



YOGA GAMES & ACTIVITIES

POPULAR YOGA GAMES WITH A JEWISH TWIST

Toe-ga

Take a large Ziploc bag of pom poms of various sizes and colors and pour them into the center of your circle or class area. Everyone starts on their mat. When the song begins, the class runs to the pom poms, grabs them with their toes, and takes them back to their mat. We like to have the kids place their hands on their thighs while the song is gearing up and we bend our knees and chant "TOE-GA... TOE-GA..." while they are waiting for the "GO." Then, they put their hand in reverse Namaste to give them that extra stretch AND to keep them from cheating. At the end, we never have a real winner... we always say: "Everyone's a winner!"

Great for focus and developing foot strength and dexterity. It's also great for high-energy classes. And of course use our song.

When the song is over, have everyone make a design out of the pom poms that they've collected. It's a great quiet-ish activity that reinforces focus and thought.

Jewish Toe-Ga Themes:

- Shabbat- how many matzah balls can you pick up??
- Rosh Hashanah- use red & yellow pompoms for "apples & honey"
- Sukkot- Harvest your garden to decorate the sukkah
- Chanukah- collect gelt
- Purim- make Mishloach Manot. Have kids give their collected pompoms to a friend and work together to create a design.
- Passover- Let's get ready for Passover & use our toes to remove the chametz!

Post-toe-ga activities: start cleaning 'em up

Pom Pom basketball

This is a fun way to combine pranayama (cleansing breath) and cleaning up. Put a bowl in the center of the room and the kids take deep breaths and



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blow pom poms from their hands into the basket. To avoid hyperventilating say: “blow one and throw one”and then do just that.

Pompom popper

Cup a pom pom in your palms (a cocoon) and pop it up in the air. Turn your hands over and try to catch it on the back of your hands (a butterfly). Pop it back and forth like this. For little kids, just use your palms and not the back of the hands. There is always one kid who says, "This is easy!" So for more of a challenge, try to pop 2 pom poms in the air and catch them on the back of your hands. Still easy? Try 3 or 4!

Yoga Nosh

Sit up straight with your feet touching to make a bowl. What are you making today? Bagels? Hamentashen? Ruggeleh? What ingredients do we need?? (Reach up high to grab the ingredients that the kids shout out.) Hmmm, let's stir our dough. (Make big circles with your upper body making sure to really stretch and lean back. Remind yogis to make their tummy tight when they lean back.) Our dough is looking good! What else do we need?? (Repeat reaching up & stirring) Don't forget to twist your body right & left if you're making challah!

Another fun version of this is making it a partner activity:

Straddle partner pose, feet to feet. Hold hands and make circles with your upper body going forwards and backwards and side to side. BIG circles. Mixing the dough! Don't forget your challah twists!!

Mayim, Mayim, GADAL/ Water, Water, GROW! (Duck Duck Goose)

Using a watering pitcher like Duck Duck Goose, but water, water, GROW & then the kids would choose what to grow into... Yep even animals need water to grow!

“Mayim, mayim, mayim, GADAL....”

“I grow into a Tree (Eagle, Butterfly, Cow, Warrior, etc.)!”

Pass the Orange



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Sitting in a circle, an orange or orange ball is passed by holding it in the feet and passing to the other person's feet. We like to say while we are passing, "ORANGE you grateful for [insert something]" or "orange you thankful for" during Rosh Hashanah , Yom Kippur or Shabbat.

Jogging Through Judea

Say, "First we will jog through Judea". Stand up and begin jogging. Lift your knees high and breathe deep. "We are jogging through the Judea.. Where in Israel should we go first??"

The Negev?? Let's GO! What do you see in the desert?

Jog, jog, and jog.... desert flower, jog, jog, jog...Snakes (cobra pose), jog, jog, jog.... Camels

- The Golan?? Let's Go!!! What do you see in the mountains?
Mountain, tree, butterfly, mountain lion
- Tel Aviv?? Let's GO! What do you see by the sea?
Boat, fish, bridge, dolphin
- A Kibbutz?? Let's GO!! What do you see on the farm?
Dog, donkey, cat, cow
- Ancient Jerusalem? Let's GO! What do you see in the old city?
Star, Menorah, Warriors!

In the beginning, the teacher can lead the poses & jogging. Once the kids get the hang of it, ask them to suggest poses for the area you are in. Everyone does the pose until the teacher directs them back to jogging through Judea.

For a really large class, have the kids in the circle and have all the girls run in the middle of the circle and have the boys run on the outside. Run back to the mat to do the pose. A good BLISS for this is that, "I used to live in Israel and I would sit on my front porch and one day I saw a LION and I had to run from the LION..." then we JOG THROUGH JUDEA ! MANY WAYS TO



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PLAY... LOTS OF EXERCISE AND YOGA AND FUN, FUN, FUN! DON'T FORGET TO USE OUR SONG!!!!

Variation: Take this same idea and go for a "Stroll by the Sea in Tel Aviv", "March in the mountains", "Hike in the desert"

MUSICAL MATS (USE TOWELS AT CAMP!)

Infuse a "Jewish vibe" to this game by playing Israeli music.

Take all the mats/towels and fold them in half for a larger group or in thirds for a smaller group. Take one out. Turn the music on (Yoga is Fun). The kids are not allowed to touch the mats during music. They can go all over the room if they want but when the music stops they have to get to a mat.

There can be more than one kid on a mat and there will be! Turn the music on and take away a mat... keep going and going and finally you will have ALL the kids on one mat. One of our teachers calls this "Oceans and Islands" and her kids swim around in the Ocean and then run to an Island!

Jewish Food Tic Tac Toe

Supplies: yoga straps or rolled up towels

Set up a big tic tac toe board with your yoga straps or rolled up towels (pool noodles would work well too). Split your kids into two groups and select a captain from each.

One group is the "matzo balls" and the other the "hamentashen".

Each team takes turns by selecting a space on the board to place their "food". The captain chooses a space (encourage them to work as a team) and someone from the team holds the spot. Everyone from the "matzo ball" team holds their spot in either "Happy Baby" or "Child's Pose" and the hamentashen team holds their spot in "Triangle" pose. The goal is to get 3 in a row. Play a few rounds so that different people get to be the "captain". Have kids help chose where to put their "markers".

GAMES FOR LARGE GROUPS



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YOGA-LYMPICS

Either lay out yoga mats or create stations around your program space. Put a different activity in each area and each kids move from one station to another. Put music on and when you turn the music off they have to switch! Ideas for what to put on each station:

- Yoga deck card... you can use many of these
- Trampoline if you are in a gym
- Move pompoms from one side of mat to other with your toes of course!
- Lay in corpse pose
- Musical instruments... 2 or 3 on a mat
- Jumping jacks or Jump, Jump Pose
- 5 donkey kicks/savasana/5 jumping jacks/savasana
- Balance Beanie Babies on your Head while doing tree, dancer...
- Tushie Trot across the floor (race other kids)
- In groups, write a cheer that includes yoga poses (present after games are over)
- Joggin' Through Judea Stations: Negev, Golan, Tel Aviv, Kibbutz
- Noah's Ark: in groups of two, walk across the station area holding a ball or balloon between (think 3-legged race, but instead of binding partner's legs together, they walk close enough that the ball/balloon won't fall)
- Tikkun Olam: clean up a designated area or decorate recycling boxes

**Do one that is very physical, and then a calm one and so on and so on.

Maccabiah Games

The Maccabiah Games have been referred to as the "Jewish Olympics". They are held every four years and bring thousands of Jewish and Israeli athletes from all over the world. Create a "yoga-lympics" with a Maccabiah theme for a great large group program.



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(Camps, youth group events, field days) Label each station with either a city in Israel, a Hebrew letter, Jewish food or Jewish Hero. Don't forget to play your favorite Jewish music.

The Red Sea Parts (also called "The Big Wind Blows")

Everyone stands on a mat in a BIG circle... the farther away the better. The teacher takes away their mat and stands in the center. The teacher says: "My pose is the EAGLE (you choose your pose)... The Red Sea Parts if you have been to California," or "The Red Sea Parts if you like pizza." Everybody who that pertains to runs to a new mat...but NOT the one on either side of them! One person is always left without a mat. Come up with some funny stuff... like "The Red Sea Parts if you haven't showered for a week". To be fair, try to make sure everybody gets a turn. If you get chosen twice you have to pick someone else. This is a GREAT GAME... play it outside on a beautiful day in a BIG circle... it's fabulous with LOTS of kids.

Aleph Bet: 4 Corners or 4 Poses

Designate 4 areas in the room (the "corners") and each corner has a specific Hebrew Letter & Pose. (Let's say Tree, Dog, Menorah and Warrior 1). The leader gives the cue - maybe say "shalOMMM" and when the Om is finished everyone should be in the corner of their choice doing the specific pose. Then the leader either picks a pose out of a hat or is blindfolded and calls out a pose. The group in that pose corner is out. The game continues in the same way until one person is left (at the end you have to make sure only 1 person is in each corner, or they will huddle together, making it impossible to get a winner). It'd be a great way to get kids to hold poses longer, building their stamina. It would also be a fun way to introduce some new poses & Hebrew letters.



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For Chanukah, try Nun, Gomel, Hay, Shin.

You can also use this game to teach Hebrew numbers.

Number	Hebrew	Phonetic
1	אחד	eh'chad
2	שתיים	Shteyim
3	שלוש	shalosh
4	ארבע	arba

Sherlock Ommmstein

Kids stand in a big circle. One child becomes the detective, Sherlock Ommmstein. The teacher puts him/her in the middle of the circle and covers his/her eyes and then points to the first YOGI. The YOGI chooses a Yoga posture and they all follow as quickly as possible. They must be clever and NOT stare at the YOGI. The YOGI has to change the poses every 5-10 seconds. Then Sherlock OMstein opens his/her eyes. The kids are already moving from one pose to another. All the children start chanting "SHERLOCK OMMMstein... SHERLOCK OMMMstein." Sherlock OMMMstein stands in the middle of the circle and has to find out who the YOGI is (who is changing the poses). IF YOU ARE REALLY GOOD YOU HAVE A MAGNIFYING GLASS AND SHERLOCK CAN HAM IT UP A BIT AND USE THIS! The YOGI changes the Yoga postures, of course, when SHERLOCK OMMMstein is not looking and the other children have to imitate him as quickly as possible, in order not to betray him. When the YOGI is discovered, HE PICKS THE NEXT YOGI. AND SHERLOCK PICKS THE NEXT SHERLOCK. EACH KIDS GETS TO DO ONE THING UNLESS YOU HAVE TONS OF TIME. Try to guide your kids to NOT do a pose where they can't see the YOGI, like CHILD'S POSE/DOWNWARD DOG/CAMEL/ETC.



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HOLIDAY GAMES & ACTIVITIES

Pass The Challah

Supplies: plastic plate or frisbee, picture of challah & tape

First, draw a picture of a challah on the plate or tape it to the frisbee. Players make a circle on hands & knees in "Table" pose. Place the "challah" on the middle of the first player's back. The goal is to move the challah from "Table to Table" without using hands. If it falls, place it on the back of the person who had it last. Keep playing until the challah is passed around every table.

Raisins on Challah

Supplies: a straw & paper plate for each child & ten pieces of black scrap paper each

The plate is the challah and the scraps are the raisins. Pick up a raisin by inhaling through the straw and placing it on the challah. If it falls, begin again. All players start at the same time. The first to get all of the raisins on the challah wins.

Ten is a special number because there are 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Shofar Blowing

Supplies: straw, pom pom (optional: *game sheet on YY resource page)

If you are playing in a classroom, it may help to use the game sheet on a desk. This game can also be played on a yoga mat or towel.

Give each player a straw and a pom pom. Remind them to breath deeply through their nose. The goal is get the pom pom across the designated area (game sheet, mat or towel). Call out different shofar notes:



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- TEKIAH: one blast
- SHEVARIM: three short blasts
- TERUAH: nine quick notes

Challenge players (great for focus & attention) by changing up the order of the notes.

The VERY LAST note is: TEKIAH GADOLA. Have players bring their pom pom back to the starting area. Instruct them to take a BIG breath through their nose & when they hear "TEKIAH GADOLA", blow the pom pom as far as they can using one big breath.

*You can play this game using the game sheet, a yoga mat or make playing areas outside using sidewalk chalk. HAVE FUN!!

Read the Book: Ari and the Rosh Hashanah Railroad

Find the book here. Either as you read it or after, have the kids create their own mitzvah railroad. Be trains and tushie trot across the floor. Let the kids practice going forward and backward. "Line up" and pass a ball or beanie, over under kid to kid inhale arms up, exhale fold and pass through the legs. "Conductor / Engineer says" and bring in a conductor hat. Deliver the special holiday treats from the book. Discuss working together, the importance of friends and learning from mistakes.

Birds in the Trees (For Sukkot / Tu B'Shevat)

Pairs of players do "Partner Tree Pose" & support each other with their hands. A third child becomes a bird and sits between the trees. There should be a few pairs of "trees" and one or two extra birds. The caller (teacher) announces, "Birds find some worms!" all birds scamper around the room looking for worms (they can also get on their tummies and pretend to be worms). When the caller announces, "Birds find a tree!" all birds look for an empty pair of "Trees" and sit in the middle. There will be one or two birds without "Trees". Play a few times and let "Trees" and birds change places.

Fun game to play during the fall or for Tu B'Shevat!



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Yoga Dreidel Game

How to play- attach paper with poses printed to the sides of the Dreidel with Velcro. Give each child a chance to spin the driedel and teach the pose (depending on age) or you stand next to the child and teach it. For large classes you can change out the Velcro poses for new ones. (you can purchase an inflatable driedel on amazon.com)

Crossing The Red Sea

Supplies: 2 yoga straps (you can use pool noodles or yarn too)

Arrange two parallel yoga straps (or pool noodles/ yarn...) on the floor. Pretend that the straps are land and space between them is the sea. Players take turns jumping over the "sea." After each round, widen the space between the strings. Play festive holiday music and have the kids waiting in line to various Yoga poses (Triangle / Pyramids, Hero/ Moses, Mountain/ Mt. Sinai, Star/ Star of David). If anyone get's caught in the sea, they sit out a turn. See how far you can jump!

Shavuot Book Balance

It's traditional to stay up all night on Shavuot and study Jewish books.

Supplies: a variety of books of different sizes & yoga straps/masking tape/sidewalk chalk

Make a maze using yoga straps/masking tape/sidewalk chalk. Give each child a book to balance on their head. Challenge them to walk the maze while doing balance poses (Tree, Dancer...) while balancing the books. (Depending on ages, It may be challenging enough to do the poses without walking the maze.) Take turns using different sized books. What's harder to balance? The bigger heavier books or the smaller books?

Variation: Divide into teams and try this as a relay.



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Ha Ha Hanukkah (or Cha Cha Chanukah)

Children lie on the floor in a circle, each with his/her head on the next one's tummy. First child says, "ha". The second says, "ha ha," the third says, "ha, ha, ha...." This Jewish version of "Laughing Meditation" is a great intro into a guided meditation or Mitzvah Circle.

GREAT GAMES FOR FOCUS AND ATTENTION

Tushie Trot (Hiney Hustle)

Great for motor skills/left right brain coordination

Pick a partner and have them sit across from you in the room. They have to walk towards you on their tushie without their arms touching the ground.

For example: left arm, right leg forward, right arm, left leg forward, basically "walking" to their partner but on their tushie.

You can also combine this with Red Light, Green Light to make Red Light, Green Light, and Tushie Trot.

ZIP, ZAP, ZOP!

We tried and tried to "Yogafy" this game and then realized it was fine the way it is, and it IS Yoga. It would be hard to think of a better way to teach your kids how to focus and to keep them alert. There is a video of us doing this game on the KAY YouTube channel. STAND UP in the ready position. Hands in prayer position/wishin position but pointing out ready to be able to shoot a hand out to the person you are ZIP ZAP ZOPPING. The first person says ZIP and points one of their hands towards anybody else in the circle. That person receives the ZIP and ZAPS another person making the same movement with one of their hands. That person receives the ZAP and ZOPS another person and so on and so on. It's hard and the kids need to stay focused. You go faster and faster and it gets more and more fun. This is for ALL ages.

I Went to Visit My Bubbe

"... and I taught her the tree pose!" Next child says: "I went to visit my Bubbe and I taught her the tree and the chair", etc. Everyone should do the



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poses together, repeating / doing the poses that have been said before and adding to the list. Go around the group until everyone has gone at least once, each time saying/doing all of the poses that have been done before them.

Red Light, Green Light, Tree OR Adom Or Yah-Rok Or Etz

Let the leader of each round choose their own pose. They can choose Tree, Eagle, or Dancer (ONLY standing balancing poses).

The “it” person stands in front of the room and says, “My pose is the tree.” And then they start with the traditional “red light” for stop or “green light” for go. Our kids invented yellow light for walking REALLY slow and brown light for crawling... FUN! Whoever tags the “it” person first goes next. If the child touches the ground they are supposed to go back but we don’t like to do that. Decide how strict you want to be... maybe they go back two steps? Add some Jewish learning by teaching colors in Hebrew.

**Check out our OYY Facebook group for ongoing support
and suggestions!**