



Connecting the Dots
Health as Art

Yoga Freeze Dance

An art-based social emotional health
activity for play-based learning

What is play-based learning?

Play-based learning is all about the freedom to explore, learn, and create while you play. It helps us to develop new vocabulary, practice teamwork and communication, and build relationships with others. Play-based learning helps us to make sense of the world around us through discovery and the freedom and fun of play!

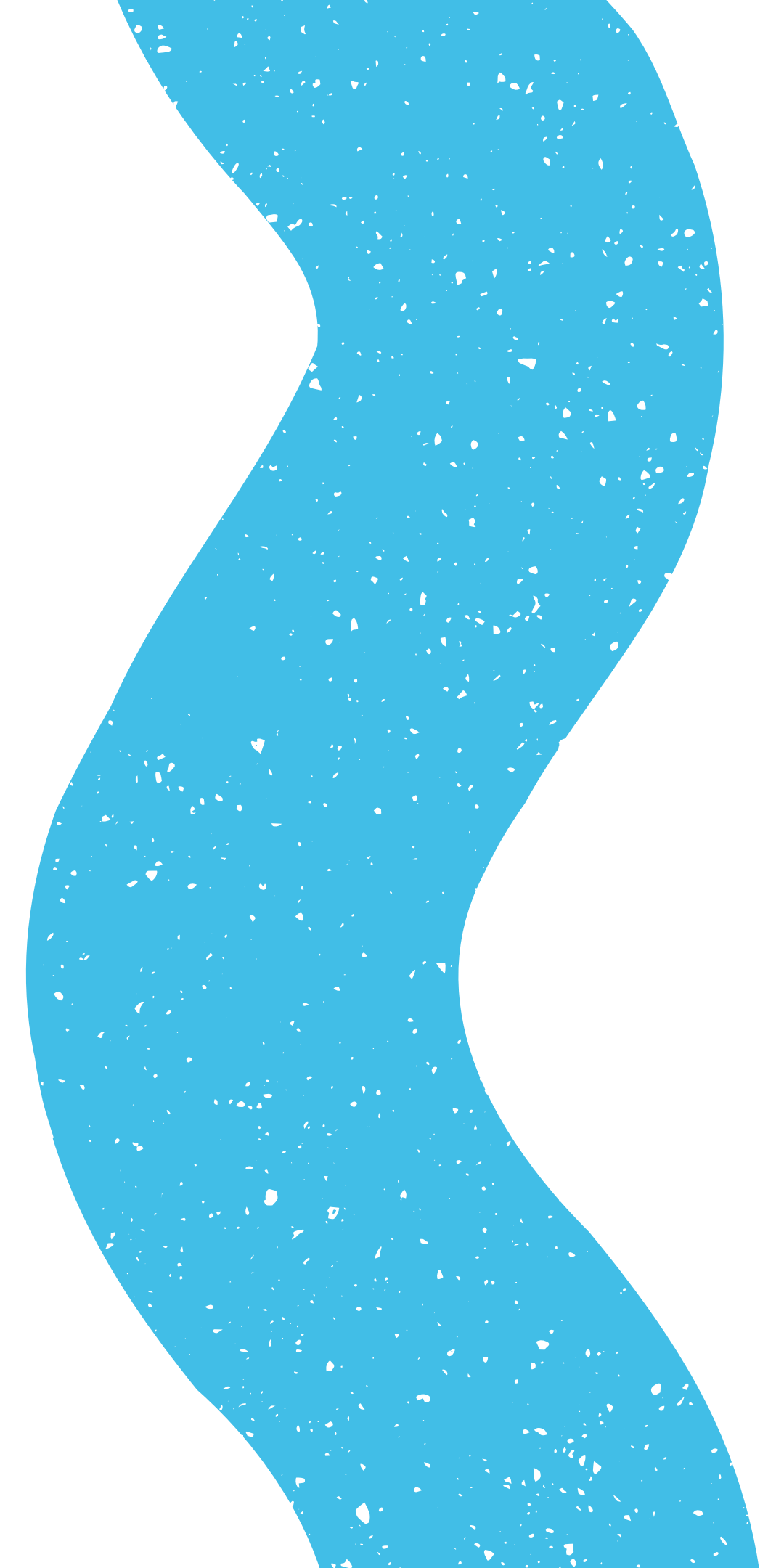


Honoring the History of Yoga

Yoga is a mind-body practice, rooted in long-standing traditions and cultural practices originating in India. In the Sanskrit language, yoga means to join together or to unite. The practice of yoga goes far beyond the physical poses and emphasizes an individualized journey connecting movement, breathing, and meditation or mental exercises. Yoga is an ancient science and practice that follows a philosophy that teaches us the importance of the mind-body connection in helping us feel our best.

Honoring the history of yoga is one of the most important things we can do when practicing. It preserves the thousands-year-old history and honors the origins of the practice and the many people who came before us.

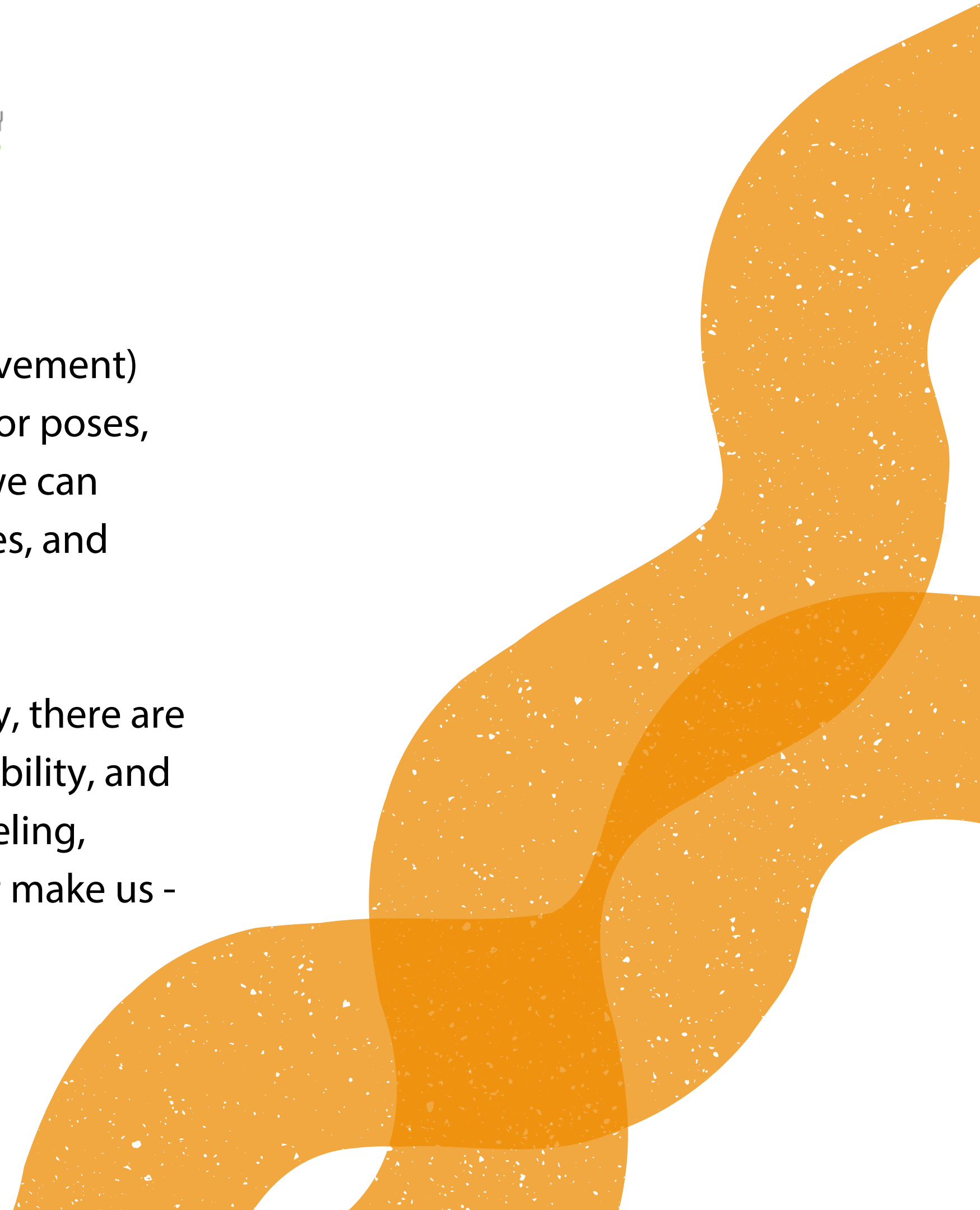
It is also the first step in creating more inclusive spaces that affirm, honor, and celebrate lived experience and actively work towards disrupting marginalization and cultural appropriation. Yoga celebrates the union of the mind and body and lifts up the ways in which we are all connected. This is why it's so important to be thoughtful in our actions towards others, including the ways we lift up and honor traditions, to ensure our impact prevents harm and fosters growth.



Connecting the Dots

As we learned, yoga is the connection of the mind (movement) and body (mindfulness and reflection). Yoga postures, or poses, are a place to practice yoga. Through different poses, we can anchor to the present moment, check in with our bodies, and strengthen the mind-body connection.

Because the practice of yoga integrates the whole body, there are many health benefits including improved posture, flexibility, and strength, and it can help us to reflect on how we are feeling, manage stress, and discover the many pieces of us that make us - us.



Let's make some mindful moves!

As the music plays you will create your own dance moves, and when the music stops you will freeze and practice deep breathing in different poses! Pay close attention to how you feel before and after, notice the changes in your body, and practice anchoring to the moment. When you are in different poses and you find yourself beginning to think about something else, gently bring your attention back to the body and breath.

Listen to Your Body and Modify For Your Needs

Being mindful of our movement helps to keep us safe. Listen to your body! If something feels uncomfortable, adjust it or lean on the modifications included below.

Take a deep breath
and let's get moving!

Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a cat - cow pose and hold

Directions

- Come down to the floor on your hands and knees.
- Check your posture - placing your hips over your knees and shoulders over your wrists.
- Exhale and tuck your tailbone - rounding your back like a cat and drawing your forehead towards the floor.
- Inhale and release your hips - letting your belly fall towards the floor and drawing your forehead up and back - like a cow.
- Repeat with your breath.

Modifications

- In a seated position, place your feet flat or your sit bones on the floor. Press your hands into something sturdy in front of you (e.g., table, desk, wall) and follow the same movement of the spine.



Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a forward fold and hold

Directions

- Inhale standing tall like a mountain.
- Exhale and bend forward at your hips - reaching your arms out in front of you.
- Bring your palms or fingertips towards the floor and take a slight bend in your knees.
- Hold for 60 seconds - breathing deeply.
- Try swaying side to side to create space in your spine.
- Take a big deep breath in and slightly bend at your knees.
- Slowly roll up to a standing position with a long deep exhale.

Modifications

- Follow the same instructions with bent knees for a modified stretch.
- Practice this pose seated either in a chair or on the floor - bending from your hips and keeping your spine tall and lengthened.



Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a garland pose and hold

Directions

- Stand tall like a mountain.
- Walk your feet out until they are a little wider than hip-width distance apart.
- Inhale and with an exhale, slowly lower into a squat like a frog - keeping your chest forward.
- Press your elbows against the inside of your knees to help you balance.
- Breathe and hold.
- When you are ready, press your hands to the floor and slowly roll up to an upright position.

Modifications

- If lowering to the ground is difficult, lower to a chair or other elevated seat. You can also use rolled-up blankets or towels to gradually squat lower over time.
- Practice this pose seated by sitting up tall in your chair and placing your feet firmly on the floor. Inhale and lean forward - pressing your elbows and forearms onto your thighs and keeping your spine long and lengthened.



Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a tree pose and hold

Directions

- Stand tall like a mountain.
- Reach your arms up towards the sky and lower them down to your heart.
- Inhale and lift your right foot to your shin or upper thigh (be very mindful not to put pressure on your knee) and balance.
- If balancing is tricky, place your tiptoe on the ground to help you balance and practice lifting your foot up and down.
- Exhale, come back to standing.
- Repeat on the other side.

Modifications

- Practice this pose seated by pointing your toe towards your ankle or shin and lifting your arms up above your head.
- You can also hold on to the wall, a chair, or a table to help with balance.



Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a cobra pose and hold

Directions

- Slowly lower down to the ground and lay flat on your belly.
- Bend your elbows and bring the palms of your hands underneath your shoulders next to each side of your chest - closely snug against your ribcage.
- Inhale and on the exhale push up and straighten your arms - growing your chest towards the sky.
- Press into the ground with the tops of your feet and thighs.
- Hold for the count of 10.
- With an exhale, slowly lower to the ground and rest.

Modifications

- Practice this pose seated by sitting at the front edge of the chair and placing your hands on the back of the chair behind you. Lean slightly forward and stretch out through your chest.



**Ready,
Set....**



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a warrior pose and hold

Directions

- Stand tall like a mountain.
- Take a large step back with your left foot - keeping your front toes pointed forward.
- Pretend your hips are your headlights. Make sure they are facing forward - over your toes.
- Bend your front knee, working to bring your thigh parallel to the floor.
- Swing your arms forward and reach up towards the sky.
- Breathe and hold.
- Step your feet back together and repeat on the other side.

Modifications

- Practice this pose seated by sitting at the front edge of the chair and turning your body weight to the side and using the support of the chair.



Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a butterfly pose and hold

Directions

- Come to a seated position.
- Sit tall and stretch up and out through the top of your head - reaching towards the sky.
- Press the bottoms of your feet together - making butterfly wings.
- For an added stretch, lightly press your elbows down on your legs or lean slightly forward.
- Breathe and allow your knees to slowly fall towards the floor.

Modifications

- For an added stretch, lightly press your elbows down on your legs or lean slightly forward.
- You can also use pillows or folded blankets to take some of the pressure off of your knees if it is uncomfortable.
- Practice this pose seated in a chair by bringing your feet together in front of you on the floor and allow your knees to fall to the sides.



Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



**Slowly melt into a child's
pose and hold**

Directions

- Come down to the ground on your knees and sit back on your heels.
- Widen your knees slightly wider than hip-width distance apart.
- Use your hands to slowly walk your upper body forward - resting your chest on top of your thighs and resting your forehead on the ground or your hands. You can also rest your arms at your sides.
- Breathe and hold.
- Slowly walk your hands back up to return to an upright position.

Modifications

- Fold a blanket or stack pillows in front of your chest if lowering your chest all the way down to your legs is uncomfortable.
- Practice this pose seated in a chair by allowing the body to rest forward - lowering your chest onto your lap, a pillow, or simply bowing your head and relaxing your arms.



Ready,
Set....



Dance!

FREEZE!



Slowly melt into a modified half lotus pose and hold

- Come to a seated position.
- Cross your legs criss-cross applesauce and rest your wrists on your knees.
- As you inhale and exhale, grow tall in your seat - stretching out through the top of your head and keeping your spine straight and lengthened.
- If uncomfortable, allow your legs to uncross or move further out to where they are comfortable.
- You can also practice this pose in a chair by resting your feet out in front of you on another chair or surface. Bend your left knee and rest your left ankle on top of your right ankle - allowing your knee to fall to the side. Repeat on the other side.



**Ready,
Set....**



Dance!

FREEZE!

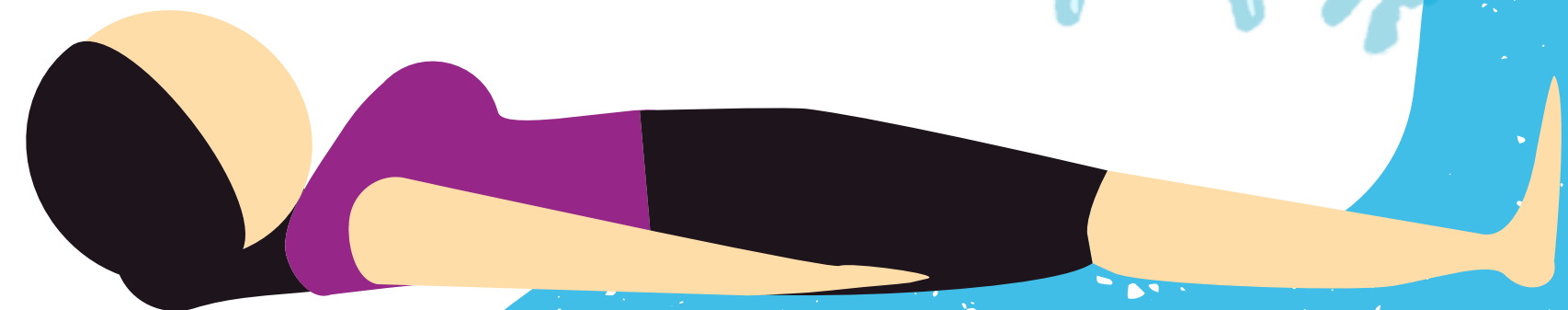


Slowly melt into a corpse pose and hold

Lie down on your back and find a comfortable position. Relax your muscles by imagining a slow melt from head to toe - just like a snowflake melting into the ground. If comfortable, allow your eyes to gently close.

Practice this pose seated by resting back in your chair and allowing the muscles to relax. Rest your hands on your lap and allow your feet to relax out in front of you .

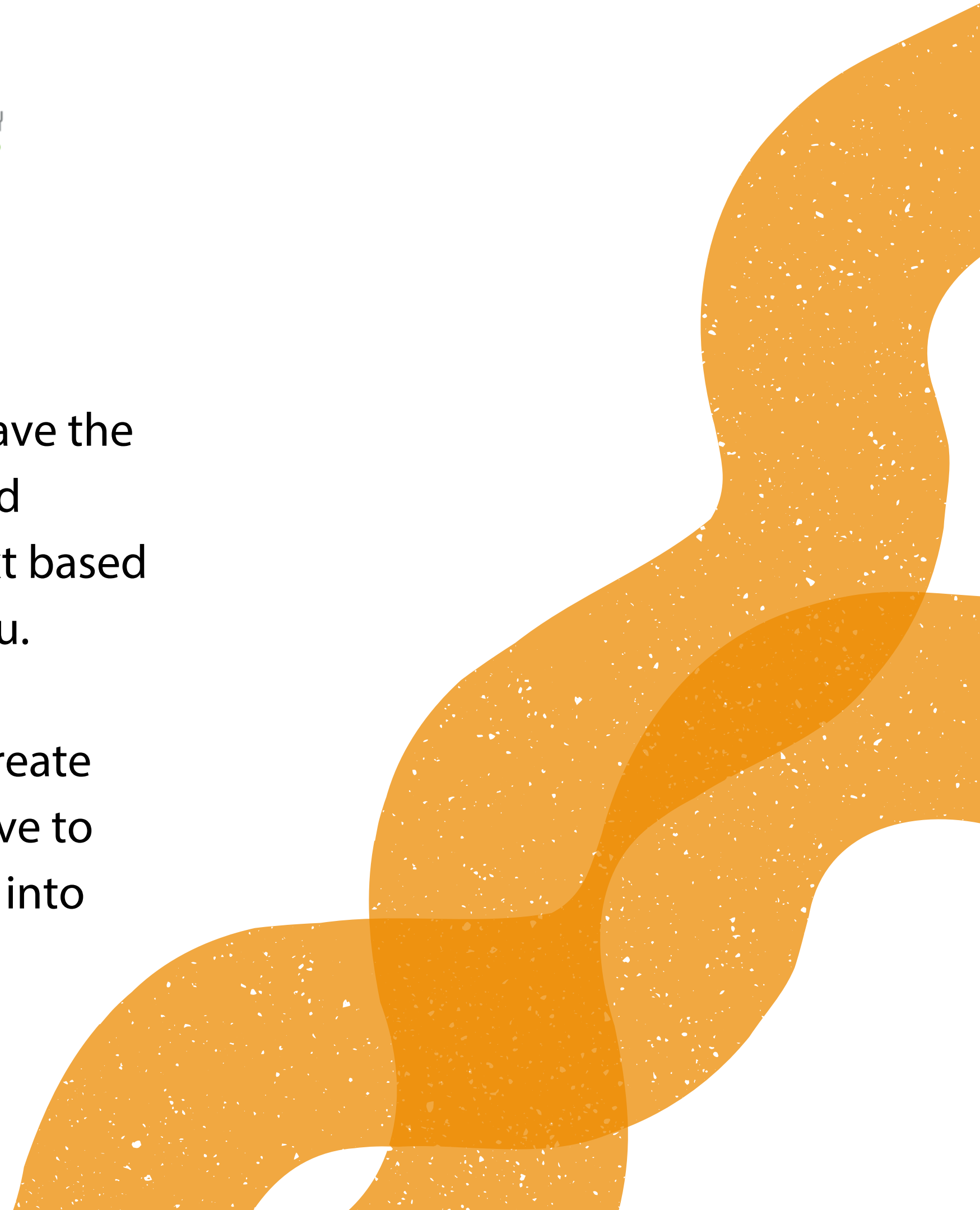
Take a deep breath in through your nose. Notice how your belly button moves away from your spine and your belly gets bigger. Now exhale through your mouth and notice as your belly button comes into your spine and your belly flattens. Place one of your hands on your stomach to feel this. Repeat this until time ends. Placing your other hand on your chest notice your heart. Is it beating fast? How hard is it to catch your breath after dancing? As the minute ends think of one thing you are grateful for.



What is a flow?

What is a flow? When practicing yoga you have the freedom to move from pose to pose in a fluid motion. You move from one pose to the next based on what feels natural and comfortable to you.

Take what you've learned today and try to create your own flow. Start in one position and move to the position that feels most natural to move into next!



Reflective Wrap-Up

- What did you notice about your breath?
 - How did it change throughout the activity?
 - How hard was it to catch your breath in between each dance break?
- What did your notice about your heartbeat?
 - How did it feel?
 - did it change?
- How did your body move during your deep breaths?
- What did your personalized flow look like?
- What were you grateful for today?

