the resources of their hearts, imaginations, inner wisdom and intuition. They clarify their own values, and develop the emotional intelligence to observe, manage and move themselves into greater responsibility for their choices.

### **Unit Four: RELATIONSHIPS**

The last unit moves into a study of relationships. Lessons focus students on looking at the ways in which they relate to themselves, their peers, their families and their worlds. They use Contact Yoga experiences to practice listening, respecting, supporting and collaborating. They learn the rewards of fully communicating, "showing up", and the value of focus, intention, and reflection.

## **LESSON PLAN OVERVIEW:**

### **UNIT ONE: CORE**

- Lesson 1: Yoga Philosophy and Methodology
- Lesson 2: Conscious Breathing
- Lesson 3: Yoga Principle: 1. Non-Violence
- Lesson 4: Basic Yoga Postures
- Lesson 5: Yoga Principle: 2. No Lying
- Lesson 6: Time-In
- Lesson 7: Yoga Principle: 3. Non-Attachment
- Lesson 8: Your Daily Yoga Practice
- Lesson 9: Yoga Principle: 4. No Stealing or Greed

### **UNIT TWO: WELLNESS**

- Lesson 10: Yoga Body = Healthy Lifestyle
- Lesson 11: Systems of the Body
- Lesson 12: Yoga Principle: 5. Be Clean
- Lesson 13: Mind/Body Interface
- Lesson 14: Yoga Principle: 6. Be Content
- Lesson 15: Nutrition and Environment
- Lesson 16: Yoga Principle: 7. Be Disciplined
- Lesson 17: Stress Management
- Lesson 18: Yoga Principle: 8. Be Thoughtful / Reflective

### **UNIT THREE: SELF-AWARENESS**

- Lesson 19: Yoga Mind = Focus, Observation, Choice
- Lesson 20: Mind/Brain Interface
- Lesson 21: Your Critical Voice
- Lesson 22: Emotional Intelligence
- Lesson 23: Intuition
- Lesson 24: Values and Commitments
- Lesson 25: Decision Making
- Lesson 26: Defining Your Stand / Your Principles
- Lesson 27: Yoga Principle: 9. Be Devoted

### **UNIT FOUR: RELATIONSHIP**

- Lesson 28: Contact Yoga – Trust / Trustworthiness
- Lesson 29: Contact Yoga - Passion / Fun
- Lesson 30: Contact Yoga - Commitment / Willingness
- Lesson 31: Contact Yoga – Compassion / Caring
- Lesson 32: Contact Yoga – Communication / Honesty
- Lesson 33: Contact Yoga – Vision / Creativity
- Lesson 34: Contact Yoga – Union / Partnership
- Lesson 35: Contact Yoga – A Map for Healthy Relationship
- Lesson 36: Yoga Education - Review and Completion