

Activity: Try some animal yoga (Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts)

🕒 10 mins

Be active

Look after your body by being physically active.

Live healthily

Gain awareness and practical skills to take care of your body and mind.

Safety alerts

Active games

The game area should be free of hazards. Explain the rules of the game clearly and have a clear way to communicate that the game must stop when needed. Take a look at our guidance on [running active games safely](#).

Stretch like an animal to calm down and relax.

Before you begin

- Use the [safety checklist](#) to help you plan and risk assess your activity. Additional help to carry out your [risk assessment](#), including examples can be found here. Don't forget to make sure all young people and adults involved in the activity know how to take part safely.
- Make sure you'll have enough adult helpers. You may need some parents and carers to help if you're short on helpers.

Planning this activity

- This is a great cool down or relaxing activity to stretch. Try playing a high energy game, such as [Red light, Green light](#), before this to get everyone warm and moving.
- You may want people to bring yoga mats or towels to stretch on to make it more comfortable. Camping roll mats also work well!

Running this activity

1. Gather everyone together and tell them you're going to do some animal yoga.
2. Ask if anyone can do an impression of an animal using their full body, such as lying down and stretching out your arms to be a snake.
3. Ask everyone to spread out in the space and make sure they can see the person leading the activity. They should have plenty of space around them for stretching.

4. When everyone's ready, an adult volunteer or young leader should read out an animal and create the shape for that animal.
5. Everyone has ten seconds to copy that shape.
6. Keep playing with as many animals as possible.
7. You could put on some relaxing, age-appropriate music and encourage people to slowly get into the positions, so people can take their time to make the position rather than feeling rushed. Make sure to follow [music licensing](#).

Some animal-themed positions include:

- **Dog:** From a standing position, bend down and place your palms flat on the ground. Step your feet back to create an upside-down V shape with your buttocks high in the air. Straighten your legs, relax your head and neck, and look down between your legs.
- **Frog:** Put your feet together with your hands on the floor and your knees bent.
- **Kangaroo:** Pose with your feet hip-width apart, bend your knees, and jump on the spot, like a kangaroo
- **Cat, Tiger or Lion:** Get into all-fours position, round your back, and tuck your chin into your chest.
- **Bird:** Slowly and gently flap your arms at your sides
- **Crocodile:** Stretch both arms out in front of you, opening and closing them as wide as possible, just like a big crocodile's mouth.
- **Elephant:** Clasp your hands together and stretch your arms out in front of you, lean over slightly and swing your arms between your legs.
- **Wolf:** Get into an all-fours position, look up, arch your back, and open your chest.
- **Butterfly:** Sit on the floor and keep your back as straight and tall as you can. Bend your legs in front of you, placing the soles of your feet together, then gently flap your legs like the wings of a butterfly.
- **Hedgehog:** Sit on your heels, slowly bring your forehead down to rest in front of your knees, rest your arms down alongside your body, and take a few deep breaths.
- **Snake:** Lie on your tummy, place palms flat next to your shoulders, press into hands, lift head and shoulders off ground, and hiss like a snake.
- **Giraffe:** Stand up tall on your tip toes and slowly reach your arms up as high as you can, bringing your palms together. Tilt your upper body to one side, then tilt your body to the other side.
- **Starfish:** Lie on your back with your arms and legs stretched out, stretch out your legs and arms as wide as you can, being mindful of those around you.
- **Flamingo:** Stand on one leg, bend your knee, place the sole of your foot on your inner thigh, and balance.
- **Octopus:** With your legs straight out in front of you. Bend your torso forward while keeping your spine straight. Dangle your arms in front of you like the tentacles of an octopus.
- **Horse:** Stand with your legs apart, feet facing slightly outwards, bend your knees, and stand firm, just like you sat on a horse.

- **Dolphin:** On your hands-and-knees, bend your elbows, rest your forearms on the ground, with your palms flat, lift up your knees to straighten your legs, and look forward.
- **Penguin:** Stand on your knees, open your chest, look up, and reach up to the moon.
- **Shark:** Lie on your tummy, lift your chest and shoulders up, look up, clasp your hands back behind you, and glide through the water like a shark.
- **Bear:** Lie on your back with your chin tucked in, hug your knees into your chest, then grab the outer part of your feet with both of your hands, and rock like a happy baby.
- **Koala:** Standing up tall, wrap one leg around the other, bring your bent arms out in front of you, wrap your arms together the opposite way, and slightly bend your knees, perching on a tree like a koala.
- **Bat:** Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet flat on the floor, arms resting alongside your body, and chin tucked in. On an exhale, push your palms down and lift your legs straight up, making an L shape with your body. Stay in this position or squeeze your belly and raise your hips. Then, bend your elbows and place your palms on your lower back for a half shoulder stand.

Reflection

Take the time to think about what you did and why – you'll be amazed at what you learn.

Try out a quick, active reflection from our [reflective toolkit](#) to lock in the great things you tried and learned in this activity.

Change the level of challenge

Step it up by asking people to choose their own animals and shapes for the group to copy.

Make it accessible

Choose animals and shapes that everyone in the group can copy.

Asking people to choose their own animals and shapes can help make sure they're comfortable with the chosen movements.

Take it further

Try out some more active games and get your body moving with our [activity finder](#).

