

Deer-lightful yoga sequence and postures

Notes for the classroom teacher or yoga facilitator

After having read the story of Deer-lightful to your students, you might like to share the story with them in a more experiential way. The whole story is made up of 3 sections—the Energy Block Sequence (EBR1), a series of yoga postures (tree, cobra, downward dog, child and corpse) and then the guided relaxation.

Stage 1

Begin by clearing a space in your room if necessary and arranging the children in a circle formation. Have the children standing as still as can be, like the mountain, and slowly start moving into EBR 1 sequence. The sequence begins in Tadasana, the Mountain pose, and finishes at the point in the story when the deer returns to the top of the mountain, after emerging from the dark cave:

“Emerging from the dark cave Deer sees that Surya is painting the evening sky.

Deer is disappointed. He’s looked on the mountain’s slopes and in the depths of the cave, he’s searched here, there and everywhere.

He retraces his steps to the top of the mountain. He takes a deep breath in. It smells deliciously like musk perfume, but where is it coming from?”

Is it being carried on the wind’s breath from some far away place?

Hands rise all the way up above the head into a standing stretch then come back down in front of the heart to rest in praying hands position. This is the end of the EBR sequence.

Stage 2— Posture obstacle course

Take a moment to explain to students that Deer is about to continue his journey and that we're going to help him by creating the obstacles he encounters along the way. Some of us will be the trees in the moonlit forest, some of us the snakes in the valley, some will be bridges (or maybe a long tunnel), some will be lying in child pose like big rocks and boulders...and some of us will be the wandering deer searching for the sweet, enticing scent.

Creating a human obstacle course with postures encourages the children to hold each pose for an extended period of time, making the story interactive and fun. It's a good idea to explain up front to students that we'll each get a turn at doing the different postures.

Instruction for obstacle course

Divide the children into 5 groups—the first group becomes the deer and the other 4 groups take on a posture each representing a section of the deer's continuing search.

- > **Deer**—hold the deer mudra while travelling around course
- > **Forest**—tree pose
- > **Valley of snakes**—cobra pose
- > **Bridges**—downward dog pose
- > **Rocks and boulders**—child pose

Once the deer group has weaved through the trees, stepped safely over the snakes, crossed over or under bridges/tunnels and climbed carefully around the rocks/boulders we change roles. Deers become trees, trees turn into snakes, snakes become bridges, children in downward dog rest in child pose and those in the last group have a turn at being Deer.

Continue in the same way until everyone has had a turn at each posture.

Resting in recovery position

Deer, now exhausted, trips and falls down a rocky crevice and all the children lie down on their sides in the recovery position. Deer has finally stopped. He has hit rock bottom and can't go on any more. Now that he has stopped, and with nose nuzzled into his belly, Deer realises that the scent is stronger than ever before. Could it be that what he has been searching for is coming from within?

Deer is so happy to discover that he has that delicious sweet scent and that it *he* is deer-licious. He feels full of light and joy—deer-light-full!

Stage 3—guided relaxation

Children lie on their backs with arms by their sides, ready to be taken through the tense and release relaxation.

Please refer to the end of Deer-lightful for this guided relaxation and for the structure of relaxations so you can make up your own. Once you are familiar with the process you can be creative and take children on amazing journeys to their own delightful spaces within.