

GROUND ED GAMES



**A COLLECTION OF TRIED AND TRUE YOGA GAMES
TO TURN ANY GATHERING INTO A PLAYFUL GROUP
WITH MOVEMENT THAT MATTERS.**

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INTRODUCTION

This book is written for yoga teachers, activity group leaders, school teachers and parents seeking ways to enhance learning and social skills in fun and engaging ways. Play during yoga clubs, studio classes, birthday parties, yoga camps, special events and during school. The games and variations are appropriate for children of all ages and grown ups too so use during family yoga or at home. Easily adaptable to accompany even your most serious minded yoga themes, our games are valuable for personal and social development. Games can be used to break the ice in new situations, help children in a group get to know each other, direct and manage energy, learn how to laugh together and teach children to pay attention to you and each another.

Grounded yoga games increase understanding of yoga poses, develop breath and body awareness, improve motor skills and physical fitness, heighten the senses, enhance focus and concentration, foster emotional growth, encourage teamwork, build creativity and induce an overall feeling of joy and an attitude of light heartedness. We have found that children who are yogis perform better in school, have less fear of failure and demonstrate more confidence and kindness toward themselves and others. The best way to teach and learn games is to play them. Be clear with instructions and allow for a practice round when introducing a new game. Most importantly, enjoy!

~ Amy Haysman & Cheryl Crawford, co-founders of Grounded Yoga, Laughter, Elevation

Yoga HeadBANDs

Flex your deductive reasoning, critical thinking, and communication skills. This game reinforces the ability to recognize poses and focus on details of alignment with fun and interesting questions. Show kids how to use their heads in more ways than one! It will be most impactful when played after the students are familiar with the poses.

Game STUFF:

Hedbanz Game, similar headbands or Grounded Pose Stickers
Printed Grounded yoga pose buttons on stiff paper (laminated)
Grounded Pose Chips

Game PLAN:

Each player gets 3 pose chips, 3 pose button cards (face down), and a headband. Player places pose button card on headband without peeking. The goal is to deduce which pose you are by asking the other players questions. Ask each player a question about your pose. Examples of questions are:

- Am I standing?
- Am I lying on my back?
- Are both my feet on the ground?
- Are my feet hip-width apart?
- Are my legs straight?
- Is my basement pointed to the sky?
- Are both hands on the ground?
- Are my fingers spread wide, clawing the floor?
- Is my head below my heart?

For each pose you guess correctly, you'll practice one chip pose and turn it over. If you give up, you'll collect a pose chip from the chip bank and be dealt a new pose card. The first player to practice all of her pose chips is the winner!

VARIATIONS:

1. Set a timer for 1-3 minutes.
2. Use Grounded Pose Stickers on forehead or back.
3. Write the name of the pose on a sticker and place on forehead or back.



MOVING IN SOVEREIGNTY

As an individual, we maintain sovereignty over ourselves –physically, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually. While we are not immune to the influences of other people or environments, it is vitally important to remember that we possess imminent power over how we choose to act towards those around us and ourselves. Moving in Sovereignty teaches students to collectively harness their power (energy). The students will use their knowledge of yoga

The students will use their knowledge of yoga – the postures and breath work – to create a flow as a class. The activity relies on receiving and giving. The students must open themselves up to the influence of those preceding them in the flow and offer a counterpart that enhances and guides the flow as a whole no space here toward the collective theme or goal.

GAME STUFF: Grounded Poster

GAME PLAN:

The class decides as a whole what state they would like to travel from and to which state they would like to arrive (i.e. bitter > joy, denial > acceptance, disconnected > connected). Once this theme has been decided upon, ask for a volunteer to start moving around the circle in clockwise order. For the purpose of explaining the flow, the student who begins the sequence is “A.”

“A” stands center of the circle and demonstrates the posture of their choice. The class as a whole repeats this posture with “A” a second time. “B” stands center of the circle and demonstrates their posture. The class as a whole moves through “A’s” posture, then “B’s” posture. “C” moves to the center of the circle and demonstrates their chosen posture; then the class as a whole moves through “A,” then “B,” then “C.” This pattern continues until the last person has demonstrated their posture; then the class as whole will move through the entirety of the sequence together ending in Savasana.

While in Savasana, guide the students through a reflection moving from their original state to their ending/current destination. Play several rounds – competing with your best self.



MUSICAL MATS

This game fosters playful competition and improves listening skills.

GAME STUFF:

Grounded pose chips or Grounded pose cards

Mats

GAME PLAN:

Place a chip at the top of every mat. Play a fun, upbeat song while kids walk or dance around the mats. When the music stops, kids take the pose of whatever mat they land on. The player who doesn't get a mat is out and is in charge of folding a mat and picking up that mat's chip so it is out of play for the next round. Play until there is only one mat left and a winner.

VARIATIONS:

1. Use one less mat than there are players at all times. This way only one player is out at a time. Allow that person to control the music for the next round.
2. Use blocks instead of mats and when the music stops, players must do a yoga pose balancing on the block or incorporating the block into a pose.



POSE PATTERN

Players practice patience and work on patterning and sequencing skills

GAME STUFF:

Grounded pose chips, Grounded pose cards or Grounded poster

GAME PLAN:

Line mats up in a row with room in between the mats. Choose 3 players to practice the following poses in a line: Tree, Down Dog, Dark Seed Light. Each player in line takes a turn interacting with the pose and then takes the next pose in the pattern in line. When a new player takes a pose, the first in line can release the pose and continue to play in order: Tree (run around the tree), Down Dog (Crawl under the dog), Dark Seed Light (jump over the seed). Continue until all players have a turn.

VARIATIONS:

1. Play the game with the following three poses: Lighten Up: (blow out the candle (toes), Snake (charm the snake), Dolphin (swim under the dolphin)
2. Kids work together to choose three new poses and interactions.



SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

Transitions can be tricky, even if we know where we are going. This game shows how staying aware and integrated during times of transition leads to a smoother, more steady arrival.

Game STUFF:

Grounded Pose Chips in a bag
Paper
Pens

Game PLAN:

Divide students into pairs. Each pair chooses two pose chips at random. Together they will design a transition to move from one pose to the other. The group that uses the fewest number of transition poses wins.

VARIATIONS:

1. Play in small groups with more than two poses. Sequence the poses and then design the fewest number of transitions to make the sequence flow.
2. Ultimately work as a whole group to combine these poses and transitions into a smooth Grounded yoga flow.

Mashup

This is a good game to demonstrate how to make the best out of forced interactions and connections.

Game STUFF:

Grounded pose chips in a bag.

Game PLAN:

Partner up. Each person chooses a pose chip out of a bag. Partners make up a brand new pose by mashing the two poses together. Once created, the team teaches the new pose to the group.

Examples:

1. Playing With Fire + Twist and Target = Fire Target. While in the pose Playing With Fire, move one arm with thumb up out to the side while twisting in that direction to mark a spot on the wall. Repeat and twist even farther. Switch sides.
2. Because I Said So + Gratitude = Be Grateful 'Cause I Said So. While in Gratitude pose, lift one arm and the opposite leg. Hold for two breaths and then switch sides.

POSER ON THE GROUND

This game requires excellent knowledge of the Grounded poses and body awareness.

GAME STUFF:

Grounded poster

GAME PLAN:

The leader will glance at the poster and have a Grounded Pose in mind. Then the leader calls out different body parts that should be touching the ground and posers must negotiate their body into a yoga pose that satisfies the request. The leader then reveals the pose in mind.

Examples:

1. "Show me a pose with 2 feet and 2 hands on the ground only". This could result in: Down Dog, Plank, Forward Fold, etc...
2. "Show a pose where only one hand and one foot touch the ground." This could be Over The Rainbow, Because I Said So, etc...

VARIATIONS:

1. Have students do all the poses, not just one, that meet the request of the leader.
2. To play for points, the leader could secretly write down the pose in mind or pick a Grounded pose chip. Posers earn one point for practicing a different pose that meets the requirements and two points for matching the leader's pose.



Heads Up, Yogis Up

This game is derived from the game “Heads Up, 7 Up”. Players must move purposefully and quietly. Sensory awareness is tested as the players must rely on senses other than sight, such as sound and intuition.

Game STUFF:

Grounded pose chips or Grounded pose cards
Chimes

Game PLAN:

With a large group, choose 7 players to come to the front of the room and be “it”. The rest of the group listens for the chimes and the leader calls out “Heads Down, Yogis Down” to signal the yogis on the mat to go into Dark Seed Light pose. No Peeking! Then the 7 players choose a chip or card to place at the top of one of the yogis’ mats. Once all 7 have returned to the front of the room, the leader calls “Heads Up, Yogis Up”. The 7 yogis must try and guess which player put it there. If the yogi on the mat guesses correctly, then he and the player will do the pose as partners and the yogi on the mat gets to go up front to be “it”. If the yogi on the mat doesn’t guess correctly, then he does the pose alone and the player remains the same. Each of 7 yogis gets one turn to guess.

Variations:

1. Play with smaller groups by lowering the number of players that are “it”.
2. This game can be played at desks.



FOUR CORNERS GROUNDED STYLE

This game reinforces an understanding of the qualities of the four directions as described in Native American tradition.

GAME STUFF:

Grounded pose chips in a bag

Compass to determine East, South, West, and North in the room

4 Sheets of Paper, each labeled with one direction

GAME PLAN:

Place the four direction sheets of paper in the appropriate places in the room. One student selects a pose chip from the bag without showing it to anyone. Another student sits in the middle of the room with closed eyes and counts to 11. All of the other students quietly scatter to one of the four directions. The counter then calls out the name of one direction before opening eyes. If the student holding the pose chip is standing in the named direction, the counter gets to teach the pose to the group and pick the next pose chip. If the counter doesn't guess the correct direction, the chip holder gets to teach the pose to the group and choose the next player to pick a chip. Either way, the chip holder becomes the counter.

VARIATIONS:

1. If the counter correctly guesses where the chip holder is located, all players in that group must practice the selected pose as a partner or group pose.
2. Add a player who stands in the middle with open eyes to provide the counter with clues by describing one or more attributes of the direction where the chip holder is located.
3. All players select a pose chip to hold without showing it to anyone. Have a list or a second set of chips showing the poses that are in play available for the counter to see. Instead of guessing directions, the counter calls out the name of a pose and teaches it to the group. Make sure to scratch off the list or turn face down correctly guessed poses. The player holding the named pose gets to be the next caller.



GRUNDER Says

This “Simon Says” game for yogis is a fun way to enhance listening and observation skills. It keeps children alert and focused while teaching self-control.

GAME STUFF:

Grounded poster

GAME PLAN:

Ask one person to be the Grunder and stand in front of the players. The Grunder will lead the players step by step into a yoga pose. To stay in the game, players can only move if Grunder Says precedes an instruction.

Examples:

1. “Grunder says fold forward. Grunder says place your hands on the floor. Grunder says step one foot back. Step the other foot back.” If players stepped the other foot back, they would have to sit in easy pose for the rest of the round.
2. “Grunder says step the other foot back. Grunder says raise lift your basement and take 3 deep breaths in Down Dog.” After Grunder has lead the group into a yoga pose, call on someone else to be the Grunder for the next round.

VARIATIONS:

1. When the students have knowledge of the poses and smooth transitions, the Grunder can call out yoga poses instead of instructing all the movements to get into the pose. For example “Grunder says Down Dog. Grunder says Plank. Lower your knees.” Those who lowered knees would sit. “Grunder says lower your knees. Grunder says Flat Like A Pancake. Snake. Etc...” Switch Grunders after 3-5 poses.
2. The teacher is the Grunder and plays until there is a “winner” who wasn’t ever tricked into movement.



GROUNDed GROUNDed Go!

This game is detective “duck duck goose” played with a purpose. It fosters connection and observation as well as verbal and non-verbal communication skills. It reinforces an understanding of the poses, alignment and physical sensation.

Game STUFF:

Grounded pose chips

Game PLAN:

The group sits in a circle with pose chips face down all around the inner edge of the circle. One player picks a pose chip without anyone seeing it. He then goes around the circle touching the top of each person’s head with the entire palm and fingers saying “Grounded”. The gentle hand pressure encourages the students to lengthen their spine as they lift their head up into the player’s hand. This action improves posture and opens the throat for better breathing. The player picks someone by saying “Go” and then hops around the circle trying to out hop the chosen one. If the player makes it back to his seat without getting caught then the one picked does the pose in the middle of the circle. If he gets caught they both must turn it into a partner pose in some creative way and show it in the middle of the circle. The other students act as detectives, observing the student(s) in the pose. Call on one student to point out what is good about the pose and another student to offer what could be adjusted to make the pose feel better. The one picked now becomes the player.

VARIATIONS:

1. Ask the detectives to name the pose after it is demonstrated.
2. Play Grounded, Grounded, Slow. Sit in a circle with a pile of pose chips face down in the center. Use an eye pillow for younger students or a yoga block for older players. The player must place the object on top of his head and walk around the circle grounding the others. If the player makes it all the way around the circle without the object falling, he chooses a chip and the entire group practices the chosen pose. To choose the next player, he gently places the object on someone’s head and returns to his original seat.



Be The BUBBLE

This game teaches the concept of personal space and balances the electromagnetic field known as the aura. It is a fun way to reinforce knowledge of the poses.

GAME STUFF:

Grounded poster or Grounded pose chips

Music

GAME PLAN:

Guide the students to use long deep breathing to blow up an imaginary bubble. Use their arms to hold the bubble as it gets bigger and bigger. Place the bubble in front of your body and then gently step into the bubble. Imagine the iridescent energy bubble all around you. Extend your arms and legs out in all directions to reach the borders of your protective bubble. Mention what actions could pop the bubble such as getting too close to someone, bumping into something or falling down.

When the music starts, float around the room in your bubble. When it stops, freeze! Listen for a pose name and then go back to your mat to practice the pose. When the music begins again, float. If you pop your bubble, go into Dark Seed Light pose for one round.

VARIATIONS:

1. Practice the pose in the same spot where you froze and notice how far you've floated in the room.
2. Ask a student to the poster to push a pose button or to pick a random pose chip and call out the pose when the music stops.
3. Instruct the students on how to float. For example: on tippy toes, twirling, hopping, slow motion, etc...



NOTES