



Foundations of *Vinyasa Krama*

Refer to Appendix Page: page 105 “Biodynamic and Energetic Effects of Asana”

- As outlined by *Krishnamacharya*, all poses can be grouped into six categories:
 - forward bends
 - back bends
 - twists
 - laterals
 - extensions
 - inversions
- Distinguishing *asana* this way, as we do in *ParaYoga*—as opposed to what is commonly taught (standing, seated and lying poses)—groups the poses according to their spinal orientation and movement as well as each pose’s unique physiological and energetic effects.
- *Asana* can be approached either with an orientation to “form” or “function.”
 - *Form* refers to the approach of trying fulfill an ideal image or shape of an *asana*; this approach is rooted primarily in an external standard.
 - *Function* refers to the intended effect—e.g. specific movement of the spine, impact to the viscera and its impact on physiology, mind and subtle anatomy.
- *ParaYoga* strategy emphasizes *asana function*, as opposed to *form*, allowing for a deeper overall approach to practice and more precision as it relates to creating specific outcomes.

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Examples of forward bends:

1. *Uttanasana*
2. *Paschimattanasana*
3. *Halasana*

With an emphasis of “function” over “form,” all poses are grouped into six categories, according to their spinal orientation, movement as well as physiological and energetic effects.

This allows us to fully comprehend the unique effects of each pose and to create the most effective practices, while building toward specific outcome(s).

Note that in the postures below, the visceral, neurological and energetic effects of these postures are similar, despite the fact that the base of each one is different.



1. *Uttanasana*



2. *Paschimattanasana*



3. *Halasana*

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The Energetics of *Asana*

- The Biomechanic and Energetic of *Asana* Chart delineates some of the essential concepts (and impact) of prioritizing function over form in *asana* practice.
- Each category of *asana* reflects the specific impact to the physical, energetic body as well as mind (*guna*).
- Moving from left to right on the chart, you move from the physical body to increasingly subtle layers.
- Components of biodynamic and energetic systems include the following:
 - Nervous system
 - Energetics
 - *Dosha*
 - *Prana Vayu*
 - *Chakra*
 - *Guna*
- The more you wish to become a masterful teacher, the more vital it is to know how to affect each and/or all of the systems—and thus, positively influence the direction of change.

Practice Guided by Nature—Wisdom

- The principles of *Vinyasa Krama* are consistent with three key principles found throughout nature:
 - Elegance: harmony, beauty, thriving—long term health and wellbeing
 - Efficiency: minimum output for maximum return; nature doesn't waste energy
 - Adaptation: the key to surviving and thriving in the midst of constant change

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- In order to positively influence change, the traditional approach to *asana* practice is rooted in the following principles:
 - Not about trying to assume a form, but rather adapting the function of the *asana* to your individual condition.
 - Using awareness of your thoughts, feelings, behavior to reflect on the unique affects of the practice.
- Thus, as you practice you embody *purusha*, observing the practice while also embodying *prakriti*, open and aware of the changes happening to you.



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Introduction To Lateral Practice and Pranayama

Refer to Appendix: page 106 “Asanas To Know”

- Four stages of *pranayama*:
 - Inhale
 - Hold after inhale
 - Exhale
 - Hold after exhale
- At all times *pranayama* practice requires a clear, calm and relaxed mind—a *Sattvic* approach.
- NEVER STRAIN OR FORCE.
- Remain relaxed and aware: if needed, reduce either the length of the inhale or exhale and/or the length of holds.

Lateral Practice Notes

- General notes on lateral bends:
 - asymmetrical poses reveal imbalances—e.g. one side is tighter, weaker
 - asymmetrical poses help you address physical asymmetries, creating greater balance
 - physical asymmetries are harder to perceive in symmetrical postures.
 - symmetrical postures are used to balance the effects of asymmetrical postures.
 - laterals (as well as back-bending) help you to develop inhale.



- General notes on meditation on the breath:
 - As mind and body become restful and subtle, the brain needs less oxygen.
 - At the height of stillness, the breath pauses between end of exhale and beginning of inhale
 - This is an access point to the meditative state.

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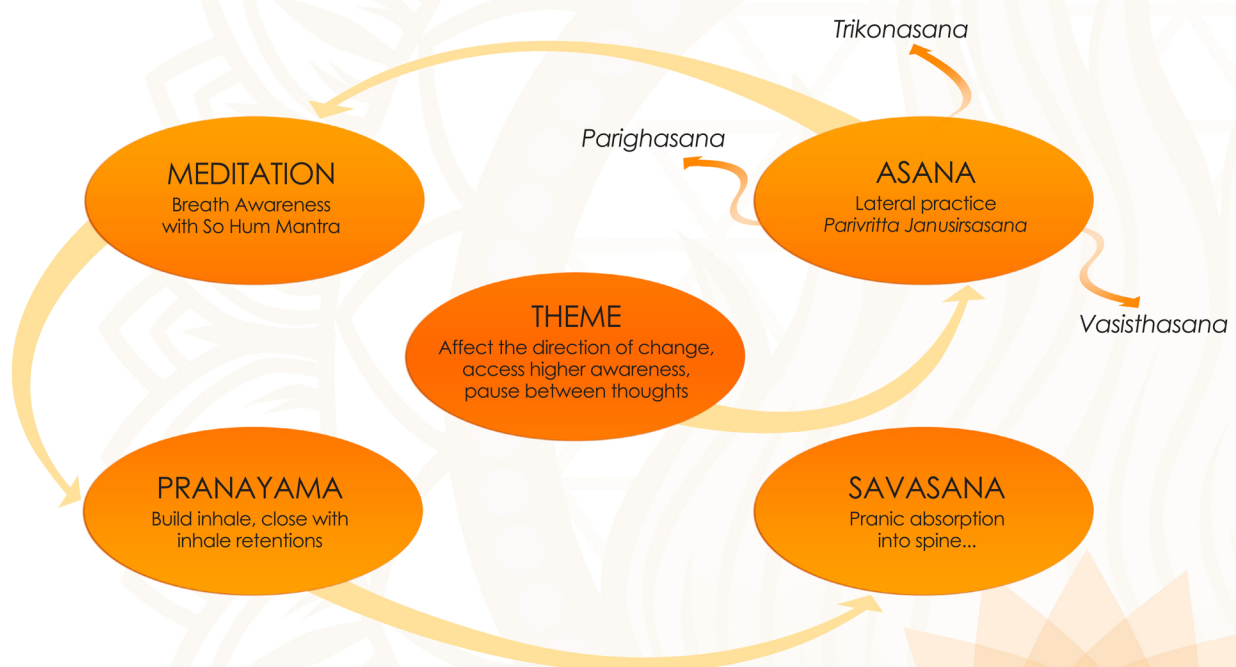
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The Five Essentials of a ParaYoga Practice



- *Asana*: consists of both the overall category focus (i.e. a lateral practice) as well as the apex pose e.g. parivritta janusirsana. The apex pose can refer to either the pose that is the most physically challenging or the energetic pinnacle of the practice. In addition, it is preferable that you also list 3-5 preparatory poses (of the same category) that will use to lead up to the apex pose.
- *Pranayama*: refers to the emphasis during the practice and/or the culminating technique of the practice (i.e. build inhale throughout the lateral practice, that culminates in long inhale retention at the close of the practice).
- *Savasana*: use of any one of the many techniques: e.g. visualization/kriya, contemplation, breath awareness or simple mindful awareness.
- *Meditation*: the pinnacle of the practice, closing it as a journey that moved from body, to breath, to mind, to spirit.
- *Theme*: this is the narrative that weaves throughout the practice, supporting and informing all the other Essentials as well as the whole of the practice and its outcome. Your chosen theme is the inspirational spine of the practice.

The example below of the Five Essentials Sequence Mind Map illustrates the lateral practice you just completed.



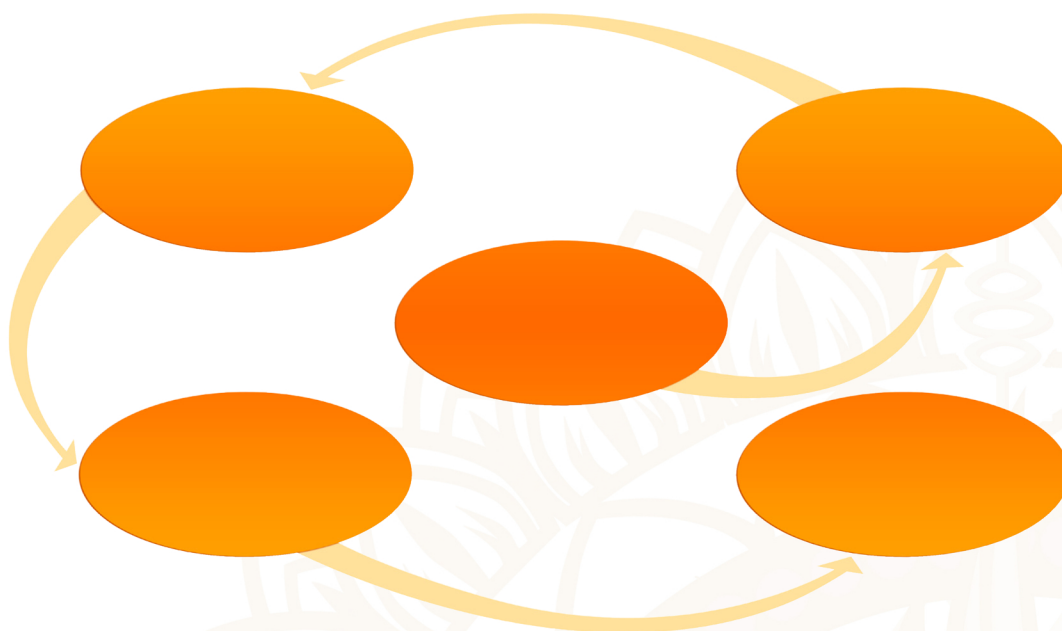
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The Five Essentials Sequence Mind Map



The Five Essentials Sequence Mind Map is a template for creating a complete practice. Starting in the center circle, build a mind map, applying the principles of *vinyasa karma*. With each circle depicting one of the 5 essential elements (*asana*, *pranayama*, *savasana*, meditation or theme), move one by one in an outward spiral. The Essentials placed in the center circle is the foundation for the design of the rest of the class.



- Place the aim of the practice (what you want to achieve—a particular apex pose, *pranayama*, meditation, *savasana* or specific theme) in the center circle. Remember: you can begin with any one of the Five Essentials.
- This first Essential is the basis for selecting the remaining four to create the integrated whole that is your complete practice.
- The next (and each subsequent) Essential placed in the mind map organically flows out of the previous one.
- All Essentials will work together synergistically to create a sum that is greater than its parts.
- The practice you design will utilize the sound principles of *vinyasa krama*.
- Please remember to specify 3 - 5 key preparatory poses as you fill in your *asana* circle, which will also include the apex pose and category of poses the practice will be emphasizing.
- When all five circles have been filled in, you have all the milestones of the practice.
- Combine the Essentials listed in your Mind Map with preparatory poses and counter-poses to lead exceptional practices informed by wisdom and love.

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