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Jenny Loves Yoga



Written and Photographed by Milo Pear

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Each morning Jenny begins her day by practicing yoga. Yoga is an exercise that helps Jenny to grow strong and flexible.

To practice yoga, Jenny moves her arms, legs, head, and chest into different positions called poses. Jenny holds the poses while she smiles. She breathes in and out slowly through her nose.

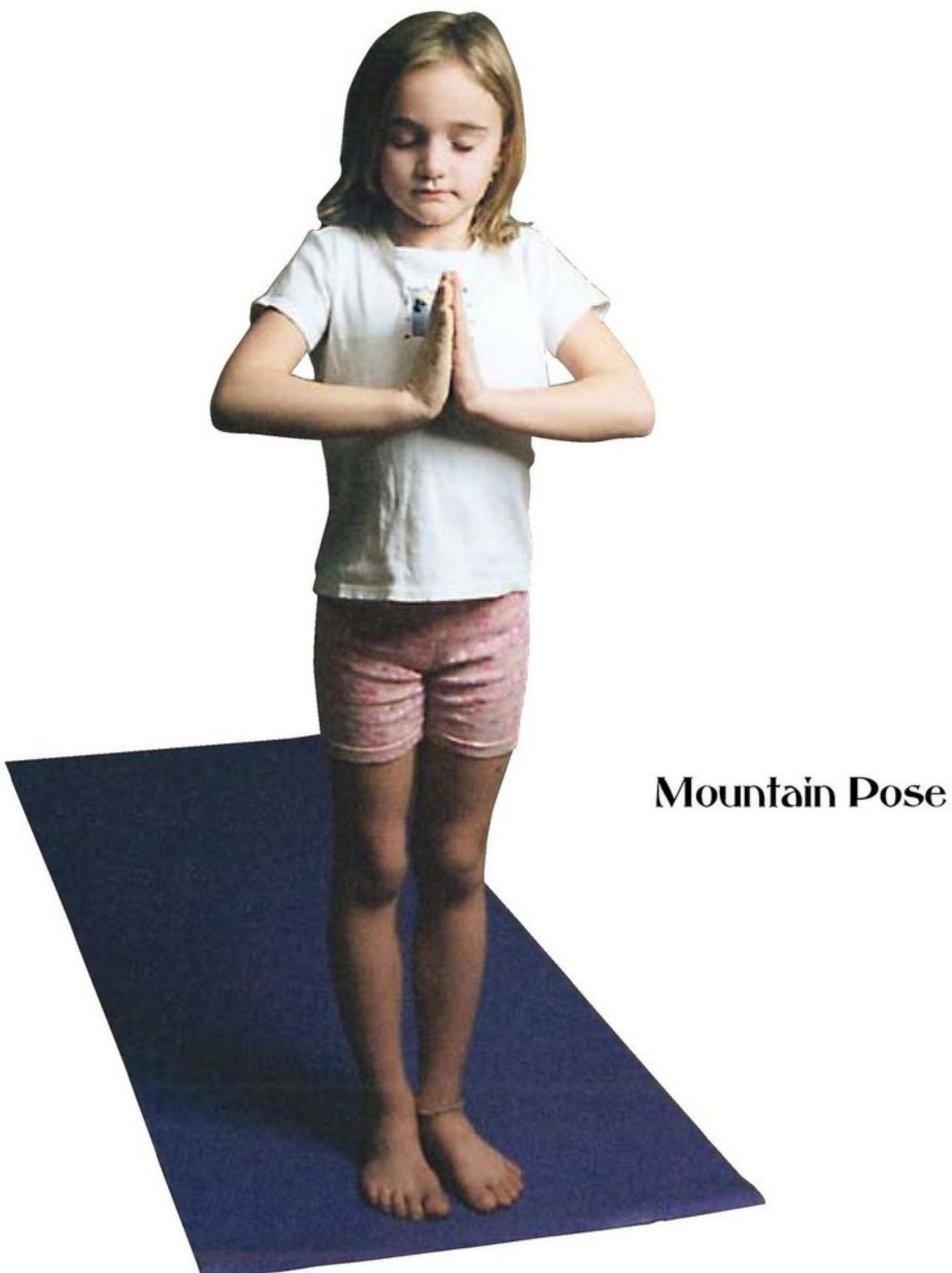


Tree Pose



Getting started

Jenny wakes up very early and puts on her yoga clothes. Loose or stretchy shorts and a T-shirt work well. She rolls out a long, thin piece of rubber called a “sticky mat.” The mat helps keep Jenny from slipping while she is moving from one pose to another.



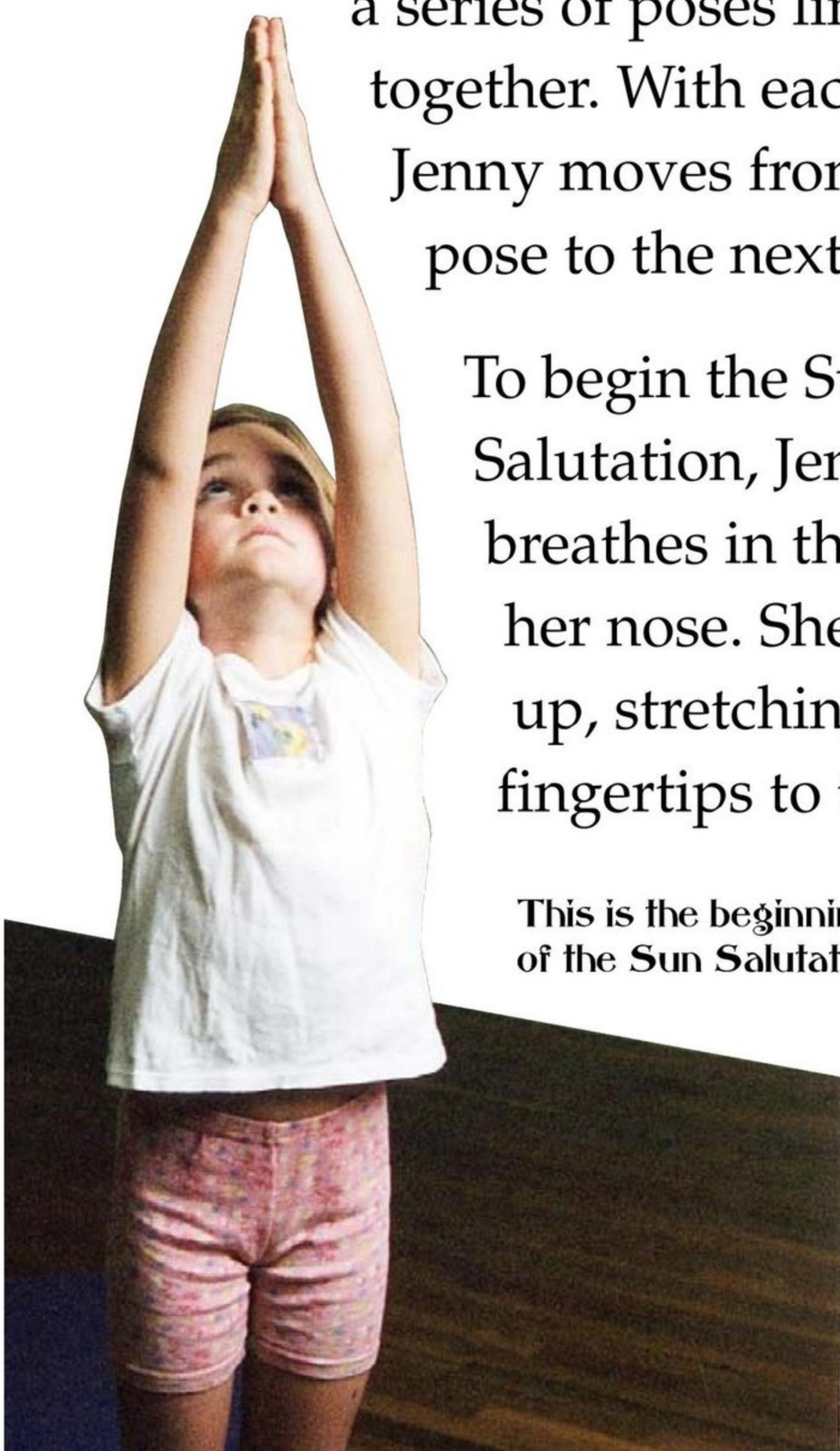
Mountain Pose

Jenny begins by standing very straight at the front of her mat. She places her palms together over her heart. She closes her eyes and listens to the sound of her breath. This pose is called Mountain Pose. Jenny stands very still for several minutes. She is practicing being as strong and quiet as a mountain.

Many yoga students around the world begin their day at dawn. As the sun rises, they practice the Sun Salutations. A salutation is a greeting, or a way of saying “hello.” The Sun Salutations are a series of poses linked together. With each breath, Jenny moves from one pose to the next.

To begin the Sun Salutation, Jenny breathes in through her nose. She reaches up, stretching her fingertips to the sky.

This is the beginning of the Sun Salutations.



As she breathes out, she bends at her waist. She folds forward, reaching toward her toes. Then, breathing in, she lifts her chin. She walks her feet back as she lowers her body to the floor with her arms.



Forward Fold

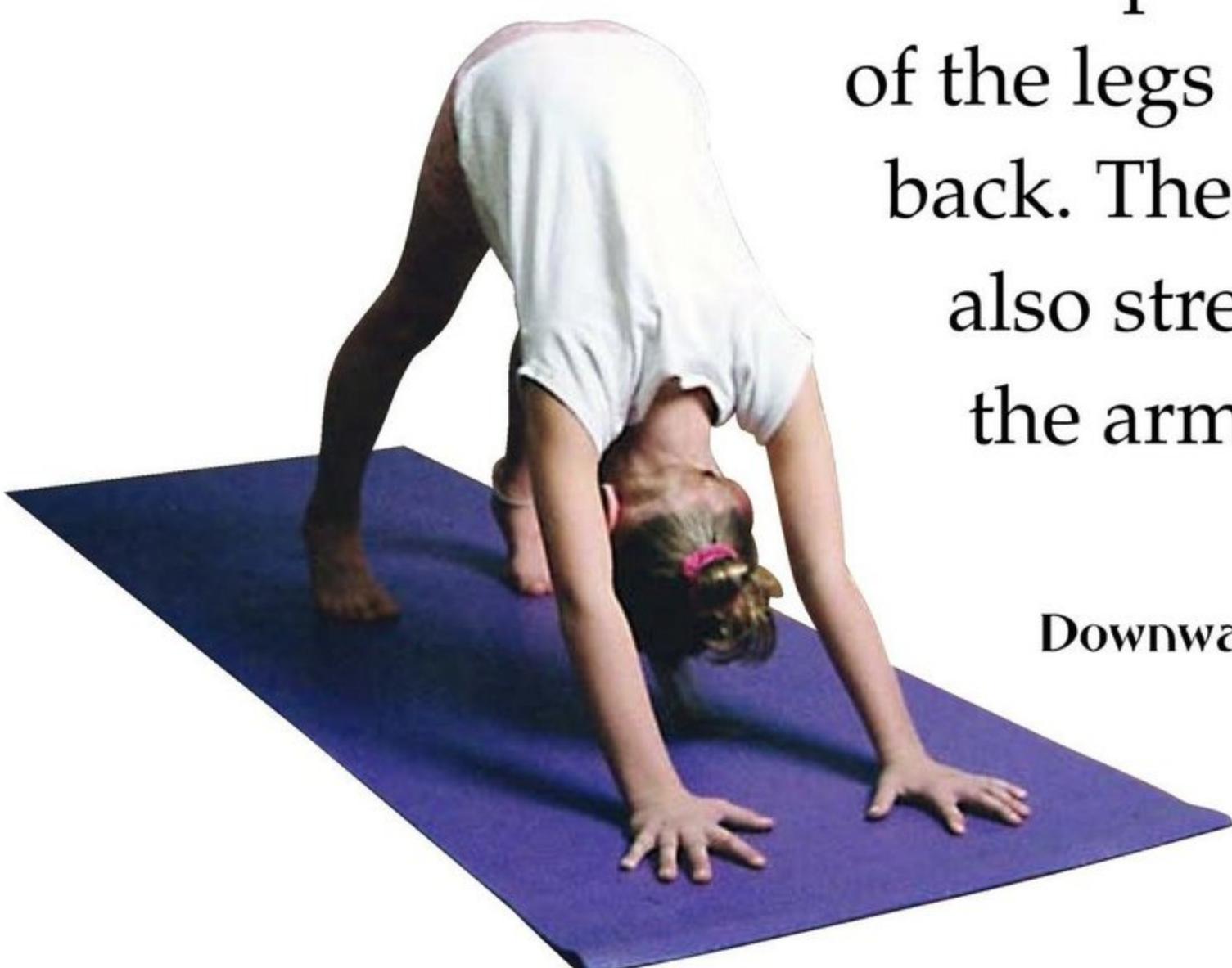


Cobra Pose

Breathing in, she begins to straighten her arms. She lifts up her chest and head as she presses her hands into the ground. She leans her head back. This pose is named after a kind of snake called a cobra. A cobra snake lifts its head up and back to scare away an enemy. Jenny makes sure to continue breathing while she holds the pose.

Then Jenny pushes back into a pose called Downward Dog. This pose looks similar to the way a dog stretches after a nap. Her hands and feet press into the floor as she begins to straighten her legs. After a few breaths she bends her knees and hops forward. Breathing out, Jenny folds over her legs again. Breathing in, she lifts up her hands and chest to the sky. Breathing out, she lowers her arms back into Mountain Pose.

Jenny moves through five sets of the Sun Salutations. This series of poses warms up the muscles of the legs and the back. These poses also strengthen the arms.



Downward Dog Pose

Triangle Pose



After Jenny has moved through the Sun Salutations, she is ready to try other yoga poses. She steps her feet apart and stretches out her arms. The rubber mat keeps her feet in place. Jenny begins to bend at the waist. She leans out over her leg and reaches down to touch the floor. Carefully, she turns her head to look up at the ceiling. Can you see why this pose has been named the Triangle Pose?



Tortoise Pose

Jenny likes to do poses that remind her of her favorite animals. Can you see why this pose might remind people of a tortoise?



Fish Pose

Jenny enjoys practicing this pose, named after a big fish.



Rabbit Pose

The Rabbit Pose is a wonderful way to stretch the muscles of the neck.



Boat Pose

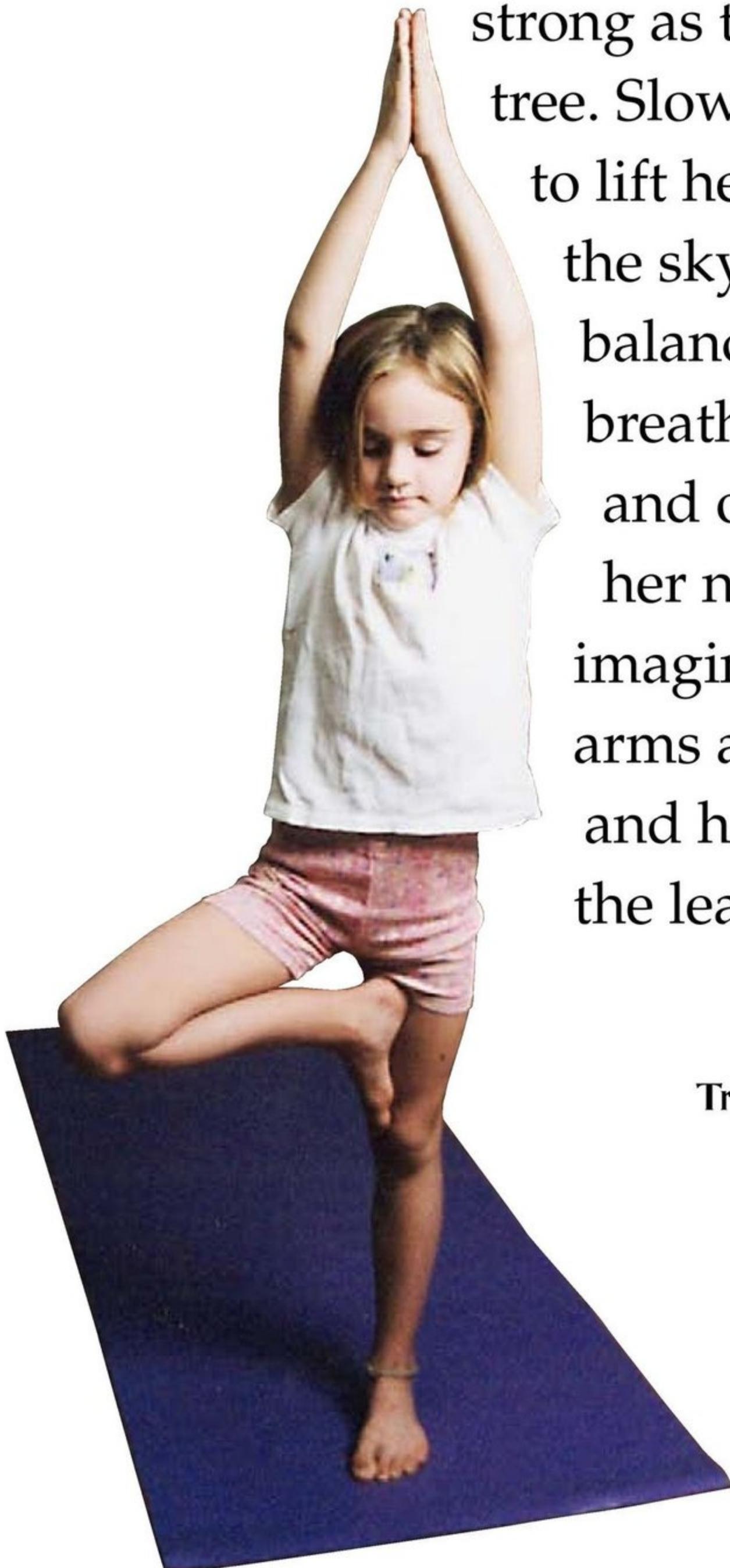
Some yoga poses are named after things they resemble. Jenny likes to practice the Boat Pose. She sits and holds the backs of her knees with her fingers. Jenny leans back as she straightens her legs. She imagines she is a little boat floating on the surface of the water.



Airplane Pose

Jenny also loves to practice balancing poses. These poses help to strengthen the legs and feet. First, she stands on one leg and focuses her gaze on one spot on the floor or wall. As she leans forward, she lifts her other leg up and back. She holds her arms out like wings. She pretends she is floating like an airplane.

Another balancing pose is called the Tree Pose. Again, Jenny stands on one leg. She tries to make this leg feel as strong as the trunk of a tree. Slowly, she begins to lift her arms up to the sky. As she balances, she breathes calmly in and out through her nose. She imagines that her arms are branches and her fingers are the leaves.



Tree Pose



Camel Pose

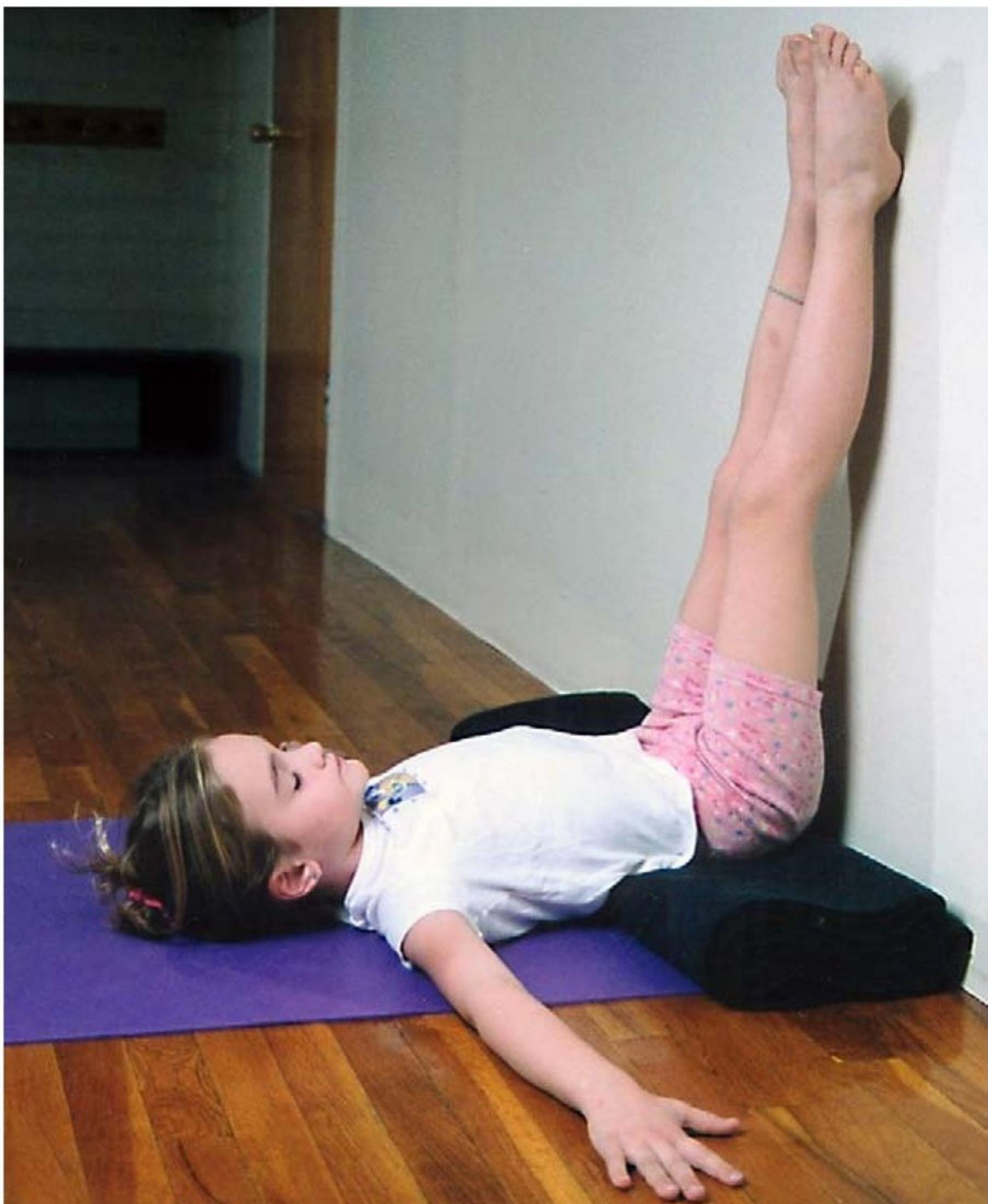
This back-bending pose is called the Camel Pose. This pose is wonderful for strengthening the arms, the legs, and the back.



Shoulder Stand

Near the end of her yoga practice, Jenny makes sure to practice an inversion. An inversion is a pose in which the body is held upside down. This allows old blood to drain out of the legs. It helps to prevent soreness in the muscles. Jenny's favorite inversion is the shoulder stand. She lifts her legs up toward the ceiling. She bends her elbows and uses her hands to support her back. She holds the pose for a few minutes.

Jenny also likes to practice this simple inversion. She lies on the floor and lifts her legs. As she leans her legs against the wall, she reaches her hands out to the sides. This pose is a very restful way to practice an inversion.

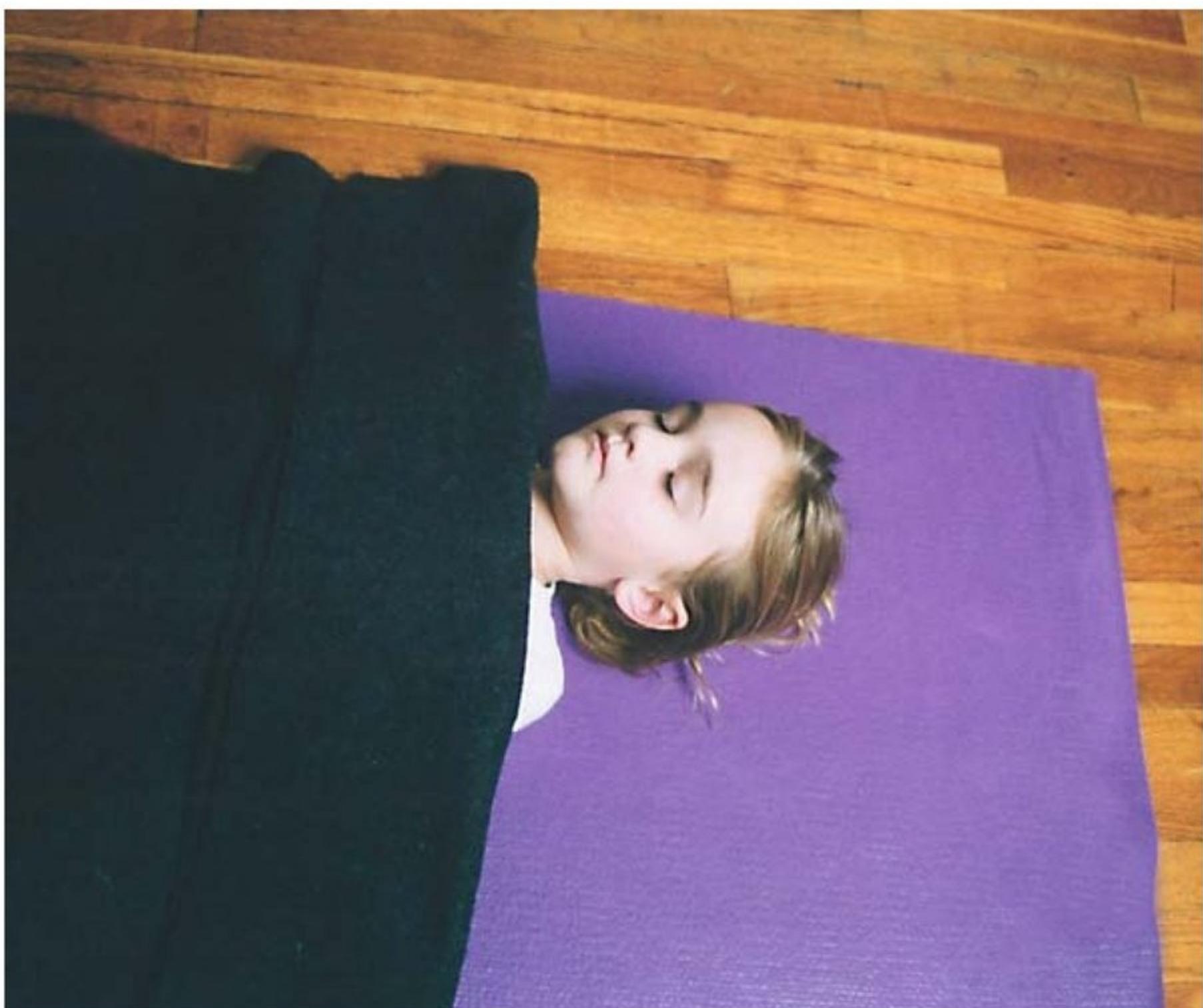


An inversion

Jenny is almost finished with her yoga practice. She folds her legs into the Lotus Pose. She crosses one leg over the other in the shape of a pretzel. She tries to make her back straight and tall. She rests her hands on the tops of her knees. She sits very still and closes her eyes. She listens to the sound of her breath. Although she is not sleeping, Jenny is allowing her brain to stop thinking. This practice of not thinking is called meditation. At first, it can be very hard to do. Meditation helps to make Jenny feel calm. Try sitting very still with your eyes closed. How long can you sit without moving or opening your eyes? How long can you sit without thinking about anything?



Sitting in a Lotus Pose



Jenny uses a blanket to keep warm.

Jenny always makes sure to finish her yoga practice with a rest. She lies down and covers her body with a blanket. She closes her eyes and completely relaxes her arms and legs. She stays in this pose for several minutes.



Jenny has finished her yoga practice. Yoga helps her to feel flexible and strong. Jenny knows that a good yoga practice also includes getting plenty of sleep, and eating healthy food.

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