



**JESSICA MCILVEEN**  
presents  
**KIDS YOGA THERAPY**

# FOCUS USING BALANCE



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## FOCUS USING BALANCE

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The following are the props used in these exercises that can be purchased from anywhere that sells yoga supplies: yoga mat, cards, block, round circles/discs, resistance band.

One of the best ways to achieve an extended focus point and concentration is to work with balance within the body. Balance takes a lot of focus, so the longer we extend that out, means it is building up that muscle in our brain that helps us to concentrate for longer.

It is important for your child to understand that they need to practice in order to get better at something, and it doesn't matter what you're trying to teach them, repetition is key. If you want to improve their concentration, strength, empowerment, confidence, self-regulation, repetition is key in anything that you see in these videos.

One of the most common yoga poses to help with focus is the tree pose.

In this video I will show you how to do it with your child in a few different ways depending on how much of a challenge your child needs to stay focused. We will start with the normal way.

### Variation 1

"Stand up now and face forward"

"Bring your feet together. Which one is your right leg?"

"OK we're going to bend that leg so that our foot sits just above our knee, or if that's too difficult it can just go here on the calf muscle, or it can just go on the ground like this" (*With foot bent leaning against the ankle. It depends on how old your child is as to what they can do so demonstrate each position*).



“So let’s pop our foot up above our knee and try to put our hands together in front of our chest”

“If it falls down its totally OK. You just hop straight back in”

“We’re going to try and stay here for as long as we can and sometimes it’s easier to pick one thing in front of you to stare at and focus on”

*This is something you can help your child with at home. Choose one thing in front of them as a focus point because you’ll notice that their eyes will go off in the distance, usually when they have too many thoughts in their head, so we want them to zone in and focus on one thing.*

“What are you focusing on, let’s choose”

“Can you see that card in front of you there, just focus on that card. Just look at that card the whole time”

“That’s it, you’re doing amazing”

This process will change from day to day, so just like adults, they can’t always get back to the same stage right away.

## Variation 2

This one is for children who are really hyperactive, so they need additional props to help them focus. Sometimes children wiggle around when they are on the ground being still because it doesn’t feel safe or comfortable for them. Using a block is the perfect way to get them to be still for a moment and be challenged. They enjoy the challenge.

Place the block on their mat then say:



“We’re going to put the block like this and you’re going to put one foot on top of the block and put the other foot on your calf or your knee, whatever feels more comfortable for you”

“How does that feel on the block?”

“Can you put your hands in front of your chest?”

“Now let’s experiment and see if we can lift our foot for 3 seconds. Just try it...1, 2, 3”

“Good work, that was so good”

There are other ways you can help your child remain still. You can use anything, it is just about being creative. In this case we used a red dot, so place it on the mat and say:

“Pop one foot on there and lift your foot as high as you can, then put your hands in front of your chest while I count.....1,2, 3, 4, 5, yes!!!”

### Variation 3

For an extra level and using balance as a means to extend focus and concentration use a resistance band. Say to them:

“Put this in your hands, lift one foot and then put your hands above your head, and you’re going to pull this”

“If that’s where you want your foot to go that’s perfect so let’s lift our arms above our head and pull as strong as you can”

“Go, go go for 5 more seconds, 1, 2, 3, pull harder 4, pull harder 5.

“Yes, good work”



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These are just a few variations. There is no right or wrong here. This is just a guide to use if you really want to challenge your child and have them be able to experiment a little more with their body.

It is really important in whatever practice you do, that you're always providing choices and options for your child. Sometimes these are the only moments they get to decide what they do with their body and their time. This doesn't happen so much at school and at home. We want to empower them so this is about giving them choice over their body, what feels good to them, and what they want to do. It is special for them to have that moment when they get to choose for themselves.