

Yoga for ADHD

Move. Breathe. Focus. Regulate. A flexible, ADHD-friendly approach to movement, attention and nervous-system support.

ADHD can affect attention, activity levels, impulse control, emotional regulation, sleep, sensory processing and the ability to shift between tasks. Yoga does not treat or cure ADHD, but movement, rhythm and body-based activities can be useful wellbeing tools for some people.

You do not have to sit still to regulate

For an ADHD brain, movement may support attention better than forced stillness. A useful practice can include rocking, changing position, repeating a favourite movement or keeping the eyes open. The aim is not to perform calmness; it is to find what helps your body and attention work together.

Six ADHD-friendly options

1	Child's Pose	Pause & ground
2	Cat-Cow	Rhythm & movement
3	Seated Forward Fold	Reduce demand
4	Low Lunge	Move & energise
5	Legs Up the Wall	Supported reset
6	Supine Twist	Release & rest

Keep it short

Thirty seconds, one pose or three minutes can be a complete practice. Short sessions may be easier to start and repeat than an ambitious routine.

Safety

Move within a comfortable range and use props. Stop for pain, dizziness, faintness or feeling unwell. This is an educational wellbeing resource and not a replacement for ADHD assessment, medication review or professional care.

The six-pose practice

Use the order if predictability helps, or jump straight to the movement your body wants.

1. Child's Pose

Support the torso and head with cushions. If stillness feels uncomfortable, rock gently or choose an upright position.

2. Cat-Cow

On hands and knees or seated, repeat a comfortable rounding and lengthening movement. Rhythm can give attention something immediate to follow.

3. Seated Forward Fold

Hinge forward only as far as comfortable and support your arms or head. Use it as a low-demand pause rather than a deep stretch.

4. Low Lunge

Use a chair, blocks or wall. This can provide a little more movement when you feel restless or under-stimulated. Skip it if balance is difficult.

5. Legs Up the Wall

Rest the legs on a wall, sofa or chair. If lying still makes you restless, add ankle circles or small foot movements.

6. Supine Twist

Support the knees and keep the range easy. Finish with rest, movement or simply getting on with your day—there is no required ending.

Breathing without pressure

Natural breathing is enough. Counting breaths or extending the exhale can be useful if you enjoy it, but breath holds and forced deep breathing are unnecessary. Movement can be your anchor instead.

Making yoga ADHD-friendly

Remove unnecessary barriers so the practice is easier to begin.

Reduce the starting steps

Keep a mat or cushion visible, save one familiar sequence, or attach movement to something you already do. If setting up becomes a project, the practice is less likely to happen.

Use novelty and repetition

Some days novelty helps engagement; other days a familiar sequence reduces decision-making. Both are valid. You can use music, a timer, visual prompts or a favourite repeated pose.

Transitions and task switching

A one-minute movement break can create a bridge between tasks. Stand, stretch, shake out your hands, do several Cat-Cows or walk briefly before beginning the next demand.

Emotional regulation

Strong emotions can arrive quickly. Movement may help discharge some physical activation, but it is not a requirement to calm down immediately. Reduce demands, use sensory supports and seek connection where helpful.

Sleep and restlessness

Gentler evening movement may help some people transition towards rest, while vigorous late exercise can be stimulating for others. Notice your own pattern rather than following a universal rule.

Medication and professional support

Yoga can complement ADHD treatment but should not replace evidence-based care. Medication questions or side effects should be discussed with the prescribing clinician.

ADHD movement & focus tracker

Look for what helps rather than trying to create a perfect routine.

Situation	Energy /10	Movement tried	Focus after	What helped?

Reflection prompts

When does movement help me focus? Do I need energising movement or a quieter reset? What makes starting difficult? Would a visual cue or shorter routine help? Which movements do I naturally want to repeat?

A message from Maggie

You do not have to force an ADHD brain into stillness for yoga to count. Move, change position, repeat things, keep it short and make it yours. The practice should work with your brain, not become another place where you feel you have failed to do things the 'right' way.

Evidence-informed note

Research suggests physical activity and mind-body approaches may support aspects of wellbeing, attention and executive functioning for some people with ADHD, but effects vary. Yoga is best viewed as an optional complementary tool rather than a treatment or cure.

Space to Breathe Therapy — educational wellbeing resource; not medical treatment.