

Day 1 - Surya Namaskar

“For those who practice *asanas*, the *Surya Namaskara* must be performed first and then followed by the *asanas*. This is the rule. Those who follow this rule will receive whatever they desire.”¹

Suryanamaskara Mantra

Om Hraam Mitraya Namaha
Om Hreem Ravaye Namaha
Om Hroom Suryaya Namaha
Om Hraim Bhanave Namaha
Om Hraum Khagaya Namaha
Om Hrah Pushne Namaha
Om Hraam Hiranya Garbhaya Namaha
Om Hreem Marichaye Namaha
Om Hroom Adityaya Namaha
Om Hraim Savitre Namaha
Om Hraum Arkaya Namaha
Om Hrah Bhaskaraya Namaha

Fig 1. Each mantra pays homage to a quality of the sun.

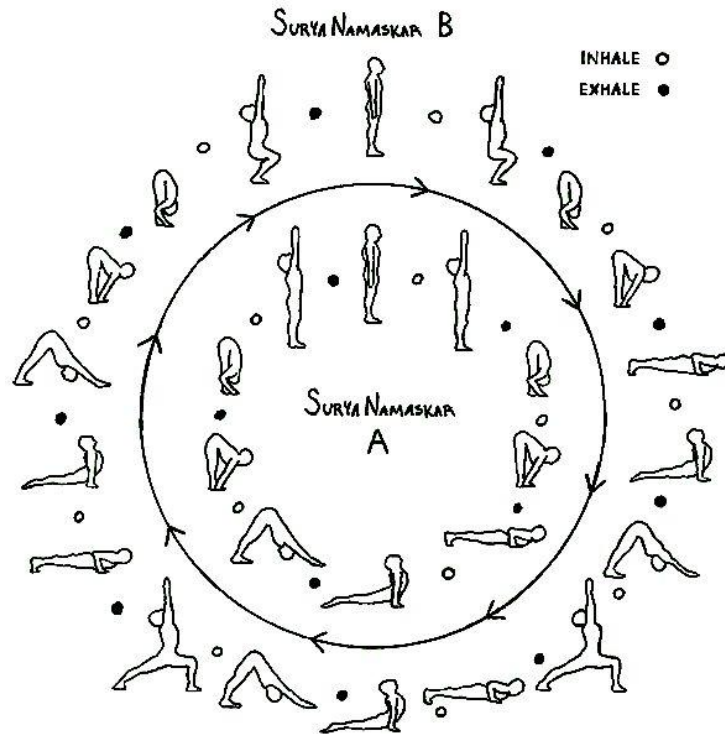
There are many variations of the Surya Namaskar depending on the lineage or style of yoga. What is common between all the styles is that there is breath control in tandem with movement.

¹ Jois, S. P. K. (2021). *Yoga Mala*. pp 47



Iyengar Style

1. Tadasana
2. Namaskarasana
3. Urdhva Hasta Tadasana
4. Uttanasana
5. Chaturanga Dandasana (jump back)
6. Adho Mukha Svanasana
7. Chaturanga Dandasana
8. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana
9. Chaturanga Dandasana
10. Adho Mukha Svanasana
11. Uttanasana (jump forward)
12. Tadasana



Surya Namaskar A

1. Samasthiti
2. Urdhva Hasta Namaskarasana (inhale)
3. Uttanasana (exhale and then inhale look up)
4. Chaturanga Dandasana (exhale)
5. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (inhale)
6. Adho Mukha Svanasana (exhale and breath 5 times)
7. Uttansana (inhale jump forward, exhale head down)
8. Urdhva Hasta Tadasana (inhale)
9. Samasthiti

Surya Namaskar B

1. Samasthiti
2. Urdhva Hasta Namaskarasana (inhale)
3. Uttanasana (exhale and then inhale look up)
4. Chaturanga Dandasana (exhale)
5. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (inhale)
6. Adho Mukha Svanasana (exhale and breath 5 times)
7. Virbhadrasana 1 right side (inhale)
8. Chaturanga Dandasana (exhale)
9. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (inhale)
10. Adho Mukha Svanasana (exhale and breath 5 times)
11. Virbhadrasana 1 left side (inhale)

12. Chaturanga Dandasana (exhale)
13. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (inhale)
14. Adho Mukha Svanasana (exhale and breath 5 times)
15. Uttanasana (inhale jump forward, exhale head down)
16. Urdhva Hasta Tadasana (inhale)
17. Samasthiti

Sequence of the day (loc 47.06 in practice video):

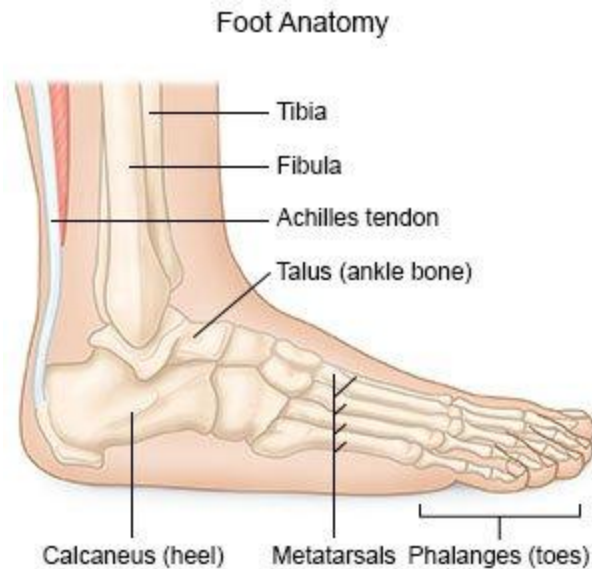
1. Iyengar Style SN for the first 4 mantras.
2. Surya Namaskar A for the next 4.
3. Surya Namaskar B for the last 4.

Day 2 - Standing Asanas

We begin our practice with standing asanas as they bring stability to the body. Once our stance is firm, it is possible to move on to other asanas without disturbing the lower body.

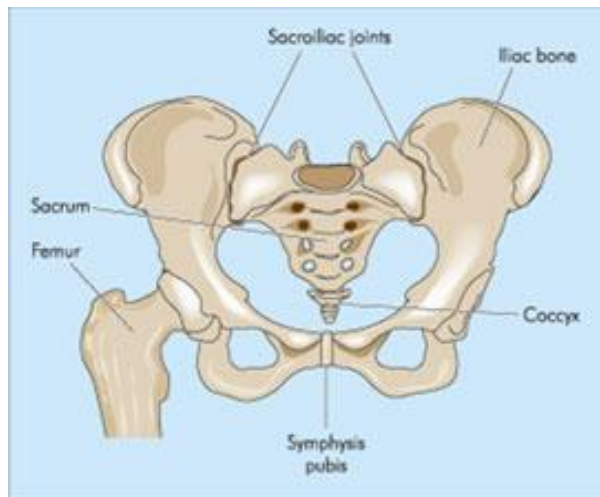
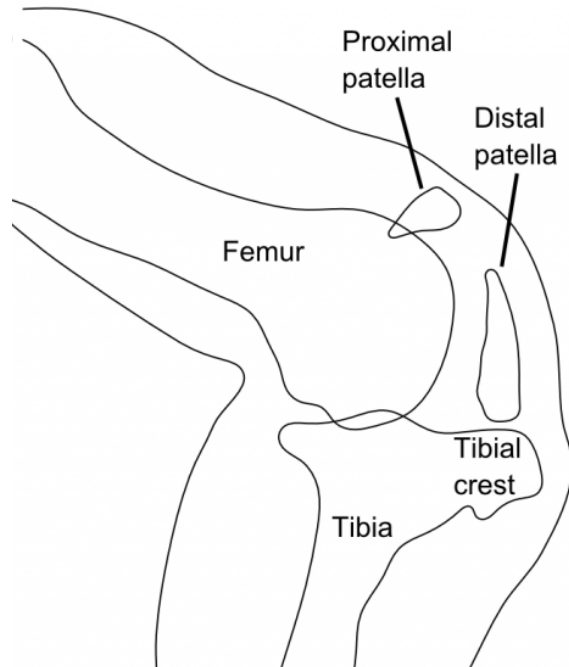
The Foot

The soles of the feet are our interface with the floor and as such must be given more attention. In all standing asanas it is important to start the posture with an awareness of how the soles are behaving. For eg. have you spread the soles? Are you pressing down on the soles evenly? While practicing asanas, it is important to keep checking in with the soles to ensure that the connection with the floor is always maintained.



The Knee

The knee is the most abused joint in the human body. For healthy knees, it is important to distribute the weight of the body evenly across the foot. This can be done by avoiding locking the knee while practicing asana.



The Sacrum

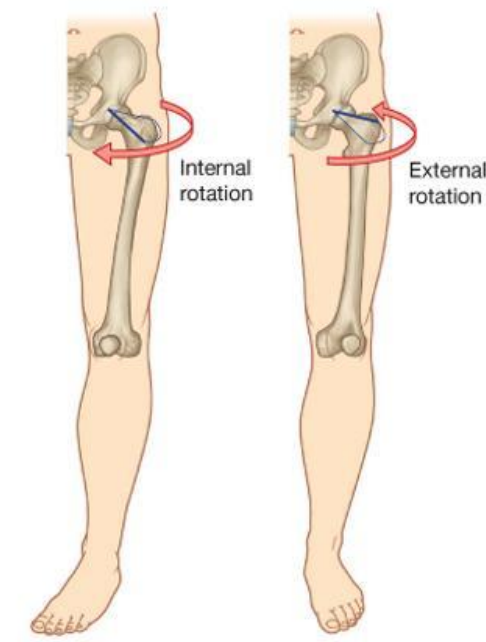
The sacrum is a triangular structure between the hip bones and it holds these bones together. The sacrum is involved whenever there is any movement in the lower body. For eg, when the legs move, several major muscles pull on the sacrum.

Healthy movement requires the sacrum to remain balanced and stable. A balanced sacrum also enables 'squared' hips. A 'squared' hip is when the two hip bones and the pubic bone are in one line, with the shoulders also facing in the same direction.

Keeping the hips squared evenly distributes the body weight ensuring that one side of the body isn't taxed with more weight

External vs Internal Rotation of the Legs

External rotation of the leg happens when the leg is turned outwards from the center line of the body and internal rotation is the opposite i.e when the leg is turned in to the center line. This comes into play when we talk about the positioning of the legs in yogasana. When we rotate the leg inwards, we do an internal rotation and vice versa. For rotation to occur safely, it must originate from the hip socket - which means the femur must also rotate within the socket, for the entire leg to turn inwards or outwards.



1. Tadasana



This is the basic asana for all standing postures.

Pointers:

- Spread the soles evenly on the floor and press down on the three points (under the thumb, under the fifth toe and under the ankle) that support the weight of the body.
- Balance the inner and outer ankle.
- Don't lock the knees.
- Sternum lifted.
- Rib cage pulled in.

2. Uttanasana



Props: Bricks

Pointers:

- Spine and sides should be long.
- Keep the chest open.
- Knees soft
- Internal rotation of the legs.

3. Adho Mukha Svanasana



Props: Wall, brick

Pointers:

- Lengthen the sides.
- Legs internally rotated.
- Shoulders externally rotated and upper arms down.
- Back of the knees wide but knees soft.
- Spine long.

4. Trikonasana



Pointers

- Sides of the trunk have to be parallel.
- Hips and chest squared..
- Femurs drawn into the hip socket.
- Don't reach up with the raised arm, rather work on widening the chest..

5. Parivrtta Trikonasana



Props: Wall

Pointers:

- Knees soft.
- Hips squared.
- Chest open.
- Feet stamped into the floor.
- Thighs rolled in and hip pulled in to the center line of the body.

6. Parivrtta Parsvakonasana



Props: Chair

Pointers:

- Knees soft.
- Hips squared.
- Chest open.
- Feet stamped into the floor.
- Thighs rolled in and hip pulled in to the center line of the body.

7. Ardha Chandrasana



Props: Block

Pointers:

- Square the hips.
- Widen the chest.
- Lift the arm up only when you can balance, else keep the hand on the hip and rotate the shoulder back.
- Lengthen and raise the inner leg up.
- The leg nor the trunk should collapse from the hip.
- The standing leg is externally rotated, raised is internally rotated.
- The body should form a 'T'.

8. Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana



Props: Block, bolster, wall

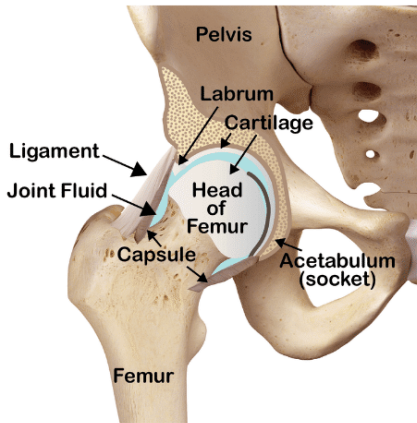
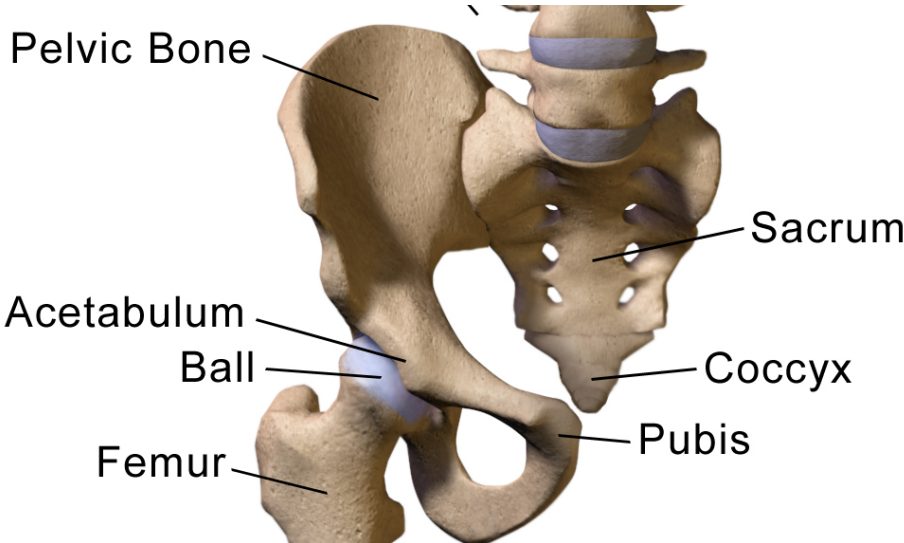
Pointers:

- Square the hips.
- Widen the chest.
- Lengthen and raise the inner leg up.
- The leg nor the trunk should collapse from the hip.
- The body should form a 'T'.

Sequence of the day (loc 1.02 in practice video):

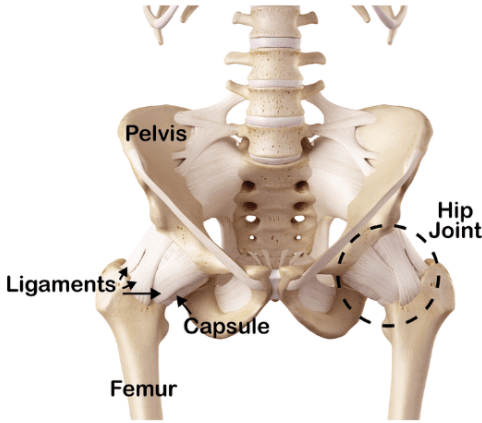
- Tadasana
- Vrikshasana
- Trikonasana
- Parivrtta Trikonasana
- Virabhadrasana 2
- Virabhadrasana 1
- Virabhadrasana 3
- Parsvakonasana
- Parivrtta Parsvakonasana
- Ardha chandrasana
- Chopasana
- Parivrtta Ardha chandrasana
- Viparita Karani (legs straight, upavistha, malasana and baddha konasana position)

Day 3 - Seated & Forward Bends



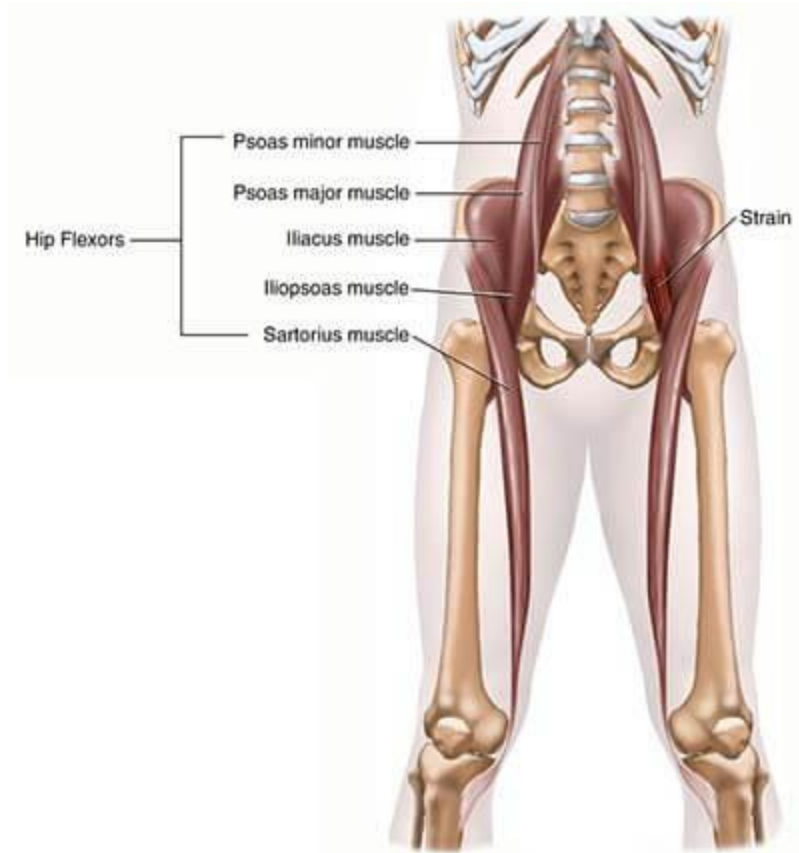
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Figure 1.3:
The hip joint, viewed from the front. Cross-section through the middle of the joint.



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Figure 1.4
Front view of the hip joint with its surrounding capsule and reinforcing ligaments.



A diagram of all the Hip Flexors

1. Dandasana & Urdhva Hastasana



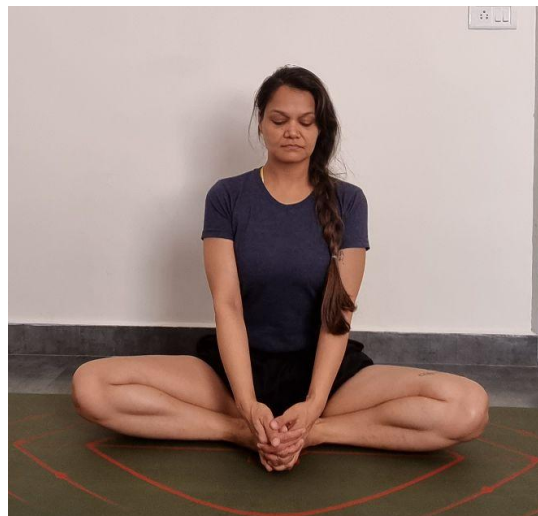


Props: Blocks, bolster, wall

Pointers:

- Practice with a wall behind you to get a neutral pelvis.
- Keep the rib cage tucked in.
- Keep the outer upper arms pulled outwards (external rotation).
- Activate the legs.

2. Badhakonasana



Props: Blocks, bolster

Pointers:

- If your thighs don't rest on the floor, use support under them and push down actively.

- The outer edges of the feet must touch and the feet open up like a book.

3. Paschimottanasana



Props: Blocks, bolster

Pointers:

- Outer feet must be pulled in.
- Thighs internally rotated.
- Note the pelvic floor is engaged.
- Don't lead with the head. Focus on bringing the navel to the feet. Push the pelvis back so it's neutral rather than tucked under you.

4. Janu Sirsasana



Props: Blocks, blanket

Pointers:

- Extended leg should be internally rotated.
- Neutral pelvis.

- Widen the back of the body.

5. Padmasana



Props: Blocks, blanket

Pointers:

- Note the external rotation of the femur and internal rotation of tibia.
- In seated postures if your knees are above the level of your hips, it causes the pelvis to tilt forward and pulls on the spine. Use support under your hips if this happens.

6. Siddhasana



Props: Blocks, blanket

Pointers:

- Note the external rotation of the femur and internal rotation of tibia.
- In seated postures if your knees are above the level of your hips, it causes the pelvis to tilt forward and pulls on the spine. Use support under your hips if this happens.

Sequence of the Day (loc 1.03 of practice video):

1. Virasana
2. Adho Mukha svanasana
3. Urdhva Hasta Virasana
4. Paschimottanasana
5. Uttanasana
6. Adho Mukha svanasana
7. Uttanasana
8. Paschimottanasana
9. Uttanasana
10. Adho Mukha svanasana
11. Uttanasana
12. Paschimottanasana
13. Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana
14. Paschimottanasana
15. Urdhva Mukha Paschimottanasana
16. Urdhva Mukha Baddha Konasana
17. Urdhva Mukha Upavistha Konasana
18. Agnistambhasana
19. Paschimottanasana (with wall support)
20. Relax with hips on the bolster and legs inside the belt.
21. Relax with legs in sukhasana on the bolster.

Day 4 - Hip Opening

1. Upavistha Konasana

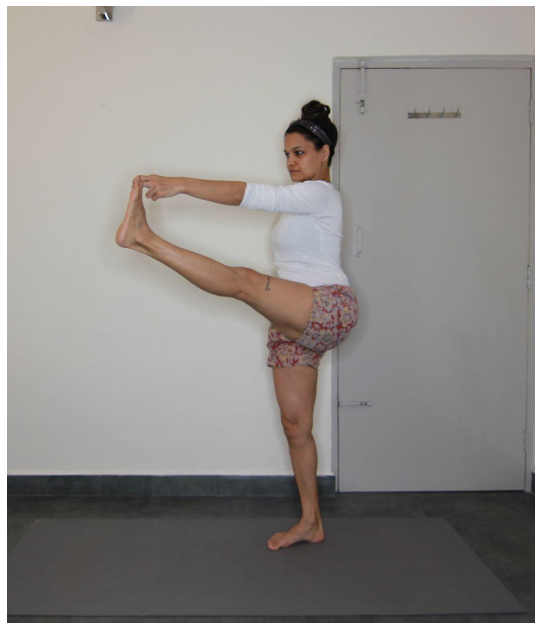


Props: Blocks, bolster

Pointers:

- Roll the inner thighs down.
- Extend from the inner groin to the inner feet.

2. Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana



Props: Chair, wall, blanket, belt

Pointers:

- The spine should remain straight as the foot goes higher on the wall.
- The standing leg is in Tadasana.
- Extend the leg from the groin to the inner foot.
- Pull the hip back, instead of tucking the pelvis in.
- Weak adductor muscles can cause your hip to sway to either side (same thing in vrikshasana)

3. Parsva Hasta Padangusthasana



Props: Chair, wall, blanket, belt

Pointers:

- The spine should remain straight as the foot goes higher on the wall.
- The standing leg is in Tadasana.
- Extend the leg from the groin to the inner foot.

4. Garudasana



This pose is particularly therapeutic for the piriformis and helps in stabilizing the sacrum.

Props: Belt

Pointers:

- Work on extending the leg from the hip to achieve the length required to wrap it around the other leg.

5. Parivrtta Surya Yantrasana



Props: Belt

Pointers:

- Neutral pelvis.
- Chest wide.
- Spine extended.

6. Hanumanasana



In this pose use your strength for stability and allow gravity to help you with flexibility.

Props: Wall, blanket, blocks

Pointers:

- SQUARE HIPS!!!!
- Keep both thighs internally rotated.
- Push the metatarsals of the back foot down.
- Widen the hip.

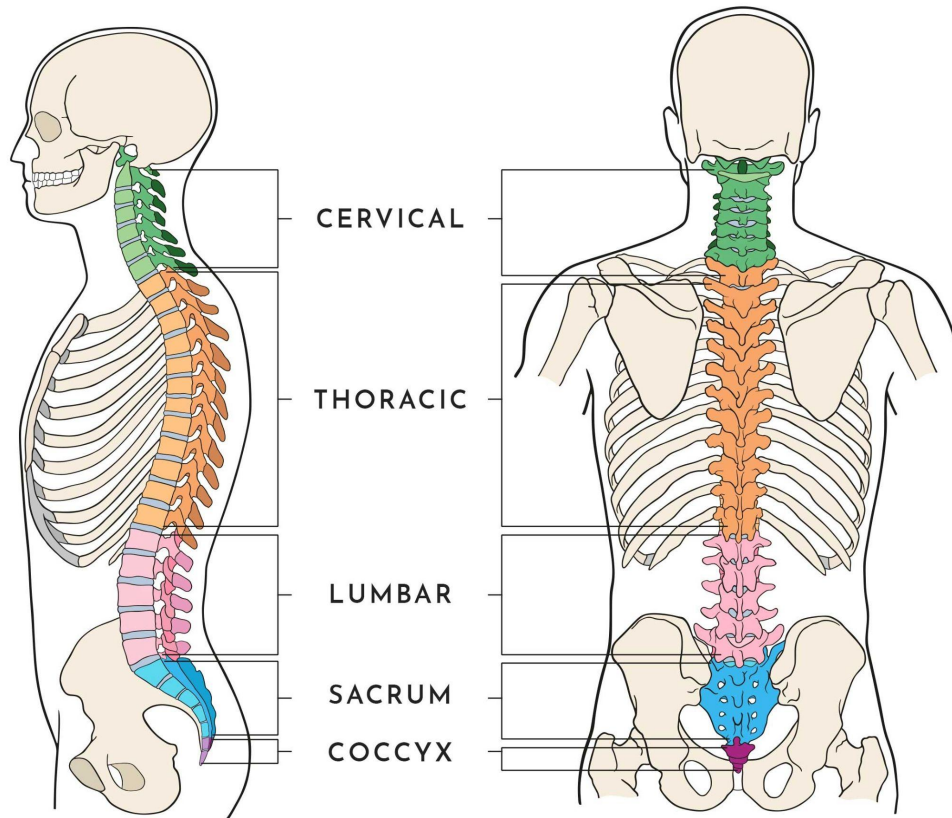
Sequence of the day (loc 1.05 in practice video):

1. Trikonasana
2. Parsvottanasana
3. Trikonasana
4. Virabhadrasana 2
5. Parsvakonasana
6. Eka pada uttanasana

7. Adho mukha svanasana
8. Eka pada Adho mukha
9. Padangusthasana A
10. Padangusthasana B
11. Upavistha Konasana
12. Prasarita Padottanasana
13. Parsvottanasana
14. Hanumanasana
15. Vrksasana
16. Garudasana
17. Parivrtta Surya Yantrasana
18. Relax with legs on chair and two blocks vertically under lower back.

Day 5 - Twists

The Spine



The spinal column.

Key facts about the spine:

- Provides support and balance for an upright posture.
- 33 vertebrae
- Spinal cord + brain = Central Nervous System
- Top of the spine is directly under the brainstem.

Different areas of the spine:

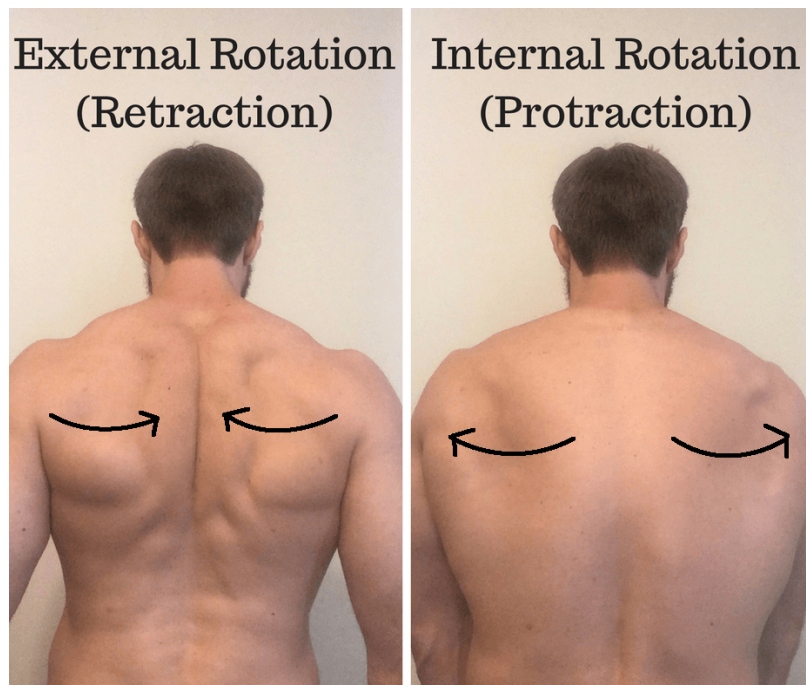
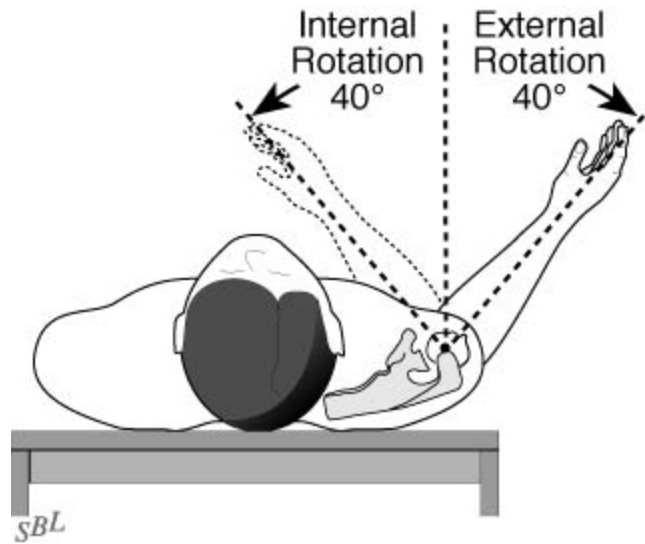
- Cervical: 7 vertebrae. C1-C7. This forms the neck.
- Thoracic: 12 vertebrae. T1-T12. This forms the middle back.
- Lumbar: 5 vertebrae. L1-L5. This forms your lower back.
- Sacrum: 5 vertebrae. S1 To S5. This consists of a triangle bone that connects to the hips.
- Coccyx: 4 vertebrae that are fused together. This forms the bottom of the spine.

The weight of the head, shoulders and arms and upper body sits on the spine. The spine is constantly trying to keep the body weight balanced on the pelvis. Those with 'good' posture ensure they don't fatigue the body and if you have poor posture then the different limbs and

muscles compensate to keep you upright and you find yourself fatiguing faster. This can cause strain and can lead to the spine bending unnaturally. Strong back muscles ensure your spine is always well supported and you have less back pain.

External vs. Internal Rotation of Shoulders & Arms

Rotation of the shoulder blades happens with reference to the inner arm moving away or towards the torso. Inner arm moving away is external rotation; moving in is internal rotation. External rotation leads to an open chest, while internal rotation compresses the chest.



1. Parsva Dandasana



Props: Wall, blanket, brick

Pointers:

- Sit on a bolster/blanket to lift the sacrum up.
- Ensure you're pushing the feet firmly into the wall and *spreading* the soles evenly.
- Use a brick under the back hand.

2. Parsva Upavistha Konasana



Props: Blanket, brick

Pointers:

- Sit on a bolster/blanket to lift the sacrum up.
- Use a brick under the back hand.
- Focus on spreading the hamstrings, back of the knees and calves on the floor.
- Extend from the inner groin to the inner feet.

3. Parsva Trianga Mukhaikapada Paschimottanasana



Props: Blanket, brick

Pointers:

- Square the pelvis using support under the hips.
- Keep the knees together.
- Spread the back of the extended leg on the floor.
- Use a brick under the back hand.

4. Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana



Props: Blanket, brick, belt

Pointers

- Work on external rotation of the shoulders.
- Be aware of the external rotation of the femur.
- Use a belt if you're unable to reach the foot.
- Keep the torso even, refrain from leaning to one side.

5. Bharadvajasana



Props: Blanket, belt

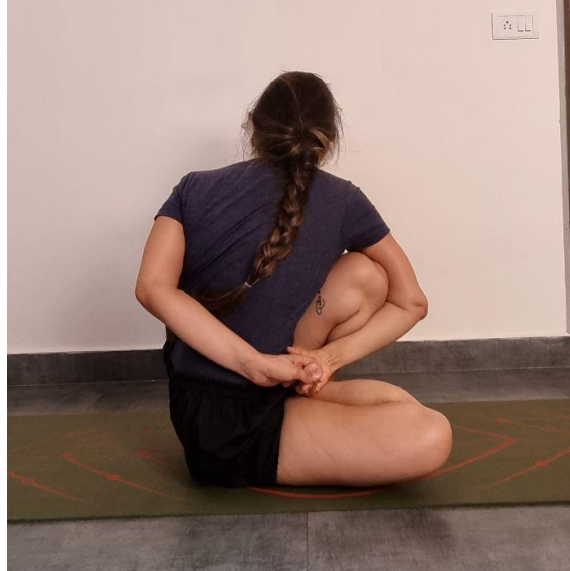
Pointers

- Be mindful of the external rotation of the padmasana leg.

- Widen the chest without collapsing the spine.

6. Marichyasana 1, 2, 3, 4





Props: Blanket, belt

Pointers

- Balance the pelvis.
- Get a uniform twist on the torso.
- Widen the chest.

Sequence of the day (loc 1.08 in the practice video):

1. Urdhva Hasta Dandasana
2. Parsva Dandasana
3. Urdhva Hasta Upavistha Konasana
4. Parsva Upavistha Konasana
5. Urdhva Hasta Parsva Upavistha Konasana
6. Adho Mukha Svanasana
7. Urdhva Hasta Virasana
8. Adho Mukha Svanasana
9. Virasana
10. Triang Mukha eka pada Paschimottanasana
11. Parsva Triang Mukha eka pada Paschimottanasana
12. Bharadvajasana
13. Ardha Baddha Padma Paschimottanasana
14. Marichyasana A, B, C, D
15. Badhakonasana
16. Relax with bolster under knees and head on a folded blanket.

Day 6 - Backbending

The most common mistake we make in backbending is not engaging the thighs enough. To be able to extend back, particularly in the more advanced asanas, we need to have strong legs that can hold us anchored to the ground and that can also push the ground away to elevate the body.

1. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana



Props: Chair, bolster, belt

Pointers

- Keep the thighs lifted and the hips moving forward.
- Focus on extension, not compression of the lower back.
- Roll the shoulders back. In this asana the work is done in the thoracic spine, more than in any other part of the spine.
- Don't lock the elbows.

2. Dhanurasana



Props: Chair, wall, 2 belts

Pointers

- Keep your thighs rolled in.
- Pull the arms and elbows inwards and knees in line with the hip sockets.
- Relax the jaw and face.
- Be conscious of not putting too much pressure on the knees, instead think of lifting up from the floor.

3. Urdhva Dhanurasana



Props: Chair, wall, belt

Pointers

- Keep your thighs rolled in.
- Pull the femurs in to the socket.
- Press the soles down.
- Feet parallel to each other.
- Work on hip extension - flexible hips will ensure the movement isn't straining the lumbar spine.
- Palms and fingers pressed down and elbows straight. Don't widen the shoulders indiscriminately; instead rotate the outer upper arms outwards.
- Halve the mat and perform the posture.

4. Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana



Props: Wall, belt

Pointers

- Keep the thighs and feet parallel. Knees should not splay out.
- Elbows should be shoulder width apart.

5. Kapotasana



Props: Chair, wall, belt

Pointers

- Work on the external rotation of the shoulders and internal rotation of your femurs.
- Spread the back foot on the floor.
- Press the front leg into the floor.

Sequence of the day (loc 56.15 of the practice video):

1. Adho Mukha Svanasana
2. Chaturanga Dandasana
3. Urdhva Mukha Svanasana
4. Supta virasana
5. Adho Mukha Svanasana
6. Urdhva Dhanurasana
7. Dhanurasana
8. Urdhva Dhanurasana
9. Dhanurasana
10. Urdhva Dhanurasana
11. Dhanurasana
12. Adho Mukha Svanasana
13. Uttanasana
14. Standing backbends with wall
15. Dwi pada viparita dandasana with wall
16. Ek pada viparita dandasana with wall
17. Ustrasana
18. Kapotasana
19. Relax with the bolster against the wall and legs in sukhasana on the bolster.

Day 7 - Inversions

1. Adho Mukha Vrikshasana



Props: Wall, belt

Pointers

- Learn to widen the palms and grip the floor.
- The palms and shoulders should be in one line.
- Pull the femurs into the hip sockets; similarly pull the arms towards their sockets.
- Imagine a straight line running from the center of the pelvis to the crown of the head.
- Dorsiflexion of the ankles.
- Focus on stabilizing the muscles of the torso and the pelvis; these will help maintain the balance.
- DO NOT collapse on the wrists.

2. Sirsasana



Props: Wall, belt

Pointers

- Push the triangle of your arms into the floor.
- Lift the spine up.
- Keep the rib cage pulled inwards towards the spine.
- Don't collapse your hips to the wall, keep your hips in line with the shoulders.

3. Sarvangasana



Props: Blanket, bolster, belt

Pointers

- Elevate the spine.
- Use your legs to lift the body up - the lower body is in Tadasana.
- Internal rotation of the legs.
- Learn to pull the shoulders back and the scapulae into the chest, instead of bearing your body weight down on the shoulders.
- Throat relaxed.

4. Halasana



Props: Chair, belt, bolster

Pointers

- Shoulders have to work more strongly against the weight of the legs (than in sarvangasana).
- Maintain the length of the spine.
- Use your legs to pull the spine up.
- Internal rotation of the legs.
- Throat relaxed.
- Learn to pull the shoulders back instead of bearing your body weight down on the shoulders.

Sequence of the Day (loc 1.16 of practice video):

1. Surya Namaskar - Iyengar Style
2. Ardha Sirsasana (alternate legs)
3. Sirsasana
4. Adho Mukha vrksasana (facing the wall - alternate legs)
5. Adho Mukha vrikshasana (alternate leg jumps)
6. Uttanasana - relax the neck
7. Adho Mukha vrksasana (jump with both legs)
8. Sarvangasana
9. Eka pada sarvangasana
10. Parsva sarvangasana
11. Halsana
12. Parsva Halasana
13. Savasana