

**SEQUENCING  
FOR  
THERAPEUTIC  
YOGA**

Sequencing Principles ..... 2

## SEQUENCING PRINCIPLES

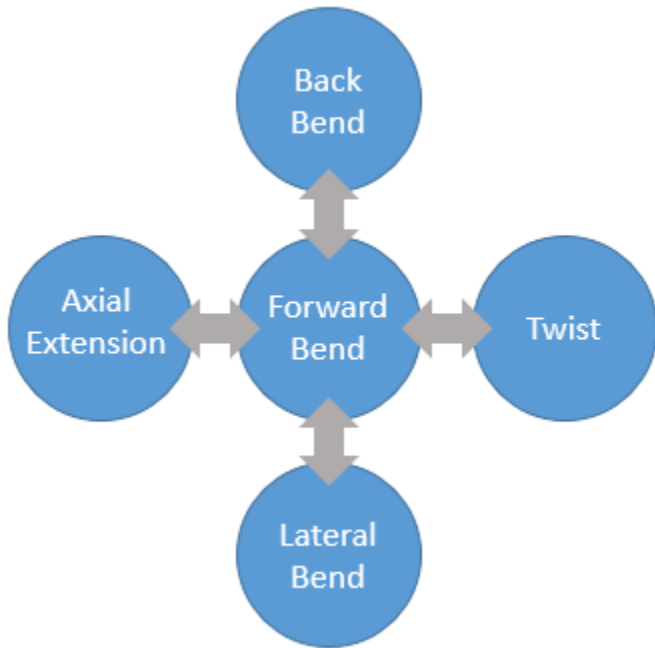
When sequencing poses, remember important concepts of safe movement: preparation and compensation for poses, limiting cumulative stress and keeping the spine safe.

- There are definitive principles of intelligent sequencing to keep the body, especially the spine, safe.
- Rama loves Sita. Sita loves Rama. Same words, different meanings. The same applies to sequencing asana, the order can change the effect.
- **Forward bends** are the hub of an asana practice, they bring the spine back to neutral.
- **Preparation** for the practice and/or peak pose and **compensation** throughout the practice to avoid cumulative stress.
- The sequence should consider what **time of day** and what time of year the practice is occurring as well as the age of the practitioners.
- The sequence should be efficient and elegant.
- Consideration to moving the spine **in all directions**.

### Principles of Movement

- Mindful attention
  - Helps us to recognize habitual movement patterns and to work toward improving our habits
  - Can transform the way we use our body in normal daily activities
- Repetition vs. Stay
  - Repetition works with the biomechanics of movement with the intention of improving tracking of the joints and alignment, increases circulation and can be used for preparation or compensation for stay
  - Stay allows time for the fascia to stretch and time to use the breath like an internal flashlight, exploring the body from the inside out
- Repetition
  - Increases circulation to the larger, superficial skeletal muscles
  - Makes them stronger and more flexible
  - Prepares for holding postures and can compensate for stay
- Stay
  - Inner purification and physiological transformation
  - Deep breathing activates the deepest layers of the spinal musculature

Increases circulation through spine, organs and glands



This graphic can help you picture forward bends as the hub of the wheel of an asana practice. A forward bend does not have to be placed after every pose - for instance, it could be that you do two or three backbends that progressively go deeper, followed by compensation in a forward bend.

NOTE: Not all students would require compensation for an axial extension pose, however, I put it in there because it is often necessary for someone with spinal stenosis or severe lumbar osteoarthritis.