



## Elements a balanced hatha yoga class

### 5 principles of sequencing

1. Moving from simple to complex - (vinyasa krama) One step at the time we go from simple to complex so as not to miss the conscious process that makes yoga a transformative practice. Slowing down and taking things step by step so as we give our 'awareness muscle' a workout to strengthen it
2. Moving from dynamic to static or moving towards stillness - (vinyasa) Prioritise coordinating moving in and out of asanas with the breath. We are moving and dynamic beings by nature and we want to foster that by relishing our ability to move. Practicing asana is about the internal experience of the movement and so we are continuously working from the gross to the subtle.
3. Cultivating energetic balance - (equanimity) balance of the gunas. To some degree the gunas are all present in our lives. Rather than judging ourselves by them, we use them as insight and reflection tools to transform and refine our lives and relationships. Hatha yoga is a practice of moving into energetic balance despite the ever changing nature of our lives and the play of the gunas.
4. Integrating the effects of actions - (pratikriyasana) Prati means against and kriya means action. The objective of pratikriyasana is to integrate prior actions in a way that prepares the student for the next action. Eg Posture/ counter posture But we want to be careful that this does not go too far as to overdo the swing between each. Instead we intend to neutralise, integrate, refine and deepen the experience.
5. Cultivating Sustainable Self transformation - (holistic) by practicing with:
  - a. Aparigraha - non grasping for things that are out of reach
  - b. Not dwelling in avidya - avidya means not knowing what we are doing - not taking the time to care about what we are doing with our bodies
  - c. Having a teacher who safely instructs and adjusts - ensuring our teachers don't do a and b above



## 6 main components of a hatha yoga class

A balanced yoga class has six main components that take the student through a logical progression to release and rebalance body, mind and energy (and eventually all koshas).

### 1. **Opening / centering**

The beginning of the yoga class is a time where we invite the students to land on their yoga mats leaving the business of their day/life behind and become present. This can happen laying down, in child's pose or even sitting with closed eyes. Use a clear and calming guided instruction on bringing attention inwards to themselves. Perhaps setting an intention for the practice, introducing a theme, or have the students explore something within themselves. We aim to help the students settle body, mind and energy in preparation for their yoga practice.

### 2. **Vinyasa /limbering/mobilise**

Start with moving the main joints of the body or awakening the core. We warm up the body and coordinate with the breath with gentle, limbering vinyasa to release tension, realign the spine, improve circulation and calm the nervous system. Connect to our centre and then start to build some heat. Surya namaskara is a dynamic limbering flow.

### 3. **Asanas**

Our class plan will have a logical flow where asanas build upon each other so that the body is prepared throughout the practice. There may be a physical and/or emotional intention built into the class plan and this will unfold during delivery of the class. The ashtanga system has this done already for us but it is important to ensure the body is moved in all directions in each practice using Backbends, forward bends, inversions, twists, balances, hip openers and side bends.

Generally I follow:

- Centering
- Mobilisation and core activation
- Surya/chandra namaskara
- Standing postures
- Seated postures with forward bend, hip opener and twist
- Backbends
- Twist
- Inversion
- Breathing
- Stillness
- Relaxation



<b>Asana family</b>	<b>Basic distinguishing elements</b>
Standing	All asanas where the weight of the body is primarily in the feet and legs
Core awakening	All asanas that are primarily focussed on activation of abdominal core
Arm balance	All asanas where the weight of the body is primarily in the hands and/or forearms
Forward bend	All non standing asanas where the primary action is anterior tilt of the pelvis and lengthening the back of the body
Twist	All non standing asanas in which primary action is rotation of the spine
Hip opener	All non standing asana in which there is stretching or activation of the muscles attached to the pelvis
Backbend	All asanas where the spine is extended beyond anatomical position
Inversion	All asanas where the body is inverted

**4. Pranayama/Breath awareness**

Following the asana, the body has been opened and released around the chest and spine, enabling deeper breathing and comfort in sitting to practice pranayama. This can be simple seated breathing exercise for a few minutes or something more complex if we have been building on this for a few sessions. Refer to Pranayama for teaching practices by Tracey.

**5. Stillness/meditation**

The mind is now ready for the stillness and contemplation of a meditation practice. I believe meditation should have it's own session, however it is good to introduce a few minutes of stillness and quiet to introduce the student to this part of the practice.

**6. Relaxation**

Relaxation can be laying on our back or side or even on our stomach. It allows the mind and body to integrate all of the elements of the practice without having to 'do' anything. It should be at least 10 minutes and will bring about equilibrium and calm on all levels, in particular the nervous system (nadis)