

PLANNING YOUR YOGA PRACTICE

When planning your own yoga practice, you need to consider the following:

1) OBJECTIVES

Decide what your objectives are. For example, if you have a bad back, or lack of flexibility, or are suffering from anxiety or a breathing-related disorder etc, your whole session might be directed towards restorative exercises for your particular condition. Or you might be interested in a particular aspect of yoga, eg. sound vibration or philosophy. Perhaps you are looking for a balanced practice including pranayama, asanas and meditation.

2) TIME OF DAY and TIME AVAILABLE

Morning practice will be different from evening practice. A 15 minute session will be different from a 90 minute session. Choose a time realistic for you.

3) ORDER OF ELEMENTS

Consider in what order you should place the different elements. For example, relaxation followed by pranayama followed by asanas followed by meditation could be the order that works best for you, but not for someone else. Also, some yoga styles/teachers have dictates about the order in which elements should appear.

4) ORDER OF ASANAS

Consider what order you should place your asanas. Some styles/teachers begin with lying down relaxation; others begin with strong standing postures. Some styles/teachers put inverted postures at the beginning; others put them towards the end. Some styles/teachers have dictates about the order in which asanas should appear. End with conscious relaxation.

5) SELECTION OF ASANAS

A balanced asana selection should ensure that you stretch in every direction, i.e. forward, back, to the sides + twist. It should also include postures which develop strength + an inversion.

6) COUNTERPOSES

Every strong asana should be followed by a counterpose.

7) COMFORT ZONE

You should work 90% within your comfort zone, but should include aspects which occasionally bring you slightly out of your comfort zone in order to progress.