

# Student Manual

200 Hour Teacher Training



# CONTACT INFO

## 200HOUR ONLINE PORTAL

Throughout the training, you will have access to a private 200HR training portal. This hub is your resource for receiving your weekly coursework, connecting with your group, and accessing an online discussion board.

For further assistance, please contact  
[info@yogamedicine.com](mailto:info@yogamedicine.com)



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# COURSE WORK

## Weekly Online Homework

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- Weekly videos are delivered via the online portal; live sessions happen on zoom. You will find your zoom link on the online portal welcome page.
- Average 6 to 6.5 hours per week including live sessions, practices, lectures & practice teaching. The course follows a rhythm of 3 weeks on and 1 week off.
- Practice hatha vinyasa yoga 5 to 6 times a week
  - 1x the weekly pre-recorded practice
  - 4-5x other practices - Yoga Medicine Online, in person, or repeating any previous classes from training; ideally one of these is a beginner class
    - From Block 5 onwards, 2 of these will be a self-led practice. We will provide you with a sequence or you can create your own.
  - Take at least one day a week off to rest.
- A daily meditation practice of at least 5 minutes

## Class Observations

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You must observe 10hrs of classes and write a short summary of the things you took away from the observations, approximately 1 page for all 10hrs. This report is due in week 36 / end of block 9.

During each observation, take notes on things like:

- How the teacher prepared and managed the space (props, lighting, music, heating)
- The teacher's use of voice tone, volume, and verbal cues
- The sequence, and how it related to the students present
- Whether there was a theme or focal point for the class, and how it was communicated
- Any physical assists used, including how and when the teacher demonstrated poses
- Any overall impressions of the teacher, class, students, or space

You must also document the hours on the attached sheet in the back of your manual.

## Final Exam - Theory

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- Taken in week 38 of block 10
- Open book, timed, multiple choice
- Mixture of anatomy, alignment, adjusting, lecture, and homework video content

## Final Exam - Practical

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- Practical exams will be completed over two days online. Be sure to put these days in your calendar - check the schedule on the online portal.
- You must be present for the duration of both days
- Practical exams include a group exam with your fellow trainees and 1:1 assessment with a lead instructor. Your lead instructor will be in touch with you to schedule your 1:1 time slot two months prior to the conclusion of the training.

# INTRODUCTION

## Attendance Policy

1. Complete all online classes, watch all video lectures, submit all written reports, and complete all exams.
2. If you are unable to participate, you are expected to observe and take notes.
3. Live Sessions designated with an \* in the schedule on the online training portal and the exam days are mandatory sessions to attend. Any hours missed must be made up; replacement work will be issued by your group leader. You cannot miss more than 10 hours total.

## Expectations

1. Follow the attendance policy.
2. Arrive 5mins early for all sessions, prepared to learn.
3. Actively participate, by participating you will deepen your knowledge and ingrain the ideas deeper into your brain, therefore requiring less study time between sessions.
4. Be respectful of your fellow students and instructors. Everyone has a right to freely participate. Practice kindness and patience.
5. Be prepared for class, you'll get more out of it if you're prepared.
6. Support and encourage the growth of your fellow students. By encouraging each other we all learn more.
7. Commit to your practice. Experiment and try as many different styles as you can, even if they are harder or easier than you would like. Know your inner teacher; be ok with backing off, this is the foundation of being a good teacher to others.
8. Leave your expectations behind, so you can open yourself fully to the changes that will come.
9. Gratitude for the many teachers who have taught before us and have passed this information down to us.



# Code of Ethics of a Yoga Teacher

The primary responsibility of any teacher is to be of service to our students and our community. Yoga Medicine teachers must be committed to responsible and ethical practices, to their own professional and personal growth, and to contributing to the growth and development of the field of yoga.

In furtherance of these commitments, I agree to be bound by the following Code of Ethics. I will:

Respect the rights and dignity of each student.

Provide my services in a nondiscriminatory manner, welcoming all students regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability or financial status.

Create and maintain a safe, clean, and comfortable environment for the practice of yoga.

Teach only within my level of skill and knowledge and communicate my teaching experience, training, certification status and professional affiliations honestly.

Stay within my scope of practice and make only realistic statements regarding the benefits of yoga. As a yoga teacher it is not my job to diagnose my students but to encourage them to continue their medical care or make timely referrals to other healthcare professionals as appropriate.

Honor and acknowledge my teachers as the source of my knowledge and skill when teaching, and dedicate myself to maintain their standards of competence and integrity.

Maintain professional boundaries in relationships with students and avoid any relationships that could exploit teacher-student trust.

Refrain from teaching if I am unable to safely and effectively teach due to substance abuse physical and/or psychological impairment, and seek appropriate assistance for any personal problems or conflicts that impair my ability to teach.

Bill students and third-party payers accurately and fairly.

Work to promote high standards for the profession.

Stay abreast of new developments in the field of yoga through educational activities and study.

Not speak poorly of my colleagues or other professionals, or be judgmental of other styles of yoga or other teachers.

Continue to study the Yamas & Niyamas as a code of ethics to strive toward.

Follow all local and national laws that pertain to the art & business of teaching yoga.

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**SIGN**

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**DATE**

# Deepening your Practice to Deepen your Teaching

## Consistency

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Commit yourself to a consistent, regular yoga practice of some sort everyday, whether it be a 2 hour asana class, 5-10 sun salutations first thing in the morning, or 10-20 minutes of pranayama/meditation.

## Presence

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Being fully present allows us to connect more deeply with the people around us and allows us to be more efficient in our tasks.

## Acceptance

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Make a commitment to accept your present circumstances; a clear view of reality is required for true transformation. Learn to love your uniqueness.

## Expectations

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Let go of expectations, expectations are the stumbling blocks to growth

## Effortlessness

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Trying to pinpoint the areas in your life & practice where letting go may be helpful.

## Non-competition

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The ego disconnects us from the reality of what is happening in our bodies in the present moment and disconnects us from the people around us.

## Humility

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When you think you know everything, there is nothing to learn and no where to grow. Transformation can only happen with humility.

## Intuition

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The place where the brain & the heart merge to create intuition is a powerful place.

**LIFE IS A JOURNEY;  
IF YOU EXPECT A DESTINATION  
YOU MAY NEVER ARRIVE.**

**BE YOU,  
THE ONLY THING YOU CAN EVER  
REALLY BE GOOD AT.**

**RE-READ DAILY FOR BEST RESULTS ;)**

# What Makes a Great Teacher?

## Attitude

One of the most important qualities of a great teacher is our attitude. There are many different qualities to cultivate & each teacher should speak from their own authentic character. The most important thing is to find your own personal strengths to build on. We all have certain qualities that make us exceptional people, don't worry if it takes some time to fine tune this, some teachers take years to figure this one out & it should be constantly evolving. Here is a list of some of the important qualities of a yoga teacher:

PATIENT	POISED	CONFIDENT
RELIABLE	CREATIVE	VIBRANT
DEDICATED	DISCIPLINED	INNOVATIVE
CONSISTENT	SOOTHING	COMPASSIONATE
INSPIRING	ARTICULATE	OPEN-MINDED
CHARISMATIC	HUMOROUS	ENTHUSIASTIC
HUMBLE	POSITIVE	FRIENDLY
RESPECTFUL	FUN	

## Educated

It's important as a teacher to have a strong foundation in anatomy, alignment & adjusting as well as a strong base in traditional yoga philosophy. This will always be a work in progress, you will never stop learning & growing. No one can know it all, you will inevitably get questions you can't answer, don't make it up, rather use it as an opportunity to learn & grow. Your students will develop the utmost of respect for you if you learn how to say "I'm not sure, let me research it & get back to you". Having all the answers is not important; it's how you deal with it that's key, humility is an important virtue to cultivate. If you continue to study & learn you will always be a great teacher, it's when we stop learning that we lose our spark. If you don't take care of yourself it is very difficult to guide others & eventually you will find yourself uninspired & spent. You must make a habit of having some time for yourself every single day, even if some days that only means 5-10 minutes,

read something educational or inspiring, do some pranayama, meditate, etc. Keep growing, keep learning, keep reading to motivate & inspire yourself!

## Reliable

As with anything that you want to succeed in, reliability is of the utmost importance. Your students must be able to count on you to show up on time every week, or they won't show up at all. Students appreciate it when you show consistency. If you say you will do something, follow through with it. Always start & end class on time, respect your student's time.

## Strength

Having a strong foundation in your own practice is the only way to be a great teacher. This doesn't mean you have to be able to do fancy poses, what it means is that you have a depth in your own practice to be able to teach from. Often times those of us that struggle the most become the best teachers because we understand how to help people. So don't get caught up in what poses you can or can't do and don't bother teaching poses you can't do. Teach from your heart and live what you teach. You will never be perfect so be careful of the pressure this may entail, but live to the highest of your potential. If you learn to be where you're at you will always be great!

## Teaching as a service

Teaching yoga is truly a great service. With more and more yoga teachers in the profession it's easy to get caught up in being the best teacher, it's also easy to forget that it's a service and an honor to teach this practice. Yoga is a powerful tool, to be able to pass it on and guide people out of their suffering is such an honor.



# Principles of Vinyasa

**FLOW** Sequence that smoothly connects the poses together, so the class moves fluidly, like water. Flow is the absence of resistance; it moves you out of your head and into being.

**BREATH** Conscious breathing stimulates purification of the internal organs, revitalizes us from the inside out and keeps us present in the practice. When we are able to ride the breath we create a spaciousness for the mind to rest in.

**BANDHAS** Traditionally referred to as internal locks, used in an asana practice to support the body and in a pranayama practice to direct energy to specific parts of the body. These locks provide an anchor to the practice to provide stability and steadiness while toning the internal organs.

**DRISHTI** A focal point directs the purpose of the practice and maintains a steady foundation for movement to create a place for internal silence. The drishti could be the focal point for the eyes or the intention of the practice itself.

**ALIGNMENT** An anatomical focus allows the practice to be used as a form of physical therapy to help us break free of our unconscious holding patterns. Precise alignment can also act as a gateway into our bodies to take us into the present moment.

**TAPAS** The dedication and self-discipline that keeps us coming back to our practice. Literally heat or fire, used to purify the physical & energetic bodies.

## ASANAS

A basic class flow outline

INTRODUCE THEME/PURPOSE

WARM UP

SUN SALUTATIONS/FLOW/STANDING POSES

BACKBENDS

COOL DOWN - SEATED/SUPINE/INVERSIONS

SAVASANA

**INSPIRATION** Allows students to move deeper through the transformative process that unfolds with a consistent practice. This element creates the link between our practice on the mat & our practice off the mat, encouraging students to find a way to incorporate their practice into their lives after they leave their mat. Yoga is a call to action; if you leave them inspired you've succeeded.

# General Principles of Alignment

**FOUNDATION** Build the foundation from the ground up. If you're on the feet start there, in inversions start with the upper body, seated start with the pelvis.

**STACKING THE JOINTS** Once you've established the foundation build the pose on top of that, stacking the joints along the way to use gravity to your benefit. Stacking the joints will help protect the joints from torque on the joints & in some instances will provide effortlessness by using the skeletal system as opposed to the muscles.

**BALANCE** Within each pose look for balance between strength & surrender, effort & ease, floating & grounding. Use opposing movements to initiate & create each other to decrease tension.

**EXPANSIVENESS** In most of the poses we are looking to decrease compression and increase expansion to counteract our tendency to lay in the joints.

**MINDSET** Never underestimate the power of the mind. As you approach a posture you may want to address the mindset, this is important to notice as a teacher, especially when you are teaching something new or more difficult poses. The mindset we take changes everything!

**FOCUS POINT** The focus point is the key point in a given pose that will be the center of attention for that particular posture. It is important to have one or maybe two focus points so that the directions aren't overwhelming. This could be one area to focus on for each pose or it could be your focus for the class to cultivate a string of awareness throughout.

## Tadasana Basic Alignment

### 1. ANKLE

Starts in the ankle moves down the back of the heel, forward along the bottom of the foot, then lifts up the arch of the foot back to the starting point in the ankle.

### 2. THIGH

Starts at the top of the femur and moves down the back of the leg to the top of the calf, then moves forward & up the front of the thigh back to the top of the femur at the starting point.

### 3. PELVIC

Starts at the lower back just below the kidneys, moves down the spine to tuck the tailbone, forward through the pelvic floor, up the front of the lower abdomen to just below the navel & back to the starting point in the low back.

### 4. KIDNEY

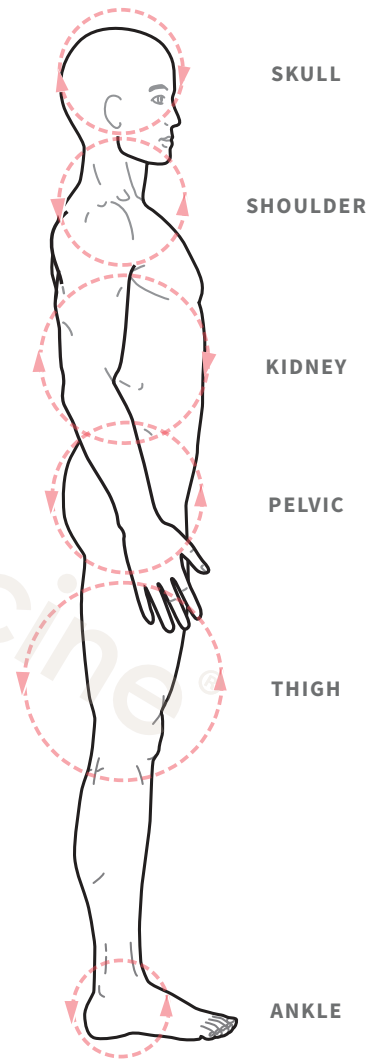
Starts at the lower back just below the kidneys, moves up the back to the bottom of the shoulder blades, forward to the base of the sternum, down to just below the navel & back to the starting point.

### 5. SHOULDER

Starts at the center of the upper palate, moves down the back of the neck to the bottom of the shoulder blades, forward through the bottom of the heart, up the chest & throat to the starting point.

### 6. SKULL

Starts at the center of the upper palate, moves back and up the back of the skull, forward over the top of the head, down the face back to the center of the upper palate.





## Recurring Themes

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**LIFT ARCHES & GROUND THROUGH 4 CORNERS OF FOOT**

**KNEE TRACKING**

**MICRO BEND KNEES/ELBOWS**

**LENGTHEN SACRUM/TAILBONE**

**CINCH WAIST**

**HUG/LENGTHEN MIDLINE**

**FRONT RIBS BACK**

**LIFT STERNUM AND BROADEN CLAVICLES/CHEST**

**SHOULDERS HUG INTO SOCKET**

**SOFTEN NECK & JAW**

**LIFT OCCIPUT TO LENGTHEN BACK OF NECK**

**UPPER PALATE BACK**

**SOFTEN THE GAZE**

# The Art of Assisting

## General Principles

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The most important part of assisting is to proceed with the intention of helping the student. Try to see the good in the pose first and remember that a posture is never inherently bad or wrong, but that it could be more fully expressed. You want to try to express the message that the student is doing fine & that you are there to support them first and foremost, not that they are wrong and need to be changed. Try to make contact with every student in some way during the class, most often probably with eye contact or verbal affirmations or assists.

### IMPORTANT NOTES

- **Consent is essential prior to a physical assist;** use consent cards, ask students individually before touching (eg can I place my hand on your knee) or ask students as a group to indicate consent before class (eg place a hand on your belly if you are interested in receiving hands-on assists)
- Be steady in your base and mindful of your own posture while adjusting.
- Begin your assists with the students who need it the most, assisting central or main misalignments first and then assisting the periphery.

- Try not to fix every little misalignment you can find but rather focus on one or two main things so that the students will remember and come back to it on their own.
- Make your assists timely, don't spend too much time with one student or throw off the pace of the entire class.
- Make sure that every interaction you have is meaningful rather than trying to fix everyone/everything.
- If everyone needs help you either need to modify the pose or bring them all out and demo or give verbal cues to help them figure it out.
- Sometimes to make a good assist you may need to have the student come out of the pose completely or partially before making an assist.
- Use props when necessary so that they learn to support themselves as needed.
- Remember calm, sensitive observation and listening will teach you how to assist your students best.

## Verbal Assists

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### AUDITORY LEARNERS

These should be your first line of assisting. This will allow students to make the changes on their own first, which will empower them and bring them into their body. Once you have guided them into a pose starting from the foundation then:

- Start first with the misalignments you see in the majority of the class.
- If you see someone doing something dangerous this may be the best place to start.
- If you are talking to someone specific make sure you either address them by name or are making eye contact with them.

- If the adjustment is aimed at one person try to be close to them and use a softer voice so they know it is aimed at them & to be respectful.
- Always use the utmost of respect with your students.
- Try to be clear and articulate in your instructions and limit the use of the word "like" in your descriptions, try words like "as if you were...." or "imagine that you are..." or "similar to..."

## Visual Assists (demos)

### VISUAL LEARNERS

These can be very helpful, but can slow the pace of class if used too often. These work well when you see that a large group of students aren't incorporating your verbal cues, or if you're teaching something new to the students.

- Be sure to position yourself in the room so everyone can see you, or have the students gather around you.
- First demonstrate the final pose, then the modifications so they know where they are heading as they proceed with the modifications.
- Point to the areas you are focusing on if possible (maybe on a model) so the students know exactly what to watch.
- Make the demo clear and concise
- Show how to go into the pose properly as well as how to come out of the pose.
- Ask the students if the demo was clear & if they have any questions.
- Repeat as needed
- Sometimes you may want to use these for one specific student if they just aren't getting it, but try to keep it somewhat discreet so the student doesn't feel singled out. You can also point to a nearby student to help guide them.
- As a teacher you always want to be cautious of your own body as well. If you aren't warm enough or are injured or too tired to demo properly, grab a student to demo on, even if they do something different you can show where to correct so that everyone learns from it.
- When doing demos make sure you even out your own body, as a teacher it's easy to develop muscular imbalances by always assisting or doing demos on one side.

## Physical Assists

### KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

These are very important to learn well and incredibly fun and rewarding to give, however these are usually your last line of assisting. The muscle memory created by figuring it out on your own is usually more deeply engrained in the nervous system than one that is created for you. However when a student is simply unable to produce the movement themselves or has plateaued on their own, then a physical assist is irreplaceable. Allow the student to hold the pose for at least a couple breaths after you have assisted them for them to integrate the sensation into their muscle memory. Try not to correct the pose continually for the student, allow them to learn to find it on their own, if they know you will recreate it for them they will become dependent on you for an assist. The therapeutic portion of the practice comes from learning to integrate the alignment on their own to empower the student to become their own teacher it is not to make them dependent on you.

With that said, when a physical assist is needed the results can be profound and quite empowering for the student. These can be, however, the most difficult part of teaching. If you chose to assist someone don't

do it half hearted and don't try to assist more than 1 or 2 people in a pose. Pick the people who need it most and focus your attention on them to be fully present in your assists.

There are several important factors that we will discuss that will be key in giving good assists to establish a few key points before you begin. Remember your job is to be of service, to help your students to the best of your ability and to keep practicing.

As a teacher always be careful with your own body as well, make sure you have a good setup and alignment for yourself as well so that you're not hunching over your students and wearing on your body over time. You'll figure this one out very quickly if you're teaching a lot and doing a lot of assisting and demos.



When you are getting ready to assist, quickly note who needs to be assisted & how you want to assist them by looking at:

- The foundation of the pose first
- Then inspect the outer form or periphery of the pose

- Observe the student's attitude before, during and after the assist to change accordingly, here are some things to observe:

- » Quality of the breath
- » Skin color
- » Facial expression
- » General posture within the pose
- » Quality of the eyes (tension or softening)

## Types of touch

### 1. INVESTIGATIVE

Palpating to see if a muscle is engaged or relaxed

### 2. STABILIZING

Using the entire hand to firmly contact the student in order to stabilize their foundation

### 3. DIRECTIVE

I like to think of these assists as sculpting the pose and can be used in several different ways.

- Directs the student's attention to specific areas to make small changes to the alignment (i.e.-hand or rib positioning)
- Light guiding touch to show the direction of movement in a pose to gently guide them deeper into the pose with little assistance (i.e. - guiding length in the spine in forward folds)
- Awaken unused or underused areas of the body by having the student press or breathe into your hand.

### 4. ASSISTING

Moving the student's skeletal alignment, usually a deeper assist than the other types, these assists usually involve getting set up and being in the pose with the student for at least 3 breaths, this technique also involves listening carefully to the student's body language, used for advanced "feel good" assists or to assist those who do not respond to other techniques. These assists can be more difficult to know where to stop, make sure you check in with your student in these assists to see how they are doing and to see if they need more or less intensity. Even when it feels they are flexible or seem they can go further, their experience may not match up with that so always ask.

Note the contrast to the directive touch, here the assist is deeper and a change in position may be created for the student. The directive touch usually consists of smaller changes done more lightly and built on the student's capacity.

#### KEYS TO WORKING WITH INJURIES

1. Ask first
2. Go slow
3. Get waiver
4. Check in with students

Expect that most people have something going on.

## General Rules of Assisting

- Avoid rubbing the skin softly or using an unsure soft touch, as this can be misinterpreted as sensual or unsure
- Try not to grip the students, especially with your nails
- Be firm, directive & confident, the student being assisted will be the first to notice if you're unsure.

### ASK FIRST

This is especially important if the student is new to your class or you aren't familiar with their practice &/or limitations/injuries. Don't be afraid to ask. You can also ask at the beginning of class about injuries or people who wish not to receive assists during class.

### MAKE SURE THE STUDENT KNOWS THAT YOU'RE THERE

You can say something or rub your hands together, whatever works for you but let them know you're there other wise you may startle them or knock them over.

### FIRST STABILIZE

Make sure that before you begin assisting you create an anchor or stabilizing point to begin with. This will give the student a sense of balance and stability upon which to build an assist. This is also the last part of the assist that you will release.

### 1-10, 10-1

Don't just walk up and go right into an assist, you will need to ease your way into it. Start with a light touch and then work your way into it from there. Starting with a low level intensity assist (1) and slowly working into the depth of the assist (10). The same is true when you come out of the assist, if you back off too quickly the student will lose their balance. This is another reason why it is best to only assist one person per a pose. This is especially true in standing poses where it is easier to lose your balance.

### HANDS AS EARS

Learning to know the difference between resistance (ie-protecting or not wanting an assist) and physical limitations (ie- their edge) can be a tricky one to notice at first but using your hands to sense gripping or resistance is crucial. Either one is a call to not go any further and potentially to back off on the assist; once tension develops there is no benefit to the student.

If it is resistance you can do one of two things:

**(1)** if you feel they are resisting you assisting all together then slowly back off and end the assist **OR** **(2)** if you feel they were resisting the intensity of the assist just back off until they relax and then stay with it to establish some trust.

With this student you will need to be more soft with your assisting to establish trust or if you feel they just don't like assists stick to verbal as much as possible.

If it is a physical limitation you will feel yourself slowly approaching a firm end rather than a push of resistance up against you. The distinction can seem subtle at first but will eventually be easier to spot. If there is a physical limitation make sure you stay in an area that the student can relax into. Check in and ask the student if the pressure is ok just to make sure, the student will always appreciate this. Sometimes asking in the case of resistance is enough to develop some trust to allow them to relax.

### MOVE THE BONES/MUSCLES NOT THE SKIN

Your assist will feel much deeper if you move into it with the intention of moving the bones not the skin. Try it; feel the difference as a student and an assister.

### OPPOSING FORCES

Always use opposing forces to create a balance assist. If you push one way there needs to be another hand or force pushing the opposite way to balance the movement so the students doesn't fall over.

# ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY



# Anatomy

## 1. Intro

What follows is a brief overview of the anatomy and physiology of the human body. Keep in mind that the human body is a complex and dynamic system that is constantly changing. Our understanding of the body is also constantly changing as we learn more and more that the body is not just a set of separate parts but a finely tuned machine that is dependent on every other part of the system. In anatomy and physiology we will deconstruct the parts of the body to give us a starting point of how the body works, however in reality it is often much more complex than this.

Please keep in mind that there is always more to learn in this subject. We have distilled the information down to the most important and relevant topics as a new teacher to understand the effects of our yoga practice on our bodies.

## 2. Terminology

**MEDIAL** close to the midline

**LATERAL** away from the midline

**SUPERIOR** above or toward the head

**INFERIOR** below or away from the head

**PROXIMAL** closer to the trunk  
(refers to the limbs)

**DISTAL** away from the trunk  
(refers to the limbs)

**ANTERIOR** toward the front of the body

**POSTERIOR** toward the back of the body

**SUPERFICIAL** closer to the surface of the body/skin

**DEEP** further from the surface of the body/skin

## 3. Bones/Skeleton

The skeleton provides structure & support for the body as well as the levers that the muscles are used to manipulate. The outside of the bone is solid & covered with a sensitive membranous cover called the periosteum, while the inside is porous & spongy.

- Bones support the body
- Protect the organs & tissues
- Store minerals that make the bone hard (calcium, phosphorus...)
- Acts as levers that the muscles can move
- The marrow produces red & white blood cells as well as platelets.

Bones are two-thirds minerals or rigid tissue and one-third collagen/organic matter or elastic tissue. This allows our bones to be stiff & supportive but to also bow slightly and absorb shock. Our bones will grow & become stronger with applied stress to them, via gravity, muscular contractions, yoga, really any movement against some sort of resistance. Our bones are constantly being remodeled (broken down, reabsorbed and rebuilt). Every two years your bone cells are replaced, this process slows with aging, inadequate nutrients, stress, smoking, alcohol, menopause & lack of exercise. However every time a muscle pulls on the periosteum of the bone it stimulates growth.

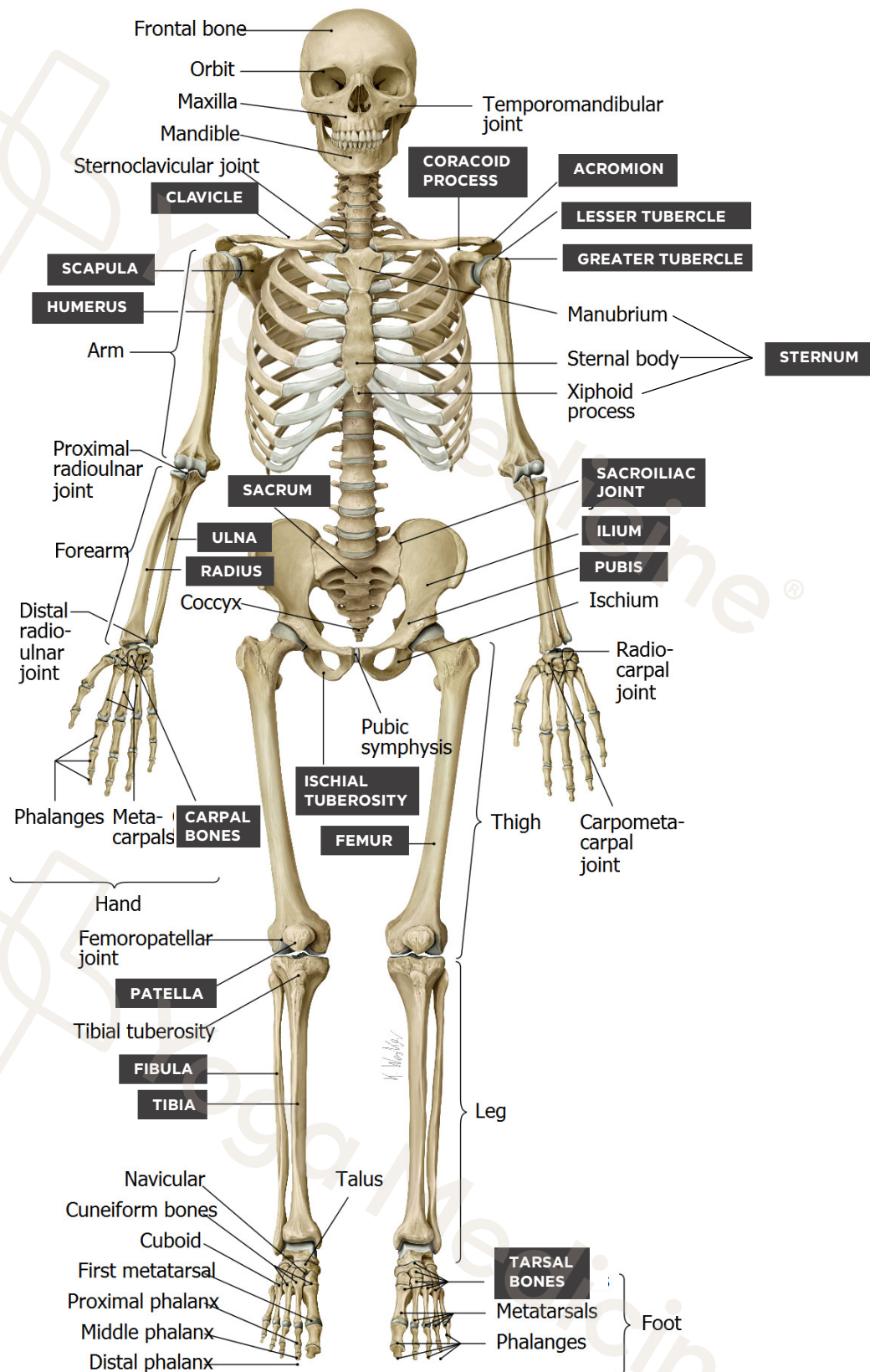
### BONES & REFERENCE POINTS TO KNOW

1. Scapula: spine, fossa's, coracoid, acromion
2. Clavicle, AC joint
3. Sternum, SC joint
4. Upper extremity: humerus (greater and lesser tuberosity, bicipital groove), radius, ulna, carpals
5. Ribs (costals)
6. Pelvis: iliac crests, iliac fossa, ASIS, AIIIS, PSIS, ischial tuberosity, pubis, sacrum & SI joint, acetabulum
7. Lower extremity: femur (greater and lesser trochanter), patella, tibia, fibula, tarsals

### SPINE CONSISTS OF

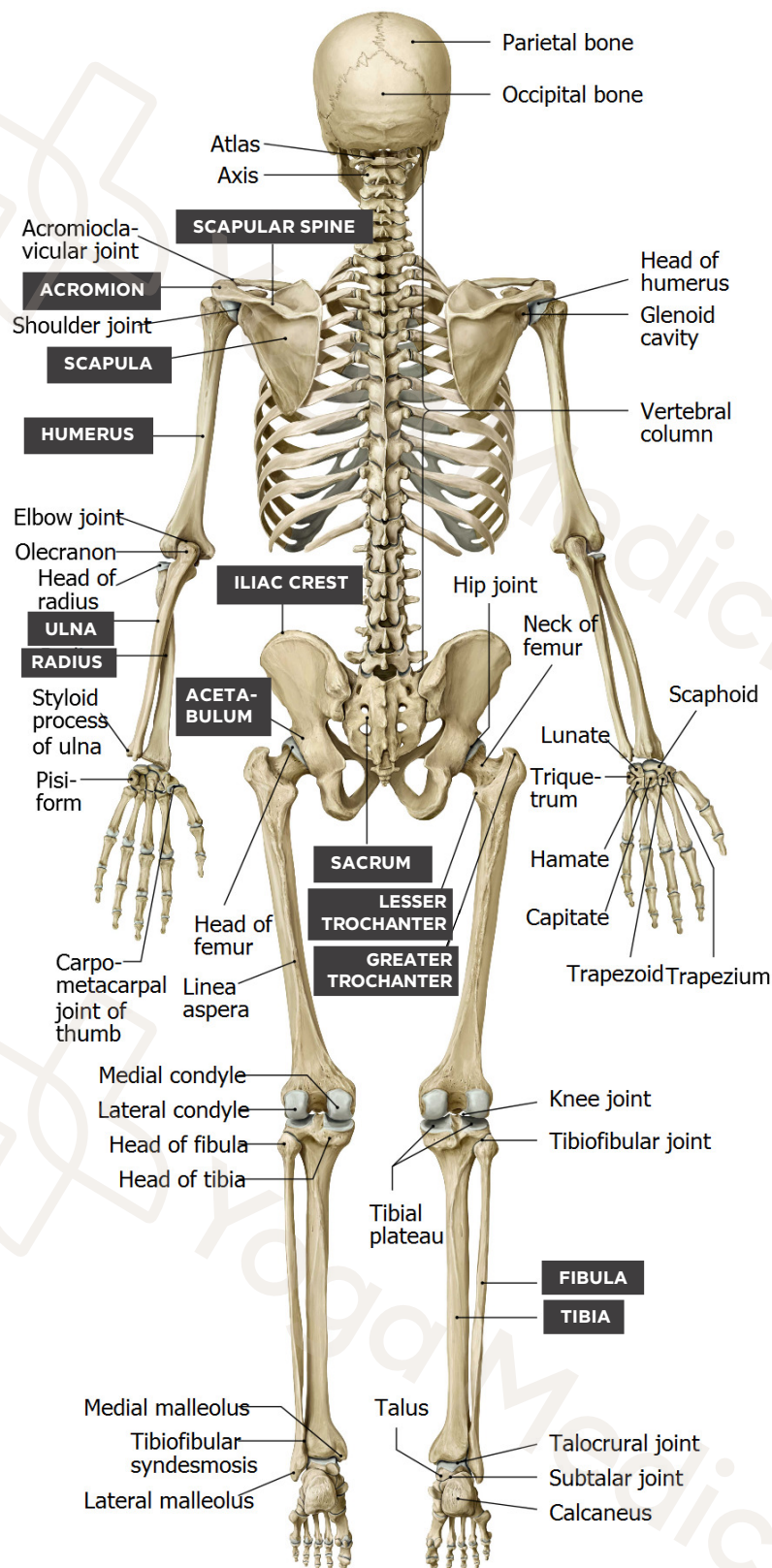
- **7 CERVICAL** vertebra (C1-7) with a natural lordosis
- **12 THORACIC** vertebra (T1-12) with a natural kyphosis
- **5 LUMBAR** vertebra (L1-5) with a natural lordosis
- **SACRUM** with a slight natural kyphosis
- **COCCYX**

## BONES



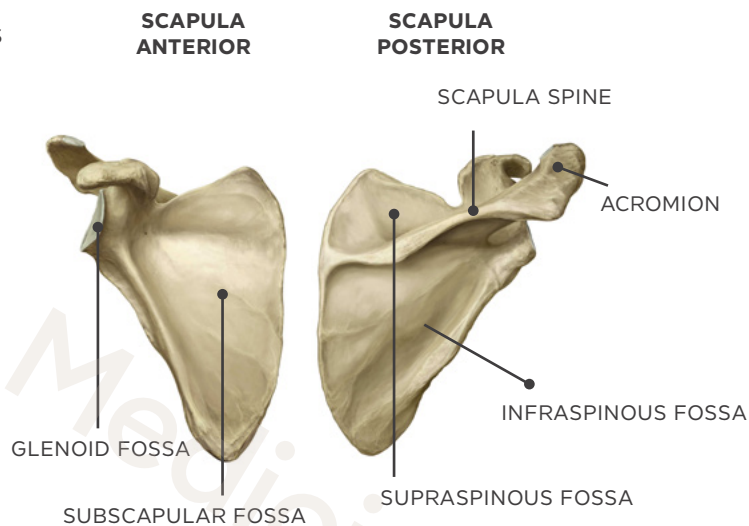
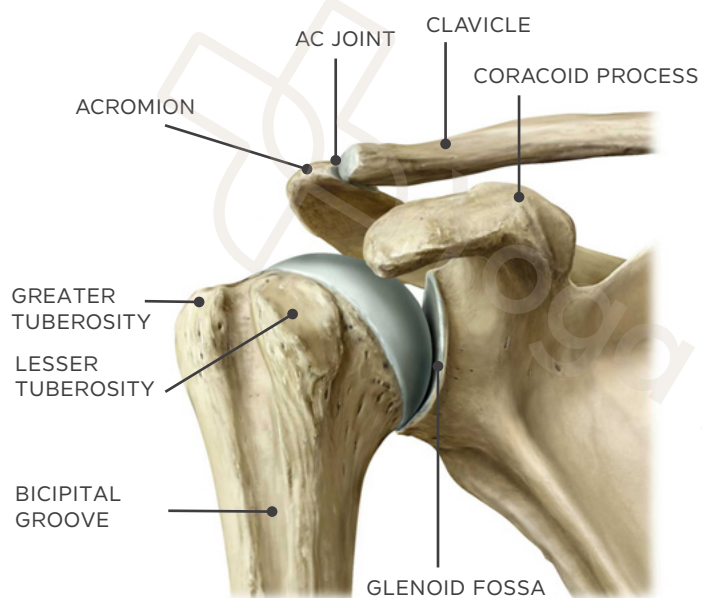
Schuenke, Atlas of Anatomy Vol. 1, 2nd Ed., Fig. 4.38 A, Illustrator: Karl Wesker, ©2016 Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.



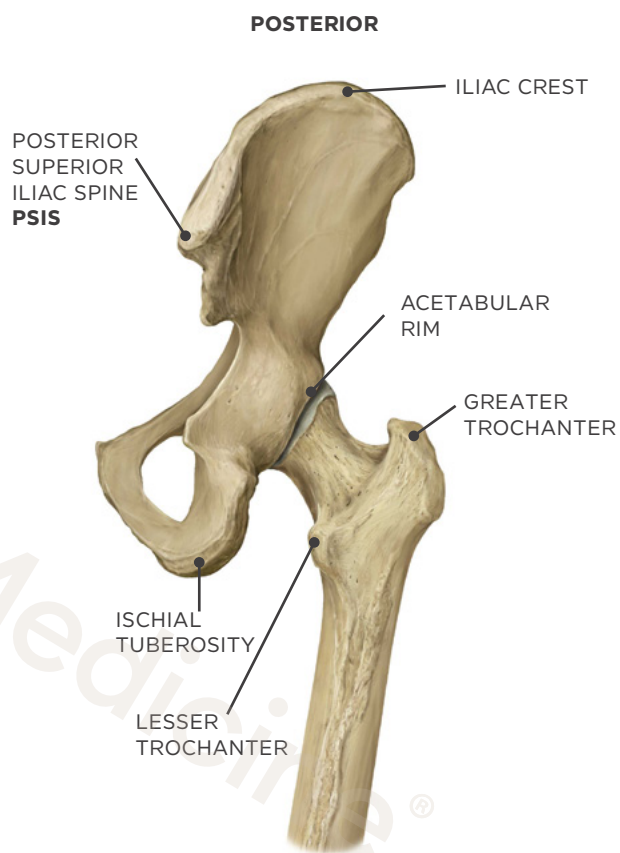
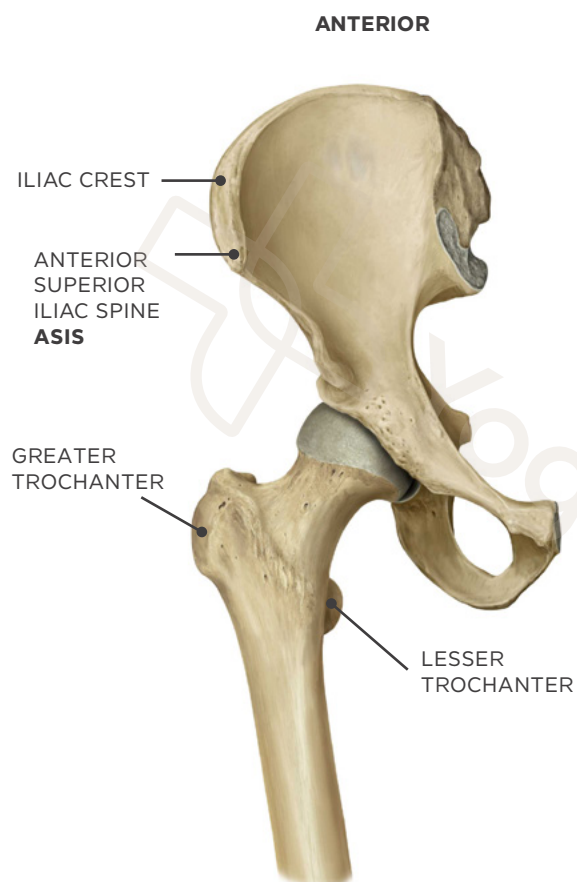
**BONES**

Schuenke, Atlas of Anatomy Vol. 1, 2nd Ed., Fig. 4.38 B, Illustrator: Karl Wesker,  
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## BONES OF THE SHOULDER & HIP JOINT



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## 4. Joints

Where 2 bones meet; there are 3 major types:

### 1. FIBROUS

Join flat bones together with very limited movement (skull & pelvic bones)

### 2. CARTILAGINOUS

Slightly movable with cartilage between the bones (vertebra, ribs/sternum)

### 3. SYNOVIAL

Freely movable, surrounded by a ligamentous joint capsule that secretes synovial fluid to lubricate the joint; includes:

- Ball & socket (hip)
- Hinge (knee)
- Compressive joints (spine)

#### LAYERS OF A SYNOVIAL JOINT

- Bone
- Cartilage
- Joint Capsule
- Ligaments
- Tendons
- Deep muscles
- Superficial muscles

*passive stability*

*active stability*

**CARTILAGE** - strong & dense to provide a smooth joint surface & absorb shock (labrum, meniscus, plus all synovial joints have hyaline cartilage covering articulating bones), however has no direct blood supply and so must receive nutrients from the bone or synovial fluid. There is usually little if any direct nerve supply to this tissue so pain signaling is limited here.

#### JOINT CAPSULE

- Connects and encapsulates joint
- Adds to passive stability
- Creates lubrication to reduce wear and tear

## 5. Ligaments

Connect bone to bone

- Connective tissue: mostly collagen with a small amount of elastin to allow for very minimal stretching
- Contain sensory nerves that communicate with the muscles & central nervous system to warn the brain of overstretching
- Ligaments have very little blood supply and therefore heal very slowly
- Critical component to the passive stability of the joints

#### LIGAMENT EXAMPLES IN THE KNEE

1. Medial collateral ligament (MCL)
2. Lateral collateral ligament (LCL)
3. Anterior cruciate ligament (ACL)
4. Posterior cruciate ligament (PCL)

## 6. Tendons

Connect muscle to bone

- A connective tissue extension of the muscle fibers
- Very little elasticity and can be overstretched
- Can become inflamed or irritated from chronic repetitive motions, leading to tendonitis
- Also have very little blood supply so heal very slowly like the ligaments

## 7. Skeletal muscle

- Produce movement by contracting and pulling on bones, composed of motor units bundled into muscle fibers. Depending on the movement, different muscle fibers of each muscle may contract or relax to perform precise movements.
- Highly elastic with good blood flow which helps them recover from injury much easier
- Contraction of the muscles moves blood and lymph through the tissues, however in states of chronic contraction the circulation is decreased, causing inflammation, hypoxia and sometimes fibrous (scar) tissue buildup.
- Muscles usually act as a coordinated group, even when a muscle is relaxed a few muscles cells stay contracted (muscle tone) to keep them ready to respond. Unfortunately many of us carry too much tension in certain areas and not enough in others, causing biomechanical discrepancies as a result; this is where the awareness aspect of yoga is so transformational.
- Help the ligaments support the joints. Good support here can help prevent injury.

### TYPES OF MUSCLE CONTRACTION

- 1. CONCENTRIC**  
Shortens the muscle to create movement
- 2. ECCENTRIC**  
The muscle lengthens as it contracts
- 3. ISOMETRIC**  
Tension without movement

**AGONIST** prime mover

**ANTAGONIST** opposes the prime mover

**SYNERGIST** assists the prime mover

## 8. Fascia

Our fascia is like the saran wrap around us that holds everything together. Our fascia acts like a web to support, position and shape the body. Research has shown that fascia does contain contractile cells and is able to contract in a smooth muscle-like manner and consequently influence musculoskeletal dynamics and postural patterns. The fascia connects and integrates our movements to allow the muscles to support and assist each other. This is why when we move it isn't just one or two muscles performing the action as you might see in the textbooks, but it rather a symphony of contractions to support and spread out the effort so no one area takes all the pressure. Unfortunately poor posture or biomechanics can reprogram the fascia to hold the tissues improperly & even change joint position & function over time, leading to uneven wearing on the joints. The good news is that through yoga or other forms of therapy these patterns can slowly be reprogrammed over time!

### FASCIA COMPOSED OF

- 1. CELLS:** mainly white blood cells & fibroblasts
- 2. FIBERS:** mainly collagen & elastin
- 3. GROUND SUBSTANCE:** viscous fluid or gel that surrounds the fibers & cells

### THREE KINDS OF FASCIA

#### 1. SUPERFICIAL FASCIA

- » Immediately under the skin
- » Houses adipose tissue
- » Blends with dermis and anchors it to the underlying myofascia
- » Provides a passageway for nerves and blood vessels

#### 2. DEEP FASCIA

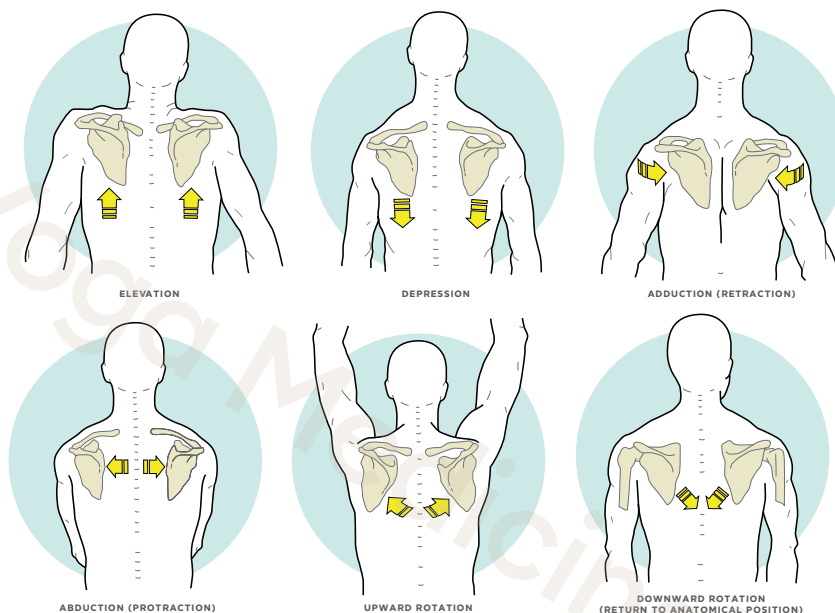
- » Dense fibrous connective tissue
- » Surrounds bones, nerves and blood vessels
- » Surrounds, interpenetrates, and interlinks muscles and groups of muscles

#### 3. VISCERAL FASCIA

- » Wraps and suspends organs within their cavities

## 9. Movements

- 1. SHOULDER:** flexion, extension, abduction, adduction, internal rotation & external rotation
- 2. SCAPULA:** protraction & retraction, elevation & depression, upward & downward rotation
- 3. FOREARM:** pronate & supinate
- 4. HIP:** flexion, extension, abduction, adduction, internal rotation & external rotation
- 5. ANKLE:** inversion, eversion, dorsiflexion, plantarflexion
- 6. SPINE:** flexion, extension, lateral flexion (left & right), rotation (left & right) and axial extension (lengthening the midline)
- 7. PELVIS:** anterior & posterior tilt



## 10. Spine

### 3 MAIN FUNCTIONS

1. Hold upright
2. Protect spinal cord
3. Allow for movement

### SPINAL CORD

The spinal cord is a column of millions of nerve fibers that carry messages from your brain to the rest of your body. It extends from the brain to the area between the end of your first lumbar vertebra and top of your second lumbar vertebra, below this level, the spinal canal contains a group of nerve fibers, called the cauda equina. Each vertebra has a hole in the center, so that when they stack on top of each other they form a hollow tube that holds and protects the entire spinal cord and its nerve roots.

A protective membrane, called the dura mater covers the spinal cord. The dura mater forms a watertight sac around the spinal cord and the spinal nerves. Inside this sac, the spinal cord is surrounded by spinal fluid.

### NERVE ROOTS

The spinal cord branches off into 31 pairs of nerve roots, which exit the spine through small openings on each side of the vertebra called neural foraminae. The two nerve roots in each pair go in opposite directions when traveling through the foraminae. The nerve root allows nerve signals to travel to and from your brain to the rest of your body.

The nerves in each area of the spinal cord connect to specific parts of your body. The nerves of the cervical spine go to the upper chest and arms. The nerves of the thoracic spine go to the chest and abdomen. The nerves of the lumbar spine reach to the legs, pelvis, bowel, and bladder. These nerves coordinate and control all the body's organs and parts, allow you to control your muscles and to feel sensations. If your body is being hurt in some way, your nerves signal the brain. Damage to the nerves themselves can cause pain, tingling, or numbness in the area where the nerve travels. Without nerve signals, your body would not be able to function.



## SPINAL DISCS

The discs are like shock absorbers between the bones of the spine and are designed to help the back stay flexible while resisting forces in many different planes of motion. Each disc has two parts:

- A firm, tough outer layer (annulus fibrosus). The outer portion of this layer contains nerves. If the disc tears in this area, it can become quite painful.
- A soft, jelly-like core (nucleus pulposus). This part of the disc contains proteins that can cause the tissues they touch to become swollen and tender. If these proteins leak out to the nerves of the outer layer of disc they can cause a great deal of pain.

Discs are primarily avascular; only periphery receives blood supply. Instead it receives nutrients & fluid through movement (imbibe). There is usually no nerve supply; it may be innervated by a few nerve fibers to the peripheral posterior annulus fibrosus.

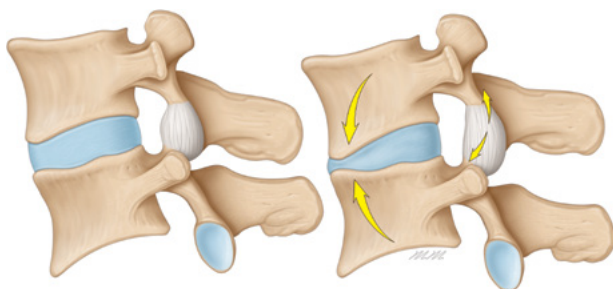
## FACET JOINTS

The facet joints are bony connections that link the vertebrae together and give them the flexibility to move against each other. There are two facet joints between each pair of vertebrae, one on each side. The facet joints give the spine its flexibility and stability.

The facet joints are synovial joints covered with articular cartilage, a slick spongy material that allows the bones to glide against one another without much friction. Synovial fluid inside the joint keeps the joint surfaces lubricated, like oil lubricates the parts of a machine. This fluid is contained inside the joint by the joint capsule, a watertight sac of soft tissue and ligaments that fully surrounds and encloses the joint.

The facet joints also comprise 2 of the 3 weight bearing points of the spine with the vertebral body, with the disc being the 3rd weight bearing point on the spine.

## THREE WEIGHT BEARING POINTS



## OPTIMIZING FUNCTION

PROGRESSIVELY MORE PRESSURE ON DISCS	
Supine	70lb
Stand	100lb
Stand slight fold	150lb
Stand fold	210lb
Lifting a weight while folding	400lb
Seated	150lb
Seated slight fold	180lb
Seated fold	270lb

Progressively more pressure on discs

- Supine
- Standing
- Standing twist or fold
- Seated twist or fold

## MOVEMENTS OF THE SPINE

### CERVICAL

- Most movement in all directions
- C1/atlas - "yes"
- C2/axis - "no"

### THORACIC

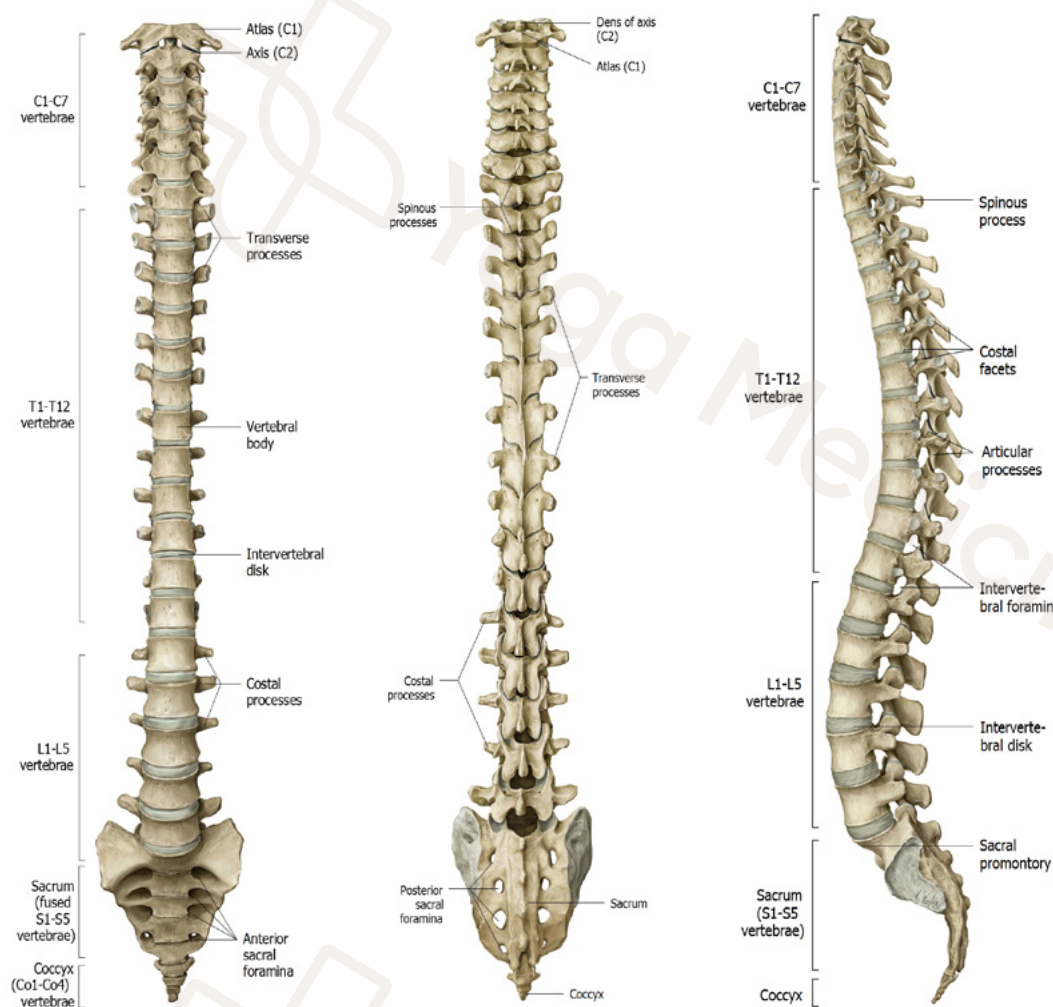
- Mostly rotation
- Some lateral flexion
- Very limited flexion and extension due to the attachment of the ribs & shape of the spinous process.

### LUMBAR

- Mostly flexion and extension
- Some lateral flexion
- Very little rotation



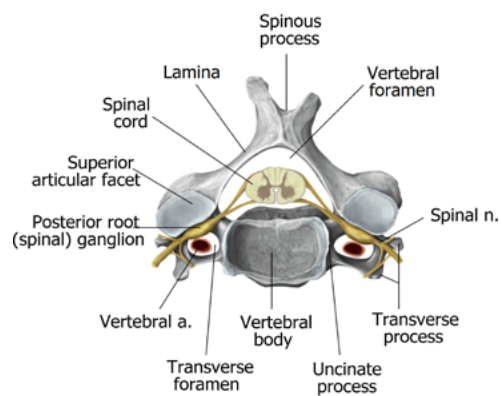
## VERTEBRAL COLUMN



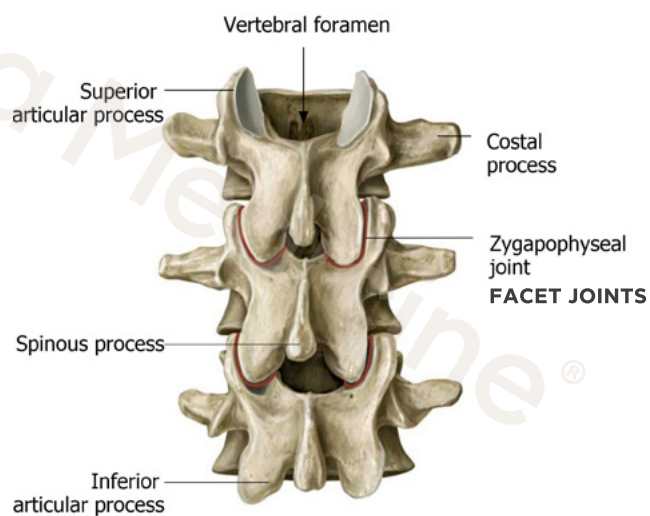
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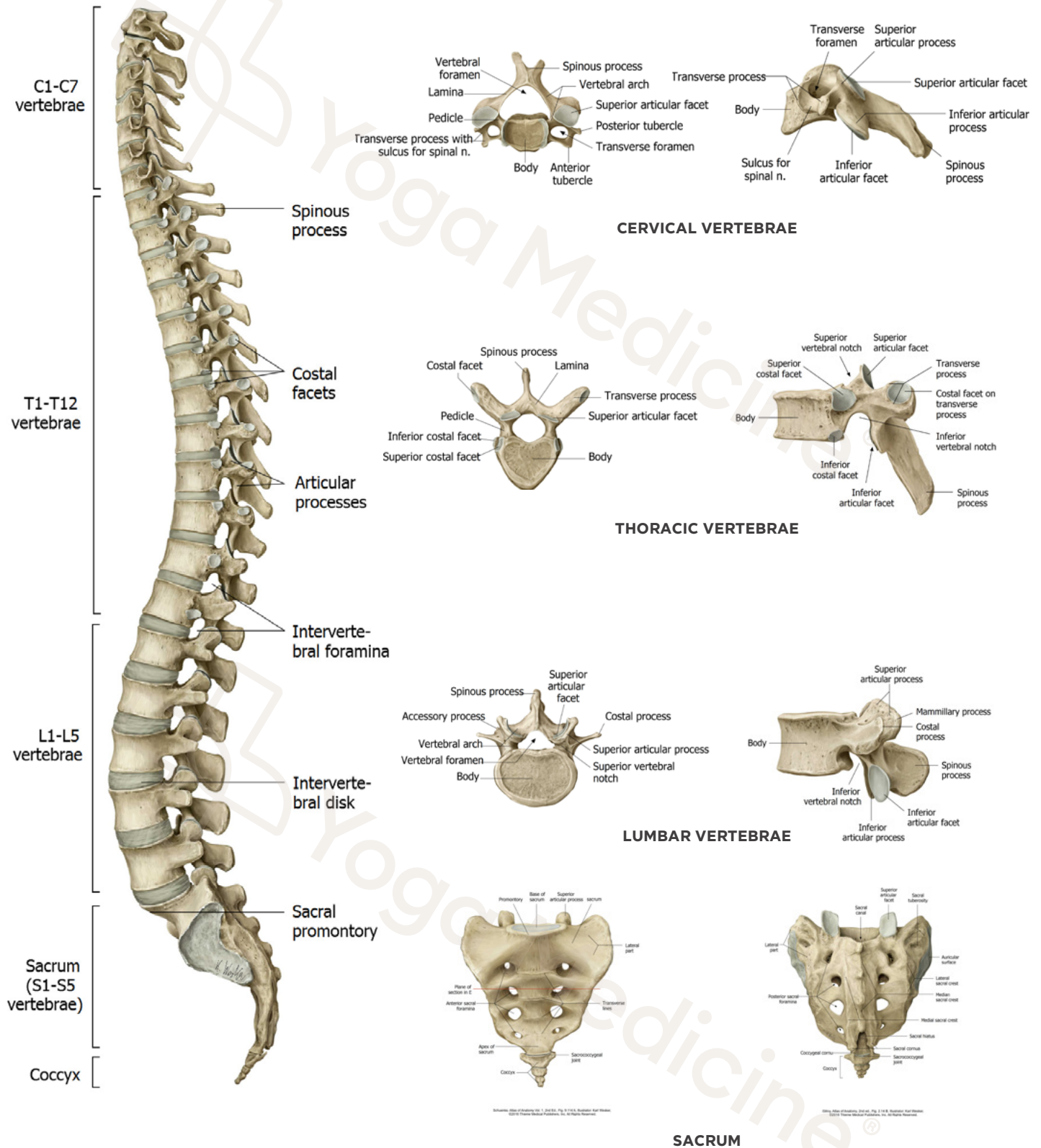
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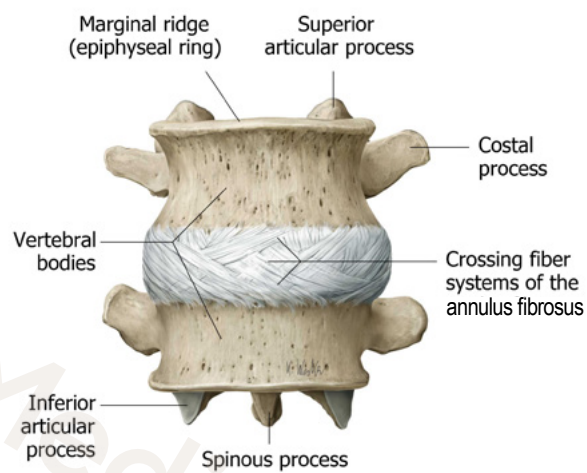
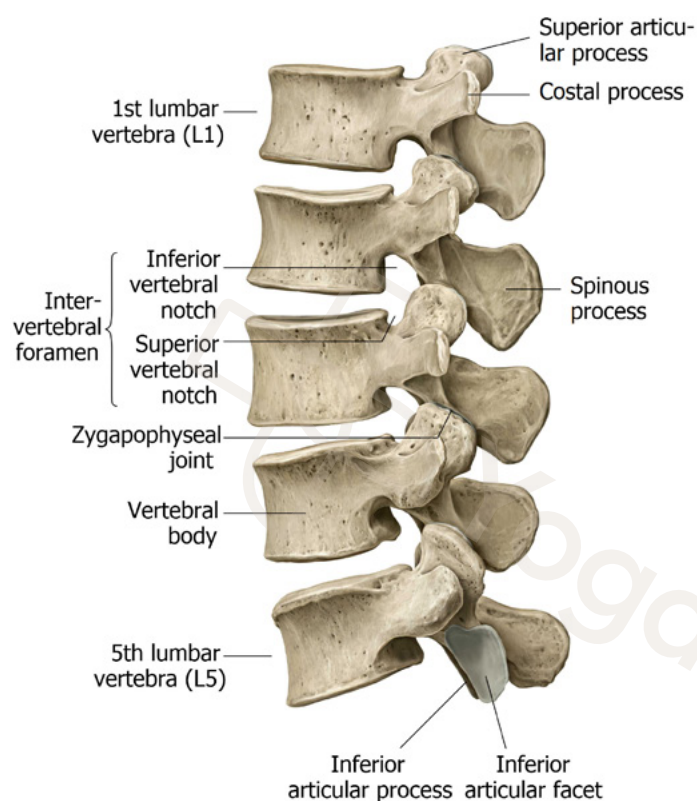
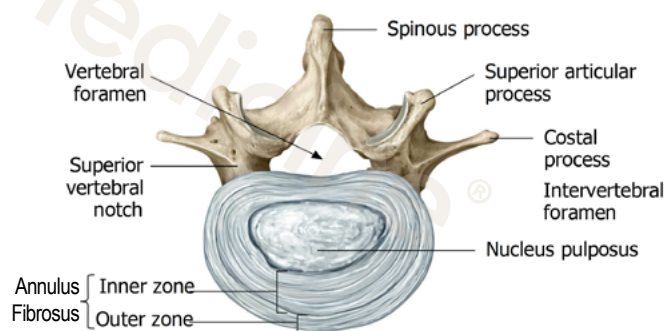
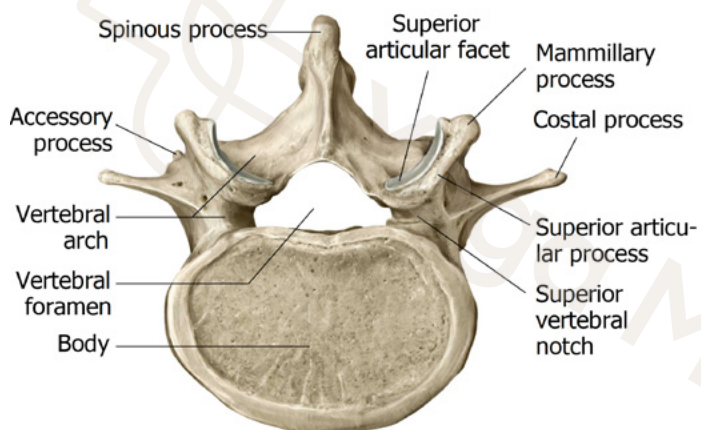
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## VERTEBRAL DIFFERENCES



## LUMBAR VERTEBRAE



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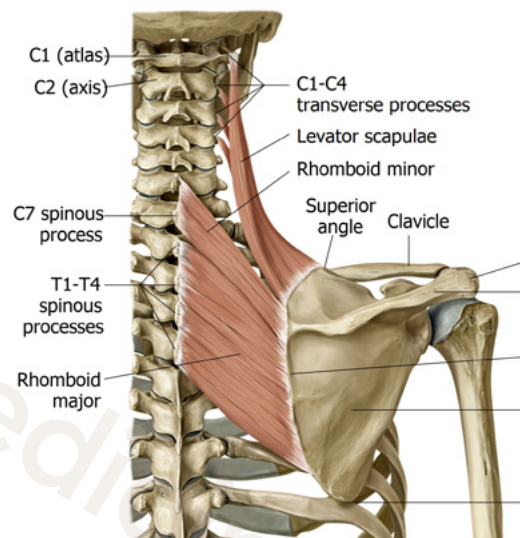
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## 11. Shoulder Girdle

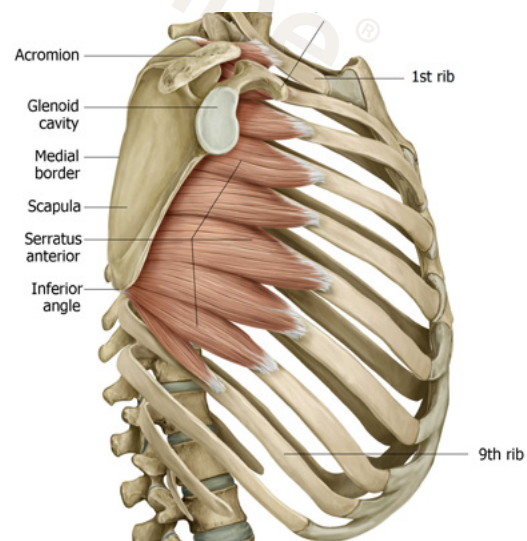
### 1. RHOMBOIDS MAJOR & MINOR

**Origin:** Spinous process of C7-T5  
**Insertion:** Medial border of scapula  
**Action:** Retract scapula, stabilize scapula  
**Poses:**



### 2. SERRATUS ANTERIOR

**Origin:** Lateral surface of upper 8-9 ribs  
**Insertion:** Medial border of scapula  
**Action:** Protract scapula, stabilize scapula  
**Poses:**

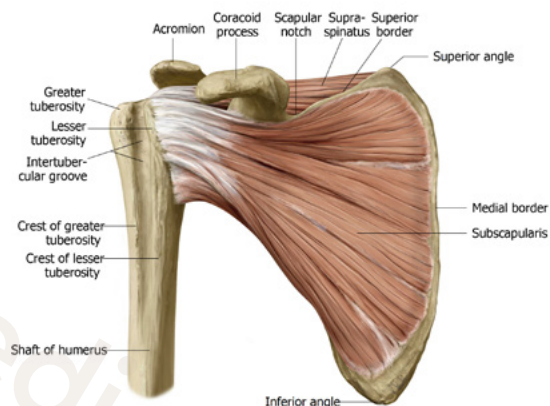


### 3. ROTATOR CUFF

(Subscapularis, Supraspinatus, Infraspinatus, Teres minor)

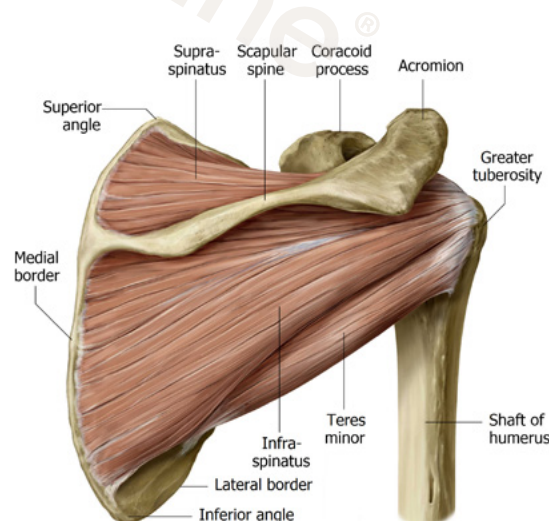
#### 3A. SUBSCAPULARIS

**Origin:** Subscapular fossa (anterior scapula)  
**Insertion:** Lesser tubercle of humerus  
**Action:** Internally rotate humerus, stabilize humerus  
**Poses:**



#### 3B. SUPRASPINATUS

**Origin:** Supraspinous fossa on scapula  
**Insertion:** Greater tubercle of humerus  
**Action:** Abduction of humerus, stabilize humerus  
**Poses:**



#### 3C. INFRASPINATUS

**Origin:** Infraspinous fossa on scapula  
**Insertion:** Posterior greater tubercle of humerus  
**Action:** External rotation of humerus, stabilize humerus  
**Poses:**

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#### 3D. TERES MINOR

**Origin:** Lateral border of scapula  
**Insertion:** Posterior greater tubercle of humerus  
**Action:** External rotation of humerus, stabilize humerus  
**Poses:**

## 12. Pelvic Girdle, Thigh

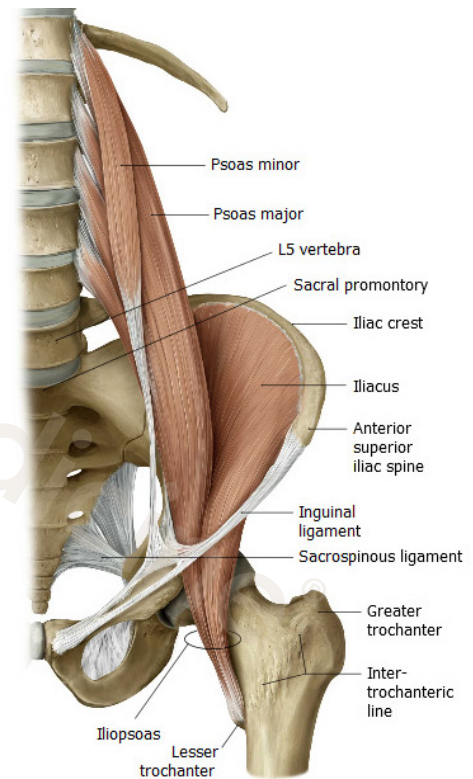
### 1. ILIACUS AND PSOAS

**Origin:** Psoas - Transverse process, body & discs of T12-sacrum  
Iliacus - Iliac fossa

**Insertion:** Lesser trochanter

**Action:** Hip flexion, lumbar extension/lordosis

**Poses:**



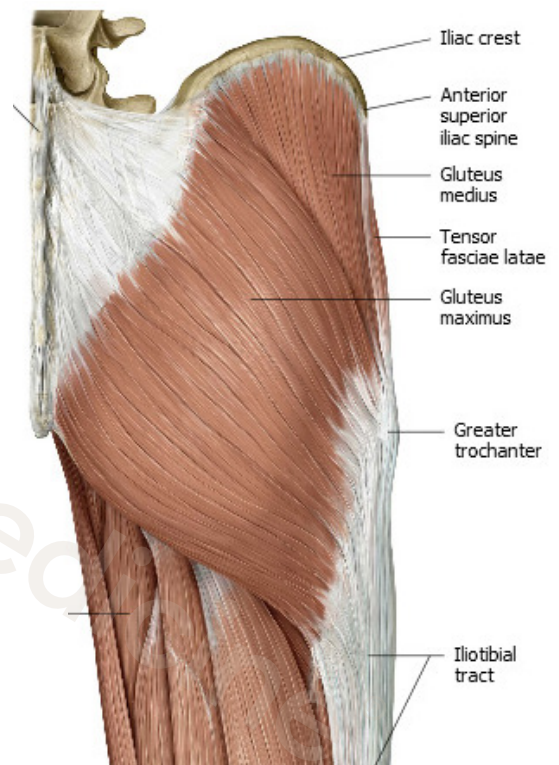
### 2. GLUTEUS MAXIMUS

**Origin:** Lateral border of sacrum

**Insertion:** Gluteal tuberosity & iliotibial band

**Action:** Hip extension, hip external rotation

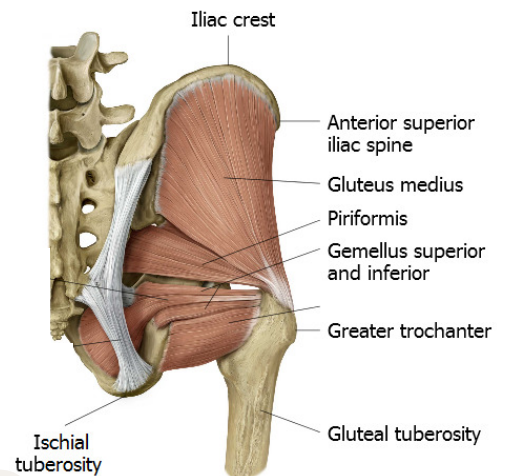
**Poses:**





### 3. GLUTEUS MEDIUS

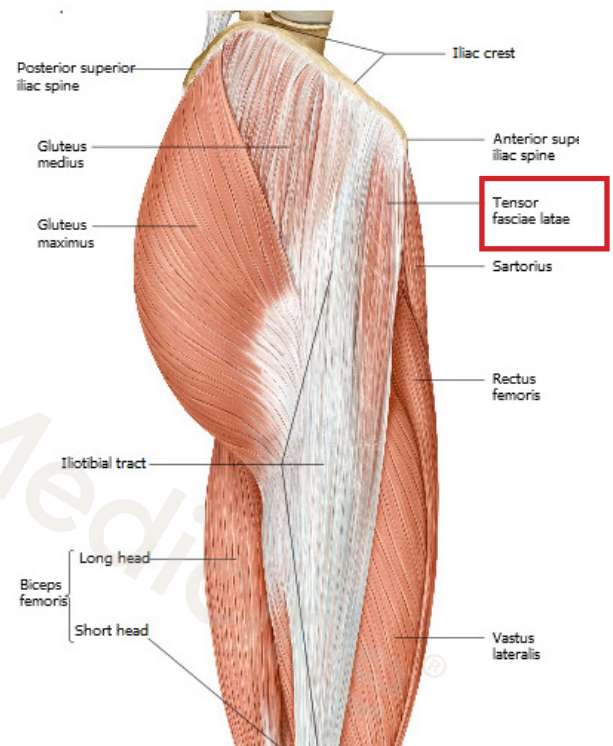
**Origin:** Under iliac crest  
**Insertion:** Greater trochanter  
**Action:** Hip abduction, stabilize pelvis on one leg  
**Poses:**



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### 4. TENSOR FASCIA LATA

**Origin:** ASIS  
**Insertion:** Iliotibial band  
**Action:** Hip flexion, abduction & internal rotation  
**Poses:**



## 5. EXTERNAL ROTATORS:

### PIRIFORMIS & GOGOQ MUSCLES

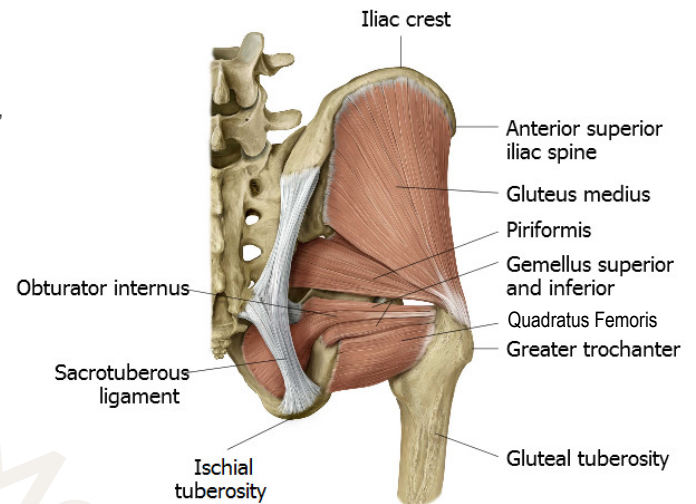
(Gemellus Superior, Gemellus Inferior, Obturator internus, Obturator externus, Quadratus femoris)

**Origin:** Lateral border of sacrum

**Insertion:** Greater trochanter

**Action:** External rotator

**Poses:**



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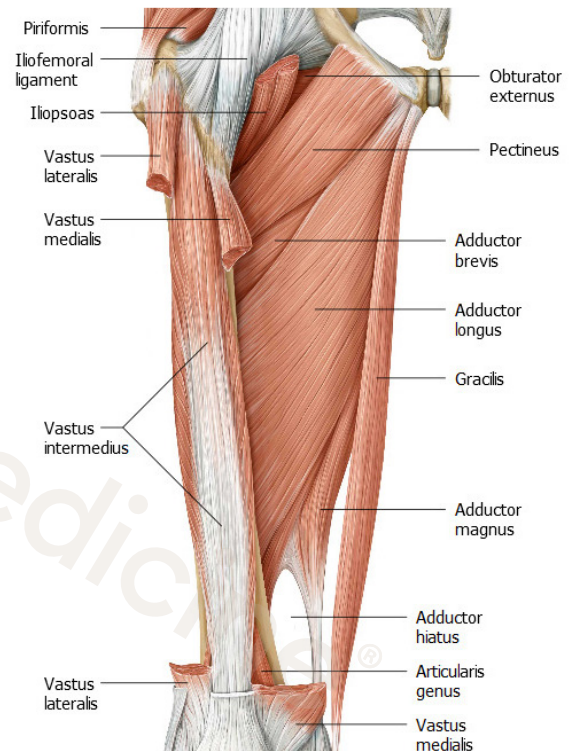
## 6. ADDUCTORS

**Origin:** Pubic bone & ischial tuberosity

**Insertion:** Linea aspera of femur

**Action:** Adduction of the hip

**Poses:**



. Fig. 16.25 B, Illustrator: Karl Wesker, Markus Voll, ©2016 Thieme Medical Publishers, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

## 7. QUADRICEPS

(Vastus Lateralis, Medialis, Intermedius & Rectus Femoris)

### 7A. VASTUS LATERALIS, MEDIALIS, INTERMIUS

**Origin:** Femur

**Insertion:** Tibial tuberosity via patellar tendon

**Action:** Extend knee

**Poses:**

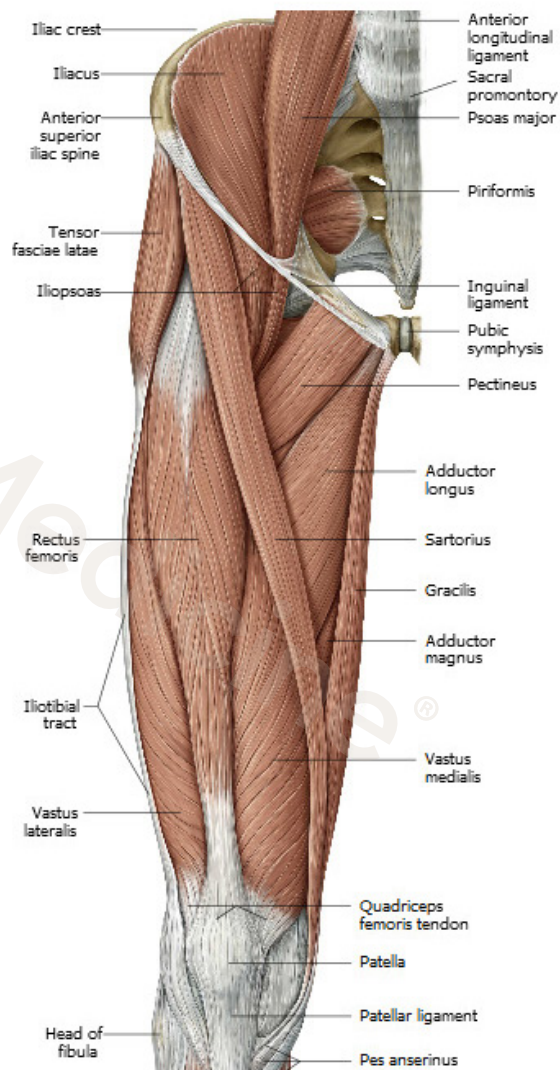
### 7B. RECTUS FEMORIS

**Origin:** AIIS

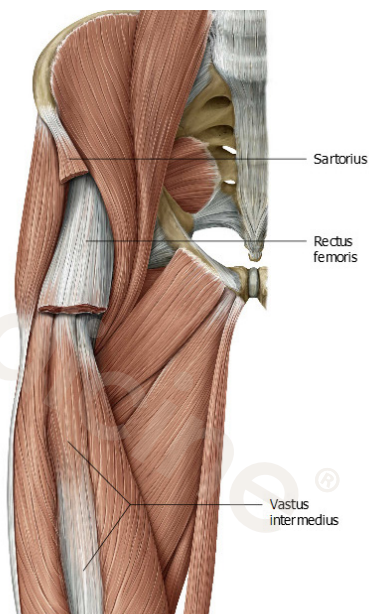
**Insertion:** Tibial tuberosity via patellar tendon (with rest of quadriceps)

**Action:** Knee extension, hip flexion

**Poses:**



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## 8. HAMSTRINGS

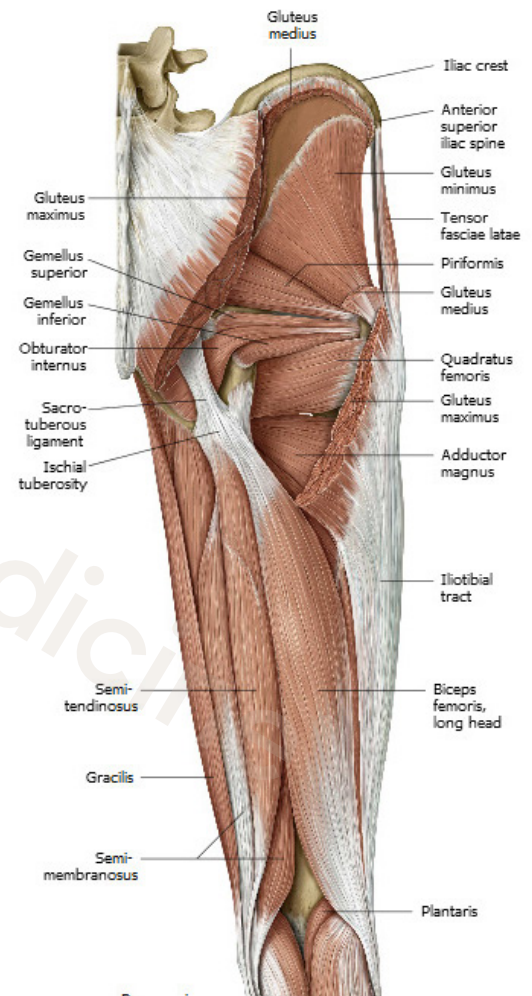
(Semimembranosus, Semitendinosus, Biceps Femoris Longus & Brevis)

### 8A. SEMIMEMBRANOSUS & SEMITENDINOSUS

**Origin:** Ischial tuberosity  
**Insertion:** Medial condyle of tibia  
**Action:** Extension of hip, flexion of knee  
**Poses:**

### 8B. BICEPS FEMORIS LONGUS & BREVIS

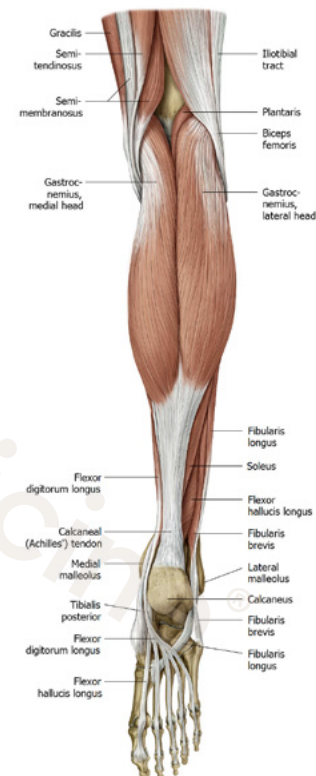
**Origin:** Ischial tuberosity & femur  
**Insertion:** Head of fibula  
**Action:** Extension of hip, flexion of knee  
**Poses:**



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## 9. GASTROCNEMIUS

**Origin:** Superior to lateral & medial femoral condyles  
**Insertion:** Achilles tendon to calcaneus  
**Action:** Plantar flex foot, flex knee  
**Poses:**





## 13. Trunk

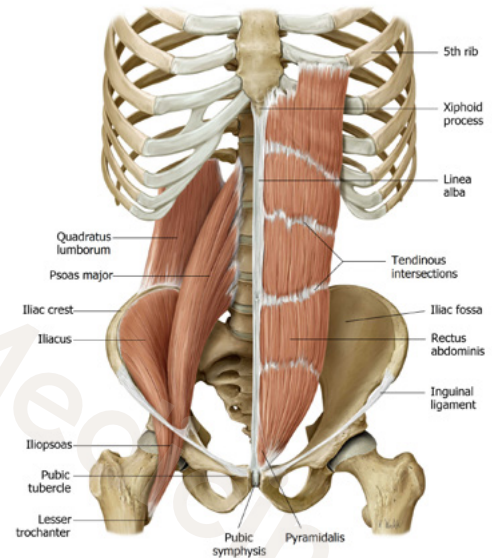
### 1. RECTUS ABDOMINIS

**Origin:** Pubic bone

**Insertion:** Xiphoid process of sternum & costal cartilage of ribs 5-7

**Action:** Flexion of lumbar spine

**Poses:**



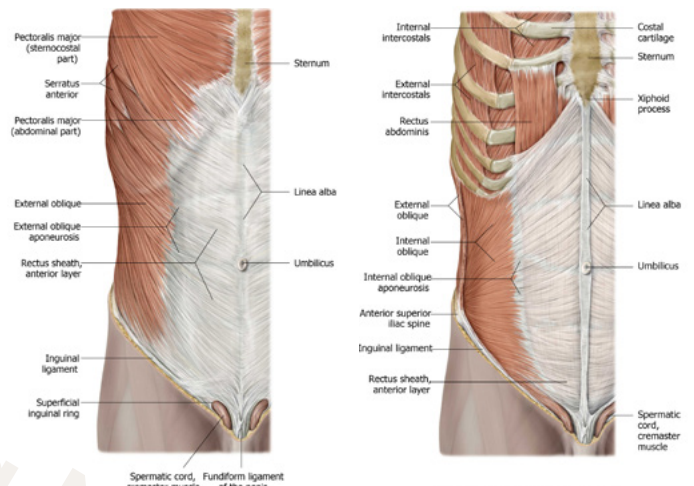
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### 2. OBLIQUES

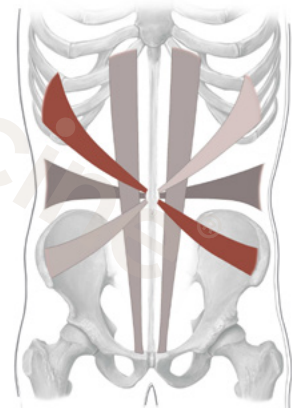
**Origin & Insertion:** Together create X shape across abdomen around sides of waist

**Action:** Rotation, lateral flexion, flexion of lower spine

**Poses:**



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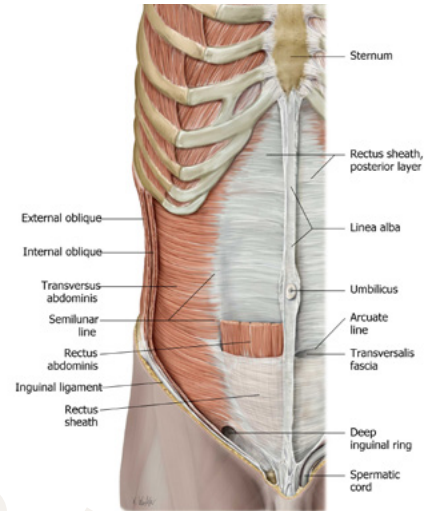


### 3. TRANSVERSE ABDOMINIS

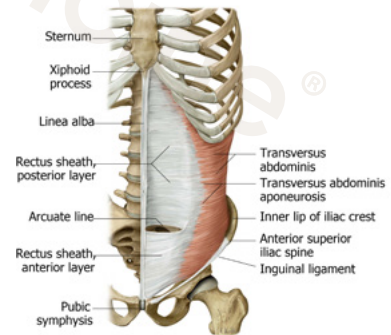
**Origin & Insertion:** Runs between pelvis & ribcage to wrap around waist to back

**Action:** Compress abdominal contents, draw in around waist to support abdominal organs & lumbar spine and to create axial extension

**Poses:**



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### 4. ERECTOR SPINAE

(iliocostalis, longissimus & spinalis)

**Origin & Insertion:** Large ropey muscles that run along sides of spine from sacrum to occiput, attaching to ribs & vertebrae along the way (iliocostalis- most lateral, longissimus & spinalis- most medial)

**Action:** Extend vertebral column

**Poses:**

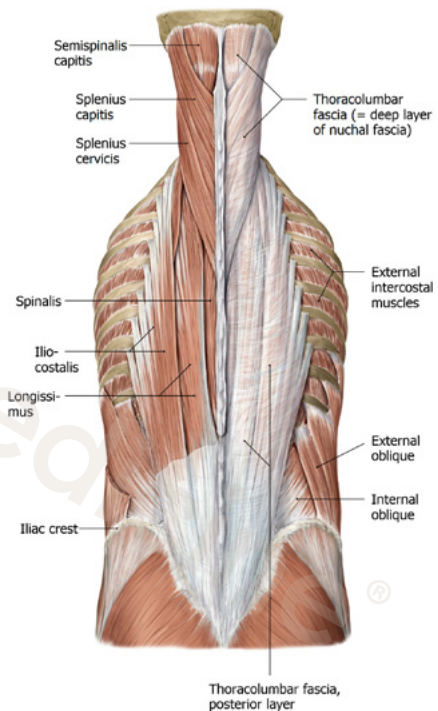
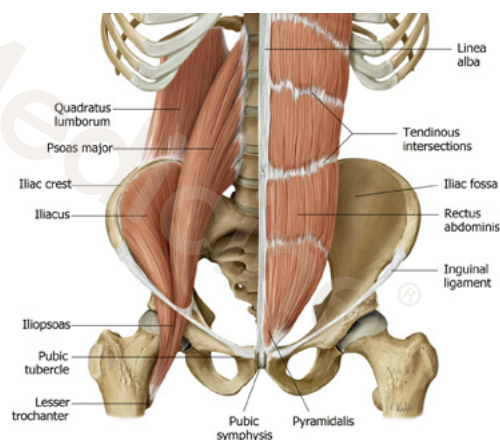
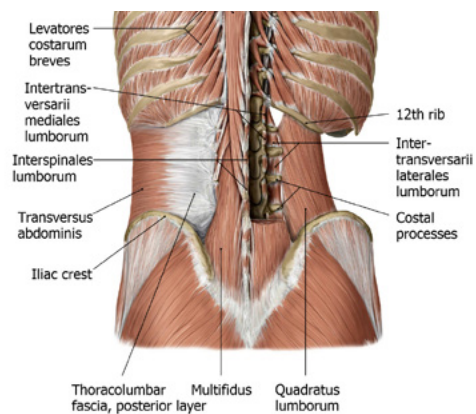


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## 5. QUADRATUS LUMBORUM

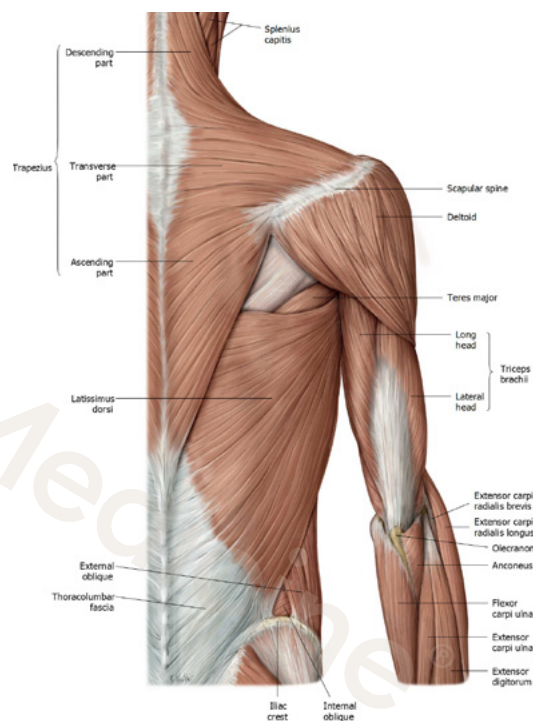
- Origin:** Iliac crest
- Insertion:** Last rib & transverse process of lumbar vertebrae
- Action:** One side= lateral flexion of vertebral column, both sides= extension of spine
- Poses:**



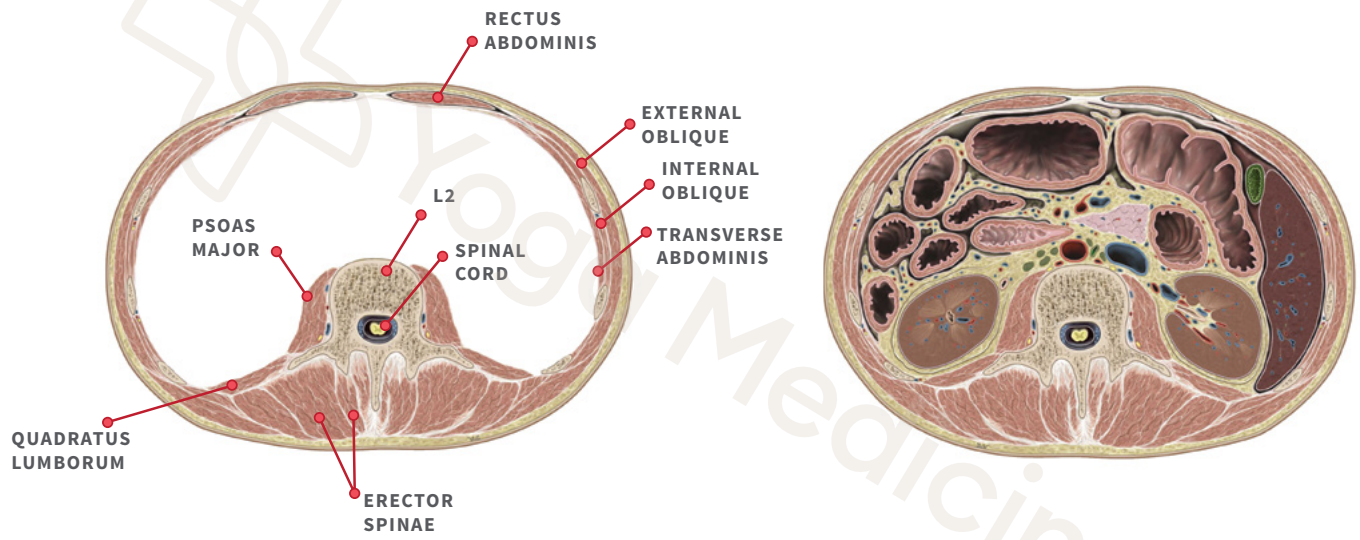
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## 6. LATISSIMUS DORSI

- Origin:** Spinous process of T7-L5, thoracolumbar fascia, iliac crest, inferior 3-4 ribs, inferior angle of scapula
- Insertion:** Medial to bicipital groove
- Action:** Adduct, extend & internally rotate the arm, rotation of trunk
- Poses:**



## MUSCLES OF THE TRUNK (TRANSVERSE SECTION OF ABDOMEN AT L2)



Gray's Atlas of Anatomy, 3rd ed., Fig. 17.1 C, Illustration: Wesker/Voll,  
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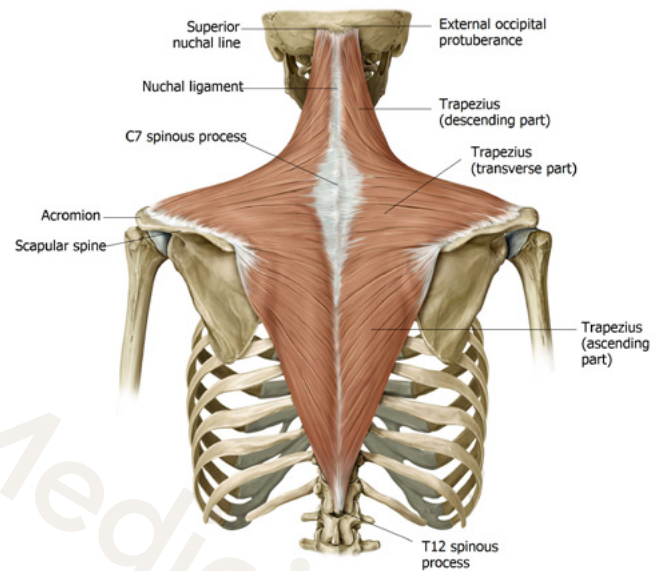
## 7. TRAPEZIUS

**Origin:** Spinous process of C1-T12

**Insertion:** Lateral spine of scapula, acromion process and lateral 1/3rd of clavicle

**Action:** Upper- elevate scapula,  
Middle- retract scapula,  
Lower- depress scapula

**Poses:**



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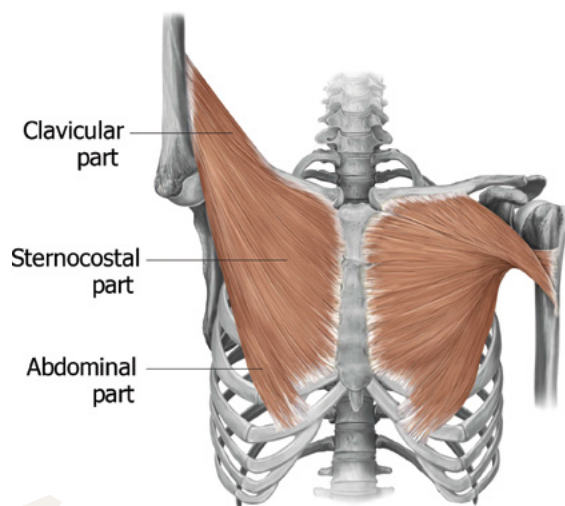
## 8. PECTORALIS MAJOR

**Origin:** Medial 2/3rd of clavicle, sternum, costal cartilage (upper 6), aponeurosis of external obliques

**Insertion:** Lateral edge of bicipital groove

**Action:** Adduction, internal rotation, flexion & extension of humerus

**Poses:**



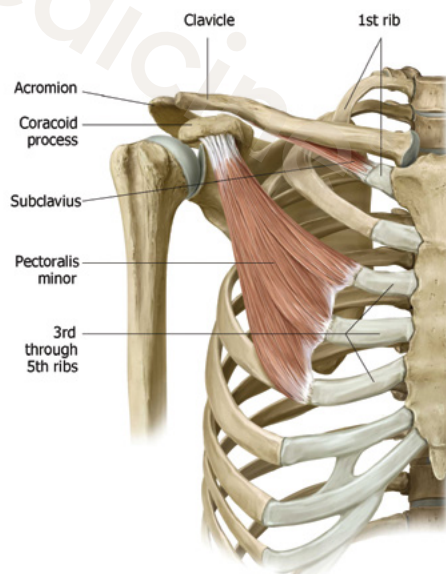
## 9. PECTORALIS MINOR

**Origin:** Ribs 3-5

**Insertion:** Coracoid process

**Action:** Anterior stability for scapula, lift ribs in respiration

**Poses:**

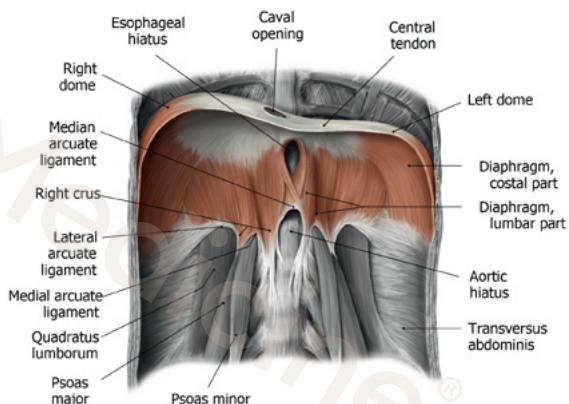


## 10. DIAPHRAGM

**Origin:** Lower ribs and T12 - L2

**Insertion:** Central tendon

**Action:** Relaxed breathing



## 14. Upper Arm

### 1. DELTOID

**Origin:** Lateral 1/3rd of clavical, acromion,

Lateral spine of scapula

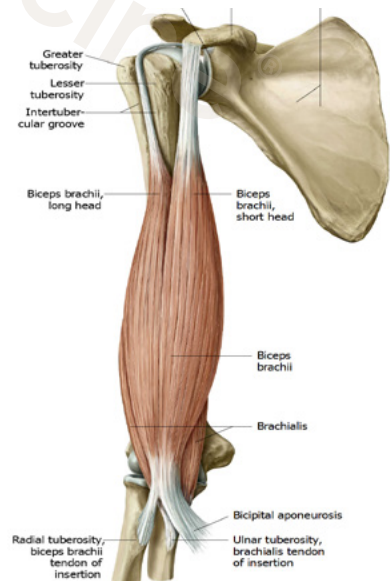
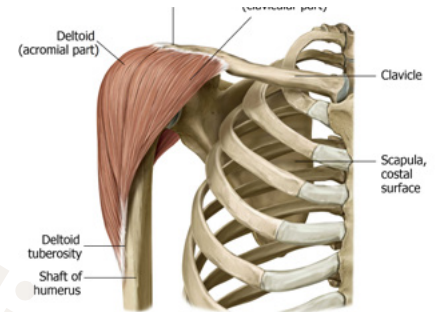
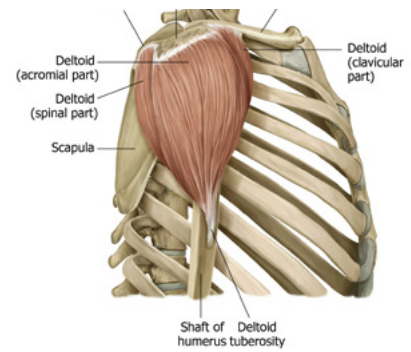
**Insertion:** Deltoid tuberosity on humerus

**Action:** Anterior - flexion of shoulder

Middle - abduction

Posterior- extension of shoulder

**Poses:**



### 2. BICEPS

**Origin:** Short head - coracoid process,

Long head - supraglenoid tubercle

**Insertion:** Radial tuberosity & bicipital aponeurosis

**Action:** Flex elbow, flex shoulder, supinate forearm

**Poses:**

### 3. TRICEPS

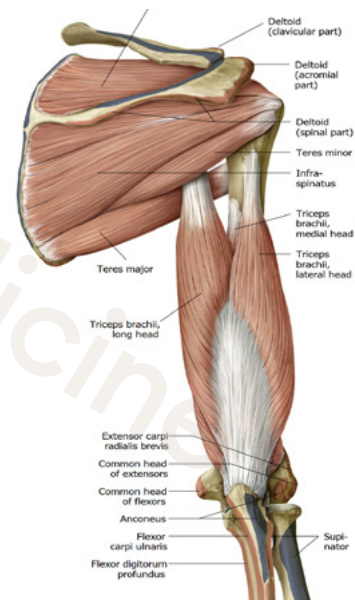
**Origin:** Long head- infraglenoid tubercle

Lateral & medial heads - humerus

**Insertion:** Olecranon process of ulna

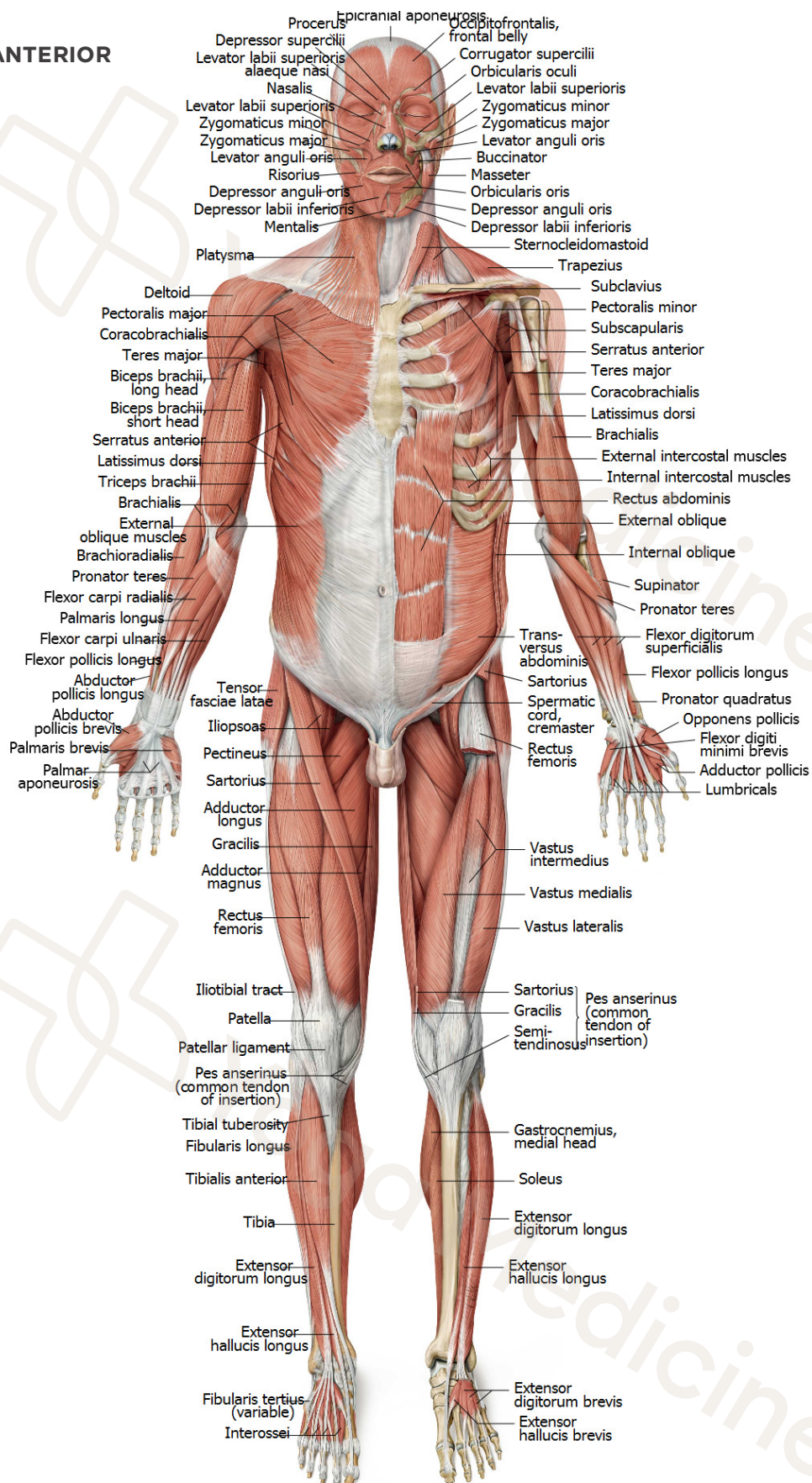
**Action:** Extend elbow, Long head- also extends shoulder

**Poses:**



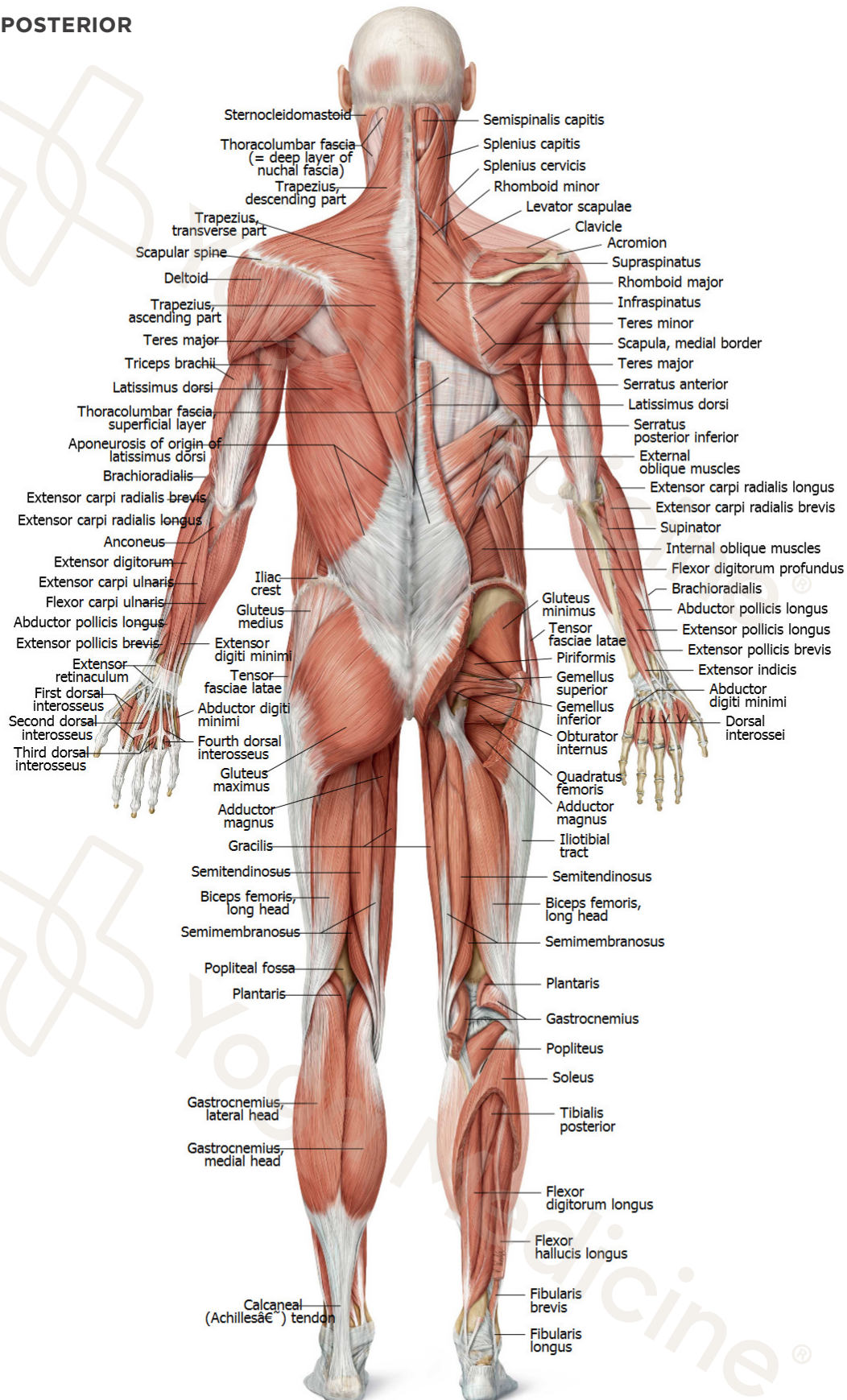


## MUSCLES - ANTERIOR



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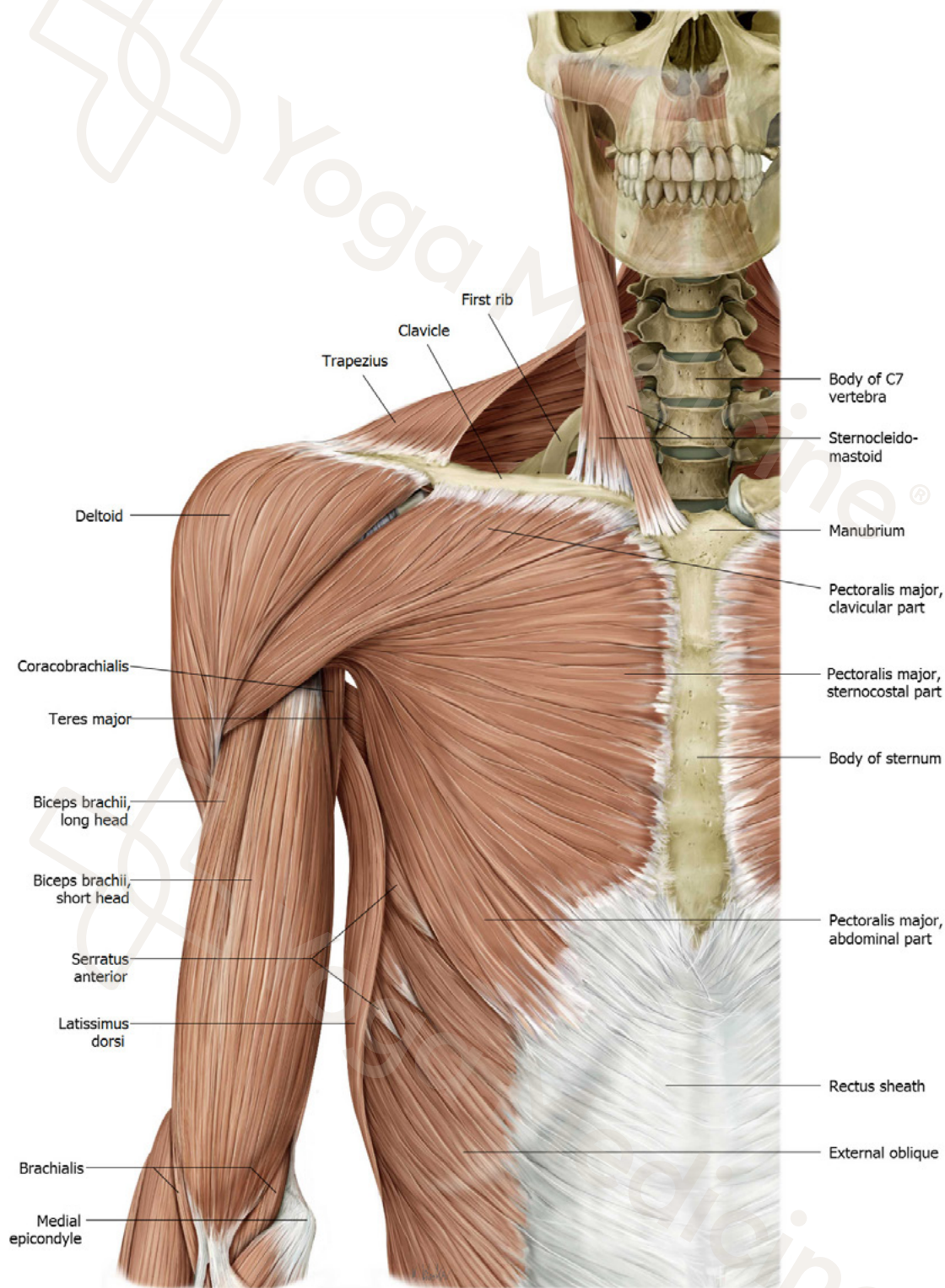
## MUSCLES - POSTERIOR



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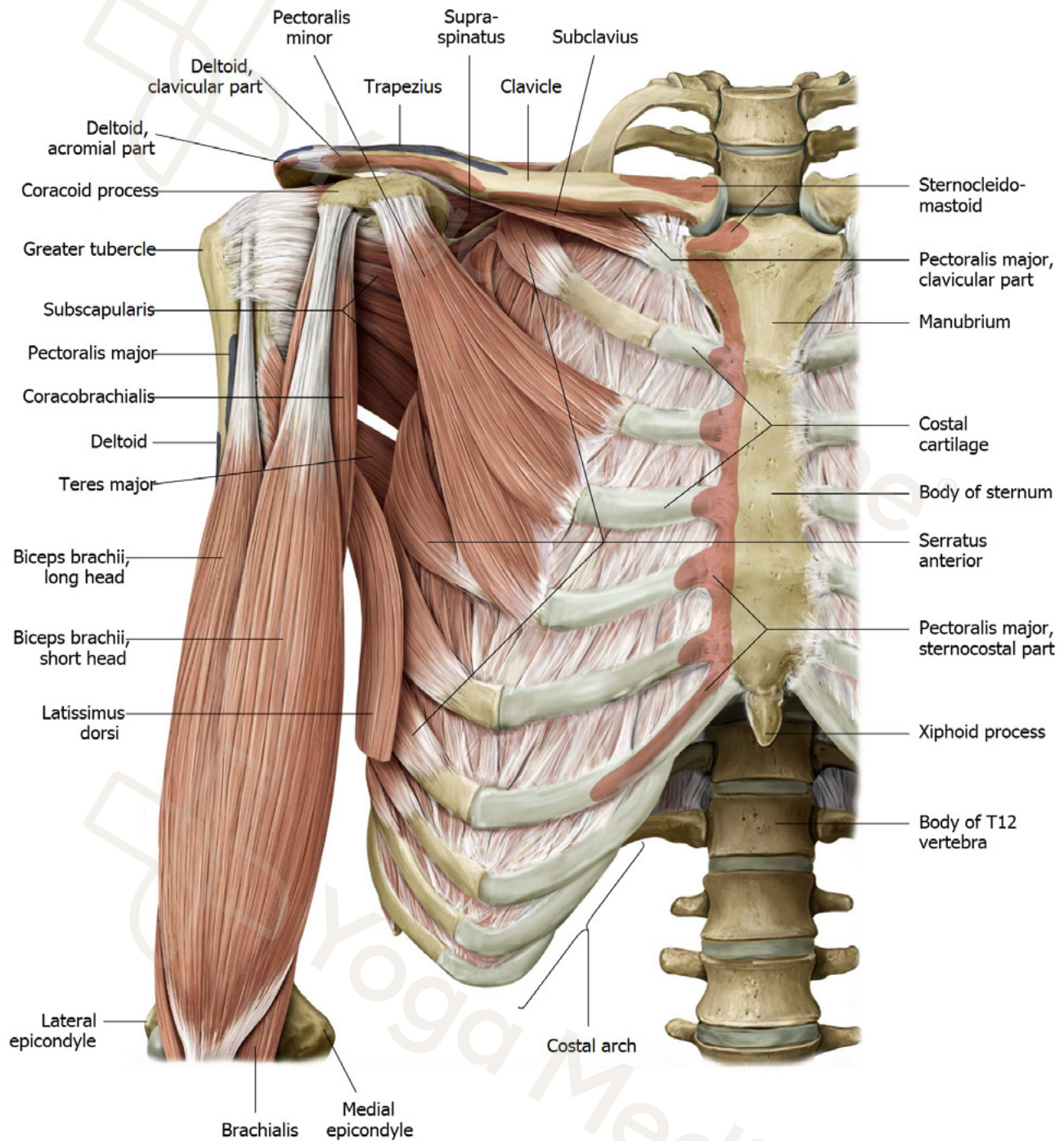


## MUSCLES OF TRUNK, SHOULDER & ARM: SUPERFICIAL LAYERS



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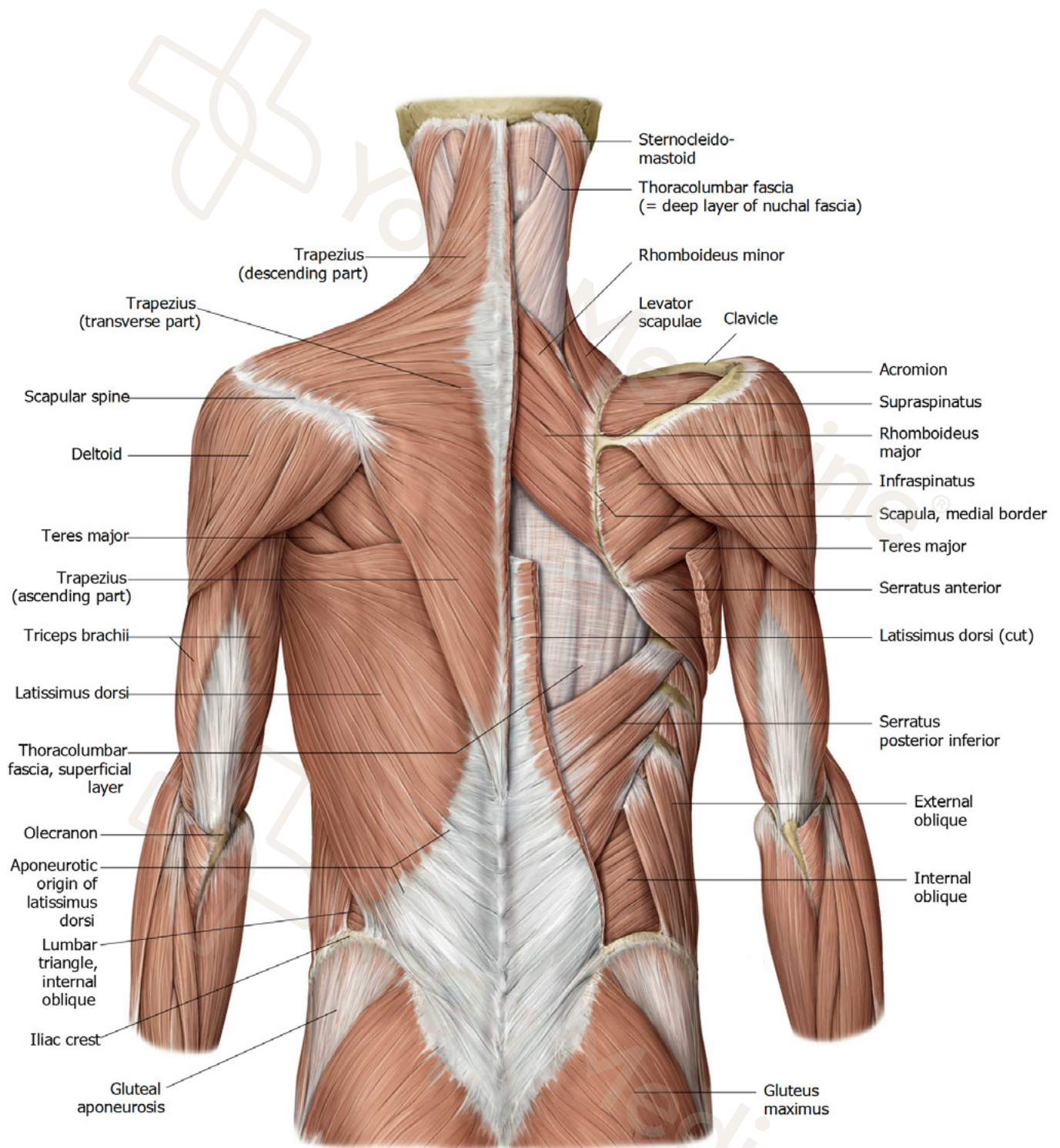
## MUSCLES OF TRUNK, SHOULDER & ARM: INTERMEDIATE & DEEP LAYERS



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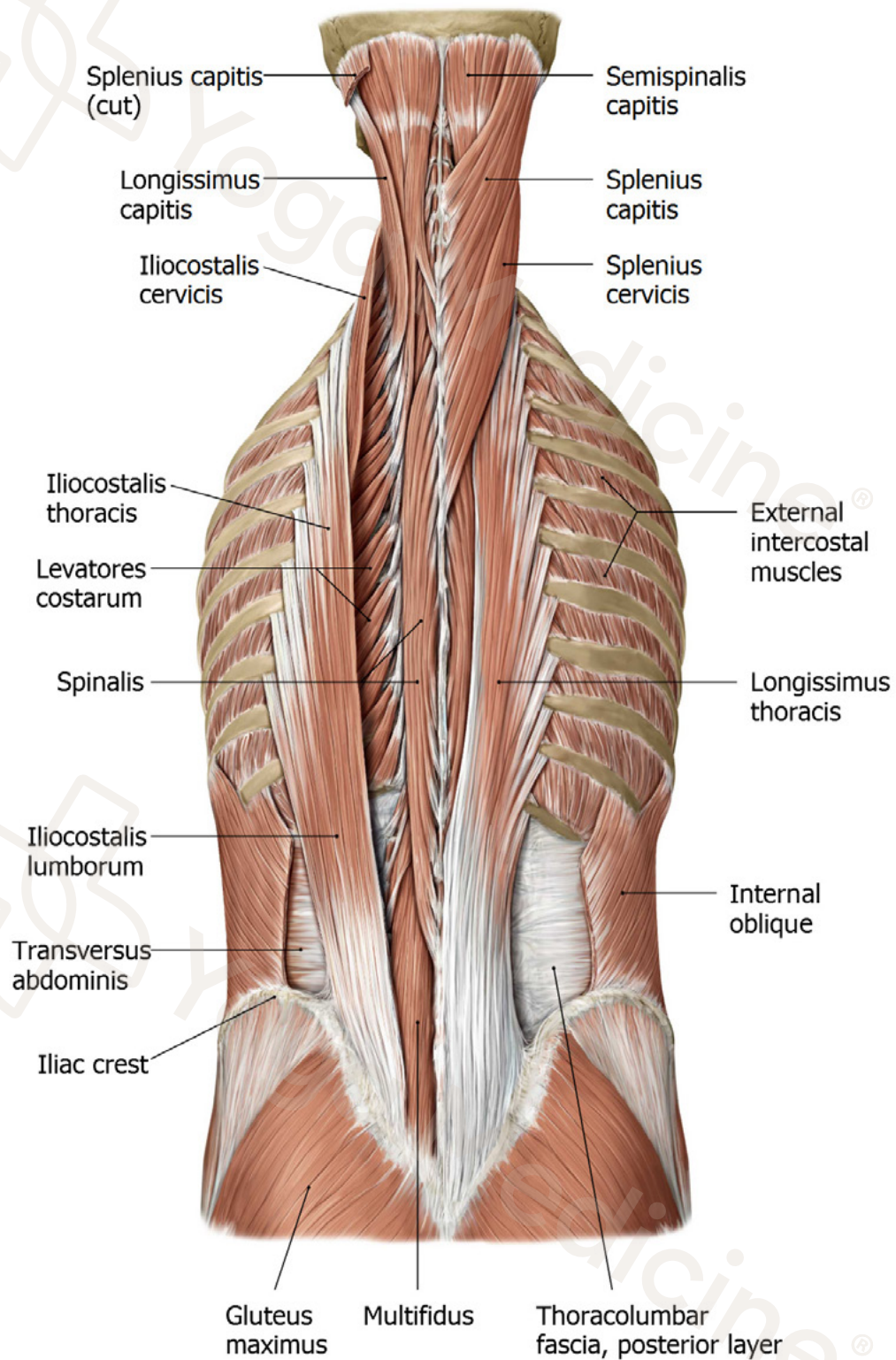


## MUSCLES OF BACK: SUPERFICIAL LAYERS



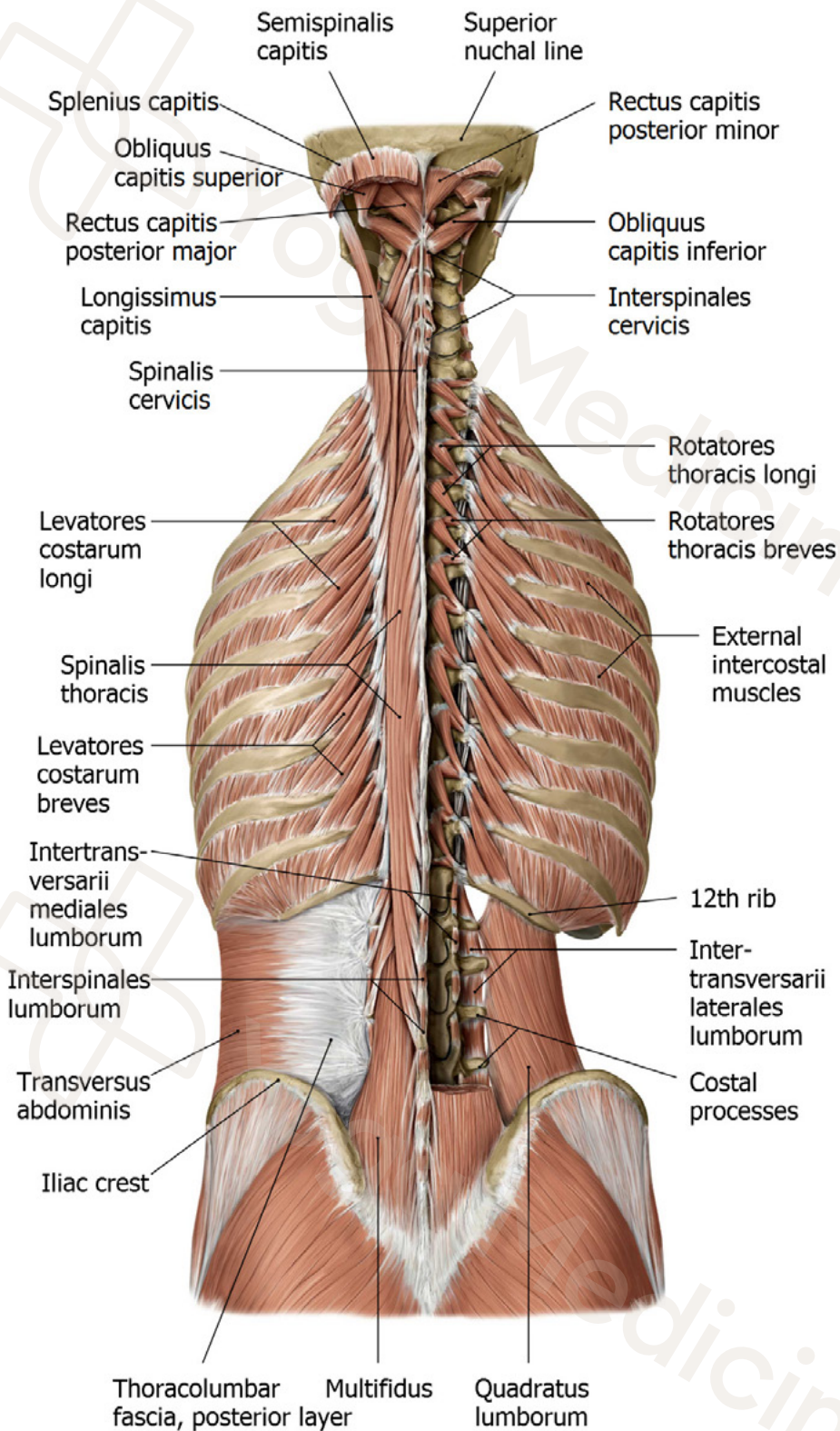
, Fig. 3.1, Illustrator: Wesker/Voll,  
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## MUSCLES OF BACK: INTERMEDIATE LAYERS





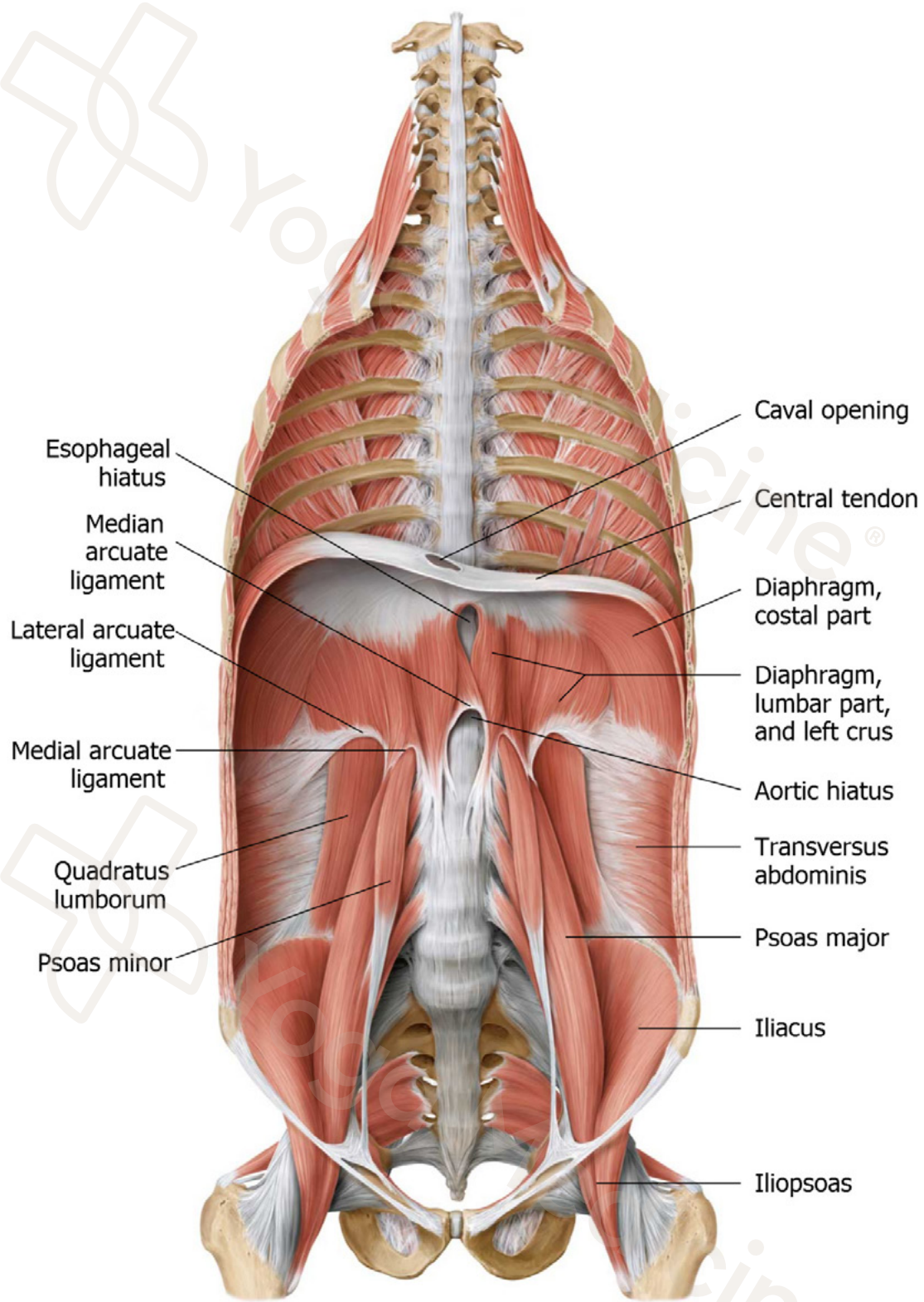
## MUSCLES OF BACK: DEEP LAYERS



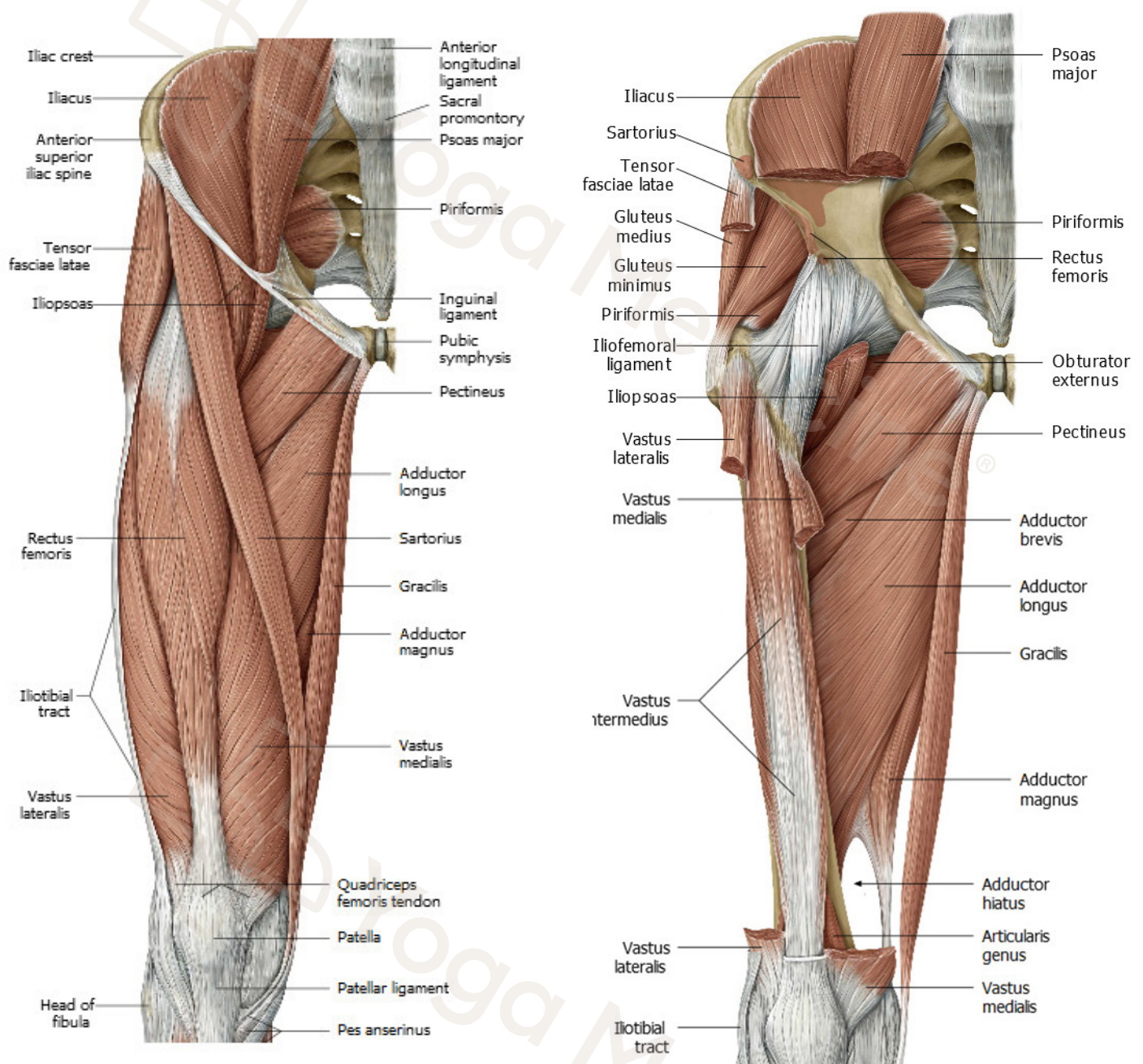
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## POSTERIOR ABDOMINAL WALL: INTERNAL VIEW



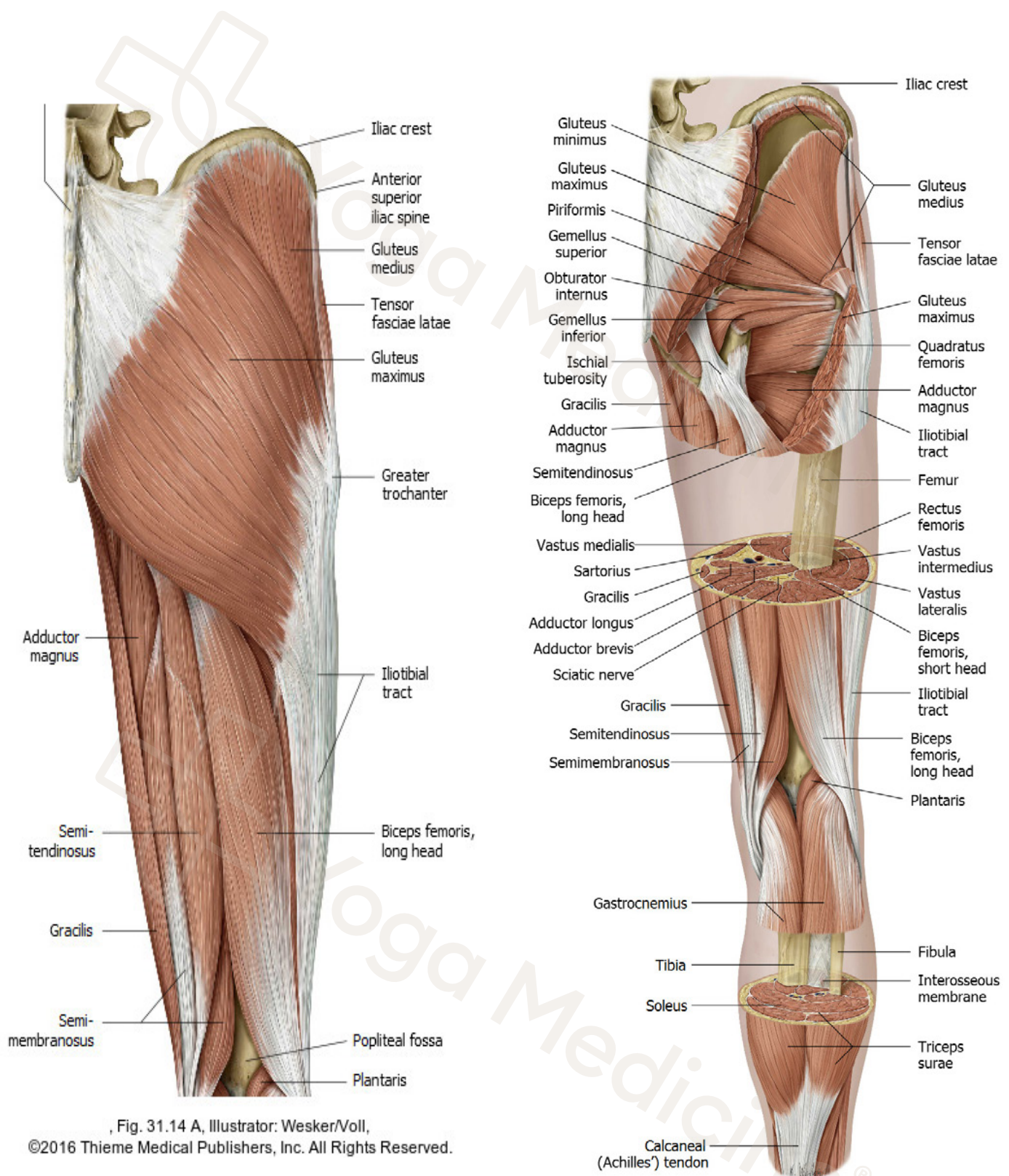
## MUSCLES OF HIP AND THIGH: ANTERIOR VIEW



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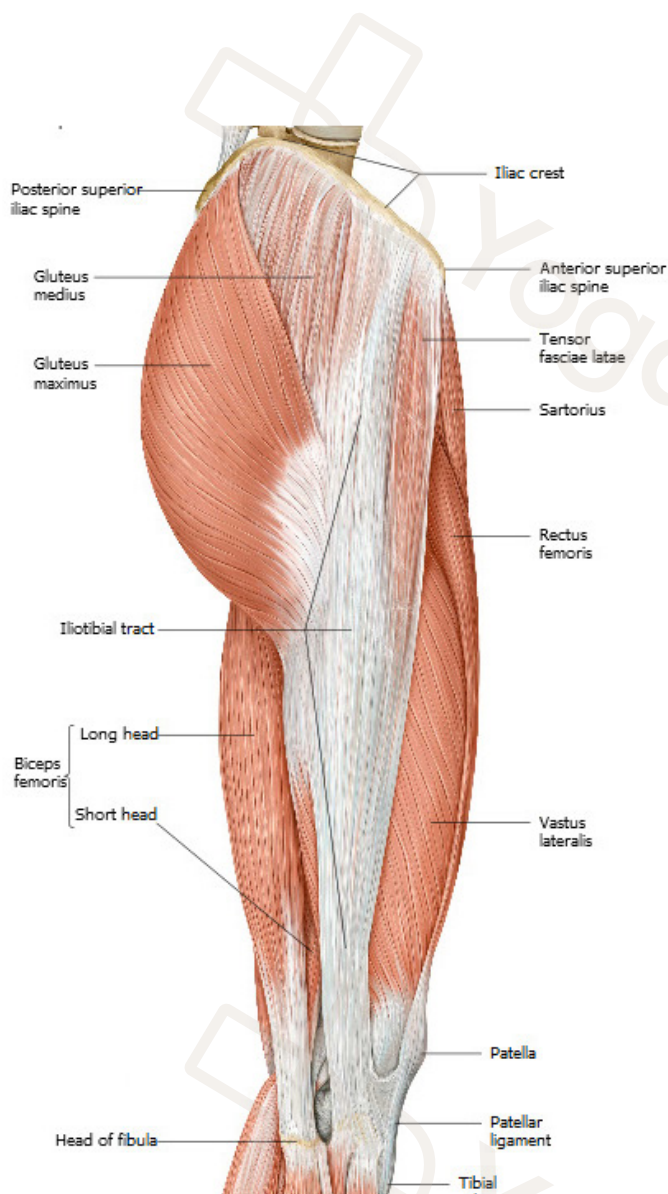


## MUSCLES OF HIP AND THIGH: POSTERIOR VIEW

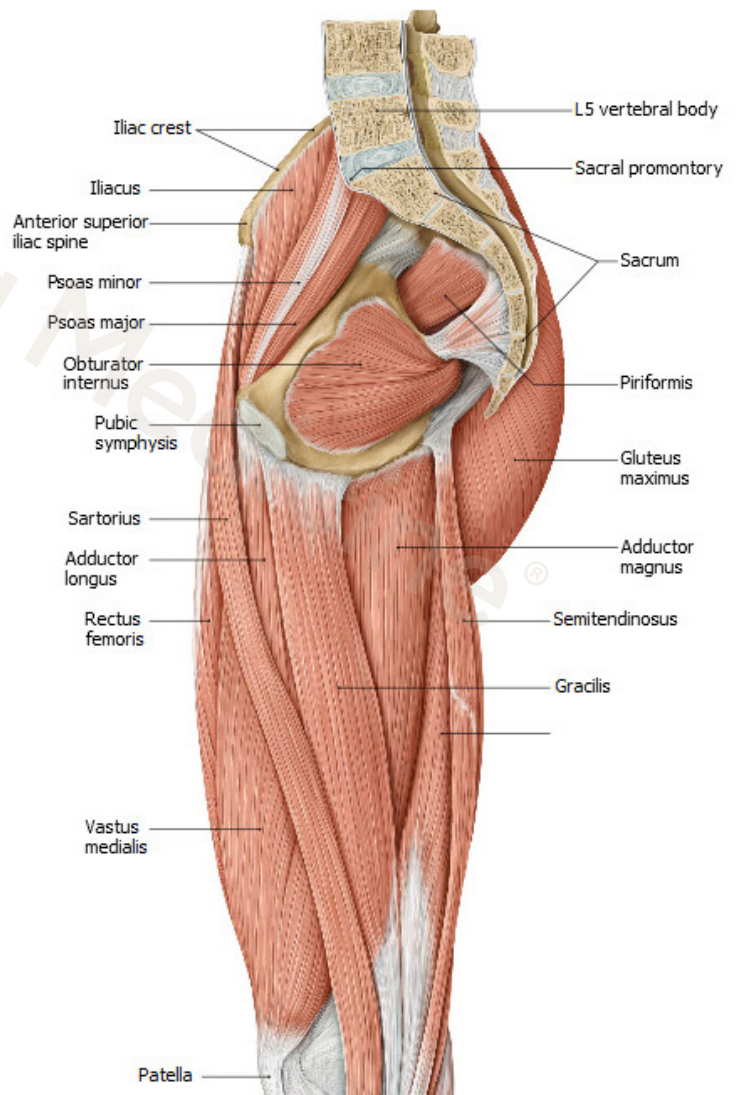


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## MUSCLES OF HIP AND THIGH: LATERAL VIEW



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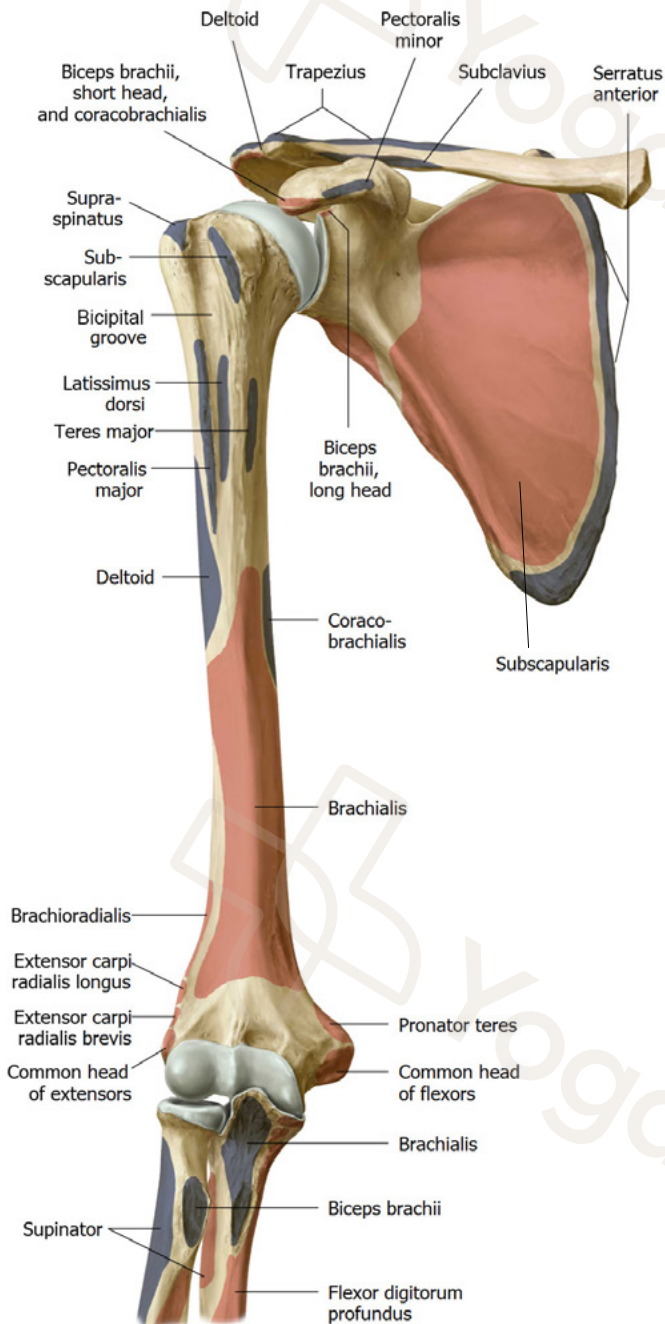
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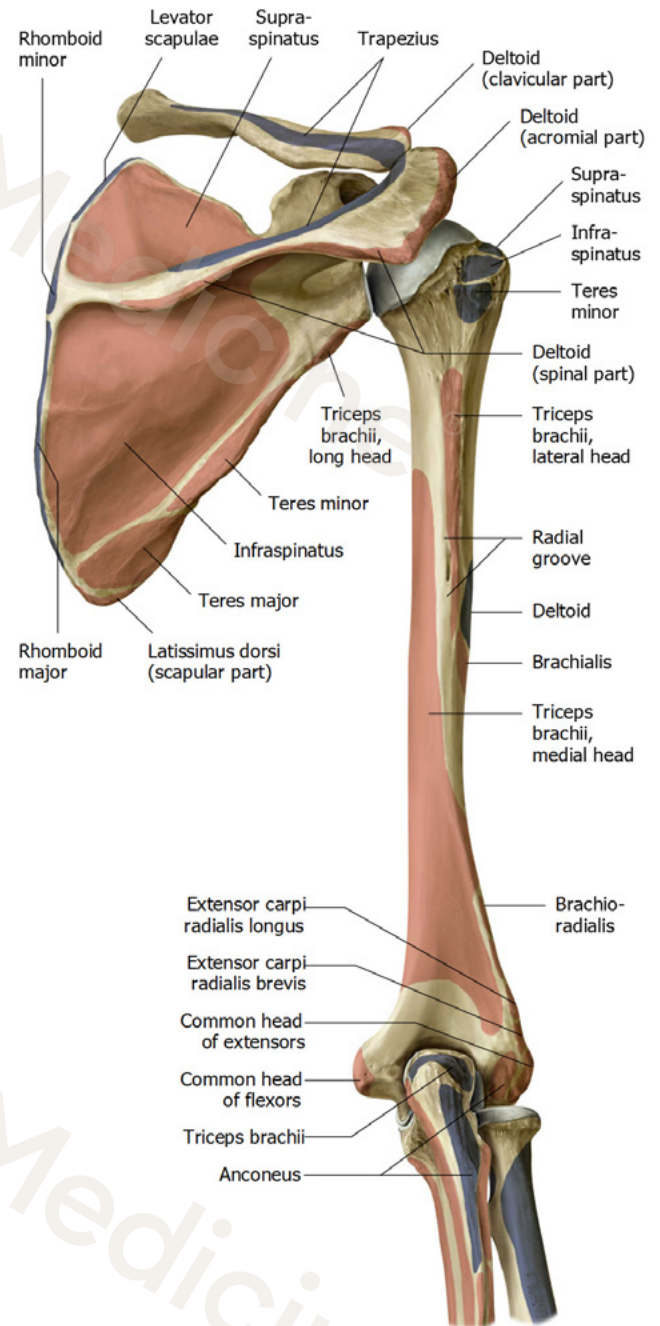
## HUMERUS AND SCAPULA: ANTERIOR & POSTERIOR VIEWS



### ANTERIOR VIEW



### POSTERIOR VIEW



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# Physiology

The organs help regulate balance in the body to keep you alive, this delicate balance is referred to as homeostasis. This introduction to physiology gives you a glimpse at some of the key features of the physiology as it relates to a yoga practice.

## 1. Nervous System

**Communication system between brain & nerves to regulate the internal state & function of the body.**

### CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (CNS)

- Consists of the brain and spinal cord
- Coordinates, analyzes and makes decisions about the information it receives from the periphery via the sensory nerves, sending messages back out to the periphery execute these decisions.

#### BRAIN

- Right hemisphere- visual, spatial, musical and intuitive functions
- Left hemisphere- math, science, analytical and verbal functions
- **Thalamus** - processes all incoming sensory pathways (except smell) and regulates the conscious state/awareness
- **Hypothalamus** - concerned with emotional behavior, regulates and relates visceral inputs with emotional reactions, controls appetite and mediates impulses related to reflexive and skilled movement

### PERIPHERAL NERVOUS SYSTEM (PNS)

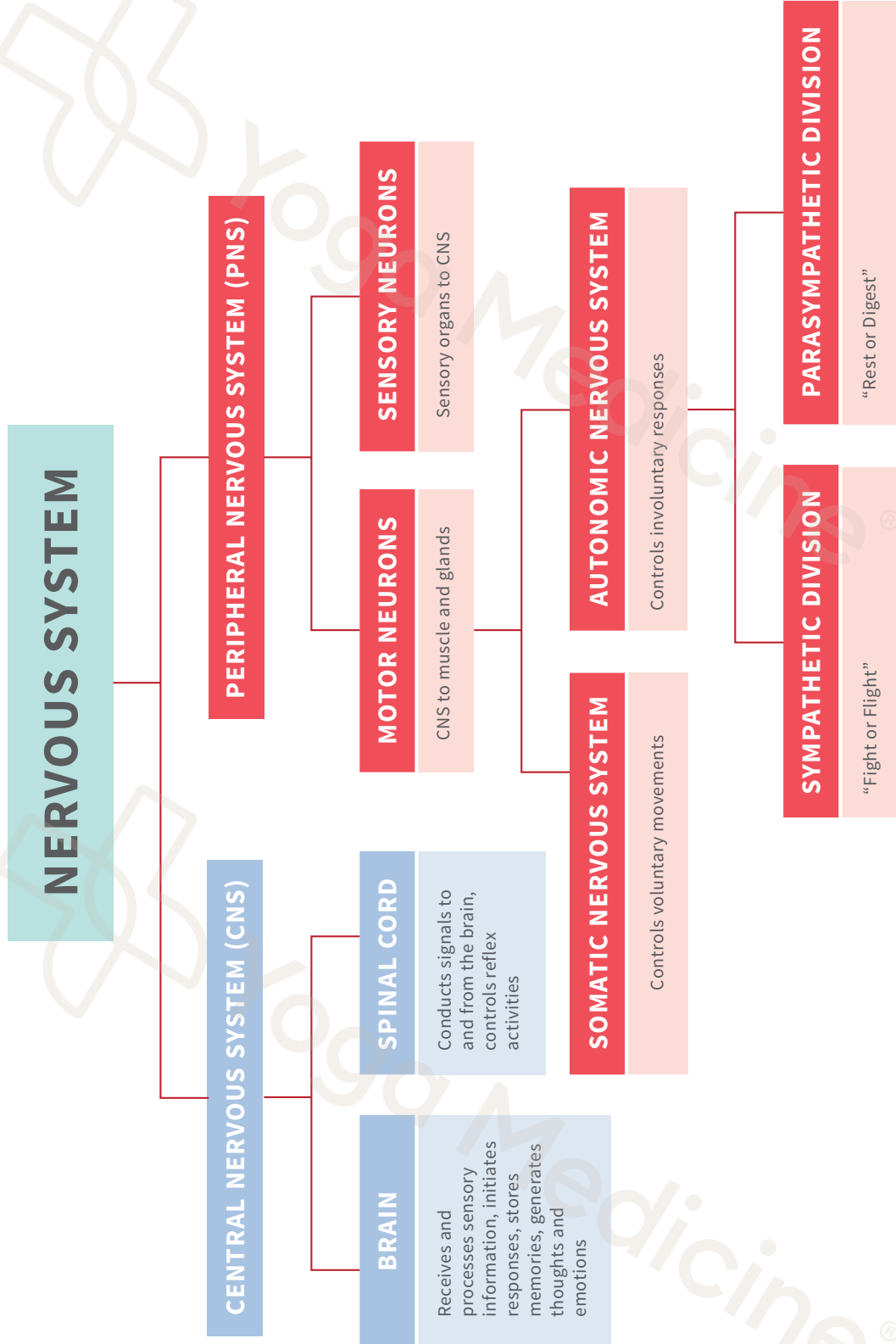
- Reaches to the periphery via the neurons
- **Somatic Nervous System** – the part that is under our conscious control
- **Autonomic Nervous System**- the part that is controlled unconsciously. The sensory cells as well as their feedback loop can become overwhelmed

by too much stimulation, which means they lose their capacity to pick up information. Consider the implications for pain, chronic tension and stress.

- **Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)** - “fight or flight” response. Increases the blood pressure and heart rate, releases stores of sugar into the blood and secretes adrenaline from the adrenals among other things. The digestive system is turned off and blood is diverted away from the gut and reasoning portions of the brain out to the skeletal muscles to run from danger.
- **Parasympathetic Nervous System (PSNS)**- “rest & digest.” Slows the heart rate and lowers the blood pressure, turns off the adrenaline and turns on the digestion. Peristalsis is increased and the digestive juices and enzymes are released into the gut. Blood vessels to the gut & reasoning centers of the brain are dilated and blood flow to the muscles is decreased. This is why we think more clearly when we are relaxed than when we are anxious or stressed.

### BENEFITS OF YOGA TO THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

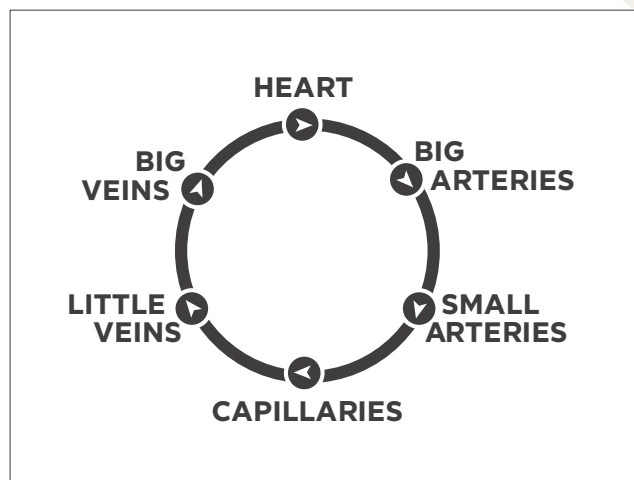
Many of the effects of a yoga practice point back to the effects of yoga on the nervous system. Yoga helps to regulate the sympathetic & parasympathetic responses to help the body better rest, digest & heal and be able to better handle stress.



## 2. Circulatory System

The circulatory system is an organ system that circulates blood through the body and transports nutrients and waste through the tissues to help fight disease, regulate the body temperature & pH and to maintain the delicate homeostasis in the body. The circulatory system is comprised of the **cardiovascular system** that distributes the blood and the lymphatic system that circulate the lymph.

Closed system of pipes



The **heart** is a muscular organ, it's the only muscle cell that contracts on its own, without a nerve telling it to contract. The heart is the hardest working muscle tissue in the body, contracting more than 100,000 times a day. Blood is pumped out to the body cells by the heart via the arteries. From the cells blood is taken back to the heart to be rejuvenated in the lungs via the veins. The blood flow through the veins is regulated by valves that prevent back flow in conjunction with muscular contraction around the veins to help return the blood back to the heart. Inversions are also a very helpful way to help return the blood back to the heart thereby increasing the cardiac output as well & gently stimulating the heart.

There's a tiny capillary next to or very near almost every cell in the body. Blood flow doesn't go through all capillaries all the time; rather they take turns, depending on which cells are working most at the time. This process is regulated by **precapillary sphincters** under the control of the nervous system. **Chronic stress** can cause chronic contraction of

these sphincters, reducing the blood supply to the body. Yoga can help regulate this by reducing stress and regulating the nervous system.

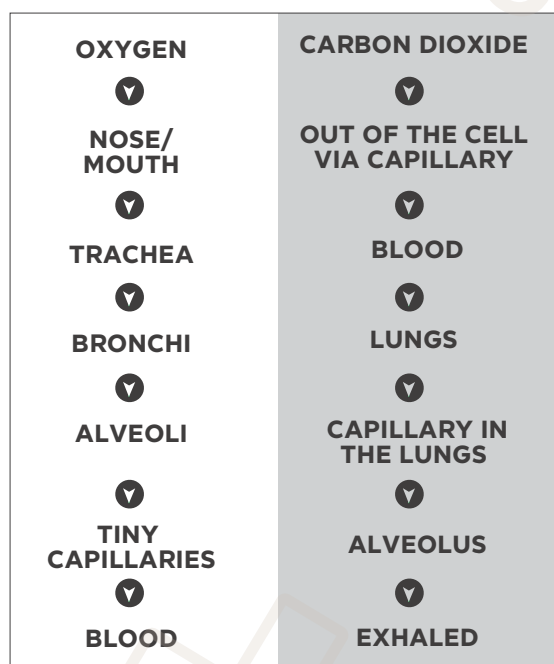
The **lymphatic system** is a system of open ended tubes that carry lymph, which transports excess fluid and proteins out of the tissues, filtering it and then dumping it back into the blood. The lymph glands contain white cells ready for any bacteria or debris that may be picked up. The spleen filters the lymph & blood, destroys defective blood cells, and serves as a reservoir for blood cells. When an infection enters the body the white cells pour out of the spleen to the rescue. This system is important for immune function, think of this as the circulatory system for the immune system.

### BENEFITS OF YOGA TO THE CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

- Relieves chronic muscular tension that can cause constriction of the blood vessels
- Helps to regulate the stress response to keep the heart & blood vessels healthy
- Strengthens and tones the heart & the muscles that surround the blood vessels
- Stretching and contracting muscles increases circulation to them
- Helps to reduce tension to enhance circulation
- Slows the heart, regulating the blood pressure
- Assists the venous return of the blood to the heart, improving the immune response and relieving pain from varicose veins (and possibly preventing them)
- Many of the effects of yoga are seen in the local & global effects to the circulatory system (with the nervous system)

### 3. Respiratory System

Every cell in the body needs oxygen to create energy. The byproduct of this is carbon dioxide, an acid that is toxic to the cells. Through the cycles of the breath we take in oxygen to nourish the cells and we let go of carbonic acid helping to regulate the pH of the body. The respiratory system also has an intimate relationship with the nervous system and thereby they are both highly influenced by the state of the other.



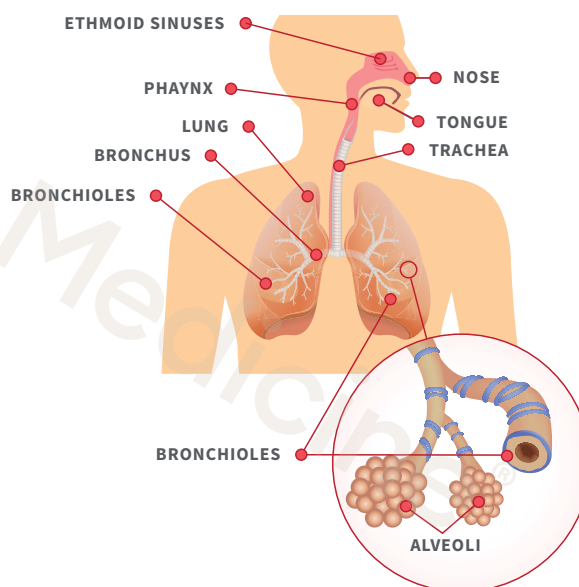
Once in the blood, a red blood cell picks up the oxygen via a **hemoglobin** molecule, taking it back to the heart to be pumped out to the rest of the body. A carbon dioxide molecule reverses this route.

The **diaphragm** is a large dome-shaped muscle (with a central tendon) that separates the chest from the abdominal cavity. When the diaphragm contracts it moves downward, pulling down the lower lobes of the lungs, causing them to expand and create an inhale. Exhalation is assisted by a passive return of the diaphragm known as elastic return; **deeper exhalation** is assisted by the abdominal muscles and the internal intercostal muscles. **Deeper inhalation** is assisted by the external intercostal muscles, and an even deeper inhale uses the scalenes and sternocleidomastoid (SCM) muscles.

The lower lobes of the lungs contain the greatest blood supply, which is why deep full breathing is a much more efficient way of breathing. The breath is regulated by the medulla oblongata at the base of the brain by sensing the amount of oxygen & carbon dioxide in the blood.

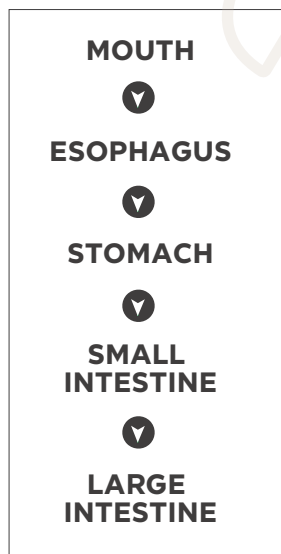
#### BENEFITS OF YOGA TO THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM:

- Increase lung capacity, energizing the body with oxygen
- Increases oxygenation of the blood, increasing the supply of nutrients to the cells
- Opens areas of the lungs that we might not otherwise use enhancing lung capacity
- Increases the efficiency of the lungs by keeping the lung tissues strong & elastic & by utilizing full lung capacity
- Learning proper breathing techniques helps to regulate the nervous system & the parasympathetic response
- Teaches us to tune into the breath as an indicator of our emotional state, giving us freedom from emotional reactivity
- Teaches us to relax & regulate the breath to cope with stressful situations



## 4. Digestive System

The main function of this system is the ever so important action of extracting precious nutrients from our food. It is regulated primarily by the parasympathetic nervous system.



The digestion begins in the **mouth**, physically broken down by the act of chewing and chemically broken down by enzymes in the saliva. This is why part of our digestion happens before we even begin eating by stimulating the salivary glands with thoughts of eating, this also stimulates the hydrochloric acid in the stomach. This is also why it is so important to chew your food well. The stress response will inhibit

this process as well as the entire digestive process (parasympathetic nervous system = rest & digest, versus the sympathetic nervous system = fight or flight).

Food passes through the **esophagus** to the **stomach**, which contains protein-digesting enzymes and hydrochloric acid.

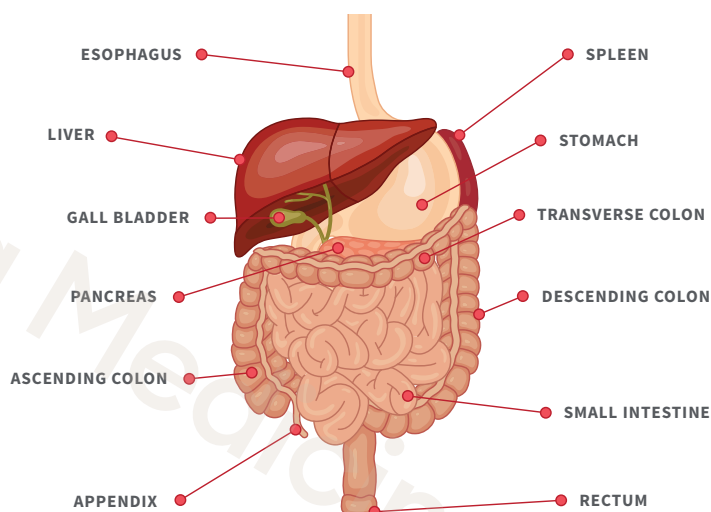
The **small intestine** is a long tube in which most of the work of digestion & absorption is carried out. Enzymes produced in the **pancreas** are secreted into the small intestine to break down carbohydrates, fats and proteins. The **liver** helps by manufacturing bile to be secreted into the small intestine via the **gall bladder**. This bile helps to metabolize fats. The **villi** are small hair-like projections that cover the inside of the small intestine. It is here that absorption occurs to take this essence of the food into the bloodstream. These villi are very delicate and are easily harmed by infections or intolerances to certain foods, resulting in malabsorption.

After being absorbed into the bloodstream, these molecules are taken directly to the liver to sort the food, removing & detoxifying and packaging the rest into forms the body can use. This is then released into the blood and back to the heart to be pumped out to the rest of the body.

The entire pipeline of the digestive system is moved by **peristalsis**, ring like waves of muscular contractions moving the food along. The nervous system can speed up or slow down peristalsis and increase or decrease enzymes and stomach acid. So the state of our nervous system is crucial to the function of the digestive system. When we're tense and anxious the nervous system inhibits this process of digestion. Unpleasant sights, tastes, smells and strong emotions can all inhibit our digestion.

### BENEFITS OF YOGA ON THE DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

- Mechanically compresses the organs of digestion, accelerating the removal of wastes and facilitating the absorption of nutrients. Forward bend, twist & side bending are all good for regulating the digestion. (squeeze & soak)
- Improves elimination by mechanically assisting the movement of materials through the intestines
- Improves circulation to the intestines, which improves overall digestion, extraction & assimilation of nutrients
- Helps regulate the stress response to encourage proper digestion





## 5. Elimination

---

The five major organs of elimination are the colon, kidneys, skin, lungs and liver.

The **large intestine** will store waste before it exits the body, as well as extract the water from it. If this happens too quickly diarrhea is the result, if it happens too slowly there is constipation. This is regulated by the rate of peristalsis, the amount of water intake, the health of the colon, the autonomic nervous system, stress and the type of food consumed.

The **kidneys** job is to filter the blood, constantly cleansing it of any waste, toxins or drugs. This is then flushed down to the bladder. Water is vital to the health of the kidneys. The Urinary system is a finely tuned regulatory system to regulated electrolytes, water and minerals in the blood as well as to detoxify the blood.

The **skin**, due to the large surface area, is the largest organ of elimination. The sweat glands release water and mineral salts that will evaporate to cool the body.

The **lungs** help us to release toxic gaseous substances, mainly carbon dioxide, from the body.

The **liver** is one of the body's most important defenses against toxins. The liver can chemically break down toxins into substances that are no longer harmful to the cells, returning them to the blood so the kidneys can remove them.

### BENEFITS OF YOGA ON THE ELIMINATION SYSTEM

- Mechanically compresses the intestines, accelerating the removal of wastes and facilitating the absorption of nutrients. Forward bend, twist & side bending are all good for regulating the digestion. (squeeze & soak)
- Improves elimination by mechanically assisting the movement of materials through the intestines
- Improves circulation to the intestines, which improves overall digestion, extraction & assimilation of nutrients
- Helps regulate the stress response to encourage proper elimination
- See effects on respiratory system
- Circulatory effects help regulate kidneys and gentle sweating to eliminate toxins through the skin

## 6. Endocrine System

The endocrine system is a complex system of hormonal communication that communicates with the nervous system.

Consists of eight glands that regulate the body through hormones they secrete into the bloodstream to the appropriate organ. There are also endocrine tissues in the heart, kidneys, GI tract and the hypothalamus.

### PITUITARY “MASTER GLAND”

Pea sized gland attached to the base of the brain that regulates the activities of all the other endocrine glands, is important in controlling growth and development and secretes many different hormones (ACTH, TSH, FSH, LH, Prolactin, growth hormones, oxytocin, ADH).

### PINEAL GLAND

Also a pea sized gland, that sits behind the brain that promotes the harmonious relationship of each gland to the others, secretes melatonin, related to our diurnal cycles and influences onset of puberty.

### THYROID

Butterfly shaped gland found in the neck that controls how quickly the body uses energy and makes proteins and thereby regulates the metabolism. The thyroid also affects the growth and rate of function of many other systems in the body and regulates the calcium balance in the blood.

### PARATHYROID

The parathyroid glands are found in the neck behind the thyroid and regulate calcium and phosphorus balance in the blood & bones.

### THYMUS

Regulates growth and development up until puberty and is a critical part of the immune system where the T cells mature to help fight infections.

### ADRENAL GLANDS

Sit on top of the kidneys and give the body increased strength and responsiveness in stressful situations. Also regulate sodium and potassium levels in the blood. Secrete a wide variety of hormones including adrenaline and many different steroid hormones (cortisol, aldosterone, and androgen).

### PANCREAS

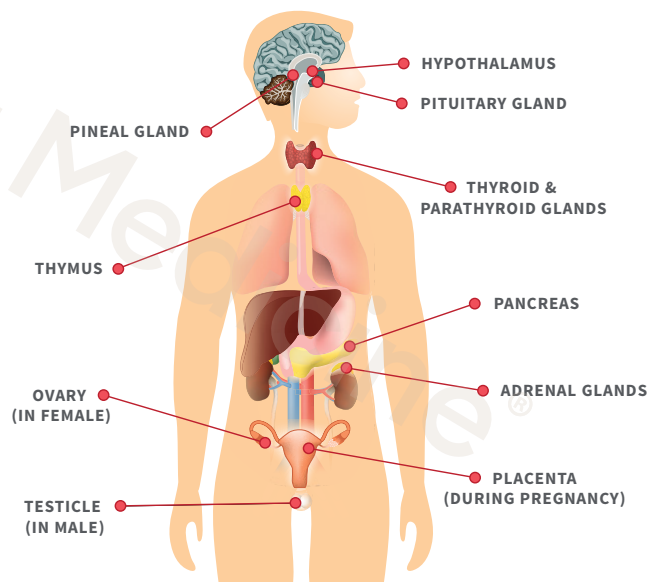
Sits behind the stomach and regulates the blood sugar and secretes insulin and glucagons. It produces several important hormones as well as secreting pancreatic juice that contains the valuable digestive enzymes to breakdown our food.

### SEX ORGANS

Regulate the development and maintenance of sexual characteristics. In females this is primarily the ovaries secreting estrogen and progesterone. In males this is primarily the testes secreting testosterone.

### BENEFIT OF YOGA TO THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

The effects here are probably the least understood and researched but the effects on the nervous and circulatory systems help to regulate the transportation and excretion of hormones in endocrine system to create much of the effects we see here.



## 7. Immune System

The immune system functions to maintain health and promote healing by defending the body from foreign invaders and abnormal cells. The primary organs are the bone marrow and thymus, assisted by the spleen and lymph nodes. Includes the Lymphocytes (white blood cells- B cells, T cells, natural killer cells, suppressor cells) and the Macrophages (scavenger white blood cells). Different cells are activated to protect the body from foreign invaders. Yoga effects here are primarily through the effects on the circulatory and nervous system effects.

As a final ending note please know that the body is a complex interwoven system of organs that all depend on each other to maintain homeostasis.

### PNEI (PSYCHONEUROENDOCRINOIMMUNOLOGY)

The nervous, endocrine and immune systems work closely together to create a multifaceted communication network throughout the body. However the states that we experience through thoughts and emotions are so intricately connected with our physiology that we cannot clearly separate the mind and body and on the contrary cellular events can alter our mental states.

Our cells have **receptors** or protein molecules on their surface that act as sensors. The **ligands** are molecules that bind to specific receptors. These include:

**Neurotransmitters** (acetylcholine, dopamine, histamine, serotonin, GABA, etc)

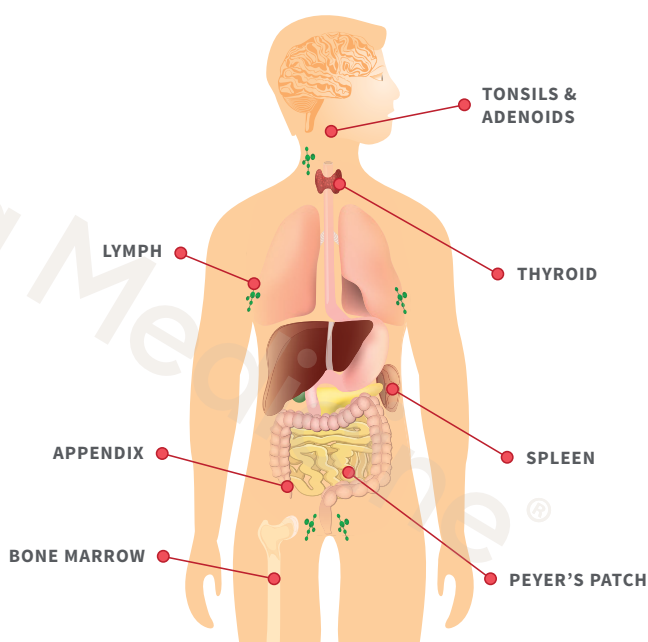
**Steroids** (testosterone, progesterone, estrogen and cortisol)

**Peptides** (cytokines, chemokines, enkephalin, endorphins, lipids, etc, etc...)

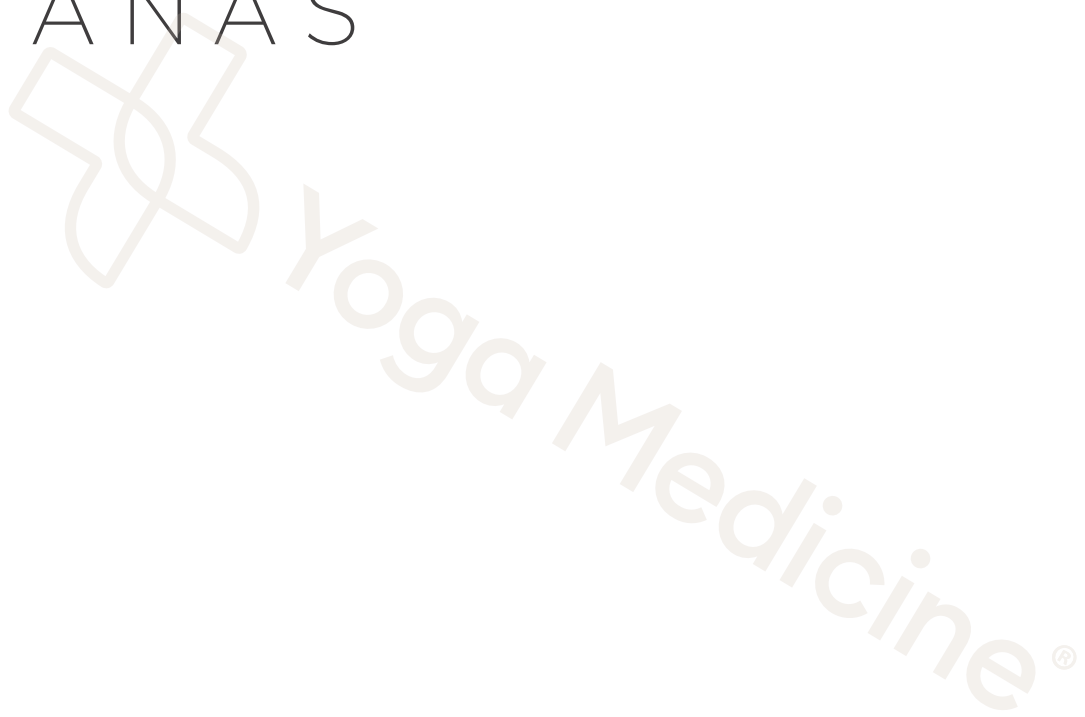
The receptors and their ligands are known as “information molecules” of a language used by cells throughout the body to communicate between systems. All the parts of the mind, brain and body are interconnected. Every thought, feeling and sensation has its accompanying peptide/ligand which brings information to cells and affects their functions. This is why our happiness and our interpretation of the environment around us directly effects our health.

### BENEFITS OF YOGA ON OUR IMMUNE SYSTEM

- Improves the circulation of blood, and thus availability of white blood cells, through muscular contraction which also contributes to the removal of toxins from the blood stream.
- Improves circulation of lymph
- Stimulates and tones the spleen
- Helps remove toxins from their various storage locations in the body
- Helps to decrease the secretion of stress hormones
- Helps fight infection via circulation of lymphatic fluid and asanas that stimulate the thymus gland
- Activates the parasympathetic nervous system, thereby boosting the overall immune system function.



# ASANAS





# General Pose Uses

## By Type of Pose

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**WARM UPS** These poses are used to help circulate and prepare the tissues for movement but more importantly they are used to awaken body & breath awareness. Use this time to begin the mind body connection and mindfully increase body awareness so that the student can move more consciously through the practice. This is also where the teacher will begin to connect to their intention or theme for the class maybe through isolated movements or perhaps just verbally.

**SUN SALUTATIONS** It is said that Suryanamaskara will strengthen the physical body, improve mind control and bring happiness & health. This practice is also meant to be a practice of bhakti yoga or devotion as well and is also used as a warm up for the entire body. This can be used as a practice in itself. For beginners this may be the peak of practice if used at all. For intermediate students this may be used as more of a warm up.

**STANDING POSES** are the building blocks upon which all the other asanas are based. They provide a foundation for poise & balance in asana practice to increase strength, alignment & stability in the legs, hips pelvis & back. The standing poses begin to open the pelvis to establish pelvic control for more advanced poses. The standing poses help create SI joint stability and teach students how to control the legs and hips to manipulate the body from the core. Traditionally it is said that the asana student must first learn to stand upright, therefore we begin our practice with the standing poses and through this find the foundation of everything else. The standing poses also give the practitioner a sense of confidence & courage and begin to regulate the nervous system to calm the mind & body as well as create mental alertness. By toning the legs circulation is also increased to rejuvenate the tissues & detoxifying the blood.

**BALANCING POSES** are great for cultivating confidence & courage as well as mental focus, in addition to the benefits of the standing poses.

**PRONE POSES** are good for postural strength by coordinating the back muscles with the core muscles. They are also helpful for strengthening the back side of the body for shoulder positioning, as well as desk or computer workers or anyone with poor posture.

**CORE POSES** The core work focuses on abdominal support to create stability for the lower back. These poses also teach the body to use the core muscles in order to create more efficient movement which translates to everyday movements or athletic training. Eventually the core will teach the student to connect more powerfully to the legs to create lightness & buoyancy.

**BACKBENDS** are a natural counterpose to the forward bending position we most often take in our lives. Backbends open the front of the body & require us to be somewhat vulnerable. Sadness, anger, fear all create some degree of tension in the front side of the body. Backbends require us to be courageous, adventurous and trusting of our own power. We must face whatever arises and openly expose our sensitive side. Back bending creates flexibility, suppleness & elasticity, invoking a sense of youthfulness in our practice. Backbends open the groin, hip flexors, shoulders, chest, back & lengthen the abdomen while strengthening & regulating the nervous system.

**INVERSIONS** By reversing the effects of gravity, the inverted poses drain fluid out of the legs & lower body to regulate the flow of blood & lymphatic fluid. The head, brain & upper torso are nourished with fresh blood & oxygen to provide mental clarity & alertness. Traditionally the inversions are said to regulate the endocrine glands, thereby strengthening the immune system & regulating the hormones. Inversions also provide a calm poise that makes them a practice in their own. These poses are good for the brain, memory, concentration, depression, anxiety and stress. These are contraindicated with glaucoma, untreated hypertension, hypotension or heart disease.

**HIP OPENERS** are great for releasing hip & lower back tension, as well as for desk or computer workers, runners, cyclists & many other athletes. These poses provide greater mobility in the hips & pelvis which increases blood circulation to the pelvis, spine & discs, intestines & reproductive organs. The hips can often be a place for stored emotions so there can be an emotional release when the student is able to surrender completely.

**SEATED POSES** Forward bends begin by lengthening the hamstrings & musculature of the legs & pelvis which lays the foundation for better movement to allow more control of the pelvis. The opening of the hamstrings & the pelvis is helpful to release pressure on the back. The forward folds also tone the internal organs (liver, kidney, stomach, intestines, pancreas & gallbladder) and specifically regulate the digestion & elimination. These poses are introspective & humbling which quiets & cools the nervous system.

**TWISTS** The twisting poses are most known for their squeeze & soak effect. Think of it like wringing out a sponge and as you release & soak up fresh water. This is the effect the twisting poses have on the blood flow through the internal organs & the muscles, thereby acting as a powerful detoxification for the internal organs & glands, giving a boost of vitality to the entire body. You can think of it like a massage for the internal organs, also bringing better circulation to the spinal muscles & discs. The twists free up the fascia & musculature around the ribcage as well to improve elasticity of the lungs to increase perfusion and oxygenation of the tissues. These poses can also strengthen the abdominal muscles when done more actively. These may need to be modified or avoided with an acute back or disc pain.

**SAVASANA** is our complete relaxation & final surrender. It is a state of emptiness & non-doing that allows the nervous system to shift gears. Savasana gives us the opportunity to absorb & assimilate the effects of our practice. Each time we come out of Savasana it represents a new beginning.

## Common Injuries & Areas for Modification

**MUSCLE STRAIN** (hamstring or psoas are common) be very careful with stretching these muscles when strained and for a month or two after they have recovered, they are very susceptible to re-tear.

**WRIST PAIN** modify with block or grips or on forearms, look at shoulder positioning.

**LOW BACK PAIN** careful with backbends and anything that is painful, work on leg strength and core strength and stretch tight areas for long term prevention, watch back rounding with forward folds.

**SHOULDER PAIN** check alignment in chaturanga, watch for traps gripping.

**KNEE PAIN** careful with squats & lotus, strengthen & stretch quads, ITB, TFL and posterior & lateral hips.

**LARGER BODIES** modifications: step forward, use hand to guide leg forward if needed or 2 steps, shoulderstand at the wall, chair or wall options.

# Contraindications

HONOR YOUR BODY! Be aware of what your body is telling you during your practice. PAIN is not okay! If a pose is painful, encourage your students to come out of the pose. Self-monitoring is extremely important. Remember it is yoga practice, not perfection. Remind your students to take responsibility for themselves when practicing. Encourage your students to use a variety of props to assist them in their journey i.e. chairs, blocks, straps and/or blankets. Props assist in modification of poses to fit the individuals need.

Yoga is a gift to help us energize, relax and restore. It is the union of the mind, body and spirit. Encourage your students to go into their practice mindfully to cultivate the most rewarding experiences. The following is a list of some asanas and their contraindications.

**BACK OFF ANYTHING THAT IS PAINFUL.**  
REMEMBER LISTEN TO YOUR BODY - COME OUT OF A POSE WHENEVER YOU NEED TO!

General Health Issues	General Guidelines
<b>GLAUCOMA, EYE PROBLEMS, EAR CONGESTION</b>	Avoid breath retention, inverted postures and anything that increases pressure in the head.
<b>LOWER BACK INJURIES/ ISSUES</b>	Bend knees slightly during all types of forward folds, this reduces strain on the back. Careful with forward & back bends, transitions & twists. Work on core support, especially in transitions.
<b>NECK INJURIES</b>	Avoid unsupported inverted postures.
<b>KNEE PROBLEMS</b>	Careful with deep quad stretches & pigeon pose, watch knee tracking on standing poses and possibly avoid deep squats. Place extra padding under the knees during kneeling floor work.
<b>MENSTRUATION</b>	Avoid inverted postures
<b>HAMSTRING INJURY/ISSUES</b>	Back off anytime there is a pulling pain
<b>DISC ISSUES</b>	Careful with forward bends, transitions & twists.
<b>PREGNANCY</b>	Refer to P157

Popular Asanas	Contraindications
<b>KNEELING POSES</b>	Knee, ankle issues. Use a cushion.
<b>DOWN DOG; FORWARD BEND(S)</b>	Proceed gently, do not hold the pose too long if you have: hypertension, stroke, heart disease, props are great for modifications.
<b>TRANSITIONS</b>	Disc & back issues - use core and glutes
<b>SQUAT</b>	Low back, knee, hip issues. May need to use gentle version.
<b>TWISTS</b>	Use caution with neck, back or disc issues. Pregnancy & postpartum.
<b>BOAT, CORE WORK</b>	Hernia, recent abdominal surgery. Pregnancy & postpartum.
<b>BRIDGE</b>	Low back, knee.
<b>PRONE POSES (LYING ON BELLY)</b>	Recent abdominal surgery; pregnancy
<b>SHOULDER STAND; HEAD STAND; HANDSTAND</b>	Neck, shoulder issues, hypertension, stroke or heart disease
<b>PIGEON</b>	Hip labral tears. Knee, hip, low back may require prop.
<b>SITTING POSES W/ CROSSED LEGS (1/2 LOTUS POSE)</b>	Knee, ankle, hip issues.
<b>FORWARD BENDS, HAMSTRING POSES</b>	Hamstring tear. Always have a micro bend in the knees. This reduces stress on the lower back & hamstrings; careful with disc problems.

# Warm Up

## Balasana (Child's Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Big toes touch
- Knees close together= spine stretch, knees wide= hip stretch

### MODIFICATIONS

- Knees spread wide
- Towel rolled behind knees or under ankles, sit back on block or blanket
- Blanket or block under forehead

### VARIATIONS

- Arms along sides, walk hands off to one side then the other
- Puppy pose: shoulder opener- hips up off heels, hips slightly behind knees

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pressure on sacrum & lengthen upper back
2. Press down on one side of sacrum & lengthen away with opposite shoulder blade
3. One hand presses down on sacrum, other hand gently massages neck

### BENEFITS

- **Traditional:** Relaxing posture, lowers heart rate, relieves congestion in the legs
- Symmetrical - calming

### NOTES





## Tabletop

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### ALIGNMENT

- Knees under the hips, wrists under the shoulders
- Neutral spine & pelvis
- Cinch in around the waist to support low back
- Extend through the top of the head & tailbone to lengthen the back of the neck & spine
- Tadasana from pelvis to head

### MODIFICATIONS

- Blanket under knees or wrists
- On forearms

### VARIATIONS

- Twist
- See core work & cat/cow

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Assist neutral spine in tabletop

### BENEFITS

- Emphasize proper spinal movement & alignment

### NOTES



## Tabletop stability / Bird Dog

### ALIGNMENT

- From tabletop:
- 1. Push floor away & knit front ribs back
- 2. Maintain pelvic & lumbar position as extend leg back and arm forward
- Hips stay square to the floor, internally rotate the extended leg & lift the inner thigh as you press back through the inner heel from the sacrum
- Lift & reach through opposite arm & leg
- Soften the shoulders away from the ears
- Lengthen midline & back of the neck
- Lumbar curve stays the same throughout

### MODIFICATIONS

- Lift the arm or the leg
- Blanket under knees or wrists
- On forearms

### VARIATIONS

- Reach arm & leg out to the sides
- Reach arm & leg out to the sides as you sit back on the back heel (on the ball of the foot)
- Exhale to round and tap elbow to knee and inhale to extend back to starting point
- Backbend- grab opposite ankle & lift up & back as in dhanurasana

### BENEFITS

- Teaches functional core stability and helpful for spinal misalignments
- Great for golfers due to the healthy torque placed on both sides of the spine, also great for those who sit at a desk all day to reawaken the strength and movement around the spine
- Great for training multifidus, transverse abdominis, serratus anterior, gluteus maximus
- Great for teaching proper spine mechanics for back or disc problems (after acute phase)

### NOTES



## Cat/Cow

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### ALIGNMENT

- Knees under hips, wrists under shoulders
- Inhale extend/cow, exhale round/cat
- Movement of the pelvis, spine & shoulders
- Keep the neck & shoulders relaxed
- Work for fluidity between the segments of the spine
- Push floor away

### MODIFICATIONS

- Zip up the lower abdomen slightly to support the low back in cow pose for those with low back pain or hyperlordosis
- On forearms for wrist pain
- Blanket under knees or wrists

### VARIATIONS

- Circles

### BENEFITS

- **Traditional:** Corrects & counteracts bad posture
- **Traditional:** Counters the degenerative effects of aging on the spine, legs & feet
- Hydration of the discs and regulating effect on the nervous system and internal organs

### NOTES



# Other Warm-ups

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## USE TO

- Create/connect to a focal point (isolations)
- Create body awareness (slow & mindful movements or breathing)
- Relax, soften tension or guarding (connect to breath)

This could be isolated movements to bring awareness to your theme, simple supine movements to increase body awareness or breathing techniques to induce relaxation & awareness. Isolated movements are helpful to bring awareness to key stabilizing groups like transverse abdominis, serratus anterior, gluteus medius, maximus or others and helps to prepare them for more effective movement & stabilization.

Simple gentle versions of any of the following:

- Sukhasana fold/twist
- Simple core work from core section
- Bridge
- Plank/ DD flow
- Uttanasana variations
- Shoulder circles holding a strap
- Gentle hip openers or folds
- Supine Twist
- Supine breathing & body awareness
- Restorative poses



# Sun Salutations (Suryanamaskara A & B)

## Tadasana (Mountain Pose) AKA Samasthiti (Upright Steadiness)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Tadasana alignment pg16
- Plumb line from ears-shoulders-hips-knees-ankles
- Base of big toes touch, heels slightly apart
- Ground down through all four corners of the feet
- Lift the arches of the feet up to engage pelvic floor
- Inhale behind the sternum to lift & broaden the chest, exhale soften shoulder blades down the back
- Cinch belly in around the waist & breath fully through ribcage
- Lengthen midline
- Hug thigh muscles in toward the femurs

### MODIFICATIONS

- Feet hip distance apart in pregnancy, SI joint issues, hip pain and low back pain, or for balance issues

### VARIATIONS

- Samasthiti (call to attention) traditionally has the hands in namaste or sometimes at the sides

### BENEFITS

- **Traditional:** Corrects & counteracts bad posture
- **Traditional:** used to counter the degenerative effects of aging on the spine, legs & feet. Strengthen & balance the nervous system.
- Foundation for proper alignment of many other poses

### NOTES

When heading into sun salutations & lifting the arms (Urdhva Hastasana) keep the ribs back to avoid laying into the low back



## Uttanasana (Standing Forward Fold)

### ALIGNMENT

- Hinge at hips not waist
- Pelvis tilts forward as the sit bones turn up
- Belly on or close to the thighs, bend knees as needed
- Torso drapes over legs to allow gentle traction of the spine
- Relax neck
- Shift weight into all 4 corners of the feet, lift inner ankle bones away from each other to lift the arches of the feet

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knees
- Block under hands or hands on shins
- Feet hip distance apart in pregnancy, SI joint issues, hip pain and low back pain

### VARIATIONS

- Padangusthasana (thumb to foot pose): first two fingers grab the big toes
- Padahasthasana (hand to foot pose): palm under foot, toes at wrist crease
- Ardha Uttanasana/half-way lift

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Hamstring tear (no pain or pulling)
- Disc injury

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Bend knees & bring belly toward thighs, use blocks
2. Spinal length & pelvic tilt: Hand at sacrum apply downward pressure to stabilize, lengthening the spine with the opposite hand.

### BENEFITS

- Stimulates the abdominal organs
- Soothes the central nervous system
- Opens the entire back side of the body

### NOTES

- Ardha Uttanasana (Half lift)- neutral spine, bend knees as needed, hands to shins if needed, lengthen spine and broaden clavicles as cinch belly in around spine. Broaden inner thighs/sitting bones and narrow the waist with look up to stabilize low back and prepare for transition
- Note that pressure on discs increases with fold forward= importance of using legs & abdominal support in the transition. Maintain neutral spine until past 90 degrees
- Set shoulders & core to prepare for jump backs with half lift.



## Plank (High Push Up)

### ALIGNMENT

- Shoulders over wrists
- 4 steps shoulder stability:
  1. Hug head of humerus down and in
  2. Press the floor away
  3. Squeeze the forearms toward the midline
  4. Broaden clavicles/ shine sternum forward
- Feet hip width apart
- Cinch around waist to support low back
- Tadasana alignment & loops
- Hug quadriceps to femurs, lift inner thighs up
- Press back through heels & forward through crown of head to lengthen midline
- Lengthen tailbone to neutralize spine (if needed)

### MODIFICATIONS

- Drop knees to floor
- Forearms

### VARIATION

#### Serratus Isolation

- From plank: Lower ribs toward floor as you draw the scapula toward each other, then press hands into floor to lift the ribcage & move scapula apart
- Keep elbows straight, movement in shoulder blades only
- Use the core, quadriceps lift & heels pressing back to help maintain plank support
- Keep sides of the neck soft, or keep neck long
- Builds core and shoulder stability for vinyasa, arm balancing and inversions

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Have them resist a light but firm downward pressure on the hamstrings to correct hips sinking or between the shoulder blades for shoulder girdle stability & to resist the chest sagging down
2. Ribs back- press into back of ribs

### BENEFITS

- Core strength & shoulder stability

### NOTES



## Chaturanga Dandasana (Low Push Up)

### ALIGNMENT

- Neutral spine, loops
  - Shoulders above elbow height, elbows & hands shoulder width apart
  - Cinch waist to support low back
  - Hips in line with natural curve of low back (tadasana) (neutral spine)
  - Feet hip width apart
  - Lift inner thighs & quads
- Preparation from plank:
1. Push floor away (activate core & serratus anterior)
  2. Sternum forward & broaden clavicles (activate posterior shoulder)
  3. Lean forward to tips of toes (activate quads & prepare shoulder position)
  4. Bend elbows & lower, keep shoulders above elbows

### MODIFICATIONS

- Drop knees to the floor for more support

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Support hips by straddle or catch shoulders

### BENEFITS

- Tones the shoulder girdle, strengthens core & shoulder stability and strengthens the arms & wrists
- Tones the abdominal organs

### NOTES

Prepare or warm up with scapular pushup exercises for serratus anterior & rhomboids





## Bhujangasana (Cobra)

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### ALIGNMENT

- From prone hands under shoulders & forehead on floor:
- 1. Zip lower abdomen
- 2. Draw inner shoulder back & lengthen back of neck
- 3. Lift back of ribs first, then head
- Press down & pull back through hands to broaden & draw chest forward
- Lengthen back of neck
- Hug elbows in
- Press down through legs & feet

### VARIATIONS

- Lift the hands to hover just above the floor
- Different hand position variations (at waist, to sides, fingertips, hands in front of shoulders)
- Eventually maybe straighten the arms with the thighs still on the floor

### BENEFITS

- Good to strengthen back & postural muscles & open the chest
- Good for teaching abdominal support in backbends
- Traditionally: good for spinal injuries, including disc problems, said to help reposition displaced discs. Also good for chest, lung & heart ailments



### NOTES

## Salabhasana (Locust Pose)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- From prone as above except arms along sides
- After lift back of ribs, then lift legs & head
- Back of the palms press down into the floor, hands on floor or arms along sides

### MODIFICATIONS

- Lift one leg at a time or one leg with opposite arm
- Block between the inner thighs
- Tuck chin more for neck pain
- Padding under the hips
- Just legs lift or just one leg at a time

### VARIATIONS

- Hands at waist, clasp hands behind back, arms out to the sides, arms out in front, etc
- Separate the legs apart as lift up, return to starting point as lower down



### NOTES

## Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward Facing Dog)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Shoulders over wrists
- Soften glutes & press down through the top of feet to engage quadriceps to lift the thighs & knees off the floor
- Press down through feet & hands to lift up through the belly & chest
- Lift & broaden the clavicles
- Lengthen the back of the neck

### MODIFICATIONS

- Cobra (Bhujangasana)

### BENEFITS

- Increase lung capacity & elasticity and opens the chest
- Lengthens abdominal muscles

### NOTES

Once comfortable you can roll over the toes by pointing them back to come into this from chaturanga & then transition to down dog rolling back by flexing the toes back, lifting the hips will make it easier on the toes



## Adho Mukha Svanasana (Downward Facing Dog)

### ALIGNMENT

- Feet hip width apart, hands shoulders width apart
- Hug upper arm bones into midline, as push floor away
- Drop heels & lengthen spine/tailbone
- Lengthen outer shoulder & hug in with inner shoulder
- Equal weight in hands & feet
- Neutral pelvis, spine & scapula
- Weight distributed equally through hands
- Relax neck

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knees, belly toward thighs
- Child's pose for rest
- Enter from tabletop to learn proper alignment
  1. Hug shoulders into sockets
  2. Lean hips back toward heels,
  3. Push floor away to lengthen outer armpit

### VARIATIONS

- Balancing, twist

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pressing on sacrum with hand, pull ribs back to spine
2. Double arm reach through legs
3. Clasp hands over low back and traction back

### BENEFITS

- **Traditional:** Strengthen shoulders & arms
- **Traditional:** Longer hold will reduce fatigue & revitalize lost energy, great for runners who get tired after a race, sprinters will develop speed & lightness in the legs (BKS Iyengar)
- **Traditional:** Lengthens Achilles tendon & strengthens the ankles
- **Traditional:** Eases stiffness between the shoulder blades
- **Traditional:** Rejuvenates the brain cells & invigorates the brain through its inverted properties

### NOTES



## Utkatasana (Fierce/Chair Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Bases of big toes touch, separate heels slightly
- Lift & broaden chest
- Cinch waist to support low back
- Drop shoulders away from ears

### MODIFICATIONS

- Low back, hip or SI joint problems separate feet hip width apart
- Hands in namaste

### VARIATIONS

- Fold halfway forward
- Onto balls of the feet
- Arm variations

### BENEFITS

- Strengthen quads, back, hips, ankles and abdominals/core
- Removes stiffness in shoulders

### NOTES



## Malasana (Garland Pose or Yogi Squat)

### ALIGNMENT

- Feet slightly wider than hip width
- Knees pointing in same direction as toes
- Hands in namaste at heart
- Press upper arms into legs and legs into upper arms
- Lift & broaden chest
- Lengthen the spine

### MODIFICATIONS

- Sit on block
- Heels lift





## Virabhadrasana A (Warrior I)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Feet few inches apart (width)(not walking a tight rope)
- Knee over ankle- both front to back & side to side
- Back knee tracks in same direction as toes
- Zip lower abs to support low back & more neutral pelvic position
- Ground through the outer edge of the back foot
- Hips turn toward front, without forcing
- Soften shoulders down from ears

### MODIFICATIONS

- Drop arms to sides
- Allow the front leg to bend less &/or shorten the stance (lengthwise)

### VARIATION

- Humble Warrior

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Knee over ankle

### BENEFITS

- Chest is fully expanded to allow deep breathing
- Alleviates stiffness in the shoulders & back
- Tones the ankles & knees

### NOTES



# Sun Salutation A (Suryanamaskara A)



START IN TADASANA

INHALE

EXHALE

INHALE



EXHALE (STEP BACK TO PLANK)

INHALE (PLANK)

EXHALE

INHALE

EXHALE

INHALE (RISE TO TIPTOES)

EXHALE (STEP FORWARD)



INHALE

EXHALE

INHALE

EXHALE

# Sun Salutation B (Suryanamaskara B)



# Standing Poses - Front Facing

## Parsvottanasana (Sideways Stretching Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Back foot turns out, front foot turns forward
- Weight equal in both feet=hips squared & sacrum level
- Front leg: draw outer hip crease back away from ear
- Long spine, reaching belly toward the front thigh
- Lift back arch & press through the outer edge of the back foot

### MODIFICATIONS

- Lengthen stance, bend or just soften the front knee, block under hands

### VARIATIONS

- Reverse namaste, walk hands back toward back foot fingers pointing back

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Square hips

### BENEFITS

- **Traditional:** clear mucous blocking the respiratory tract

### NOTES





## Anjaneyasana (Crescent Lunge)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Feet hip width apart, hips square forward
- Front knee over ankle
- Sacrum lengthens toward floor to neutralize the pelvis & low back
- Cinch waist to float ribcage
- Front ribs back toward spine
- Push back through the back heel & lift back femur
- Inner spiral back thigh, sides of waist cinch in to float ribcage
- Lengthen back of the neck
- Shoulders down from ears

### MODIFICATIONS

- Back knee down (see below)
- Hands on front thigh
- Bend back knee

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Back thigh/heel

### BENEFITS

- Improve balance & stability, lengthen hip flexors, strengthens legs & glutes



## Low Lunge (Crescent variation)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Lift low belly to support low back
- Knee over ankle
- Hands on the floor or thigh

### MODIFICATIONS

- Hands on blocks or hands on floor, thigh or in air
- Blanket under back knee

### VARIATIONS

- Forearms to the floor front foot can turn out, grab back ankle, twist

### BENEFITS

- Great hip & groin opener (quad opener with grab ankle variation)

### NOTES



## Virabhadrasana C (Warrior 3) (also known as Digasana)

### ALIGNMENT

- Hips square to the floor, back foot & kneecap point to the floor
- Inner thigh lifts on back leg
- Hug outer hip of standing leg into socket
- Standing leg hip wraps away from ear
- Cinch waist to lengthen midline
- Neutral spine (not flat or hyperextend)

### MODIFICATIONS

- Hands namaste
- Bend standing leg, hands on blocks or tap foot to floor
- At wall

### VARIATIONS

- Arm variations

### BENEFITS

- Increases core, pelvic & hip/glute strength for lower back, hip and SI joint health.
- Traditionally: keeps the abdominal muscles strong, tones the abdominal organs, gives agility to the body & mind & convey harmony, balance & poise.
- Strengthens the muscles that support the back, pelvis and sacroiliac joints= a great pose for those who sit hours on end
- Great for posture, coordination & balance
- With proper support trains the hip muscles to stabilize more effectively to protect the deeper structures of the hip joint

### NOTES



## Prasarita Padottanasana (Spread Foot Pose)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Feet parallel, arches lift, femurs & inner ankles lift up & outer leg/foot grounds down
- Bend at hips, not waist, long spine & neck
- Shoulders away from ears
- Spread & lift sitting bones

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knees, hands on floor or block, shorten stance

### VARIATIONS

- A.** Hands shoulder width apart, elbows over wrists
- B.** Hands at waist
- C.** Clasp hands behind back
- D.** Grab big toes
- Twist...

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Stabilize sacrum & lengthen spine

### BENEFITS

- **Traditional** Lengthen calves & inner hamstrings
- **Traditional** Tone abdominal muscles and internal organs
- **Traditional** Strengthens & soothes nervous system
- **Traditional** Stimulates digestion & elimination & tones the reproductive organs

### NOTES



# Standing Poses - Side Facing

## Virabhadrasana B (Warrior II)

### ALIGNMENT

- Feet in heel to arch alignment
- Front foot forward, back foot turns in
- Press down outer edge of back foot & lift the arch of the foot
- Knee tracks over ankle (front to back & side to side)
- Wrap bent knee hip under & hug into the joint
- Lengthen sacrum to neutralize low back/pelvis
- Turn hips, ribs & shoulders toward long edge of mat
- Lift/lengthen sides of waist out of pelvis
- Front ribs back
- Soften shoulders away from ears & reach out through the fingertips
- Lift up through the back of the skull

### MODIFICATIONS

- Less bend in front knee, shorten stance

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Knee & hip



### BENEFITS

- Warms & opens the hips as well as strengthens the hips & thighs
- Great pose for knee: tracking, rehab & preventative (with vira A)
- Traditionally used for rheumatism

## Viparita Virabhadrasana (Reverse Warrior)

### ALIGNMENT

- Lengthen sacrum toward front heel
- Lift/lengthen sides of waist out of pelvis to lift rib cage off the pelvis (do not rest on back leg)
- Torso faces the long side of the mat (a side bend rather than a backbend)

### VARIATIONS

- Arm variations, float back arm for core stability

### BENEFITS

- Side body stretch & strengthen

### NOTES





## Utthita Parsvakonasana (Extended Side Angle)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Feet in heel to arch alignment
- Front knee over ankle, back foot turns in, inner arch lifts
- Ribs back toward spine, extend through the spine, back of neck & top of the head
- One long diagonal line from foot to hand
- Lift the back femur, sacrum lengthens toward back heel, front hip- wrap outer hip crease under (external rotation)
- Shoulders down from ears

### MODIFICATIONS

- Elbow to knee
- Shorten stance

### VARIATIONS

- Hand to floor on the inside or outside of the foot

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. 3 points of contact: adjust hips and chest/ shoulder

### BENEFITS

- Knee stability, arm, back, hip & thigh strength
- Aids digestion & peristalsis

### NOTES



## Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle)

### ALIGNMENT

- Feet in heel to arch alignment
- Front foot forward, back foot turns in
- Anchor down through back leg into floor to lengthen spine & broaden chest away from leg
- Press down through front big toe & outer edge of back foot, lift arch & thigh of back leg
- Microbend knee to avoid hyperextension
- Draw outer crease of front hip back and down toward back heel
- Turn hips, ribs & shoulders toward long edge of mat
- Lengthen sides of waist out of pelvis
- Front ribs back

### MODIFICATIONS

- Hand on shin or block
- Gaze down
- Shorten or lengthen stance

### VARIATIONS

- ½ bind, reach lower arm or both arms forward or hands to namaste

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. 3 points of contact: adjust hips, ribs, chest
2. Coming into-foot in hip crease & grab arm

### BENEFITS

- Lengthens spine
- Strengthens & stretches the side of the body and the back (quadratus lumborum, obliques, gluteus medius, IT band)

### NOTES



## Ardha Chandrasana (Half Moon)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Wrap standing hip away from ear
- Lengthen from inner heel to top of head
- Knit front ribs back
- Lengthen back of neck, sides of ribs, sacrum & inner heel
- Standing leg hip externally rotates to hug hip into socket
- Broaden chest & reach through the fingertips
- Hips, ribcage, shoulders and kneecap point to side wall
- Gaze up, back leg parallel to the floor
- Preparation from warrior B or extended side angle:
  1. Wrap (externally rotate) front hip
  2. Reach forward with hand or block

### MODIFICATIONS

- Hand on a block, foot on or near floor with standing leg bent, at a wall

### VARIATIONS

- Half bind, fingertips on floor, hand hovers, both arms reach out or at namaste

### BENEFITS

- Traditionally: tones the lower region of the spine & the nerves that innervate the legs as well as strengthening the knees & cures gastric problems.
- Strengthens functional core (obliques, quadratus lumborum)
- Cultivates stability, posture and confidence

### NOTES



## Skater Pose

### ALIGNMENT

- One knee bends & one leg straight
- Feet turn out like horse so kneecaps point in same direction as toes
- Chest above hips, hips above knee
- Feel leg & glute strength with core support

### MODIFICATIONS

- Not bend as deep, feet closer together

### BENEFITS

- Great for glute & leg strength

### NOTES



## Utkata Konasana (Horse / Goddess Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Knees and feet turn out
- Bend knees
- Kneecaps point in same direction as toes

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend less, adjust distance of feet

### VARIATIONS

- Arm variations

### BENEFITS

- Builds leg & glute strength

### NOTES



# Standing Poses - Twisting

## Parivrtta Utkatasana (Revolved Chair)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- From utkatasana:
  1. Keep the hips squared and the knees level with each other.
  2. Lift the belly away from the thigh.
  3. Rotate the thoracic spine & chest.
- Press the hands together to lift and broaden the chest.

### MODIFICATIONS

- Look down
- Less bend in knees
- Feet hip width apart for SI joint issues, hip or low back pain
- Torso upright, extend arms into twist

### VARIATIONS

- Open arms wide, half bind

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Square hips
2. Chest/shoulder opening

### BENEFITS

- Detoxifying & stimulating for the abdominal organs
- Strengthen legs, glutes & back
- Spinal flexibility & strength,
- Hydrate intervertebral discs

### NOTES





## Parivrtta Anjaneyasana (Revolved Crescent)

### ALIGNMENT

- From crescent lunge:
  1. Keep hips squared (don't let back hip drop).
  2. Cinch waist to stabilize low back and lift belly away from thigh.
  3. Press palms together to rotate chest and thoracic spine.
- Front knee stacked over ankle and back femur lifted.
- Hug outer hips into midline.
- Lengthen from back heel through spine to top of head.

### MODIFICATIONS

- Back knee down, lower hand to the floor inside the foot opposite arm up to sky

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Lift back femur

### BENEFITS

- As with all twists: rinses, detoxifies, revitalizes the abdominal organs
- Squeeze & soak effect on organs, discs, spine, interspinous muscles
- Open chest
- Tones the nervous system & strengthens the spinal cord
- Improves digestion & elimination

### NOTES



## Parivrrta Trikonasana (Revolved Triangle)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Coming into from Parsvottanasana:
  1. Keep weight even in both feet, squaring hips to the front of the mat so the sacrum is flat.
  2. Cinch waist to stabilize low back and stretch ribcage forward.
  3. Rotate from the thoracic spine, turning chest and arm up.
- Front leg: pull outer hip away back from ear,
- Back leg: ground down into floor, stretch chest forward
- Spine extends out of the pelvis & twists as if spiraling on a rod

### MODIFICATIONS

- Use a block under the hand
- Hand at sacrum/hip
- Look down to ease neck

### VARIATIONS

- Half bind

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. 3 points of contact

### BENEFITS

- Soothes & strengthens the nervous system
- Stimulates & cleanses the digestive system and abdominal organs
- Reduces fat around the waist
- Lengthens & strengthens the back, hips & legs
- Breathing difficulties & other respiratory problems can be corrected

### NOTES



## Parivrtta Ardha Chandrasana (Revolved Half Moon)

### ALIGNMENT

- From Digasana:
  1. Belly button, hips/ pelvis and kneecap/ toes turn to face the floor.
  2. Cinch waist to lengthen midline= press back through heel & out through top of the head
  3. Rotate from midback (thoracic spine) to broaden chest & reach through the fingertips
- Pull standing leg hip away from ear.
- Top shoulder blade moves back toward spine
- Eventually gaze up to sky with back leg parallel to the floor

### MODIFICATIONS

- Block under hand
- Top hand on hip
- Look at floor
- At wall

### VARIATIONS

- Half bind

### BENEFITS

- Strengthens the bandhas and wraps them all the way around the torso
- Cultivates functional core stability & confidence

### NOTES



# Balancing

## Garudasana (Eagle)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Opposite leg/arm on top (right leg on top=left arm on top)
- Sit weight back into the heels
- Drop the shoulders down the back
- Lengthen the spine
- Square the pelvis, hips and chest

### MODIFICATIONS

- Cross leg over top without tucking the foot behind the calf or cross ankles and rest ball of foot on floor
- At a wall
- Cross arm under without palms touching

### VARIATIONS

- Reach elbows forward or lift hands/elbows up

### BENEFITS

- Squeeze & soak action to the legs & arms= fresh blood/oxygen/nutrients
- Strengthen & lengthen the legs/hips
- Stretch the posterior shoulders

### NOTES



## Natarajasana (Dancer)

### ALIGNMENT

- Preparation from standing:
- 1. Grab outer ankle & lengthen tailbone
- 2. Zip up lower abdominals
- 3. Kick ankle back into hand as lean forward
- Hips & shoulders square forward

### MODIFICATIONS

- At wall

### VARIATIONS

- Bind overhead with strap
- Grab inner ankle
- Quad stretch

### BENEFITS

- Creates inner focus, cultivates balance & confidence
- Expands the ribcage to increase oxygen supply
- Improve flexibility of the spine, suppleness of the discs

### NOTES





## Vrksasana (Tree)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Foot to inner thigh or inner calf
- Press foot & inner thigh/calf into each other to lift out of hip
- Cinch waist to lift the ribcage off the pelvis
- Keep a level pelvis as you root down through the standing leg
- Knee & hip turn out only as can keep pelvis facing forward
- Watch for leaning into standing leg hip

### MODIFICATIONS

- Foot at ankle with ball of the foot on the floor
- At wall

### VARIATIONS

- Arm variations

### BENEFITS

- Improves posture & balance
- Strengthens the ankle & hip adductors & abductors

### NOTES



## Utthita Hasta Padangusthasana (Extended Hand Thumb to Foot Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- A.** Leg out front
- B.** Leg to side
- C.** Leg forward with hands to the waist
- D.** Grab with opposite hand & twist

### ALL

- Cinch waist to lift ribcage off pelvis & broaden chest
- Wrap lifted leg outer hip away from ear
- Stand tall, shoulders down
- Ground down through leg to lift up through chest

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knee of lifted leg
- Strap
- At wall

### BENEFITS

- Traditionally: loosens the hips, purifies & strengthens the spine, waist, hips & lower abdomen, purifies the kidneys & eliminates constipation

### NOTES



## Urdhva Prasarita Eka Padasana (Standing Splits)

### ALIGNMENT

- Eventually hips squared and legs straighten
- Find awareness in the feet
- Relax neck & jaw

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knee, hands on block

### VARIATIONS

- Hands on ankle

### BENEFITS

- Strength, courage & confidence
- Strengthens the legs & hips
- When done with hips squared teaches pelvic & SI stability as well as glute & hamstring strength

### NOTES



## Bakasana (Crow)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- From a squatting position: hands shoulders width apart, knees wrap around the outer edge of the upper arms/ armpits
- Hug knees & triceps in around arms to lift pelvis as lean head forward
- Scoop belly back, like harness
- Play with the head position to fine tune the balance: drop head too low= somersault, head too high= never lift off the ground
- Use inner thighs & pelvic floor to hug in and lift up

### MODIFICATIONS

- Lift one foot at a time, feet on a block

### BENEFITS

- Strengthens the core, inner thighs, pelvic floor & upper body
- Cultivates balance & confidence

### NOTES



## Vasisthasana (Side Plank)

### ALIGNMENT

1. Hug shoulder into socket
2. Press floor away with hand and outer foot to lift hips away from the floor
3. Square pelvis, torso & shoulders to the side of mat
  - Long midline through back of neck
  - Knit front ribs back, lengthen sacrum toward heel
  - Tadasana on your side

### MODIFICATIONS

- Lower knee to the floor, gaze forward or at the floor
- Top leg foot to the floor in front of you
- Wrist issues= forearm on the floor, 45 degrees to front of mat

### VARIATIONS

- Lift top leg to hover
- Lift and bend top leg to side of chest
- Lift top leg all the way up and grab the big toe (lift hips to bring lower leg foot flat on the floor)
- Forearm to the floor
- Bent or straight leg out in front
- Lift & lower hips few inches at a time (small side body pushups)
- Wild thing= retract weight bearing shoulder blade for backbends here

### BENEFITS

- Strengthens core, shoulders & side body
- More functional whole body stability
- Strengthens the side body (gluteus medius, QL, obliques, serratus anterior)

### NOTES



# Core Work

## Supta Prasarita Padasana (Supine Outstretched Foot Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Legs over hips, zip low abs & keep lumbar spine position as lower legs a few inches at a time
- Legs together, relax neck

### MODIFICATIONS

- TVA bent knee lifts from supine.
- TVA toe taps from supine tabletop.
- Single leg extensions from supine tabletop.

### CONTRAINDICTIONS

- Watch for straining

### BENEFITS

- Traditionally: strengthens the lumbar spine, reduces abdominal fat, tones the abdominal organs, relieves gastric problems & flatulence.

### NOTES





## (Paripurna) Navasana (Full Boat Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Lift the lower back away from the floor to neutralize spine and roll pelvis forward toward the highest point of the sitting bones
- Palms facing each other to allow the shoulders to sit back
- Cinch waist & zip low abs to lift & broaden chest

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knees or bend one
- Feet on floor or lift one leg
- Hold outer legs or forearms on floor behind to support low back
- Bend the knees & lift one leg at a time

### VARIATIONS

- Bend one knee or lift one leg
- Rotate torso, hands in namaste

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Back injuries, herniated disc (put forearms on floor)
- Pregnancy and postpartum

### BENEFITS

- Strengthen psoas
- Traditionally: for gastric complaints such as gas or bloating and tone the kidneys.

### NOTES



## Ardha Navasana (Half Boat)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- From navasana: recline halfway back, rest on the sacrum
- Legs at about 30-35 degrees from the floor with the feet at about eye level

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend one knee into chest
- Place the feet on the floor, walk the feet further & further away

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Back injuries, herniated disc
- Pregnancy and postpartum

### BENEFITS

- Same as paripurna Navasana, this variation will isolate more of the lower abdomen
- Traditionally: Paripurna is said to work more on the intestines, whereas ardha navasana is said to address the liver, gallbladder & spleen.

### NOTES



## Lift up/through

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Hips on the floor lift torso & reach toward the toes without grabbing the feet
- Cinch in around the waist
- Soften the neck & shoulders

### MODIFICATIONS

- Don't lift up as high, bend knees slightly
- Clasp hands behind head

### VARIATIONS

- Pulse the hips up off the floor
- Pulse shoulder blades up off the floor, smaller movements will work deeper with both of these variations
- Spread the legs wide & reach through the legs

### BENEFITS

- Cultivates core & pelvic stability

### NOTES



## Rock ups

### ALIGNMENT

1. Bend knees & grab big toes, balancing on the sitting bones
2. Rock back & forward catching balance at the top, using the core deep in the belly to control the movement

### VARIATIONS

- Straighten the legs & grab the big toes
- Legs straight, grab the outside of the feet just above the heels

### BENEFITS

- Core stability
- Traditionally: used to strengthen the genitals & bladder, strengthens & straightens the spine

### NOTES



## Side to side lifts: Jathara Parivartanasana variation (belly turning)

### ALIGNMENT

- Arms extended out to the sides start with the legs perpendicular to the floor & cinch in around the waist
- Exhale slowly lower the legs to one side as you turn the belly away from the legs. Keep both shoulders on the floor, inhale slowly lift the legs back up & repeat on the opposite side

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend the knees

### BENEFITS

- Strengthen obliques & core
- Traditionally: good for reducing abdominal fat, tones and eradicates sluggishness of the liver, spleen and pancreas, cures gastritis & strengthens the intestines, stimulates the abdominal organs, helps to relieve sprains and catches in the low back & hips

### NOTES

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# Backbends

## Setu Bandha Sarvangasana (Bridge Formation Entire Body Pose)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Feet & knees hip width apart, knees over ankles.
  1. Lengthen tailbone between knees.
  2. Cinch waist to stabilize the low back.
  3. Retract shoulder blades to broaden chest.
- Lift and lower one vertebrae at a time.
- Soften around the sacrum, reach sit bones toward knees, lift ribs toward face, relax neck & shoulders
- Avoid moving or turning head, neck in neutral position with natural cervical curve

### MODIFICATIONS

- Block between knees
- Block under sacrum

### VARIATIONS

- Clasp hands
- Lift one leg
- Arms lift with hips as inhale, lower both with exhale

### BENEFITS

- Strengthens the glutes, open the chest, massage the spine.
- Traditionally: helps to prevent arterial blockage or cardiac arrest by resting the heart muscles and increasing blood circulation to the arteries, combats fluctuating blood pressure, hypertension, and depression by soothing the brain and expanding the chest, relieves eye or ear ailments, migraines, stress-related headaches, nervous exhaustion and insomnia, improves digestion.

### NOTES



## Purvottanasana (Eastern Intense Stretch Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- From seated in Dandasana with legs straight and feet together:
- Hands 8-12" behind you with fingers forward, legs straight feet together
- Retract your scapula to "puff up" the chest; keep that as hips lift.
  1. Lengthen the skin over the sacrum.
  2. Cinch the waist to stabilize the low back.
  3. Shoulders retract to open the chest and lift the heart.
- Feet flat on the floor.
- Press firmly through the entire palm.
- Shoulders over wrists.

### MODIFICATIONS

- Reverse tabletop
  - » Stack knees over ankles, feet hip width apart
  - » Reach sacrum toward knees

### VARIATIONS

- Lift one leg up parallel to the floor or straight up toward the ceiling, bent or straight
- From Reverse TT:
  - » Lift hips up, back & through in between for more core work, can lift feet off the floor with straight legs for lower abs

### BENEFITS

- Great active opening for front of shoulder & chest to balance poor posture
- Strengthens back of shoulder, hamstrings & glutes
- Counter pose for forward folds

### NOTES





## Dhanurasana (Bow Pose)

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### ALIGNMENT

- From prone:
- Catch ankles, bring knees and feet hip-width apart.
  1. Zip low abdomen.
  2. Maintain abdominal support.
  3. Draw shoulder blades back.
- Press back through feet to lift up.
- Shoulder blades retract to lift and broaden the chest.
- Lengthen back of neck.

### MODIFICATIONS

- Lift up halfway
- Not grab ankles
- Salabhasana

### VARIATIONS

- One leg at a time
- Thighs to floor
- Reach feet up (tear drop shape)
- Clasp overhead (with strap)
- Roll onto side

### BENEFITS

- Opens the chest & and front of the body to counteract constant flexion placed on the spine (sitting, driving, biking, etc)
- Good for teaching abdominal support in backbends
- **Traditional:** by stretching the spine, rigidity in the spine is eliminated. It is also said to provide relief from a slipped disc when practiced regularly with shalabhasana & brings elasticity to the spine & tones the abdominal organs.

### NOTES



## Ustrasana (Camel)

### ALIGNMENT

- Begin kneeling, knees hip-width apart:
  1. Lengthen sacrum toward knees.
  2. Cinch waist.
  3. Retract shoulder blades.
- Keep spine position, using quads and core to lower hands back to heels.
- Lift out of pelvis and focus stretch in chest.
- Head forward or back, as long as you can keep chest lifted to focus on upper back.

### MODIFICATIONS

- Flex toes back
- Block under hands
- Hands to sacrum

### BENEFITS

- Great counter pose for kyphosis & poor posture, stretches pecs, lengthens spine, massages spinal nerves, improves posture
- Traditionally: increase lung capacity, improve blood flow, removes stiffness in the shoulders, back & ankles, relieves abdominal cramps, regulates menses, relieves menstrual pain & the symptoms of menopause, stimulates adrenals, pituitary, pineal gland & thyroid, tones the liver, kidneys, spleen, tones the spine, relieves backache & arthritic back pain, helps to prevent varicose veins by toning the legs, hamstrings & ankles, helps to correct a prolapsed uterus by stretching the pelvic area, tones & improves blood flow to the ovaries

### NOTES



## Urdhva Dhanurasana (Wheel)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Begin supine with feet hip width apart. From top of head allow elbows to move slightly apart.
  1. Zip low abs to lengthen sacrum.
  2. Cinch waist.
  3. Retract shoulder blades and hug shoulders into sockets.
- Straighten arms to lift up.
- Unclench glutes, long curve throughout spine.
- Lift sides of the ribcage up and back to open chest.

### MODIFICATIONS

- Blocks under hands, at wall

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Assist scapula retraction
2. Hold adjuster's ankles

### BENEFITS

- Traditionally: prevents the arteries of the heart from thickening and ensures healthy blood circulation throughout the body, tones the spines, strengthens the abdominal and pelvic organs, stimulates the pituitary, pineal and thyroid glands, prevents prolapse of the uterus, helps prevent excess menstrual flow and eases menstrual cramps.

### NOTES



# Inversions

## Salamba Sarvangasana (Shoulderstand)

### ALIGNMENT

- Shoulder blades back to lift vertebrae away from floor
- Enough space between chin & chest so that the cervical vertebra are off the floor with a natural curve in the back of the neck
- Eventually straight line through the shoulders, hips & feet
- Legs actively press together & lift, feet active
- Soften neck & jaw

### MODIFICATIONS

- Viparita karani (inverted practice)- sacrum rests on the hands
- Fold blanket under the shoulders, top of the blanket should be 1-2inches above the top of the shoulders, when up in the pose shoulders are on the blanket and neck is off the blanket
- Hips on block & legs up (come into from bridge)
- Difficulty getting into= at wall or above modifications
- Strap under armpits to create space from breast tissue

### VARIATION

- Arm & leg variations, twist (approach carefully and never move/twist the chest/head/neck with legs up)

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Traditionally no inversions during the menses
- Unmanaged hypertension (traditionally only do shoulderstand after halasana with hypertension)
- Neck problems, herniations



### BENEFITS

- Traditionally: is the mother of all asana & is said to cure all diseases, relieves disease of the throat, relieves stress and nervous disorders, eases migraines and stress-related headaches, alleviates hypertension & insomnia, reduces palpitations, improves the functioning of the thyroid and parathyroid glands, relieves cervical spondylosis and shoulder pain, relieves bronchitis, asthma, sinusitis & congestion, prevents varicose veins, alleviates ulcers, colitis, chronic constipation & hemorrhoids
- When using therapeutically for long holds use a blanket as described above
- Increased cardiac output with venous return for cardiovascular health

## Halasana (Plough)

---

### ALIGNMENT

- From shoulderstand slowly lower the feet to the floor
- Point the toes & rest on the toenails
- Hips over the shoulders with a long spine

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knees= Karnapidasana
- Feet above the floor or on a block
- No clasp, arms press into floor
- Separate the legs for pregnant or overweight
- Blanket under shoulders to take weight off neck
- Strap under armpits to create space from breast tissue

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Traditionally no inversions during the menses
- Unmanaged hypertension (traditionally only do shoulderstand after halasana with hypertension)
- Neck problems, herniations

### BENEFITS

- Traditionally: soothes the nerves & relaxes the brain, alleviates anxiety, insomnia & fatigue, great for thyroid disorders, relieves stress-related headaches, migraines and hypertension, relieves palpitations and breathlessness, alleviates throat ailments, asthma, bronchitis, colds and congestions, relieves backache and arthritic of the spine, purifies the intestines and the throat.
- Karnapidasana Traditionally: eliminates diseases of the ears, rests the trunk, heart and legs, stretches the spine and helps the circulation of the blood around the abdomen

### NOTES





## Sirsasana (Headstand)

### ALIGNMENT

- Top of the head on the floor, lengthen evenly through all four sides of the neck
- Pressure down through the forearms/elbows to lift shoulders and lengthen sides of the neck = pressure off the neck
- Tadasana alignment: front ribs back, sacrum towards heels
- Hug in to lengthen midline and reach through the feet

### 4 STEPS TO SET SHOULDERS TO PREPARE

1. Hug shoulders into socket (subscapularis/lats)
2. Press elbows forward (serratus anterior)
3. Hug elbows into centerline (anterior shoulder)
4. Broaden clavicles (posterior shoulder)

### COMING UP

- Physics is key, the weight of the legs & hips will offset each other, pelvis movement is key: hips move back to lift legs up then begin to come back to center when legs halfway up

### MODIFICATIONS

- Puppy pose to open the shoulders, child's pose to rest
- Feet on the floor
- Steps to getting into safely:
  1. One knee into chest
  2. Two knees into chest
  3. One knee into chest & one leg stands on the ceiling
  4. Both legs stand on ceiling
- Knees on triceps in tripod variation

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Spot - progression from line backer to fist between thighs (to control pelvis) or calves, to heel press

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Traditionally no inversions during the menses
- Unmanaged hypertension
- Neck problems, herniations
- Shoulder injuries

### NOTES

- Not necessarily for you to teach but giving you the essentials to set yourself up with integrity to learn it in your own practice first, if that interests you.



### BENEFITS

Traditionally: said to be the King of all asana practice, develops poise, lightness & stimulates the brain, makes pure healthy blood flow through the brain cells, increases brain power & clarity acting as a tonic for those whose brain tires quickly, for growth, health & vitality due to the increased circulation to the pituitary & pineal glands, good for sleep, strengthens the lungs to resist colds, alleviates palpitations, keeps the body warm, relieves constipation & regulates the bowels, regular practice improves the hemoglobin content of the blood, regular & precise practice develops the body, disciplines the mind & widens the horizons of the spirit & one becomes balanced & self-reliant in pain & pleasure, loss & gain, shame & fame and defeat & victory

## Pincha Mayurasana (Forearm Balance)

### ALIGNMENT

- Elbows forearms width apart, forearms parallel
- Gaze at floor between forearms
- Pressure down through the forearms/elbows to lift shoulders away from ears
- Front ribs back, sacrum toward heels
- Tadasana alignment (except neck/head)
- Active feet, hug in and lift
- Coming up from dolphin on knees:
  1. Hug shoulders into socket and push floor away with forearms
  2. Lift knees & lift one leg straight into air
  3. Bend leg on floor with belly & thigh close, hop and tap heel to butt

### MODIFICATIONS

- One or both legs on the floor (dolphin)
- Block between the hands, strap around upper arms
- Hands together or halfway apart (elbows still shoulder width)
- Kicking up at wall, or walking the feet up the wall
- Dolphin push ups to build strength
- Puppy pose to open the shoulders, child's pose to rest

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Spot - progression from line backer to fist between thighs (to control pelvis) or calves, to heel press

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Traditionally no inversions during the menses
- Unmanaged hypertension
- Shoulder injuries

### BENEFITS

- Great for developing a clear confident focus, strengthens the shoulder girdle & teaches control of the ribcage/core & bandhas
- Traditionally: develops the muscles of the shoulders and back and tones the spine
- Increased cardiac output with venous return for cardiovascular health

### NOTES

- Not necessarily for you to teach but giving you the essentials to set yourself up with integrity to learn it in your own practice first, if that interests you.



## Adho Mukha Vrksasana (Face Downward Tree Pose / Handstand)

### ALIGNMENT

- Front ribs back, sacrum toward heels
- Tadasana alignment (except neck/head)
- Gaze at floor between hands
- Active feet, hug in and lift
- Coming into from downdog:
  1. Hug shoulders into socket and push floor away
  2. Step one foot halfway forward and bend knee
  3. Lift other leg up, then lean weight into hands & hop and tap heel to butt

### MODIFICATIONS

- One leg up, lean forward & back
- At wall kick ups
- Practice jumping with both legs together & knees bent, eventually hover with knees bent into chest & heels to butt
- Walk feet up the wall until hips are 90degrees & legs are parallel to the floor, used to build strength as a prep for handstand, do not kick up from here
- Puppy pose to open the shoulders, child's post to rest

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Traditionally no inversions during the menses
- Unmanaged hypertension (traditionally only do shoulderstand after halasana with hypertension)

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Frog jumps with sacrum push (option to catch sides of pelvis as it stacks over shoulders)
2. Spot - progression from line backer to fist between thighs (to control pelvis) or calves, to heel press

### BENEFITS

- Builds strength, patience, confidence & focus
- Traditionally: develops the body harmoniously, strengthens the shoulders, arms & wrists and expands the chest fully

### NOTES

- Not necessarily for you to teach but giving you the essentials to set yourself up with integrity to learn it in your own practice first, if that interests you.



# Hip Openers

## Eka Pada Rajakapotasana (One Leg Pigeon)

### ALIGNMENT

- Back kneecap points to floor (internal rotation on the back leg, external rotation on the front leg)
- Hips turn forward to setup rotators for a stretch, try not roll off to one side, to prevent this use a block/blanket/prop under the hips

### MODIFICATIONS

- Prop under hips if it's not on the floor, bring front foot in closer to the pelvis
- Supine figure 4

### VARIATIONS

- Backbend, quad stretch, twist...

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Sacrum & upper back

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Labral tears- no deep hip flexion or deep stretching here, sit upright pigeon, supine figure 4 or skip this pose entirely
- Knee pain or injuries

### BENEFITS

- Stretch hip rotators with the forward fold, sitting upright will stretch the hip flexors
- Great for sciatica like symptoms associated with piriformis syndrome

### NOTES



## Dwi Pada Rajakapotasana (Double Pigeon) and Sukhasana (Easy Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Preparation:
  1. Drop the sitting bones to the floor and lengthen up out of the pelvis,
  2. Walk the hands out in front,
  3. Updog chest forward, then fold
- Stack the shins parallel to each other, foot over opposite ankle, ankle over opposite foot
- Keep some weight back into the sitting bones as you lean forward
- Slightly flex the top foot to protect the knee, should not ever be painful in the knee

### MODIFICATIONS

- Sukhasana: one shin in front of the other
- Figure 4: seated or supine ankle to opposite knee
- Sit on roll, prop under the knee(s)
- Supine figure 4

### VARIATIONS

- Twist (folded or upright)

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pelvic tilt with knuckles. Flat of knuckles tilt pelvis in and up; use catcher stance & boundary hand on shoulder.
2. Anchor hips back and down. Blade of hand or shins to hip creases anchor sit bones back and down.

### BENEFITS

- Outer hip opener

### NOTES





## Gomukhasana (Cow Face)

### ALIGNMENT

- Preparation:
  1. Drop the sitting bones to the floor and lengthen up out of the pelvis
  2. Walk the hands out in front
  3. Updog chest forward, then fold
- Stack the knees, feet in close to the pelvis is easier, eventually shins maybe parallel to each other
- Hips squared forward

### MODIFICATIONS

- Knee can lift off the other leg
- Stay upright if pelvis tips posteriorly
- Sit on roll, props under knee(s)

### VARIATIONS

- Traditional arm bind- great for the lats & rotator cuff
- Twist (in fold or upright), side bend

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pelvic tilt with knuckles

### BENEFITS

- Once the outer hip releases this pose is very effective at releasing gluteus medius/minimus/TFL and thereby the IT band as a result
- Great for runner & cyclists with tight IT bands & hips
- Traditionally: cures cramps in the legs & makes the leg muscles elastic

### NOTES



## Baddha Konasana (Restrained Angle **AKA** Butterfly)

### ALIGNMENT

- Preparation:
  1. Drop the sitting bones to the floor and lengthen up out of the pelvis,
  2. Walk the hands out in front,
  3. Updog chest forward, then fold
- Lead with the belly toward the feet to tip pelvis forward

### MODIFICATIONS

- Sit on roll, prop under the knee(s)
- At wall

### VARIATIONS

- Feet out away from the pelvis (diamond pose)
- Block between feet
- Supine version or at wall

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pelvic tilt with knuckles.
2. Anchor hips back and down

### BENEFITS

- Lengthens the adductors & opens the groin
- Traditionally: stimulates the bladder, pelvis & abdomen by the increase in blood flow, diseases of the urinary tract, relieves sciatica & prevents hernia, relieves pain & heaviness in the testicles, regulates the menstrual cycle & the function of the ovaries, very helpful for pregnant women to prevent varicose veins & to open the pelvis to decrease pain during labor

### NOTES



## Upavistha Konasana (Wide-Angle Seated Forward Bend)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Legs comfortable distance apart
- Knees & feet turn up

### MODIFICATIONS

- Sit on roll, prop under the knee(s)

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pelvic tilt with knuckles.
2. Anchor hips back and down

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Hamstring tear

### BENEFITS

- Release tight hamstrings & inner thighs
- Relaxing & introspective qualities of forward fold

### NOTES



## Figure 4 / Revolved figure 4

### ALIGNMENT

- Ankle to opposite knee
- Gently flex foot to protect knee
- Grab hamstrings or shin
- Relax low back & neck to relax hips

### MODIFICATIONS

- Foot on a wall
- Foot on the floor or a block

### VARIATIONS

- Rock side to side gently
- Revolved Fig 4 (sole of foot on floor, can use hand as kickstand to keep knee pointing up)

### CONTRAINDICATIONS:

- Knee pain

### BENEFITS

- A great approachable hip opener for all levels

### NOTES



## Ananda Balasana (Happy Baby)

### ALIGNMENT

- Supine with bent knees, spread the thighs to the outer edges of the torso with the ankles over the knees, draw soles of the feet down over the knees, toward the floor
- Relax the low back & drop the pelvis

### MODIFICATIONS

- One leg at a time, hug knee to side

### VARIATIONS

- One leg
- Grab shin(s)

### BENEFITS

- Hip & groin opener
- Great for the low back

### NOTES





# Seated Poses

## Paschimottanasana (Western Intense Stretch)

### ALIGNMENT

- Preparation:
- 1. Drop the sitting bones to the floor and lengthen up out of the pelvis with the hands on the floor by sides,
- 2. Walk the hands out in front,
- 3. Updog chest forward, then fold
- Zip abs and lengthen spine, lead with abdomen to tip pelvis forward
- Slight internal rotation on the thighs
- Press through the base of the big toes & pull back on the outsides of the feet/pinky toes
- Grab outsides of the feet or big toe or around feet



### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knees
- Grab anywhere along the legs
- Sit on edge of blanket/prop
- Dandasana: upright version
- Catch feet with strap

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pelvic tilt with knuckles
2. Lengthen spine

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Hamstring tear (no pain or pulling)

### BENEFITS

- Great for opening the legs & mobility of the pelvis to create the basis for pelvic control & stability
- **Traditional:** used for liver & stomach problems, aids digestion, acts powerfully on the vagus nerve to strengthen and purify the entire body, including the heart, rests & massages the heart, soothes the adrenal glands, tones the kidneys, bladder & pancreas, activates a sluggish liver & improves digestion, helps treat impotence, stimulates the ovaries, uterus & the entire reproductive system

### NOTES

## Janusirsasana A (Head to Knee Pose)

### ALIGNMENT

- Preparation:
  1. Lengthen up out of the pelvis as rotate to face straight leg
  2. Walk the hands out in front
  3. Updog chest forward, then fold
- Less than 90 degree angle between the thighs, foot to the opposite inner thigh
- Rotate the torso & ribcage to try to square the torso over the extended leg using abs
- Belly reaches toward the extended leg thigh so the pelvis tilts forward
- Lengthen spine & broaden chest

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend knees
- Grab anywhere along the legs or use a strap
- Sit on edge of blanket/prop
- Prop under bent knee

### VARIATIONS

- Side bending

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Shin/hand in hip crease, opposite hand rotates & lengthens spine

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Hamstring tear (no pain or pulling)

### BENEFITS

- Great for opening the legs & pelvis to create the basis for pelvic control & stability, also adds a gentle twist to tones the obliques & open the side body and hip
- Traditionally: used for diseases of the liver, pancreas, prostate and bladder, used for diabetes I&II, aids digestions, eases the effects of stress on the heart & mind, stabilizes blood pressure, gradually corrects curvatures of the spine & rounded shoulders, tones the abdominal organs, relieves stiffness in and strengthens the legs

### NOTES



## Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Lord of the Fishes)

### ALIGNMENT

- Preparation:
  1. Drop sitting bones to floor
  2. Lengthen spine
  3. Rotate
- Cinch in around waist to support lumbar spine and twist through the thoracic spine
- Sit upright toward the front of the sitting bones, lean belly toward the thigh to keep pelvis from dropping back
- Lift the chest, broaden the shoulders & lengthen the spine
- Lengthen midline and back of the neck
- Hug the knee with the elbow to sit tall

### MODIFICATIONS

- Sit on prop
- Bottom leg straight

### VARIATIONS

- Arm variations

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Pelvic tilt with knuckles, hand to shoulder to guide twist.
2. Shin behind spine to lift and lengthen, hands to shoulders to guide twist.

### BENEFITS

- Stimulate circulation of fluids through the discs and gently massage the spinal nerves to help regulate the organ function & nervous system
- Regulates the digestion, stimulates the abdominal organs
- Helps relieve sciatica like symptoms caused by piriformis syndrome
- Traditionally: benefits the prostate & bladder & lower abdomen, used for backaches & hip pain, tones the liver & spleen, relieves shoulder sprains, benefits the intestines, regulates the nervous system

### NOTES



## Virasana (Hero Pose)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Heels next to hips
- Heels point up

### MODIFICATIONS

- Seated on heels
- Block under hips
- Roll under ankles

### VARIATIONS

- Suptavirasana

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- Knee pain
- Ankle pain

### BENEFITS

- Release quads, grounding pose

### NOTES



# Supine Poses

## Matsyasana (Fish)

### ALIGNMENT

- Lay with the arms flat along the sides, press through the elbows to lift the chest & rest lightly on the top of the head
- Press down through the arms to lift & broaden chest and keep the head light on the floor
- Press down through the legs & sitting bones to lift the lower back
- Shoulders away from the ears
- Weight bearing points are legs, sitting bones, elbows; head light on floor

### MODIFICATIONS

- Hover head

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Hold forearms down as they lift chest
2. Wrap shoulder blades to lift chest

### BENEFITS

- **Traditional:** Stimulates the thyroid and helps regulate the metabolism
- Tones the spinal erectors and strengthens posterior shoulder
- Traditionally: give full expansion to the chest & keeps the spine supple & healthy, tones the neck & back and regulates the thyroid by ensuring their supply of healthy blood, abdominal muscles are stretched and strengthened

### NOTES





## Supta Padangusthasana (Supine Thumb to Foot Posture)

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### ALIGNMENT

- A.** Drop head on floor, reach back to floor through inner heel/thigh of leg on floor
- B.** Open leg to the side, wrap hip, keep hips on floor
- **ALL** - Wrap lifted leg hip away from ear
- Option to use strap around foot

### MODIFICATIONS

- Bend the leg on the floor
- Block under head with strap around head & foot
- Hold foot with strap

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Wrap lifted leg hip, anchor lower leg

### BENEFITS

- Great stretch for the entire hip
- Great for low back pain
- Traditionally: strengthens & purifies the abdominal organs & muscles, regulates the digestion

### NOTES



## Supine Twist

---

### ALIGNMENT

- Bend knees into the chest & take it over toward the floor on the opposite side
- Shoulders lean back toward the floor
- Rest head & pelvis on floor to relax neck & back

### MODIFICATIONS

- Block under or between legs
- Move knees away from the chest

### VARIATIONS

- Cross knees & take to opposite side
- One leg (bottom leg straight down)
- Straight leg on top
- Grab lower leg ankle behind you

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Shoulder & spine

### BENEFITS

- Rings out the spine & rejuvenates it with fresh blood, oxygen and nutrients
- Regulates the sympathetic nervous system and relaxes the body

### NOTES



## Savasana (Corpse Pose)

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### ALIGNMENT

- Palms turn up, eyes close
- Breath is natural

### MODIFICATIONS

- If the lower back is uncomfortable roll a towel or bolster under the knees.
- In pregnancy lie on the left side with bolster between knees.

### ADJUSTMENTS

1. Legs
2. Arms
3. Neck/head/shoulders
4. Hips

### BENEFITS

- Stress reduction, helps to balance the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system to change the way the body responds to stress.

### NOTES



# TEACHING METHODS



## Embodying the role of a teacher

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**AS A YOGA TEACHER OUR BEHAVIOR REFLECTS UPON THE TRADITION AND LINEAGE OF YOGA AND A HIGH DEGREE OF INTEGRITY IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR ROLE.**

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Many students will look to you for guidance and can often project high ideals onto their teacher. Because of this power differential we must uphold the integrity of a teacher. As a teacher we must always remember that our purpose is to be of service to our students and to stay centered even in the midst of criticism or disapproval. You can't please everyone; but you must stay clear in your purpose and never degrade or demean other yoga teachers or styles. We must do our best to cultivate harmony and unity in this community that honors the great art of yoga that we represent.

Remember teaching yoga is an act of service to our communities. It's an opportunity to make a living in a way that raises the quality of people's lives, including your own.



# Teaching Systematically

## General Concepts

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- Link the breath to the movement.
- Start with basic instructions to get into the pose, beginning with the foundation.
- Then slowly progress to more complex concepts.
- Increase their awareness and sensitivity to the body by increasing their mindfulness.
- Be direct, concise and potent with your instructions.
- Use language that is easily understood by your class. Define terms when necessary.
- Pause to give students time to process the instructions.
- Try to integrate the actions within the poses to find opposing forces when possible (ground down through the sitting bones to lift up through the spine).
- Connect the action and alignment of one pose to the next when possible.
- Make instructions based on what you observe.
- Mirror your students when you are facing them so it is easier to follow.
- Do not leave it up to beginners to make decisions.
- Ask your students questions about the pose as you go, to get them thinking and bring them into the present.
- Allow room for each person's personal investigation.

## Breath

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In general

### INHALE WHEN

- Opening or expanding
- Lengthening or extending the spine
- Opening the arms to the sides or overhead
- Coming out of forward or side bending
- Going up into a pose against gravity

### EXHALE WHEN

- Closing or flexing the outer body
- Softening or surrendering into a pose
- Bringing the arms down or into the midline
- Going into forward or side bending
- Releasing down with gravity

## Voice

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Your voice is a reflection of your intentions and an instrument to guide your students.

- Be enthusiastic & inspiring while still commanding the room to help the class feel supported.
- Don't just lecture, interact, ask questions, have fun!
- Match your voice to the theme of the class and the phase of the class that you are in, trying to keep your voice somewhat steady throughout the class.
- Be sure to stay relaxed and grounded in your legs so that you can breathe all the way down to the base of the lungs to make a full, steady sound with your voice.

## Class Essentials

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### PACING THE CLASS

- The pacing of the class is very important to create a pleasant atmosphere for the class.
- Pace the class according to the theme of the class and where you are at within the class.
- Make sure the class is fast enough to keep the student's attention and slow enough so that there is enough time to absorb & incorporate the information.
- It needs to be slow enough to work within the pose and create depth but fast enough that the students can make it through the entire class without collapsing from fatigue.
- Breathe fully while giving instructions, your pacing will be more rhythmic and accurate.
- Make sure you begin & end on time, taking into account some time for an introduction as well as Savasana and maybe meditation at the end. Once these have been taken into account you will be surprised how little time you have left.
- Observe your students throughout class so that you can pick up on their specific needs, abilities and limitations.

### BEFORE CLASS

It is helpful to organize your thoughts on paper before class to create a clear, potent & smooth flowing class. You may want to rehearse your welcome to create the pace of the class and set your intention beforehand. Dress comfortably and remember you are a role model. Beginners especially will take what you say very literally.

Make sure that during class you walk around to teach, this exudes more enthusiasm and makes the class more dynamic. Stand tall and try not to cross your arms in front of you or make nervous hand gestures this can be misinterpreted as negative, disinterested or a lack of confidence. Stay calm and focused to ground the students around you. Notice the message your body language conveys to your audience, does it line up with what you are telling them.

### BEGINNING CLASS

- Briefly introduce yourself if necessary
- Ask for injuries or anyone who doesn't want to be adjusted
- Any announcements for the yoga community
- Briefly introduce your main theme for the class or your overview of the class, without too much detail

### TEACHING CLASS

- Teach from your experience. If you like something new that you learn from another class, great! If you like it first incorporate it into your own practice, practice it and make it your own; your teaching will be much more powerful.
- Try to connect to your students on more than one level. Connect to their physical body/anatomy/alignment, their mind and their heart.
- Try to put yourself in your student's body.
- Walk around the class while teaching so you can pay close attention to your students.
- Smile, get your students to laugh, this will help a lot if you are nervous.
- Don't worry about the inevitable difficulties, breath and enjoy whatever happens.
- Try to make eye contact with your students at some point during the class.
- Remember to teach to the stated level and description of the class, eventually you will build the following you are looking for. If it's an all levels class or there isn't a stated level, teach to the majority of the class, do not teach to the most basic or advanced in the class as you will lose the majority of your students.
- Remind students to listen to their body and to take ownership of their practice. Remind them that they are their own best teacher. It is always their responsibility to take care of themselves.
- Reconnect to your focal point throughout class to bring it all together smoothly.
- Remind your students to reconnect to the experience in their body to investigate the poses and notice the effect in order to get the most out of their practice.

## Managing Nerves

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### **BREATHE DEEPLY**

#### **HAVE A CLASS PLAN TO HELP YOU STAY FOCUSED**

**IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HOW MUCH YOU DON'T KNOW**, remember the students are not judging you, in fact they are there to learn and they're eager for you to lead them. There will always be something you don't know, be prepared to respond to questions you don't have the answers for confidently without making something up.

#### **TEACH ONLY WHAT YOU KNOW DEEP IN YOUR BONES.**

**THE REALITY IS THAT YOU WILL MAKE A MISTAKE** now and then, this is not important, it's how you deal with it. Laugh, you're human, it happens. Accept each mistake as a lesson to learn from, only then can you grow and become a better teacher.

**DON'T BE AFRAID TO SAY I DON'T KNOW** but do go find the answer.

**DON'T FEEL THAT YOU'RE COMPETING WITH OTHER TEACHERS**, be yourself. If your class isn't appropriate for a student, enjoy the freedom that comes with suggesting another teacher who may be more appropriate, yoga is not one size fits all. The beauty of yoga is that there is a style and teacher for everyone, however the process of finding this can be overwhelming and many students just think it's all the same. Help your students with this process so they can find the style that's right for them.

## Classroom

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Have a home base that you return to, this will establish the front of the room where you can see as many students as possible. Try to stay away from the entrance so that the class isn't disturbed by people coming & going.

If it's a smaller class try to have some more experienced students in the front, since the beginners will often need to look around for guidance. Make sure all props needed are accessible, atmosphere is comfortable (temp, lighting, etc) and forms are at the front entrance.

## Developing Your Teaching Outside of Class

### Personal Practice

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Make sure you maintain a regular practice of your own, this is the best way to stay fed in your teaching and stay inspired. Modeling poses in your classes does not constitute a personal practice. Test your classes out on yourself before teaching them. Make sure you also have a practice where you're not thinking about teaching as well. Your students will want to draw from you and you will want to give to them, you need to have a strong personal practice to avoid being depleted. A regular personal practice, adequate rest, a healthy diet and regular meditation are your nourishment as a teacher.

### Professional Development and Staying Inspired

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Continue your education, as a teacher you must never stop learning and growing, when you stop you will eventually find yourself burnt out and uninspired. You can read books, subscribe to yoga magazines, attend conferences and workshops or teacher trainings. When you find your inspiration dropping make sure you are taking enough time out for yourself, you won't be any good to anyone else if you don't take care of yourself. You can take a retreat, read an inspiring book, spend some time in nature or immerse yourself in a teacher training. Seek out community with other yoga teachers to support each other or go to new classes to learn new ideas.

# Establishing a Home Practice

It's good to have a base to practice from, below is a basic outline, of course it's always good to change it up from time to time as well. Some days you may want to check out a DVD or online class. Use the following outline as a springboard to let your creativity inspire you.

Remember, most important is to have a consistent practice, even if it's just 20mins some days. Start very simple and allow it to unfold as it may, if you start too fancy or with too many ideas you may get lost along the way and lose your presence in the practice.

## Home Practice

Start with 30-90mins-pick & choose as you like, add variations you like, you can use this as a base or create your own self-guided practice, let your intuition inspire you! Add in core poses or seated poses between standing flows or at the end.

**WARM UP** Pranayama, tabletop variations, salabhasana, sukhasana, isolations or core

**SUN SALS** Sun A, sun B (or modifications)

**STANDING** Utkastasana

Forward facing: Crescent-digasana

Side facing: Extended side angle-half moon-triangle

Revolved: Revolved crescent-parsvottanasana-revolved triangle

**BACKBENDS** Bridge/wheel

**INVERSIONS** Shoulderstand (headstand)

**SUPINE** Supta padangusthasana  
supine twist

**SAVASANA**

**PRANAYAMA & MEDITATION**

# Sequencing

## Choose a Theme or Focal Point

### PHYSICALLY RELATED THEMES

- Specific pose
- Specific body part/muscle
- Type of pose
- Breath

### PHILOSOPHICAL THEMES

- Focus/concentration
- Mindfulness
- Contentment
- Patience
- Acceptance
- Devotion
- 8 limbs

### POSSIBLE PHILOSOPHICAL THEMES

COURAGE	ACCEPTANCE
TRUST	NON-HARMING
BOLDNESS	COMPASSION
CONFIDENCE	MINDFULNESS
ASPIRATION	DEVOTION
INTENTION	REVERENCE
SILENCE	GRATITUDE
SIMPLICITY	FREEDOM
TOLERANCE	GENTLENESS
PATIENCE	HUMILITY
STILLNESS	PLAYFULNESS
SELF-HARMONY	CREATIVITY
JOY	SERVICE
ENTHUSIASM	SOFTNESS
SURRENDER	PURIFICATION

## Class Plan

- Prepare in advance, it's always helpful to have a plan to clearly convey your purpose, whether it's a rough outline or a detailed description.
- Always begin with proper breathing & basics so everyone has a foundation.
- Keep it simple. You will probably need to adapt the class to fit your time and students so simplicity is important for adaptability. The more you can have a clear focus in class, the clearer your teaching will be.
- Make sure you can realistically complete the class within the given time frame. This can be hard to predict at first. Practicing your class will help you gauge the timing, but also make sure you have an idea of things you can add or take out in case your timing is off. You will be surprised how quickly the time will pass, especially when you teach from your own experience.

## Creating a Class

### PLAN A BEGINNING, MIDDLE & END

How will you prepare them, integrate and then bring it back to conclude?

#### 1. Preparation for your theme

You can begin by introducing the theme for the class, and why/how you will integrate it into the class - your intention.

#### 2. Integration of your theme

Make sure you connect to this intention throughout class and interweave the theme.

#### 3. Close and reconnect to theme

The third element is key - how will you bring them back and conclude to tie it all together.

### USE A BASE

#### PRANAYAMA & WARM UP (CORE)

#### SUN SALUTATIONS

#### STANDING & BALANCING WITH POSES B/W

#### BACKBENDS

#### INVERSIONS, HIP OPENING, SEATED & SUPINE

#### SAVASANA & MEDITATION

## How to Connect to Your Theme

- Decide how you will emphasize your particular theme. The best way is to think about how you personally feel your topic and then think of what poses help you connect to this feeling.
- If your theme is a specific pose or type of pose, where do you feel it? What areas need to be open and which need to be strong? How can you lengthen the areas that need to be open? How can you strengthen the areas that need to be strong?
- If the theme is philosophical, your emphasis will mostly be on how you present the poses (cues, voice, music, qualities).
- Make sure you build the class sequence in an order that progresses in intensity, preparing the body for the next phase of the practice.

### FOR EXAMPLE

- If your theme is tapas you may choose to do longer holds to build heat or you may choose to do repetitions for the same reason, etc.
- If your theme is patience you choose longer holds or slow flowing practice or seated intervals between the flows to bring it back to that theme.

## Brainstorm-Organize-Refine

**A. BRAINSTORM:** Everything & anything that pertains to or helps create your theme, uninhibited is key! For example, in a backbending class brainstorm any & all poses you think might be helpful to prepare.

**B. ORGANIZE:** Organize the poses you came up with into a beginning, middle & end (a warm up, flow/peak & cool down). You don't need to use all the poses in your brainstorm and feel free to add in areas that you missed in the brainstorm.

**C. REFINE:** Go over the class and imagine doing it yourself. Is there too much warm up, not enough cool down, too much intensity, etc. This step is really about making it feel balanced and to make sure you are achieving whatever your goal or focal point is for the class.



# Creative Sequencing

Where will you draw your creativity from?

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## 1. CONSISTENT PRACTICE

This is the most important part of being a yoga teacher is to have experience to draw from. It is helpful to have a regular practice schedule and to have a day or two where you branch out.

## 2. HOME PRACTICE

Try to have a consistent home practice at least a day or 2 a week to play with ideas in your head and inspire creativity. But remember planning a class doesn't replace a personal practice. You can draw from your personal home practice but try not to not turn it into a class planning session. Try an online class for a change of pace.

## 3. BRANCHING OUT

Branch out, try new teachers, styles and levels around town whenever you can but try to have a routine of some sort so you have a foundation and some consistency.

## 4. REGULAR WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS

Attend workshops or trainings when you have the opportunity. This could be as little a day or two or as much as a couple weeks. If you teach full time or at least several classes a week, it's best if you can go away at least once a year to immerse yourself in training of some sort to come back refreshed and inspired.

# What Makes a Practice Yoga?

Yoga is a practice of learning to move beyond our conditioned consciousness. Our ability to yoke or harness our awareness to aspects of the practice through focus (dharana). By that definition a more focused awareness = a more advanced practice.

Ha-Tha refers to union of the opposites or polarities. These united opposites create balance (physical, mental, energetic, spiritual). Below are some types of polarities and ways to balance them in a practice:

- **PHYSICAL**- pose/counterpose, concentric/eccentric, sympathetic/parasympathetic
- **MENTAL**- curiosity/contentment, ego/inseparable
- **ENERGETIC**- engage/release, sthira/sukha (effort/ease)
- **SPIRITUAL**- earthly/divine

Below are some ways to connect to this focus to create depth in your practice:

- 1. SLOWER PACE:** to notice subtlety, sensations, nuances and to eradicate autopilot tendencies to tune out
- 2. SIMPLIFY PRACTICE:** to give new life & meaning to familiar poses, leave space to notice more and to explore energetic aspects
- 3. UNION OF OPPOSITES:** push down to lift up, steady gaze to relax your focus, focus your effort to relax your ambition

# Five Paths to Healthy Range of Motion

Many new yoga students come to class seeking improved flexibility.

We all have a different potential range of motion due to our proportions and our unique bone and joint structure. In extreme cases, injuries and medical conditions like osteoarthritis can change our bony structure in a way that limits mobility. But it's important to educate our students that, other than these extreme cases, our physical condition is in many ways an expression of our habits.

Our bodies tend to “shrink-wrap” around any shape we hold for a long period of time in order to reduce the muscular effort required to stay there; imagine getting out of the car after a road trip or standing up after a day stuck behind a desk. Muscles that are asked to contract repeatedly also retain higher resting tone, the way that runners tend to have tight hip flexors and hamstrings. In these ways, and more, our bodies adapt to the demands we place on them. So in simple terms the more we move, the more we are able to move; the less we move, the less we are able to move.

Whatever our potential range of motion is, yoga is incredibly effective at creating and maintaining healthy flexibility, in five different ways.

**1. ACTIVE STRETCHES** capitalize on a reflex called reciprocal inhibition. Muscle contraction on one side of a joint inhibits contraction on the opposite side of the joint, encouraging a deeper stretch. In *paschimottanasana*, seated forward fold; we contract the hips flexors and quadriceps on the front of the thighs to create more length for the hamstrings on the back of the thighs. Active stretches are a major part of Ashtanga, Bikram, Hatha, Iyengar and Vinyasa yoga. These types of poses are commonly sequenced towards the end of class when our muscles are warm and held for five to 10 breaths; long enough to move us past the initial resistance in the lengthening muscle, but not so long that the contracting muscles tire.

**2. PASSIVE STRETCHES** use little or no muscular contraction. Instead, we find a position the body can relax into, often on or close to the floor, and stay there until tension dissolves and the fascial is able to adapt. Passive stretches can also be used more subtly when the body is more supported with the body or with props and therefore more able to relax in more of a yin yoga style approach to slowly lengthen muscles and their surrounding fascia. Passive stretches also have the potential to trigger the relaxation response, a function of the parasympathetic nervous system that slows our heart rate, enhances digestion, supports our natural healing processes, and releases muscle tension. The key to passive stretching is patience, finding a position that is comfortable enough that students can rest there for anywhere from 3 up to 10 minutes.

Bear in mind that active and passive stretching can also initiate a process of releasing toxins in the body as well as held emotions or memories of trauma. Hip openers are a common culprit, but it's not uncommon for students to experience an inexplicable emotional reaction to any longer-held poses like twists, heart openers, forward folds, inversions, poses working into the soft tissue of the abdomen, etc. As teachers, one of our roles is to create a safe environment where students feel supported in their unique experience of a pose, whatever it may be and to allow our students to notice the sensations without having to interpret or judge the experience.

**3. DYNAMIC** Stretches are characterized by more fluid movements in multiple directions. A major part of Vinyasa yoga, dynamic stretches offer many benefits: lubricating the body's gliding surfaces, encouraging movement between tissue layers, stimulating warmth and circulation, offering approachable ways to move outside our postural habits and patterns, encouraging proprioception and breath awareness. Practiced first thing in the morning, after a long day of work, or early in yoga practice, they can help us prepare for deeper stretches. The key is to move smoothly with the breath in many directions rather than trying to force depth.

**4. MYOFASCIAL RELEASE** is a broad term for various methods (commonly involving targeted pressure on massage balls, foam rollers, or yoga blocks) used to restore malleability to the muscles and fascia. Fascia changes slowly over time, adapting (for better or for worse) to our posture and movement patterns, and can become more seriously restricted by inflammation, injury, surgery or scar tissue. Adhesions between layers of fascia require the help of manual body work but we may be able to release light adhesions and help prevent adhesions ourselves through myofascial release. Look for trigger points (tender spots) in the soft tissue (not on nerves or bone) where you feel a dull or achy tender spot, and lean into it until you notice the feeling change. The sensation should be gentle enough that you can relax, and it may only take a couple of breaths to notice a change here.

**5. TARGETED STRENGTH WORK** is often overlooked by those seeking flexibility. There's a myth that a strong muscle is a tight one, and a flexible muscle is weak but a healthy muscle is both strong and supple. Sometimes a muscle is tight simply because it is weak and is working inefficiently, or because there is weakness elsewhere, and our tight muscle is having to do double duty.

Typical culprits include:

- Tight hamstrings that are either weak themselves, or compensating for a weak Gluteus Maximus (or both)
- Tight or irritated IT band being pulled on by an imbalance between Gluteus Maximus and the TFL or tight quadriceps
- Tight upper Trapezius, which can be compensating for weakness in the mid and lower Trapezius (and other posterior shoulder muscles).

So for habitual tension that won't stretch away or respond to myofascial release, consider whether there's underlying weakness to be addressed. Notice which actions are challenging for you, which muscles seem weaker or more difficult to activate, and try simple targeted awareness in the more dormant areas.

No matter what technique we use, the real keys to success are patience and consistency; so once you've found an approach that works, stick with it.

# Business

## Business Basics

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Teaching as a profession requires a shift in thinking, to view your teaching as a business as well as a service to your community. For many teachers, the business aspect of the role is the least favorite, but rest assured that the most important aspect of running a successful business is simply to be good at what you do - to be prepared, professional, and punctual. Beyond that though, it's helpful to do some basic business planning to focus your effort and energy in your desired direction. In fact, going through the process of business planning will help you clarify the kind of teacher you want to be.

Consider the following topics:

- Your strengths as a teacher
- Where to teach
- Pricing
- Promotions
- Liability & Safety
- Where to start

## Know Your Strengths

This step is essential to creating a successful and sustainable business. Begin by looking at what makes you different from other people and other teachers - for example your life experience, training, profession, personality, skills, and interests. What are you are really passionate about? What do you want to teach? What do you love to share? What do you most want students to get out of your classes (therapeutics, alignment, workout, sweat, stress reduction, etc)? What feelings do you want your students to experience (informed, relaxed, strong, empowered, inspired etc)?

This self-reflection might also help you start identifying who you are best suited to teach - ie your niche. Consider your colleagues, neighbors, athletes, kids, stressed office workers, seniors, etc.

You don't need to be too specific as a new teacher, but this will help you focus on what you think will be most important to you in the future. First and foremost though is just getting experience wherever you can. You might actually be surprised what you learn about yourself by teaching varied styles and diverse populations. Be patient and flexible with this self-reflection. As a new teacher, it may take some time exploring to figure out what your strengths are. And, your strengths may change over time as you learn more, experience more, continue your training (if you choose) and incorporate more skills into your repertoire.

## Place - Where to Teach

### STUDIO

- Resume and experience are key; training will also be important.
- Be a regular at the studio you wish to teach at before applying; get to know the teachers and owner/s and tell them why you love their space.
- Make yourself available to sub and be prepared to teach less popular classes or time slots to get your foot in the door.

### HIRED ON

- Gym, YMCA, school, business, apartment complex, retirement centre, hotel or resort etc
- Training (and perhaps Yoga Alliance registration) is key.
- Be professional and personable: have a plan and pay range in mind, and (if they don't already offer yoga) prepare a pitch on why they need it, how you can help, stats and research.
- Have a plan for music, mats and props if they aren't already in place.
- Factor in the need for additional time before and after class to prepare, heat and tidy the space.
- Ensure you talk to the decision maker; it's best if you know someone who works there.

### TO RENT

- Chiropractic, PT, wellness centre, community centre, business, apartment complex, etc.
- You have more control and the venue have less to lose.
- Do your research to decide if the rent is affordable given anticipated demand. Make sure you factor in the need for mats, props, music and additional time before and after class (to prepare, heat and tidy the space, do student sign in and accept payment).
- Choose class times, duration, and types that will appeal to people in the area (know your demographic!); a series of classes around a relevant topic could work well here.
- Set up an intake and payment process (including a liability waiver).
- Marketing will be key so that people are aware of who you are, what you offer, and how it will benefit them (know your demographic!).

## AT YOUR HOME

- Professional presentation is key.
- Choose class times, duration, and types that will appeal to people in your neighborhood (know your demographic!).
- Make sure the space is clean, quiet, comfortable temperature, and large enough; ensure there is a bathroom available and consider the need for a separate entrance.
- Lower cost, but factor in the need for mats and props if required.
- Set up an intake and payment process (including a liability waiver).
- Think ahead about pricing, including discounts for friends, family or those in need in your community.

## MOBILE

- Professional presentation is key.
- Do your research to ensure your price covers travel expenses and the need for mats and props if required.
- Decide your maximum travel distance in advance, and factor traffic into the times and areas in which you make yourself available.
- Set up an intake and payment process (including a liability waiver) and consider the need for a cancellation policy.
- Keep all student information confidential, and if you keep any records regarding your sessions, store them securely.
- Marketing will be vital so that people are aware of who you are, how to reach you, what you offer, and how it will benefit them (know your demographic!).

## Pricing

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Budgeting is not fun, but it is essential to setting a sustainable price. If you are establishing your own rates, price your classes based on the going rate in your area. Generally classes outside of a studio charge less than studio classes, but it depends on the overhead. Do your research to ensure this rate covers your costs including travel, insurance, taxes, advertising costs, mats and props if required. Teaching often takes more time than anticipated; when establishing your costs remember to factor in time the time you spend planning and preparing for classes (including study), traveling, preparing the space, doing student sign-in, and administration (including advertising, answering correspondence and invoicing).

New teachers are often tempted to price their classes low in order to secure students, but remember you won't be helping others if you don't charge enough to keep yourself in business. If you under-charge people you also run into the dilemma of people not valuing your services (and it will make it more challenging to increase rates to local rates in the future).

However, you may consider offering some special rates and discounts. Consider offering a package rate for a number of classes to encourage attendance. Decide in advance how you will manage pricing for your friends and family.

Finally, consider service or Seva to your community. Will you offer special discounts or a sliding payment scale for people in need? Will you offer donation classes, or teach some classes for free (for example, at a local nursing home, homeless shelter, women's shelter, prison or non-profit)?



## Promotions

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In this day and age, this side of a business is more important than ever to help you cut through the clutter. However, but don't let it overwhelm you. In essence, promotions are a matter of consistently communicating your teaching identity and style to help you connect to your community, in particular the students you are best suited to teach. Mass popularity is not required for you to build a sustainable career as a teacher.

Here are some ideas as to where to start:

### ELEVATOR PITCH

Create a succinct statement of your teaching style and focus - a sentence or two - so that you're ready to talk to people about what you learned in training and the kind of classes you offer.

### CONTACT DETAILS

Decide how you would like prospective students to be able to get in touch with you. Are you comfortable sharing your phone number? Do you have, or need, a separate professional email address?

### WORD OF MOUTH

Tell people in your community that you have completed teacher training and are excited to start teaching. Take whatever opportunities you can. Personal recommendations from people who have experienced your teaching is always the most powerful form of promotion.

### BIO

Building on your "elevator pitch", write a short biography, or bio, a paragraph or two that expresses your teaching qualifications, style and focus. This can be provided to the venues where you teach, or used on your website or social media profiles.

### PHOTOS

Find, or take, a couple of photos that you can use to promote your teaching: one relatively close headshot, and at least one yoga pose. Make sure the images are well-lit, in-focus, and in a style that represents your teaching.

### RESUME

Draft a brief resume that outlines your training, teaching experience, practice history, qualifications (including First Aid), and any relevant skills or unique qualities (eg languages, relevant sports or hobbies). As with any jobs, a strong resume can help you get your foot in the door and secure you further conversation or a teaching audition.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media can be a great free way to market your classes and connect to and inspire your community. Don't waste time and energy trying to amass a huge following; focus instead on communicating what is important to you as a teacher clearly and consistently.

### WEBSITE

Consider building a simple website that makes you easier to find and connect with online. There are many high quality, low cost "build your own" options to use.

## Liability & Safety

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Here are some practical suggestions for reducing potential liability exposure and maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

**OBTAIN INSURANCE.** Yoga teachers should obtain professional liability insurance, and yoga studios should obtain an umbrella insurance policy. Read the policy carefully (and seek professional advice) to ensure you have sufficient and appropriate coverage.

**MIND STUDENTS' LIMITATIONS.** Be mindful of students' varied needs in terms of pace, mobility and stability and give them explicit permission to modify their practice accordingly in order to avoid discomfort or aggravating any injuries or medical conditions. Such mindfulness takes account of the classic legal definition of professional malpractice or negligence, which is failure to follow professional standards of care (or “due care”, “reasonable care under the circumstances”) , thereby injuring the students. Yoga teachers are legally, as well as ethically and professionally, obligated to take due care in their teaching and any adjustments.

**COMMUNICATE MINDFULLY.** The physical and psychological intimacy of a yoga class suggests a need for particular vigilance around students' moment-to-moment receptivity to changing levels of contact, both physical and energetic, from the instructor. Miscommunication between providers and patients accounts for many malpractice filings, and attention to communication and perception comprise a liability management strategy - especially in therapeutic settings. Be keenly aware of your scope of practice. As a teacher it is not your role to diagnose an injury or medical condition - be ready to refer students to the assistance of healthcare professionals.

**HAVE A LIABILITY WAIVER FORM FOR STUDENTS TO FILL OUT** if you teach in your own venue. This is a great reminder to your students that they are in charge and their safety is their responsibility.

**BE PROFESSIONAL.** Be timely and positive, so that your students know you are there to support and guide them.

## Where to start?

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You may still feel nervous about starting teaching in the real world, but the best way to become a teacher is to teach, so get experience wherever you can.

Also consider the following steps to help you transition into teaching as a business:

- Scan or copy your teaching certificate and store it safely.
- Secure professional liability insurance.
- Consider whether or not to register with Yoga Alliance.
- Create an elevator pitch, bio and resume that communicate your training and the kind of classes you offer so that you are ready to respond to any teaching opportunities to arise.
- Tell your community that you have completed teacher training and are excited to start teaching.
- If you plan to teach in an independent venue, create an intake/liability waiver form.
- If you plan to take payment for teaching, open a separate bank account to help you track your income and have funds set aside for taxes.
- Seek help and advice from others. This includes networking with fellow teachers and health professionals, professional advice (regarding insurance, accounting, legal issues and taxes), and mentoring.
- Prioritize your own practice and ongoing study. Use that to inspire you to start teaching, and have fun!

# Pregnancy and Yoga

## Points to consider

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Pregnancy is a state of health.

Involves a shift in systemic function

### SOMATIC CHANGES INCLUDE

- Cardiovascular- Increase in heart rate and pump volume, increase by almost 40% in blood volume, adaptive decrease in blood pressure.
- Respiratory- Lung volumes increase, rib cage expansion, lung displacement by upward moving abdominal contents + baby.
- Muscular/Skeletal-Hormone relaxin works to loosen connective joint tissue to allow for maximum expansion of pelvis for delivery, significant changes in the shape of the spinal column. Kyphosis and Lordosis, shift in balance.
- Endocrine- Multitude of hormones that cause changes.
- Neuromuscular- Significant elevation of pain threshold and pain perception especially in 3rd Trimester.
- Emotional and Spiritual changes: fear and anxiety, body image issues, anticipation, nesting.

**1ST TRIMESTER** Menstruation to 12 weeks

**2ND TRIMESTER** 12 weeks to 26 weeks

**3RD TRIMESTER** 26weeks to 40 weeks  
(+/- 2 weeks is normal)

## Contraindications to practice in pregnancy (unless Dr or Midwife consents)

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- Ruptured membranes
- Preterm labour
- Hypertension
- Incompetent cervix
- Growth retarded fetus
- Triplets or more
- Placenta previa
- Uncontrolled type I diabetes, or other serious medical disorder.

Always recommend a pregnant woman check with her caregiver before practicing in pregnancy.

Liability is always implied unless sanctioned by caregiver.

Women need to establish a relationship of trust in their caregivers. Be respectful and do not undermine.

## ANYTHING THAT DOES NOT INTUITIVELY FEEL RIGHT, REGARDLESS OF WHAT THE “EXPERTS” SAY.

Round ligament pain is a sharp stitch-like pain often on the right side that occurs when stretching, twisting or contracting the side body. Most common during the 2nd trimester. This is a normal response to stretch of the round ligament that connects the uterus to the pelvis. Leaning into the same side should significantly ease the stitch.

PRENATAL YOGA CONTRAINDICATIONS	MODIFICATIONS
Low abdominal twists that compress the belly	Open (away from the body) twists
Strong abdominal work/ trunk flexion (potentially increases likelihood of diastasis recti)	Gentle TVA work/core awareness/abdominal breathing
Inversions (risk of falling)	Feet up the wall pose
Prone positions	Tabletop variations
Supine positions into the 2nd & 3rd trimester (potential for weight of baby to compress vena cava)	Use a bolster/blanket/blocks to prop chest up or side lying
Heat	Non-heated classes
Jump backs, forwards, jarring movements	Step forward and back, use blocks, step feet apart
Balance asanas where falling is an issue	Use wall or chair
Closed legged forward folds	Widen stance, decrease ROM, use props
Quick return to upright from folds	Slow return
Deep stretches (Relaxin levels can increase the risk of ligament over-stretching)	Don't exceed 50-70% of full ROM
Anything that causes dizziness, nausea, cramping, bleeding, or any discomfort, fear or unease	

## Asanas that may be beneficial during pregnancy

- Poses that bring energy and prana to the first and second chakra
- Kegel (mula bandha) exercises
- Malasana (support with a block under sitting bones if held for longer than a few breaths)
- Upavistha konasana (wide leg seated forward bend)
- Baddha konasana
- Supta baddha konasana with incline support
- Table top leg/arm extensions for core strength & cat/cow
- Modified downward and dolphin pose with hands on a wall, back parallel to floor, feet under hips
- Balasana wide leg
- Low lunge with blocks under hands and knee on the floor
- Feet up the wall pose

## Pranayama

- Congestion is very common and increases as the pregnancy progresses, making pranayama practice sometimes challenging. The gift of a pranayama practice is that this is the greatest tool for coping/relaxation in labour.
- Ujjayi pranayama is very helpful for this.
- Alternate nostril breathing can also be helpful.
- Pranayama techniques involving breath retention or abdominal contraction are not recommended.

## Postnatal Considerations

- Caregiver will determine when practice can be resumed.
- Hormones are slow to exit the body, leaving the joints vulnerable to injury after pregnancy.
- Lactation may make breasts sore, leak and uncomfortable but otherwise no adverse effects.
- Lochia persists for 2-6 weeks and may resume with vigorous practice.
- Extreme fatigue, body image, frustrated expectations, and depression are all fairly common experiences of a new mom.
- Kegels are recommended postpartum.
- Yamas and Niyamas are helpful reminders.

# EASTERN ANATOMY

We can view the same location through several mapping models: a road map, a satellite map, a weather map and so on. One map isn't more correct than the others; each captures a different aspect of that area. In the same way, we can view our body through the lens of Western anatomy and physiology, or through the lens of Eastern anatomy. Western anatomy is expressed in physical structures like bones and joints, muscles and fascia, organs and organ systems. Eastern anatomy is expressed in terms of energetic structures, comprised of life force or prana. Prana, translated as "primary energy", "breath" or "life force", is the vital creating energy that permeates all life, including our bodies.

Aspects of Eastern anatomy, sometimes called subtle anatomy, include:

## **KOSHAS**

Layers or sheaths of the body, graduating from the most gross (the physical body) to the most refined or subtle spiritual body.

## **KRIYAS**

Methods of cleansing to refine and purify the body, with the intention of making the subtler layers more accessible.

## **VAYUS, NADIS, CHAKRAS**

Channels, currents, or structures comprised of prana.

## **BANDHAS, MANTRAS, MUDRAS, DRISHTIS**

Methods of controlling or directing prana.



# Koshas

The Five Koshas, or Pancha Kosha, are described in the Upanishads. They are visualized as layers covering the spiritual self, or Atman. The literal translation for kosha is sheath, like that which covers a knife.

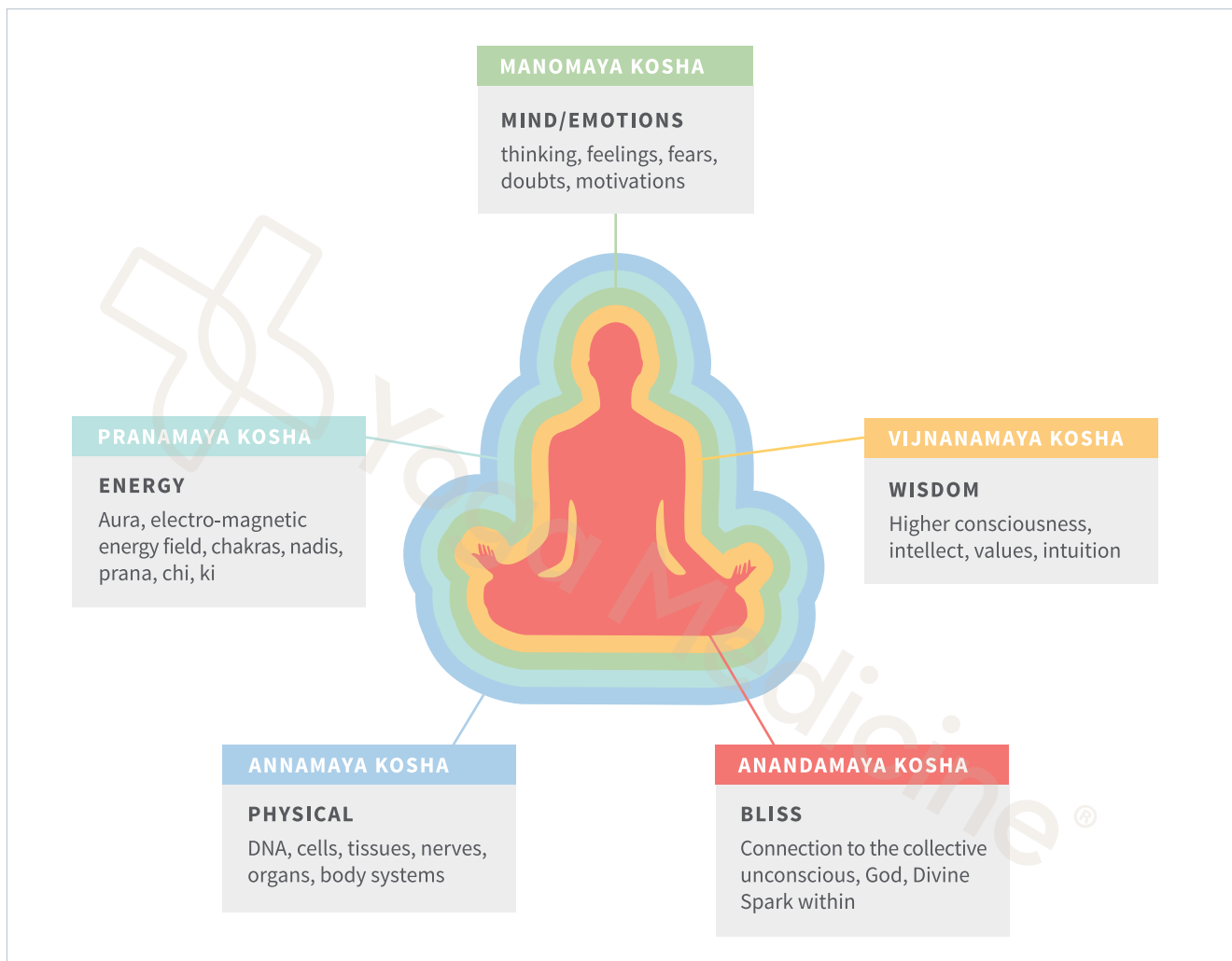
**THE ANNAMAYA KOSHA**, meaning “made up of food”, is the most gross or superficial covering. It is the physical body, consisting of muscles, bones, and organs.

**THE PRANAMAYA KOSHA**, meaning “made up of prana or life force”, is the energy body within, evident in breathing and circulation.

**THE MANOMAYA KOSHA**, meaning “made up of thoughts”, lies deeper still, consisting of the sensory organs and manas or mind, the kind of intelligence that allows us to complete routine tasks on auto-pilot.

**THE VIJNANMAYA KOSHA**, meaning “made up of insight”, is our inner teacher, containing intellect, discernment, conscience and will.

**THE ANANDAMAYA KOSHA**, meaning “made up of bliss”, is the deepest sheath, made up of ananda, or spiritual bliss. Those who have dedicated their entire lives to selfless service might experience it consciously; for the rest of us it manifests most effectively in deep sleep.



# Kriyas

The kriyas are yogic cleansing practices and can vary between styles of yoga. The essence of these practices are aimed at cleansing from the inside out to assist in the flow of energy in the body. Some are a bit strange and can be quite intense. However some are simple and can be beneficial. Below are the 7 basic kriyas as described in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

## KAPALBHATI

This is a cleanser for the respiratory system, especially the lungs. This is described in detail in the pranayama section.

## NETI

This practice involves cleaning the nasal passages as well as the throat. It can be done with water (jala-neti), where salt water is poured into one nostril and comes out through the other. A variation is Sutra-neti, where a fine thread is taken inside one nostril and then pulled out of the mouth through the throat. Neti is a pre-requisite for cleaning the respiratory passages for the proper practice of pranayama.

### JALA NETI SUPPLIES

- Sea salt (pure sea salt, should have small gray specks in it)
- Neti pot
- Hand towel or paper towels, tissues
- Filtered or distilled water

### DIRECTIONS

1. Fill the neti pot with lukewarm salt water. The salt-to-water ratio is  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon sea salt to 1 cup water. Filtered water is best.
2. Have some tissues within reach for this next part. Over a sink, tilt your head forward so that you are looking directly down toward the sink. Insert the spout into your right nostril. It is important that you relax & breathe through your mouth. Turn your head to the left and let the water move into the right nostril and exit the left nostril. Normally, you will feel the water as it passes through your sinuses. It is fine if some of the water drains into the mouth, simply spit it out and adjust the tilt of your head further forward.
3. After using half of the mixture, repeat the above procedure for the other nostril.
4. To finish, expel the water by bending forward with a towel over your face and your nose pointing to the floor & gently blowing air out both open nostrils several times, then standing upright and repeating this. Avoid the temptation to block off one nostril, as doing so may force water into the eustachian tube. Once the passages are mostly dry you may gently blow the nose as needed.

## NAULI

The rectus-abdominii (abdominal column) is churned left and right in this kriya. This is a traditional practice that is done on an empty stomach to stimulate the internal organs and promote detoxification and elimination. To perform this stand with the legs a foot apart, bend the knees as you lean forward to rest the hands just above the knees. Place the chin on the chest then inhale deeply and exhale quickly, pressing out all the air and holding it out as you draw the abdomen toward the spine. Most importantly this is not a muscular engagement pulling the belly back to the spine, softening of the abdomen is key and then sucking the abdomen back toward the spine. When you exhale completely you create a vacuum, instead of breathing in, hold the breath and feel like you're inhaling the abdomen up into the ribs. You should be able to feel a noticeable hollow at the abdomen, no matter how big your belly is. If you are comfortable with that you can pump the belly in and out while still holding the breath, or move the belly side to side or around in circles. Nauli is said to massage the abdominal organs, increase the gastric fire and eliminate toxins in the digestive tract.

## TRATAK

This kriya is for cleansing and strengthening the eyes. The eyes are focused usually on a small object or candle in a dark room, without blinking, until they water.

## BASTI

This is the ancient version of enemas or colonic irrigation. It involves drawing water in to the lower intestine via the anus and then expelling it. This aims to cleanse the lower part of the colon up to the sphincter.

## SHANKA-PRAKSHALAN

This is another advanced kriya that cleans out the entire GI tract. It involves drinking lukewarm salt water and then doing specific asanas (mainly forward folds & twists) in a repeated cycle until you relieve yourself and what you pass is as clear as the water you are drinking. Do this kriya only under the supervision of an experienced teacher.

## DHAUTI

This is the first and most difficult kriya. It involves swallowing and re-gurgitating a fine piece of muslin cloth. It is usually only prescribed in serious ailments of the stomach like cancer. This is aimed at cleaning the mouth, throat and stomach.

You may also come across other traditional Ayurvedic cleansing practices including:

**OIL PULLING**, also known as “kavala” or “gundusha”, involves swirling oil around the mouth for several minutes, usually first thing in the morning. It is thought to cleanse and purify the tongue, teeth and inner cheeks before eating.

**TONGUE SCRAPING** involves using a small, rounded hand-held tool made from plastic or metal to scrape dead cells, debris and bacteria off the surface of the tongue. It is usually performed morning and night, and is believed to improve mouth cleanliness and health, as well as reduce bad breath.

## Vayus

Prana is carried through our bodies by five powerful currents called vayus, translated as “winds”.

These energy flows are thought to govern specific functions, and relate to the wind in the sense that each energy field has a specific direction or flow.

**UDANA VAYU** is located at the throat and controls speech and expression. Its flow is up and out.

**PRANA VAYU** is located in the chest and governs breathing, inspiration and momentum. Its movement is upward.

**APANA VAYU** is located in the pelvis, maintaining elimination and reproduction and creating downward motion.

**SAMANA VAYU** is located in the abdomen, at the navel centre. It manages digestion, absorption and assimilation. Its flow radiates outward.

**VYANA VAYU** is a diffuse mist of prana, governing circulation and acting as a reserve tank if any other energy flows are lacking. It tends to radiate outward.

## Nadis

The nadis are a vast network of as many as 72000 rivers, tubes or channels through which prana flows. The same way that rivers irrigate the fields they pass through, the nadis carry nourishing life-force to every part of the energy body. Some nadis are small and carry a trickle of prana, while others are large and carry powerful flow.

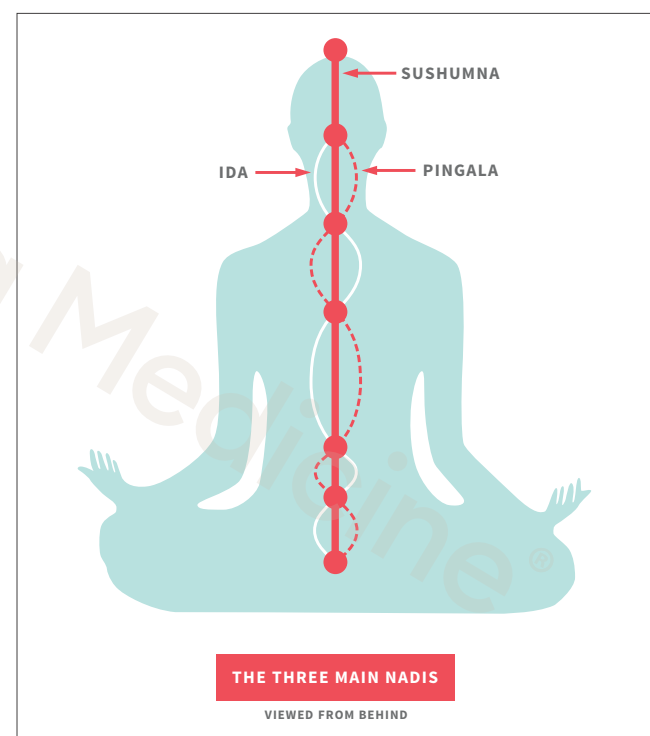
The three largest and most potent nadis in the energy body are:

**1. SUSHUMNA NADI** a powerful central channel running from the base of the spine to the crown of the head.

**2. IDA NADI** begins on the left side of Sushumna and finishes at the left side of the third eye (between the eyebrows) so that its energies exit through the left nostril. It represents passive, cool, calming, intuitive, feminine, and lunar energies.

**3. PINGALA NADI** originates on the right side of Sushumna and terminates at the right side of the third eye, exiting at the right nostril. It expresses active, heating, stimulating, analytical, masculine, and solar qualities.

Ida and Pingala spiral around Sushumna, cross-crossing each other in a double helix shape like that in our DNA.



# Chakras

There are seven chakras, or energy “wheels”, formed where the spiraling Ida and Pingala nadis cross each other and intersect the central channel, Sushumna:

**MULADHARA**, the root chakra, is located at the base of the coccyx. It is related to the earth element, the color red, and governs our need for security and survival. We can experience the root chakra in yoga practices that focus on grounding, foundations, and the lower body.

**SVADHISTHANA**, the sacral chakra, is located at the level of the sacrum, a little below navel height. It is related to the water element, the color orange, and governs our emotions and sensuality. We can experience the sacral chakra in yoga practices that create free-flowing movement or focus on the hips.

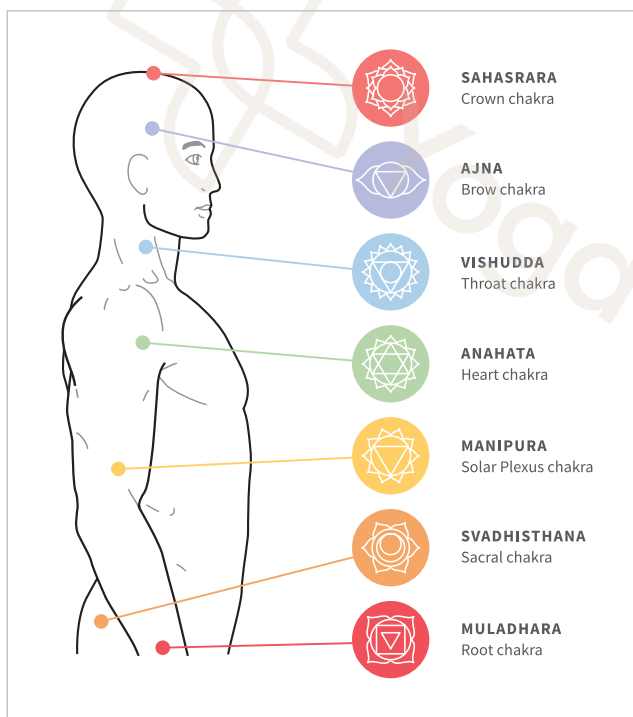
**MANIPURA**, the “city of jewels”, is located behind the solar plexus. It is related to the fire element, the color yellow, and governs transformation, as well as our ego and personal power. We can experience manipura in yoga practices that create heat or focus on the core (including twisting poses).

**ANAHATA**, the heart chakra, is located behind the heart space. It is related to the air element, the color green, and governs compassion and connection. We can experience the heart chakra in yoga heart openers.

**VISHUDDHA**, at the throat, is related to the ether element, the color blue, and governs communication and truthful expression. We can experience the throat chakra in yoga practices relating to the neck (camel, bridge, shoulderstand and fish pose).

**AJNA**, at the third eye centre, is associated with light, the color indigo, and governs insight and intuition. We can experience ajna chakra in yoga practices that encourage visualization, utilize support for the third eye, and in nadi shodana pranayama.

**SAHASRARA**, at the crown of the head, is related to the color violet and is our connection to the divine. We can experience the crown chakra in headstand, savasana and in meditation.





# Bandhas

Bandha means lock or to hold, which describes the action needed to practice these techniques. They have the effect of stabilizing the body during practice as well as massaging the internal organs. They act to squeeze out stagnant blood and stimulate and balance the nerves that innervate the internal organs. Their primary goal in asana practice is to support the body and direct the flow of energy in the body.

There are three main bandhas - Mula Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha and Jalandara Bandha. These locks are used in various pranayama and asana practices to tone, cleanse and energize the organs by directing the energy. When all three bandhas are activated at the same time, it is called Maha Bandha, the great lock.

The bandhas are often compared to electricity where it is necessary to have transformers, conductors, fuses, switches, insulated wires, etc to carry the power to its destination. The bandhas are employed to prevent dissipation of energy and to carry it to specific places to nourish the body and manipulate the body energy.

## UDDIYANA BANDHA

### Abdominal lock

Uddiyana bandha means flying up and can be practiced alone or in conjunction with mula bandha. With this technique the prana is made to flow up from the lower abdomen toward the head.

To engage this bandha, sit in a comfortable cross legged position. Exhale your breath, then instead of inhaling draw the abdomen in and up, drawing the belly up underneath the rib cage. To release, soften the abdomen and inhale.

Uddiyana bandha tones, massages and cleans the abdominal organs, increase the gastric fire and eliminates toxins from the digestive system.

## MULA BANDHA

### Root lock

To activate Mula bandha we are lifting the pelvic floor, drawing it up toward the navel. If you don't know how to access the pelvic floor, think of it as the space between the pubic bone and the tailbone. Initially you may need to contract and hold the muscles around the anus and genitals, but really what you want is to subtly isolate and draw up the perineum, which is between the anus and genitals. Do not hold your breath.

Engaging mula bandha while doing yoga poses keeps us from sagging into the joints by adding an upward lifting quality.

## JALANDARA BANDHA

### Throat lock

Jalandara bandha can be practiced alone or in conjunction with Mula bandha and Uddiyana bandha. To engage this bandha, sit in a comfortable cross legged position. Inhale so the lungs are about two-thirds full, and then hold the breath in. With Jalandara bandha you want to think of stretching the sides of the neck and lifting the chest to meet the chin halfway. Hold as long as is comfortable and then bring the chin up and release the breath. If there is tension in the neck try using a small rolled towel under the chin and lifting it up with the chest.

To practice in conjunction with the other two bandhas, first draw the pelvic floor upwards, engaging mula bandha. This leads to the abdomen drawing in and up under the ribcage (Uddiyana bandha). Finally, the chin drops to the chest and draws back into Jalandara bandha. When practiced together, the three locks are known as Maha Bandha, the great lock.

In Jalandara bandha it is said that the cool energy of the lunar plexus at the neck is sustained so that it is not allowed to flow down or to be dissipated by the hot energy of the solar plexus. In this way the elixir of life is stored and life itself is said to be prolonged. Jalandara bandha is also said to relax the brain and humble the intellect.

# Mudras

Means symbol or seal, in practice usually refers to a specific positioning of the fingers or hands. The main ones we use in our asana practice are:

**ANJALI MUDRA** palms together

**GYANA MUDRA** index finger & thumb touch, with other fingers extended

**VISHNU MUDRA** index finger and middle finger curled into the palm and the other fingers are extended

Symbolically, a mudra seals or “stamps” the mark of the god or goddess on the practitioner, signaling her complete devotion and self-surrender.

During pranayama and meditation, a mudra helps seal prana in and recycle it through the body, preventing it from leaking out through the fingers. Moreover, the fixed hand position helps quiet restless fingers and in turn calms the brain. Some texts claim mudras confer special blessings on the practitioner, such as healing or spiritual awakening.

**Namaste** means literally, “I bow to you.” It is used as a respectful greeting and also to mean thank you. When you say namaste in thanking your teacher at the end of class, you press your palms together (also called “Anjali mudra”) at your heart or your third eye and bow your head. Although namaste is the greeting and Anjali mudra the position of the hands, Anjali mudra is often called “namaste position” or prayer position.

# Drishti

Drishti is a point of focus where the gaze rests during asana and meditation practice. Focusing on a drishti aids concentration and centers our focus, so that the eyes aren't wandering around the room. Many yoga poses have a drishti which also aids in the alignment. For instance, in Extended Side Angle Pose (Parsvakonasana) the gaze is toward the raised hand, which also helps us create length through the side of the pose and direct the movement of the pose. Even though a drishti can be described as a fixed gaze, the eyes should stay soft. The drishti assists concentration, aids movement, and helps orient the energetic body.

The full meaning of drishti isn't limited to its value in asana. In Sanskrit, drishti can also mean a vision, a point of view, or intelligence and wisdom. The use of drishti in asana serves both as a mental training technique and as a metaphor for focusing consciousness toward a vision of oneness. We become aware of how our brains only let us see what we want to see—a projection of our own limited ideas. Often our opinions, prejudices, and habits prevent us from seeing the truth. Used in this way, drishti becomes a technique for removing what obscures our vision or clarity, a technique that allows us to see the divine in everything.

As we gaze at others, we perceive our own form, which is love itself. We no longer see the suffering of other beings as separate from our own; our heart is filled with compassion and empathy for the struggling of all souls to find happiness. The yogic gaze emerges from an intense desire to achieve the highest goal of consciousness, rather than from egoistic motives that create separation, limitation, judgment, and suffering.

## NASAGRAI DRISHTI

Gaze off the tip of the nose, as in Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward-Facing Dog Pose)

## URDHVA DRISHTI

Gazing up, as in Virabhadrasana I (Warrior Pose I)

## HASTAGRAI DRISHTI

Gazing at the hand, as in Trikonasana (Triangle Pose)

## PARSVA DRISHTI

Gazing over the shoulder, in the direction of the twist, used in twisting poses

## NAITRAYOHMADYA DRISHTI

(ALSO CALLED BROOMADHYA DRISHTI)

Gaze toward the third eye or Ajna chakra, as in meditation and in Matsyasana (Fish Pose)

## NABI CHAKRA DRISHTI

Gazing at the navel, as in Jalandara Bandha

## PAHAYORAGRAI DRISHTI

Gazing at the big toes, as in most seated forward bends

# Mantras

A mantra is a sacred verbal formula repeated in prayer or meditation to invoke certain qualities or states of mind. It is a sacred utterance (syllable, word, or verse) believed to possess spiritual power. Mantras may be spoken aloud or uttered in thought, and they may be repeated (japa) or sounded only once. Some have no simple verbal meaning, but they are thought to have profound significance and to serve as distillations of spiritual wisdom. These can also be key phrases or mental devices used in meditation or as an intervention strategy by athletes to focus attention internally and to reduce anxiety. Repetition of a mantra can induce a trance-like state and are thought to lead the participant to a higher level of spiritual awareness. Widely used mantras include OM in Hinduism and om mani padme hum in Tibetan Buddhism. Mantras can also be simple mindful intentions used to turn our mind toward a focal point. This can be used for specific goals or qualities or as in sports to prepare the physical & mental body for challenges of any sort. (repetition is calming, focus)

## 1. AUM OR OM

Om is a very simple chant with a more complex meaning. Often chanted at the start and finish of our asana practice, om is said to be the universe coalesced into a single sound and represents the union of mind, body, and spirit that is at the heart of yoga. It is believed that the whole universe, in its fundamental form, is made up of vibrating, pulsating energy. Om is considered the humming sound of the energy of life.

When chanted, the sound of OM or AUM is actually three syllables - a, u, and m. The letter 'a' stands for the entire physical world of our experience. The letter 'u' is the thought world, which is distinctly experienced as other than the physical world. The 'm' stands for the the unmanifest world. All these three together represent 'AUM'. AUM is complete.

## 2. HONG-SAU

See meditation for a detailed description of this technique.

## 3. GAYATRI MANTRA

**OM BHUR BHUVAH SWAHA  
TAT SAVITUR VARENYAM  
BHARGO DEVASYA  
DHEEMAHİ  
DHIYO YONA  
PRACHODAYAT**

Oh, God I (we) meditate on your divine light. Bestow your blessings on us so that my (our) intellect may be enlightened, so that I (we) may rise higher and higher to the highest consciousness. Enable me (us) to meditate, to be successful in all affairs of life, and to realize God (Truth).

## 4. SHANTI MANTRA

**SAHA NAU-AVATU  
SAHA NAU BHUNAKTU  
SAHA VIIRYAM KARAVAAVAHAI  
TEJASVI NAU-ADHIITAM-ASTU  
MAA VIDVISSAAVAHAI  
OM SHAANTİH SHAANTİH SHAANTİH**

May God Protect us Both (the Teacher and the Student),

May God Nourish us Both,

May we Work Together with Energy and Vigor

May our Study be Enlightening and not give rise to Hostility

Om, Peace, Peace, Peace.

## 5. UNIVERSAL PEACE MANTRA

**LOKA SAMASTA SUKINO BHAVANTU  
OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI OM**

May all beings be happy and free.

Peace, Peace, Peace

## 6. CLOSING PRAYER

**ASATO MA SADGAMAYA  
TAMSO MA JYOTIRGAMAYA  
MRITYOR MA AMRITANGAMA  
OM SHANTI, SHANTI, SHANTI**

Lead me from the unreal to the real,

From darkness to light,

From mortality to the immortal,

Om, Peace, Peace, Peace

# Meditation

Dhyana is the state of absorption where the meditator, the object of meditation and the act of meditation all become one. The mind settles and the heart opens in this state. The best times to meditate are said to be dawn, dusk, noon and midnight, but regularity is the most important factor. Reserve a special time and space for meditation if possible. Find something to put near you there that inspires you. Remember the depth of meditation is more important than the length, so find a time when you can be free of planning and doing. Meditation also helps us shift from doing to being which can be incredibly freeing.

## Benefits of Meditation

- Ability to relax and cope with stress and all the benefits that come as a result of that
- Research has shown that meditation can significantly reduce pain levels and enhance a person's ability to cope with pain.
- Research has shown that meditation can also enhance the immune response by increasing natural killer cells & reducing viral activity
- Increases energy
- Increases serotonin to lift the mood and help with depression, insomnia, pain, etc
- Balances the blood pressure
- Increases blood flow and slows the heart rate & respiratory rate
- Softens muscle tension and eases anxiety
- New studies on the effect of meditation on telomeres suggests it promotes anti-aging effects as well.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is currently a popular concept, often used as an accessible and secular introduction to the idea of meditation. Mindfulness encompasses deliberately paying attention, moment to moment, with the intention of maintaining non-judgemental awareness. It is a practice, and skill, and a state of mind.

**PRACTICE** Purposefully engaging with ourselves and the world around us, moment to moment, in a way that is open, patient, curious and kind.

**SKILL** The ability to bring attention to whatever is happening in the body, mind, emotions, and spirit.

**STATE OF MIND** Spacious awareness, allowing for observation and investigation of your being and its interplay with behavior and environment. This state of mind opens the door to choosing more skillful responses, connecting more deeply with yourself and the world around you.

Mindfulness can incorporate formal practices like Mindfulness Meditation and mindful movement (including yoga and tai chi), as well as being used informally in daily activities.

Here's one example of a formal mindfulness meditation. This technique is about focusing your awareness to tap into that relaxation response. This time when you sit to meditate you will focus on the sensation at the tip of the nose with inhalation & exhalation. Start with a broad focus on the whole nose, as you get better you can focus it down to the end of the nostrils, then to the space between the upper lip & the nose. Eventually you can focus it down to an area the size of the tip of a pin.



## Meditation Techniques

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There are many styles of meditation with different techniques and uses that can be beneficial too. Here are some common ones.

### 10 COUNT MEDITATION

This technique is very simple and very effective, however sometimes it can be difficult just to sit still in the beginning. Find a comfortable place to sit where you won't fall asleep or be disturbed. This is a simple counting meditation. The trick is to keep the breath natural while you count, there will be a tendency to want to control or change the breath but your job is to just watch the natural state of the breath. You will count each in & out breath until you get to 10 and then start over at 1 again. You may end up at 20 or so before you remember to start over, that's ok, it's part of the process of training the mind, just bring it back to 1 again. You are trying to teach your mind to step back and observe so that you can detach from some of the constant stress & stimulus of life.

### 2/1 MEDITATION

This meditation is similar to the 10 count meditation but instead of counting to 10, on each inhale mentally say "2" and on each exhale internally say "1". I like this technique because it keeps you present without feeling like you are trying to finish something. It's easy to get caught up in the counting as another thing you are checking off your list. The 1-10 meditation is a great practice to learn how to be present and notice where your mind takes you. This 2,1 practice will allow you to soften a little deeper into the meditation. Starting with the 2 count on the inhale goes against the natural tendency enough to keep us present without feeling like there is an endpoint to accomplish.

### LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION

Loving-Kindness, sometimes called Metta, Meditation is a popular Buddhist technique designed to build connection, compassion and forgiveness. It involves repeating a simple mantra (eg May I be safe, May I be happy, May I be free) focused first on one's self, then toward others including loved ones, neutral people, those with whom you have a difficult relationship, and eventually toward all beings.

### MANTRA/JAPA

Mental repetition of mantras is another form of meditation, it may be an ancient mantra or a personal affirmation to seal the intention of your meditation.

### VISUALIZATION

Mental or physical visualization is often used to help focus the mind. This may be a picture of a deity or a candle or mental picture.

### WALKING MEDITATION

Another simple but powerful meditation technique that involves slow, mindful walking. The first variation helps us to bring some conscious awareness into our everyday life. In this practice we keep our eyes slightly open, therefore we are not withdrawing our attention from the outside world to the same extent that we do when we have our eyes closed. This is simply a practice of expanding the awareness to bring our consciousness into the present moment. Try to be aware of your foot as the heel first makes contact, as your foot rolls forward onto the ball, and then lifts and travels through the air. Be aware of all the different sensations in your feet, not just a contact in the soles of your feet but the contact between the toes, the feeling of the skin on the floor and let your feet be as relaxed as you can. Become aware of your ankles. Notice the qualities of the sensations in the joints - as your foot is on the ground, as your foot travels through the air. Notice the ankles, knees, hips, belly, neck, jaw, etc. You will be walking slowly, with presence and consciousness.

This second technique is usually used to break up long periods of meditation. With this technique you will be walking very slowly with very small steps, usually in a large circle around the perimeter of a room. With the inhale you will gently place the foot down on the ground and feel every part of the foot touch the floor, exhaling as you shift weight then inhale when the second foot hits the floor. Move with the natural movement of the breath, uncontrolled but you will find that you quickly sink in to a rhythm.

# Pranayama

**Prana** has many translations; energy, life-force, Qi, this is the energy permeating the universe. One of my favorite definitions of Qi is described as energy on the verge of materializing. In yoga our breath is like pure, raw energy or prana at our fingertips, just waiting to be transformed and utilized. It washes through you like a drink of pure cool water, cleansing every molecule of the body and the mind. With each inhale we nourish and revitalize the body and with each exhale we let go and cleanse the body.

In our practice the breath is also what sustains us and helps us to refine and redefine our bodies as we go, it is what creates the depth in our practice. It's easy to go through the motions and miss the depth of the practice, but it's quite a different practice when we learn to breathe freely, flowing from the breath rather than adding it as an after thought. Through this practice we break the hypnosis of the body and the intoxicating thought that our happiness depends upon circumstances.

There are many different types of pranayama and many different ways to perform them, what follows is an introduction to some of the basic styles that are most useful therapeutically. These are often simple techniques, but require mindfulness to incorporate. You will often find your mind wandering, and it will always be difficult to set aside the time to practice. But if you do incorporate some of these practices into your routine, you will notice a wide range of benefits increasing over time.

Simple breath awareness and good breathing mechanics are a pre-requisite for pranayama. Beginners might get more benefit from that foundational work than from more complicated techniques.

## Benefits of Pranayama

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- Reduces the resting level of your sympathetic nervous system, so that the parasympathetic nervous system can conserve and restore energy.
- Regulate the heart rate and blood pressure, and facilitate digestion and absorption of nutrients.
- Through this awareness, stop the release of harmful stress hormones that can actually lower the metabolism, energy level, concentration and even cause premature aging.
- Increased concentration
- Improve sleep
- Increased body awareness so you can relax when you notice the stress creeping in.
- Stress often causes our breathing to be shallow, which causes more stress because it puts less oxygen into the bloodstream and increases muscle tension, by decreasing your stress and breathing more deeply you are providing more oxygen to the tissues and breaking the cycle.

## Traditionally How Pranayama works

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The core energy of the astral (energetic) body is formed by the 3 nadis (subtle nerve channels, 72,000 nadis total) of the astral spine: the ida, pingala and the sushumna. Kundalini is the divine cosmic energy that resides like a sleeping serpent or coil at the base of the spine. With each breath the prana is said to flow up the ida and down the pingala (where they cross= chakras). The ida is said to be the cooling or chandra practice associated with the left side of the spine and the left nostril. The pingala is the warming or surya practice associated with the right side of the spine and the right nostril. As the practice deepens eventually the energy will become more focused in the sushumna or deeper energetic spine. Once this is accomplished it is said that we will no longer be caught up in maya (delusion) and we will give up our identification with the ego to rest in the soul. (upon practice ida & pingala merge into sushuma to lift kundalini)

When we consciously control the breath, we are using our will to influence the energy flow in these channels, not only to draw more life-force in via the oxygen but to strengthen our consciousness. With this practice we are using the gross, physical level of our being to control the subtle, more powerful aspect of ourselves.

Patanjali says (sutra 2:52-53) that once we are able to withdraw from the senses, the veil over the inner light is lifted, and the mind becomes fit for dharana, true concentration, so that we can see clearly. Stilling the movements of the breath and prana prepares one for the deeper practices of meditation, leaving the mind free to soar where the sense of separateness can be transcended.

## Fundamentals

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- Connection of exhalation to Parasympathetic nervous system
- When first learning, practice only a few cycles, be patient, build your practice slowly over time.
- Start with the simpler breathing ratio (1:1:1) and establish a firm foundation before progressing to more advanced techniques (1:4:2)
- To keep pranayama practice safe: keep exhalation longer than inhalation and keep inhalation longer than retention
- A great place to begin is even count where inhale and exhale are the same count; then progress to lengthening the exhale
- Don't lengthen any phase of the breath beyond what is comfortable. It's the relaxation and awareness that bring the greatest benefits.
- No stress or tension
- The practice should be soothing and nourishing, if the practice disrupts your peace and nervous energy rises and you can't soften into it, stop your practice. The practice must be one that your nervous system can relax into.
- Breath retention contraindications: unmanaged hypertension, glaucoma, pregnancy, and other diseases that involve increased pressure in the head.
- More demanding pranayama techniques should be done on an empty stomach, at least 2-3 hours after meals.
- Find a comfortable seat so that the mind can focus on breathing

**KEEP THE BODY RELAXED WHILE DOING THESE, ESPECIALLY THE SHOULDERS, NECK, JAW AND FOREHEAD.**

## Types of Pranayama

### 1. UJJAYI BREATH

Means victorious breath, refers to the expansion & rising of the prana through the nadis and is distinguished by the characteristic sound it creates by contracting the epiglottis. This breath sounds like the deep rumble of the ocean & is used to monitor the flow of the breath. The ujjayi breath is typically used throughout a vinyasa practice except in savasana & meditation.

In the practice this breath creates a steady base to come back to. You can also use it to expand & soften into specific areas as needed. A conscious awareness will breathe life into your practice & change it from calisthenics to medicine. Eventually you will find yourself riding the breath like a surfer rides the waves. There will be times when there is compression on one side of the body that makes it difficult to breathe into that part of the lungs, in these poses you will need to breathe even more consciously into the other areas. Such as forward folds where you will focus more on the back & sides of the lungs while lengthening the spine to allow more opening in the torso.

This technique calms the heart and mind, to soothe the nervous system. Done gently it is beneficial for those with high blood pressure. The Ujjayi pranayama technique will also stimulate the Vagus nerve which helps to induce the parasympathic or relaxation mode. For this reason, this is a great technique to use when you are under a lot of stress, especially in an acute stressful situation to stop the release of harmful stress hormones.

### 2. SAMA VRITTI

Means Equal Part or Same Vibration breathing involves making the inhalation and exhalation even in length, sound and depth. Gradually the movement of our breath becomes so smooth and gradual that the fluctuations between the two halves of the breath become almost imperceptible. It is often used with ujjayi pranayama. The technique aims to build mindfulness and focus.

#### TECHNIQUE

- The soft engagement at the back of the throat will feel similar to the sensation you get when you yawn or when you fog up a window with your mouth, except that you close your mouth & breathe through the nose. It is important to create a smooth texture to the breath to provide a soft steady base for the asanas. Relax the brain, keep the eyes soft & heavy, keep the nostrils soft & passive and keep the root of the tongue relaxed & plump. Find a brief pause at the top & bottom of the breath to instill patience in the breath and let the mind ride on the surface of the breath. Make the breath steady & even so the inhale & exhale are the same length.
- On the exhalation keep the spine lifting as you release the breath from the top of the lungs down.
- With practice this breath should be soft & lightly audible so that there is a sense of ease with the ability to patiently linger in the breath

### 3. YOGA SIMHASANA

Means Lions Breath, involves a strong, forceful exhalation through a wide open mouth creating a “ha” sound. Stick your tongue out and curl it down toward your chin. Inhalations follow through the nose. The pranayama technique is often accompanied by a kneeling position with hands palm down on or between the knees and drishti toward the third eye. Its intention is to cleanse the throat and release tension.

#### 4. KUMBHAKA: PURAKA & RECHAKA

This practice is about lingering in between the inhale and exhale or retention of the breath. The three phases of pranayama practice are Kumbhaka or retention, Puraka or inhalation and Rechaka or exhalation. Traditionally we start with Puraka Kumbhaka or the retention after the inhale with equal length of the breathing phases (1:1:1). Next we do Rechaka Kumbhaka or the retention after the exhale still with equal phases of the breath (1:1:1). Then we do both together (1:1:1:1). The breath retention brings us back to the two most primitive aspects of the mind, the cravings and aversions. Patanjali says every

thought in its most basic form can be broken down as either craving, aversion or ignorance. This practice brings us back to the root of our cravings, the craving for life itself and the root of our aversions, the fear of death. So as we move through this practice we notice this craving and soften and remember we're not drowning but we're examining the mind at its core and watch what happens.

**CONTRA-INDICATIONS** unmanaged hypertension, glaucoma, pregnancy.

#### 5. NADI SHODHANAM

The general effect of nadi shodhanam is to calm, balance, and regulate energy on both the physical and the subtle levels. The elimination of wastes and the assimilation of energy is also increased during this practice. This practice helps to balance and harmonize the prana and apana currents ( the upward and downward currents of ida and pingala). This fosters mental poise and a deepening inner awareness. While practicing you are breathing deeply and consciously, which in itself warms the body, strengthens the nerves, and leads to stability, tranquility, and clarity of mind. This practice is used to balance the two sides of the nervous system (the sympathetic nervous system=fight or flight & the parasympathetic=rest & digest) to regulate stress and relaxation.

##### TECHNIQUE

- To perform nadi shodhanam use the right hand thumb and last two fingers to close off either side of the nose using Vishnu mudra. Start with an inhale on the left for 4 counts, then hold the breath for the same count (4), and then exhale on the right side for the same count (4). Here is the simple form:
- Inhale left, hold, exhale right, inhale right, hold, exhale left= one round
- Repeat for 3-9 rounds

##### PROGRESSION

- Start with 1:1:1 ratio, you can slowly progress 1:2:1, 1:2:2, 1:4:2
- Eventually you can add the retention on the exhalation as well, 1:1:1:1

#### 6. BRAHMARI PRANAYAMA

Brahmari is the "Humming Bee Breath" and is a simple, calming technique suitable for all ages. It lengthens the exhalation, soothing the nervous system and calming anxiety.

##### TECHNIQUE:

The lips are closed. Inhale through your nose, and on each exhalation you make a gentle humming sound in your throat, like a buzzing bee. Choose a pitch that feels pleasant to you, feeling the vibration in your throat, jaws, and mouth.



## 7. VILOMA PRANAYAMA

Viloma pranayama is a practice of patience and contentment, resting the nerves and calming the brain. When done lying down it is used for fatigue, weakness or strain. When seated it is said to create exhilaration, endurance and calmness.

## 8. KAPALABHATI

Kapalabhati is a Breathing Technique used specifically for cleansing, also referred to as a kriya technique. Carbon dioxide is released which has an alkalinizing effect on the body.

The intake of oxygen makes the blood richer and renews the body tissues. Traditionally it invigorates the liver, spleen, pancreas, heart, diaphragm and abdominal muscles and improves digestion. It also deeply massages the internal organs, stimulates digestion and elimination, removes stale air and toxins from the lungs, and pumps fresh prana into the cells of the body. It energizes massages and cleanses the central nervous system, bringing mental clarity & alertness and drains the sinuses. It is also a good practice for asthmatics, and those suffering from emphysema, bronchitis and tuberculosis. The key to effective Kapalabhati Pranayama, as with all types of pranayama, is to remain relaxed and to stay focused and mindful of what is occurring.

### TECHNIQUE

Sit in a comfortable cross-legged position with an erect spine and closed eyes. Take several deep breaths and feel tension leaving the body through each exhalation. Relax the body. Begin with several rounds of deep ujjayi breathing. Then begin Kapalabhati by exhaling forcefully through the nostrils as you contract the abdominal muscles & draw the belly toward the spine. The inhalation happens passively and the belly will relax. Repeat slowly at first to make sure the belly is relaxing & the inhale is happening naturally after the contraction, finding your rhythm. Remember the emphasis is on the exhale, you should hear the exhale as you force the breath out quickly and the inhale should happen naturally between without much sound.

### TECHNIQUE

To do this practice start with several rounds of ujjayi pranayama, exhale completely, then inhale a third of the way into the belly and hold briefly, then inhale two thirds of the way into the ribs and hold briefly, lastly inhale completely and fill up the chest and hold for 2-3 counts, then slowly exhale and repeat 3-5 times.

Always start slowly, limiting your repetitions until the body is ready to move to the next level. Start with approximately one breath per second with a total of 10-20 breaths per a round, at the end of each round take a couple slow, deep breaths and repeat for 1-3 rounds. As you become more comfortable with Kapalabhati, you can increase the repetitions, progressing in 10-15 breath increments. If you feel short of breath, slow down to allow more time for the inhalation.

\*Bhastrika Pranayama (means bellows) is very similar but will focus on the inhale and exhale equally so that both are audible and equal in strength\*

### PRECAUTIONS

If pain or dizziness is experienced, stop the practice and sit quietly for a few minutes. When the sensation has passed, recommence the practice with more awareness and less force or discontinue.

### CONTRA-INDICATIONS

Kapalabhati should not be practiced by those suffering from heart disease, unmanaged high blood pressure, vertigo, epilepsy, stroke, hernia, severe gastric ulcer, recent surgery, emphysema, MS or during menstruation or pregnancy. Instead do any of the previous pranayama techniques.

## 9. CHANDRA BHEDA PRANAYAMA

### Lunar/moon Breath

This technique cools the nervous system and induces tranquility and calmness.

#### TECHNIQUE

This technique is similar to Nadi Shodhanam, except that you will only inhale through the left nostril and you will only exhale through the right nostril still using Vishnu mudra.

#### PROGRESSION

Start with 1:1 ratio then 1:1:1 ratio, you can slowly progress to 1:1:2, 1:2:2

## 10. SURYA BHEDA PRANAYAMA

### Solar/sun Breath

This technique warms and stimulates the nervous system and induces alertness and energizes the mind. It is also beneficial for the sinuses, lungs and heart.

#### TECHNIQUE:

This technique is similar to Nadi Shodhanam, except that you will only inhale through the right nostril and you will only exhale through the left nostril still using Vishnu mudra.

#### PROGRESSION

Start with 1:1 ratio then 1:1:1 ratio, you can slowly progress to 1:1:2, 1:2:2

## 11. SITALI PRANAYAMA

### Cooling Breath

This technique strengthens the diaphragm and induces muscular and mental relaxation. It is also very cooling for the brain, nervous system and the physical body.

#### TECHNIQUE:

For this technique you will curl the tongue and inhale through the curled tongue, hold then exhale through the nose. The inhalation should be gentle not forced.

#### PROGRESSION

Start with 1:1 ratio then 1:1:1 ratio, you can slowly progress to 1:1:2, 1:2:2

## 12. ANULOMA PRANAYAMA

This practice involves breathing through a partially closed nostril(s) on the exhale. The first phase is exhaling through both partially closed nostrils then as you become more advanced in your practice you can alternate exhaling through just one partially blocked nostril.

This technique lengthens the exhalation, down-regulating the nervous system, and can create a feeling of releasing pent-up stress.

## 13. PRATILOMA PRANAYAMA

This practice involves breathing through partially closed nostrils on the inhale. The first phase is inhaling through both partially closed nostrils then as you become more advanced in your practice you can alternate inhaling through just one partially blocked nostril. Eventually you can use it with the Viloma practice or with the bandhas. This is a much more advanced practice.

This technique is thought to be stimulating to the nervous, respiratory and digestive systems.

# PHILOSOPHY ETC

## Schools of Indian Philosophy

Yoga is just one of the six Darshana - great traditions of orthodox Indian philosophy.

### Mimamsa

- Means “reflection”
- Probably the earliest school of thought in Indian philosophy
- Gives rules for the interpretation of the Vedas,
- Provides a philosophical justification for the observance of Vedic ritual

### Vedanta

- Means “the end of the Vedas” the suggestion being when knowledge is surpassed, we start to reveal the truth
- Not one unified doctrine, but an umbrella term for many sub-traditions including Advaita (non-dualism), Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism), and Dvaita (dualism), which differ in the interpretation of the relationship between Purusha and Prakriti

### Nyaya

- Means “rule” or “method”
- Seeks liberation through right knowledge, or logic
- Often closely aligned with Vaishesika

### Vaishesika

- Unique in Indian philosophy in terms of its focus on naturalism.
- Attempted to inventory categories of being, such as the elements and the gunas (the three essential and contrasting qualities of nature - tamas, rajas and sattva)

### Samkhya or Sankhya

- Means empirical or relating to numbers
- Considers the Vedas a reliable source
- Heavily based on rational thought and reason
- Strongly dualist.

### Yoga

The key concepts that help us define yoga:

- **ENLIGHTENMENT:** to see the greater truth, unclouded by our ignorance and illusions.
- **UNITY:** The word Yoga stems from the Sanskrit word “yug”, which means to yoke or join. Yoga is often called a Unitive Discipline; to many yogis, the aim of the practice is to join our small individual soul (atman or jivatman) with the universal soul (Brahman or paramatman).
- **FREEDOM:** The outcome of this unity is moksha or kaivalya - freedom or liberation. Freedom from suffering, freedom from samsara (the endless wheel of reincarnation driven by karma)

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**“THE DESIRE TO TRANSCEND THE HUMAN CONDITION, TO GO BEYOND OUR ORDINARY CONSCIOUSNESS AND PERSONALITY, IS A DEEPLY ROOTED IMPULSE THAT IS AS OLD AS SELF-AWARE HUMANITY.”**  
**GEORG FEUERSTEIN**

---

Humans of all times and all cultures have shown a universal yearning to understand our place and our purpose; yoga philosophy is one attempt to make sense of this yearning.

## Fundamental Principles of Yoga

Yoga scholar and historian Georg Feuerstein described ten overarching principles that define the practice of yoga, including the following.

### Liberation teaching

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Yoga frees us from our limited perception of who we are; we are not our possessions, nor our position in society, not our body, not our thoughts, feelings or relationships.

### Different yoga paths to suit different students

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As we all have our own personalities, interests, strengths and weaknesses, the yoga masters laid out different paths to suit each of us. We will cover these in more detail in the next section

- **KARMA YOGA.**
- **GYANA OR JNANA YOGA**
- **BHAKTI YOGA**
- **RAJA YOGA**
- **HATHA YOGA**
- **KRIYA YOGA**
- **TANTRA YOGA:** Liberation through sacred ritual and ceremony.
- **MANTRA YOGA:** Liberation through the recitation of empowered sounds.

### A moral life

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All the pathways describe a virtuous and moral lifestyle.

### Balance of theory and practice

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Yoga is not just abstract philosophy, not just a battery of practices, but a thoughtful and mindful balance between the two.

### Patient Self-Transformation

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The practice requires patient and persistent effort to replace our unconscious patterns of thought and behaviour with more mindful, more skilful patterns.

### Balance between two wings of yoga

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The varied practices of yoga require both abhyasa (diligent & repeated practice) and vairagya (non-attachment, letting go of old patterns and attachments).

# The Paths of Yoga

## KARMA YOGA

### The yoga of action

- This path involves non-attachment to the fruits of your labor & seeing the divine as acting through you in everything you do
- Selfless, egoless, desire-less action

## GYANA YOGA (OR JNANA)

### The yoga of wisdom & discrimination

- Involves using the mind impartially to distinguish truth from mere appearance to penetrate to the heart of reality
- Separate the story from your experience/reality

## BHAKTI YOGA

### The yoga of devotion

- The essence of bhakti yoga is surrender, offering the little self to the infinite
- Includes chanting, singing, mantra, prayer and devoted service

## HATHA YOGA

### The physical branch of yoga

- To yoke or join together
- Refers to the dualities within us, bringing about union of our inner duality
- Hatha = sun & moon, harmonizing dualities
- Not to be confused with the style of yoga

## KRIYA YOGA

### Any action that leads to yoga

- Union of the little self with the higher self
- Often refer to certain spiritual practices or specific spiritual lineages

## RAJA YOGA

### Means royal, the one yoga

- All forms of yoga are forms of raja yoga
- The harmonious combination of all the paths of yoga, with the practice of meditation as the supreme guide



# Traditional Texts

Traditional philosophy texts are divided into two types:

Shruti texts include the Vedas and the early Upanishads; they are considered the highest authority. Shruti means “things heard”; these texts are considered author-less, and are not to be changed.

Smriti texts, including the Bhagavad Gita, are more derivative, and more open to change. Smriti means “things remembered.”

## Vedas

- From the root ‘vid’ to know, these verses were revealed to seers (rishis).
- Four Books: Rig (hymns), Sama (songs), Yajur (incantations), Atharva (treatments)
- These are the oldest sacred texts from India (approx. 3000 BCE)
- The Vedic people’s lives centered on ritual; mostly with regards to Agni (sun god)
- The Vedas are revealed texts, or shruti (‘things heard’)

## Upanishads

- ‘To sit near/with the teacher’; commentaries on the Vedas.
- They explain in detail oneself and relationship to all things
- The first appeared around 1000 BCE, the most recent in the 20th century
- Concept of Macrocosm/Microcosm: the entire universe can be studied within oneself
- Many more references to yoga, yogic techniques and meditation appear
- From the Upanishads came both yogic and Vedanta (‘end of Vedas’) philosophies
- Maya: the world of form is but an illusion; and an underlying truth exists
- Early Upanishads are considered shruti, but later ones are smriti (‘things remembered’)

## Bhagavad Gita

- Called “The Lord’s Song”
- Part of the larger Hindu epic, the Mahabharata (Great India), that depicts India’s history and commonly held to have been written by the sage Vyasa.
- The format is traditional in that it is question & answer between the teacher (Lord Krishna) and the student (Arjuna)
- Arjuna faces a difficult choice on a battlefield. Arjuna’s duty is to lead one branch of his family into battle against another, and as he stands on the field in his chariot, looking at their faces, he questions that duty.
- Krishna instructs Arjuna on the methods and types of yoga
- Krishna outlines the nature of life and destiny, focusing heavily on performing one’s duty (or svadharma) with devotion, faith and equanimity, and without expectation of return.
- Incorporates many different schools of thought into one work - creating harmony between some of the teachings of Vedanta, Samkhya and Yoga. This makes it interesting to interpret; you may find that various commentaries differ markedly.
- Key verses

**2.48** *Yoga-sthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga uchyate.* Be steadfast in the performance of your duty, abandoning attachment to success and failure; such equanimity is called Yoga.

**2.50** *Buddhi-yukto jahatiha ubhe sukṛita-duṣkṛite tasmad yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kaushalam.* One who prudently practices the science of work without attachment can get rid of both good and bad reactions in this life; therefore, strive for Yoga, which is skill in action.

**6.6** *Bandhur atmatmanas tasya yenatmaivatmana jitaḥ anatmanas tu shatrutve vartetatmaiva shatru-va.*

For those who have conquered the mind, it is their friend; for those who have failed to do so, the mind works like an enemy.

**6.40** *Shri bhagavan uvacha partha naiveha namutra vinashas tasya vidyate na hi kalyāṇa-kṛit kashchid durgatim tata gachchhati.* One on the spiritual path does not meet with destruction either in this world, or the world to come.

**17.3** *Sattvanurupa sarvasya shraddha bhavati bharata shraddha-mayo 'yam purusho yo yachchhraddhah sa eva sah.* The faith of a man follows his nature; man is made of faith: as his faith is so is he.

**18.47** *Shreyan swa-dharmo vigunah para-dharmat sv-anushthitat svabhava-niyatam karma kurvan napnoti kilbisham.* It is better to do one's own dharma, even though imperfectly, than to do another's dharma, even though perfectly.

## Patanjali's Yoga Sutra

- 195 or 196 aphorisms on yoga compiled by Patanjali.
- Sutra means 'thread'; and the sutras are each brief phrases that intertwine to create yoga
- The Yoga Sutra was compiled around 200 CE
- Translations differ (sometimes passionately) in their interpretation, but the overall message is the same - a gradual and practical pathway to liberation by isolating purusha from prakriti.
- The Sutra is divided into four books (or pada ) that delineate the practice of yoga: (1) its aim, (2) the practices required, (3) obstacles we will encounter and how to overcome them, and (4) its desired outcomes.

### BOOK 1 - SAMADHI PADA

the portion on contemplation, defines the aim of yoga and outlines the obstacles to entering state of yoga, and our intended outcome (levels of samadhi). Key verses:

**1:1** *Atha yoga anusasanaṁ.* Now yoga is presented, offered, or shared.

**1:2** *Yogas citta vritti nirodhah.* Yoga calms the fluctuations of the mind, or restrains the agitated "mind-stuff".

**1:3** *Tada drastuh svarupe vasthanam.* And then the seer abides in his or her own true nature.

**1:12** *Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodhah.* Mental modifications are controlled through diligent practice and non-attachment.

### BOOK 2 - SADHANA PADA

the portion on practice, details a practical path (the famous eightfold path or eight limbs) to liberation. Key verses:

**2:1** *Tapah svadhyaya isvara pranidhanani kriya yogah.* Discipline, self-study, and devotion to a higher power are yoga in action.

**2:3** *Avidya asmita raga dvesha abhinivesah pancha klesha.* The five afflictions that disturb our equilibrium are avidya (ignorance, not seeing the true nature of things), asmita (ego, unhealthy attachment to self), raga (desire), dvesha (aversion) and abhinivesha (clinging to life, or fear of death; the need for shrad-ha or faith/ trust).

**2:29** *Yama niyama asana pranayama pratyahara dharana dhyana samadhi ashtau angani.*

Patanjali's famous eight limbs of yoga, which we will look at in more detail on the next section

**2:30** *Ahimsa satya asteya brahmacharya aparigraha yama.* Patanjali outlines the yamas.

**2:32** *Shaucha santosha tapah svadhyaya ishvarapranidhana niyamah.* Patanjali then lists the Niyamas.

**2:46** *Sthira sukham asanam.* Steadfast and easeful seat.

**2:52** *Tatah ksyate prakasa-avaranam.* Thus the covering of the inner light disappears.

### BOOK 3 - VERBUTI PADA

means "sacred ash". Patanjali finishes his eight limbs, concentration, meditation etc, then describes the physical manifestations that occur as the practice of yoga progresses, many of which sounds mystical or magical in nature.

### BOOK 4 - KAIVALYA PADA

describes the isolation between purusha and prakriti, the liberation of consciousness from the bonds of nature.

# The 8 Limbs of Ashtanga Yoga

From Patanjali's Yoga Sutras;  
not to be confused with the style of yoga

1. **Yamas** (don'ts)
2. **Niyamas** (do's)
3. **Asana**
4. **Pranayama** (breath/energy control)
5. **Pratyahara** (withdrawal of the senses)
6. **Dharana** (one pointed focus)
7. **Dhyana** (meditation, sustained focus or absorption)
8. **Samadhi** (union with the infinite, enlightenment)

## 1. Yamas

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Moral restrictions

### A. AHIMSA

- Non-violence
- Never to harm or demean
- Compassion
- Never to wish harm in any way (judging)
- Upon mastery it is said that all creatures become harmless in your presence

### B. SATYA

- Non-lying, truthfulness
- Never say what isn't so with intent to deceive
- Be genuine & authentic
- Truthfulness must be practiced with non-violence, it must come from love
- Not to wish things were different from what they are
- Self-honesty
- Before speaking always contemplate: is it truthful, is it necessary, is it the appropriate time, and can it be said in a kind way?
- Upon mastery it is said that whatever one says will come true

### C. ASTEYA

- Non-stealing
- Not taking what isn't yours, material or not (credit for actions)
- Not desire what isn't yours, even praise, status, time or love
- Don't build yourself up at another's expense

- See everything as a part of your self
- Letting go of ownership
- Upon mastery it is said that whatever you need comes to you when you need it

### D. BRAHMACHARYA

- Non-sensuality
- Moderation in all things
- Control of the senses, not overindulging in the senses
- What is it your body is really craving?
- Directing one's sexual energy with integrity
- Upon mastery it is said that one gains mental clarity and good health on all levels
- Traditionally celibacy

### E. APARIGRAHA

- Non-greed
- Non-hoarding, non-possessiveness
- Letting go of attachments, even things that are yours by right, even your own body and identity
- It is ok to have things; this is more about your attachment to those things

## 2. Niyamas

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### Moral Practices

#### A. SAUCHA

- Cleanliness
- Orderliness, precision
- Purity of body & environment, as well as in deed and thought
- Upon mastery one will find indifference to things of the body

#### B. SANTOSHA

- Contentment
- The ability to embrace things as they are
- Accepting what is,
- Equanimity
- Being present
- Upon mastery one finds unceasing inner happiness and the realization of bliss in every atom

#### C. TAPAS

- Austerity
- Self-discipline, simplicity, removal of distraction
- Willpower
- This discipline is the fire that one goes through in life, like refining gold
- Mastery over likes and dislikes

#### D. SWADHYAYA

- Self-study
- Mindfulness
- Introspection of one's behavior, motives, desires, etc.
- Reflection

#### E. ISHVARAPRANIDHANA

- Surrender to the divine
- To let go of the ego

## 3. Asana

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- Purifies and calms the mind and body to prepare for meditation

## 4. Pranayama

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- Breath control, also energy control
- Using the breath to regulate the mind
- Prepares the body, mind, nervous system for higher states of being

## 5. Pratyahara

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- Sense withdrawal
- Withdrawal of the mind from external objects and experiences
- Shift the awareness from the outer world to the inner world

## 6. Dharana

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- One pointed focus
- No sensory disturbances, no restless outward thoughts

## 7. Dhyana

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- Meditation
- Sustained uninterrupted one-pointed focus
- One becomes absorbed into and identified with the object of concentration

## 8. Samadhi

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- Enlightenment
- Oneness
- The subject-object relationship as well as one's ego is dissolved
- One's identity is universal
- There is a perception of oneness with the entire universe

# Yoga History

4000 – 2000 BCE	<b>PRE-VEDIC PERIOD</b> Evidence found on seals of a person in seated meditative posture.
3400 BCE	Split between Indo-Aryans and Iranians in Middle East region
<b>2700 – 1500 BCE</b>	<b>Indus valley civilization</b> (Mohenjodaro & Harappa)
2000 – 1000 BCE	VEDIC PERIOD: First references to yoga: in the form of breath control.
1500 BCE	Indo-Aryans down from steppes (to Anatolia and Punjab: W. India)
1300 – 900 BCE	Rig Veda (most ancient Indian text; 1028 Hymns)
<b>1200 – 800 BCE</b>	<b>Vedas or samhitas (Rig, Sama, Yajur, Atharva)</b>
1000 – 500 BCE	<b>PRE-CLASSICAL YOGA</b> Early Upanishads written, but still no distinct yoga philosophy or practice formed.
<b>800 – 600 BCE</b>	<b>Upanishads (commentaries on the Vedas)</b>
700 BCE	Sankhya Philosophy of Kapila (seed of both yoga & Buddhist philosophy)
563 – 483 BCE	Siddhartha Gautama ( <b>Buddha</b> ), same time period as Confucius
500 BCE:	<b>EPIC PERIOD</b> Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita written, and the later Upanishads are composed. Slowly yoga as a practice begins to take form.
500-300 BCE	Beginning of caste system in India
400 BCE – 400 CE	Mahabharata ('Great India') written
<b>300 BCE</b>	<b>Bhagavad Gita</b> (famous poem within Mahabharata)
272 – 232 BCE	Ashoka Maurya, Indian emperor that advocated Buddhism
200 BCE – 200 CE	'The Laws of Manu' (duties for varying stages of life)
32 BCE – 0	<b>Christ</b> lived
200 CE	<b>CLASSICAL PERIOD</b> Patanjali compiles the Yoga Sutra.
<b>200 – 300 CE</b>	<b>Patanjali (Yoga Sutra: consciousness, practice, powers, liberation)</b>
350 – 450 CE	Ishvara Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu
500 CE – 1900 CE	<b>POST CLASSICAL YOGA</b> Patanjali's 'eight-limbed' yoga influences many forms of emerging yoga, including the development of hatha yoga and asana.
788 – 822 CE	Shankara (Vedanta philosopher)
900 CE	Gorakshanatha is said to have been the first hatha yoga master
<b>1300 CE</b>	<b>Hatha Yoga Pradipika written by Svatiarama</b>
1900 CE – present	<b>MODERN YOGA</b> Several yoga masters come to the west and spread the eastern treasure of yoga. Hatha yoga is influenced greatly by British gymnastics.
1869 – 1948 CE	Gandhi, used satyagraha (firmness of truth) in non-violence efforts
1888-1989	<b>Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya</b>
1893 CE	Vivekananda brought Vedanta and yoga to the United States
1900 CE	Buddhism and yoga enter the West
1915-2009	<b>Sri Krishna Pattabhi Jois</b>
1918- 2014	<b>B. K. S. Iyengar</b>



# Yoga in the Context of History

3000 BCE	Early writing
1200 - 800 BCE	The Vedas: the oldest written Sanskrit texts
890 BCE	Homer's Iliad & Odyssey composed
800 - 600 BCE	The Upanishads: commentary on or culmination of the Vedas
5th / 6th century BCE	The Bible Old Testament including the Torah
563-483 BCE	Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama), founder of Buddhism, lived
551-479 BCE	Confucius (Kong Qiu), famous Chinese philosopher, lived
470 BCE	Socrates born
427 BCE	Plato born
400-300 BCE	The Mahabharata (and Bhagavad Gita) composed by Vyasa
384 BCE	Aristotle born
4 BCE to 26-34 CE	Jesus of Nazareth lived
1st & 2nd century CE	The Stoic school: Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius
70-120 CE	Bible New Testament
200-300 CE	Patanjali's Yoga Sutra
570-632 CE	Muhammad, the founder of Islam, lived
900 CE	First Hatha yoga master Gorakshanatha
1300 CE	Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Svamimarama
1300-1700 CE	The Renaissance in Europe
1440 CE	Gutenberg's printing press invented
1893 CE	Swami Vivekananda brings Vedic Hinduism to Chicago
1888-1989 CE	Sri Tirumalai Krishnamacharya
1915-2009	Sri K. Pattabhi Jois, founder of Ashtanga yoga
1919-2014	Mr BKS Iyengar, founder of Iyengar yoga
1938-2016	TKV Desikachar, founder of Viniyoga

## Sanskrit-to-English Asana Toolkit

ūrdhva	=	up, upward	bandha	=	lock
adho	=	down, downward	sālamba	=	supported
ardha	=	half	utkata	=	fierce
pūrṇa	=	full	eka	=	one
pārśva	=	side	dvi	=	two
ut-	=	intense	tri	=	three
utthita	=	extended	catur	=	four
parivṛta	=	revolved	sarva	=	all
viparīta	=	reversed, inverted	sūrya	=	sun
sama	=	same	candra	=	moon
supta	=	supine, reclining	uṣṭra	=	camel
prasārita	=	spread	baka	=	crane
tān-	=	stretch	kāka	=	crow
aṅga	=	limb	kapota	=	pigeon
aṅguṣṭha	=	thumb	matsya	=	fish
jānu	=	knee	śalabha	=	locust
pāda	=	foot	śvāna	=	dog
hastā	=	hand	śava	=	corpse
śīrṣa	=	head	dhanur	=	bow
mukha	=	face	cakra	=	wheel
koṇa	=	angle	setu	=	bridge
baddha	=	bound			

Cheryl Oliver, E-RYT 500    azvedicchant@gmail.com    480-216-2602  
Authentic Yoga Teacher Training & Arizona Vedic Chant  
www.davesastangayoga.com

# Sanskrit

*Alphabet with English Transliteration*

अ a	आ ā	इ i	ई ī	उ u	ऊ ū	
		ए e	ऐ ai	ओ o	औ au	
ऋ ṛ	ॠ ṛ	ऌ ḷ		अं an/ān/an/am	अः ah	
क ka	ख kha	ग ga	घ gha	ङ ṅa		Guttural
च ca	छ cha	ज ja	झ jha	ञ ña		Palatal
ट ṭa	ठ ṭha	ड ḍa	ढ ḍha	ण ṇa		Cerebral
त ta	थ tha	द da	ध dha	न na		Dental
प pa	फ pha	ब ba	भ bha	म ma		Labial
य ya	र ra	ल la	व va			
श śa	ष ṣa	स sa	ह ha	क्ष kṣa	ज्ञ jña	

# APPENDIX

## Recommended Further Reading

### **The Language of Yoga**

Nicolai Bachman  
(highly recommended  
but not required)

### **Light on Pranayama**

BKS Iyengar

### **Light on Yoga**

BKS Iyengar

### **Scientific Keys Volume I & II**

Ray Long

### **Yoga as Medicine**

Timothy McCall, MD

### **Meditations from the Mat**

Rolf Gates

### **Anatomy Trains**

Thomas Myers

### **Atlas of Human Anatomy**

Frank Netter

### **Yoga Sutras**

Swami Satchidananda

### **The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy and Practice**

Georg Feuerstein

### **Biology of Belief**

Bruce Lipton

### **Intention Experiment**

Lynne McTaggart

### **Yoga Masters**

Mark Forstater

### **Molecules of Emotion**

Candace Pert, PhD

### **Power of Now**

Eckhart Tolle

### **A Path with Heart**

Jack Kornfield

### **Yoga & the Quest for the True Self**

Stephen Cope

### **The Deeper Dimension of Yoga: Theory and Practice**

Georg Feuerstein

### **Anatomy of the Spirit**

Caroline Myss

### **The Tree of Yoga**

BKS Iyengar

### **Light on Life**

BKS Iyengar

### **How Can I Help**

Ram Dass

### **The Heart of Yoga**

TKV Desikachar

### **Coming to Our Senses**

Jon Kabat-Zinn

### **Eastern Body Western Mind**

Anodea Judith

### **Teaching Yoga**

Donna Farhi

### **Upanishads**

### **Mahabharata**

### **Bhagavad Gita**

# Priorities

Take a minute sometime this week to sit down and write out your goals and then your priorities.

Before you begin answer the following questions

(FROM THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ACHIEVEMENT BY BRIAN TRACY)

1. What are the 5 things that you value the most in life?
2. In 30 seconds, what are the 3 most important goals in your life right now?
3. What would you do if you won a million dollars?
4. What would you do if you only had 6 months to live, what would your priorities be?
5. What have you always wanted to do but been afraid to attempt?
6. What gives you your greatest feeling of importance or purpose?
7. What one great thing would you dare to dream if you knew you couldn't fail?



# Goals

**LIFETIME:** What will be important to you when you come to the end of your life?

**10 YEAR**

**1 YEAR**

**TODAY/NOW**

# Priorities

**VERY HIGH**

**HIGH**

**MEDIUM**

