

Yoga for ADD and the Autism Spectrum

Shaye Molendyke, Director YogaFit for Warriors
Lt Col USAF, C-IAYT, 500 ERYT, MA Counseling



- ADD/Autism on the rise – 1 in 60 today projected to be 1 in 25 by 2050
- ADD/ADHD : 1 in 10 children in US and huge increases in Adult ADD
- Sensory Processing Disorders - Over/Under

- 8 Senses instead of 5
 - o Smell – Has a privileged position amongst senses
 - o Touch - Stimulates brain to release endorphins.
 - o Taste – Sweet tastes form stronger memories
 - o Hearing – Hearing problems linked with PTSD
 - o Sight – Last sense to develop – Hypervigilance tied to Peripheral Vision
 - o Proprioception – highest amount of proprioceptors are in the ankles and feet
 - o Vestibular – Internal GPS system – always “on”
 - o NEW Interoception – Internally felt sense of self - Sense of safety

- Yoga help BOTH ADD and Autism to integrate & mitigate sensory input
- Yoga and Meditation create holistic effects and help to re-wire brain
- Brain connects right and left Hemispheres through Corpus Callosum
- Brain integrates from back to front - senses, feeling of safety/connection and language critical
- Parietal lobes process sensory input – mindful movement increases neural connections

- SIFT cueing in Yoga
 - o Senses
 - o Imagery
 - o Feeling
 - o Thought

- Example: Mountain Pose SIFT cueing
 - o Find an Image of a Mountain in your mind, see the colors, the green grass around the base, smelling the evergreens going up the base, and then finally feeling the cold air at the top of the mountain and seeing the cathedral-like white snowy peaks expanding towards the blue sky. Feeling strong, grounded rooted solidly through the foundations of our feet and toes and the spaces between our toes creating a sense of Peace and ease with where we are in our lives and where we need to go. Knowing that we can return to this place as often as we need in our daily lives

Yoga Sequence for ADD/ADHD

**** Cue with SIFT cueing**

1. Start with 3 to 5 mindful breaths in a seated position
2. Alternate nostril breathing
3. Table top pose
4. Cat/Cow pose for 3 breath rounds
5. Spinal Extension – Flowing spinal extension – to alternate elbow to knee
6. Childs pose – forehead to mat or hands
7. DDog Step to Mountain
8. Inhaling arms overhead to extended mountain and exhaling to forward fold
9. Kneeling half series (2-3 times)
10. Mountain
11. Tree pose alternating sides
12. Mountain with Lateral flexion
13. Chair pose
14. Mountain
15. Step back to W1 - W2 with right foot
16. Side angle – Triangle – Side angle – flow
17. DDog repeat other side – step right foot forward to W1-W2
18. Side angle – Triangle – Side angle flow
19. DDog - Childs Pose – several breaths with guided imagery
20. Kneeling camel – with suspenders
21. Mermaid legs to seated forward fold
22. Butterfly to twisting butterfly
23. Bridge or wheel (kids☺)
24. Legs up wall or modified shoulder stand with block
25. Supported fish pose with blanket
26. Savasana options – guided yoga nidra

Short Yoga Sequence for Autism Spectrum Disorder

** Use yoga kids cards or draw or show visuals form book for each pose if appropriate

1. Childs Pose – Grounding, Calming, Easy
2. Butterfly Pose – Active and fun pretending to be a butterfly
3. Lions Pose with Breath – any sound is ok
4. Cat/Cow
5. Mountain Pose
6. Standing Forward folks
7. Mountain
8. Lateral Flexion
9. Rock and Roll
10. Happy baby
11. Alternate knee to chest – supine
12. Sleeping pose