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Introduction to Twist Practice and Alternate Nostril Breathing

Refer to Appendix: page 106 “Asanas To Know”

- In twists we aim to build stability as well as flexibility.
- Activation/contraction of the navel: drawing in to stabilize the sacrum while maximizing spinal rotation.
- Alternate Nostril Breathing helps to balance the brain and ANS.
Practice Alternate Nostril Breathing with these guidelines:
 - use right hand
 - use the ring finger and the thumb to block the nostril at the point where the bone and cartilage meet.
 - be aware of the presence that rides on the air flow.
Maintain a light touch on the nostrils to bring extra sensitivity to the breath.



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Vayu Essentials

Refer to Appendix: page 134 “Prana Vayu Chart”

- “Vayu”—to carry; to move. Each *vayu* animates both mental and physical functions.
- Each *dosha* has five sub-*dosha*. The five *prana vayus* are the sub-*dosha* of *Vata*.
- Of all the energetic systems, *vayu* is the most accessible and easily transformed.
- Each *vayu* has a name, location, action and function.
- Understanding *prana vayu* as a tool allows you to create the most impactful yoga classes possible, skillfully creating change and transformation in the mind, body and awareness of your students.
- Remember: Energy is primary, matter is secondary. In other words, *prana* moves first, then its material counterpart; *prana* influences matter more than matter influences *prana*.
- *Vata*’s five sub-divisions, the five main expressions of *prana* affecting mind and body:
 - *apana vayu*—“*ap*,” to descend; move downward. This is a descending, grounding energy that is located in the pelvis. *Apana vayu* is embodiment. It’s primary function is physical and mental elimination.



- *samana vayu*—"sam," equal. This is the equalizing or balancing *vayu* located in the abdomen. The force that moves you into quiet and stillness, whose function is physical and mental assimilation.
- *pran vayu*—located in the heart and the head. Its direction is internalizing and up. Its function is to recharge mind and body; it is related to inhalation and heartbeat.
- *udana vayu*—"the air that ascends," located at the throat. This is the upward moving force, the energy of aspiration and enthusiasm, mental and physical growth and personal self-development.
- *vyana vayu*—this *vayu* distributes and circulates. It is both expansive and integrating mentally and physically.

The Energetics of Laterals, Forward Bends and Twists

Refer to Appendix: page 105 "Biodynamics and Energetics of Asana"

Refer to Appendix: page 135 "Vayu Kriya Meditations"

- General directions of the *vayus*:
 - *apana*—down
 - *samana*—centering, balancing
 - *pran*—inward and upward
 - *udana*—upward
 - *vyana*—all directions



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- Forward bends
 - more grounded (*apana*) and *samana* (centering)
 - increase *tamasic sattwa*
 - reduce *pitta*, particularly seated forward bends; can increase *kapha* when done excessively
- Laterals:
 - increase *pran* and *udana vayu* (possibly even *vyana*)
 - increase *rajas*
 - decrease *kapha*, its centralizing effect can decrease *Vata* (because of *Vata* being scattered energy) as well as decrease *pitta* (by dispersing stagnant liver and small intestine energy)
- Twists:
 - increase *apana*, *samana* and *udana*
 - increase *sattwa*—purifying, balancing, centering and creates clarity
 - decrease *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*
- We can affect the *vayus* through *asana*, the mind (e.g. *vayu kriya* meditation) and other means, such as *mudra* (hand gestures) as well as *mantra*.



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Wise Progression Part I

- Principles of Sequencing involves the application of two concepts:
 - content, which refers to the specific *asanas*, breath, meditation, *savasana* you will employ during the practice
 - ordering or progression of the content
- The overall intention of *vinyasa krama* is to be able to design an optimal practice: intentional, balanced, seamless, integrated and sustainable.
- Applying these principles in the process of sequencing *asana* (and series of *asanas*) impacts any or all of the following 6 facets of a practice, enabling you to:
 - reduce the risk of a practice or a particular *asana*
 - adjust from one *asana* to another
 - increase intelligence (e.g. in relationship to movement, the dynamics of anchoring, breath) as well as the ease which allows you to build toward a particular *asana* or *asanas*
 - achieve the desired energetics from a practice
 - heighten the overall experience of the practice
 - ensure long-term health



Wise Progression Part II

- The focal point of a pose refers to the following three groupings:
 - area(s) that requires the most flexibility/mobility
 - part(s) of the body that requires the most stability to do the pose safely
 - area(s) of risk/injury
- To address the three focal points in the apex or most challenging pose, you first build toward it by teaching more accessible poses with similar focal points (but, most likely fewer focal points).
- More advanced apex poses require more preparation.
- See PDF of *Urdhva Dhanurasana* (upward facing bow)

Urdhva Dhanurasana Focal Points



Risks

1. Wrists
2. Rotator cuff, Deltoid
3. Intercostal Muscles
4. Rectus Abdominis
5. Psoas Major
6. Knee Joint
7. Lumbar Compression
8. Thoracic Compression
9. Cervical Compression

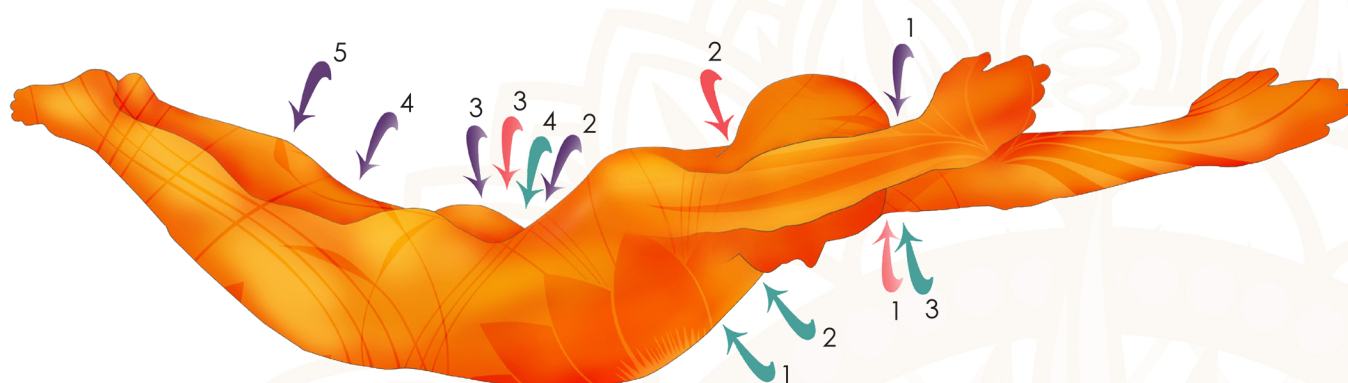
Flexibility

1. Wrist joint
2. Tricep
3. Teres
4. Shoulder Joint
5. Intercostals
6. Rectus Abdominis
7. Psoas
8. Quadricep
9. Lumbar Spine
10. Thoracic Spine
11. Scapula
12. Cervical Spine
13. Hand Musculature

Anchors

1. Lifting out of wrist joint
2. Forearms engaged; move toward shins
3. Stable elbow
4. Tricep
5. Latissimus dorsi, stabilize rotation of the shoulder joint
6. Rectus Abdominis
7. Internal Rotation; adduction/inner thighs
8. Shins toward forearms
9. Hamstrings
10. Hand Musculature

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Risks

1. Teres/Rotator cuff
2. Cervical Compression
3. Lumbar Compression

Flexibility

1. Intercostal Muscles
2. Serratus Anterior
3. Shoulder Joint
4. Spinal Extensors and Erector Spinae

Anchors

1. Rotator Cuff
2. Erector Spinae
3. Gluteus Maximus
4. Hamstrings
5. Soleus



Wise Progression Part III

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- Wise progression (*Vinyasa Krama*) or sequencing involves a three-fold process of preparation—pose—counter-pose (*Pratikriya*)
 - preparation involves using poses—generally, in the same category—to help prepare the student to move more seamlessly into the apex pose.
 - counter-poses help to return the body and mind to a balanced state. They relieve strain, resolve asymmetries and undo any negative impact. They restore neutrality, returning you physically and energetically to a more stable, aware condition.
 - simple forward bends or neutral supine positions (e.g. *urdhva prasarita padasana*) are most commonly used to counter-pose.
 - when counter-posing asymmetrical poses utilize balancing and symmetrical poses,
 - finally, the more extreme the pose, the more gentle the progression of counter-posing should be (both energetically and physically).
 - this is vital to and supports the critical goal of long-term health and increased stability.

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Principles of Sequencing: Preparation, Pose, Counterpose



Preparation	Pose	Counterpose
Simpler forward bends	Forward Bends	Simple forward bend, dynamic bridge, symmetrical FB's for asymmetrical FB's
Simpler back bends, laterals, frontal thigh openers	Backbends	Simple forward bend or simple poses to stabilize sacrum (i.e <i>urdhva prasariya padasana</i>)
Forward bends, standing twists, simple backbends for upper thoracic, hip openers	Twists	Symmetrical forward bends
Simple forward bend, simple lateral, backbends (for the upper spine)	Laterals	Symmetrical forward bends
Forward bend, laterals, backbends and twists	Extension	<i>Baddha konasana</i> for <i>maha Mudra</i> , in general, gentle forward bends
Everything	Inversions	Shoulderstand for headstand, backbends (dynamic locust) for shoulderstand