

Approaches to Building a Home Practice

Sometimes yogis report that it is overwhelming to create a personal practice. They don't know where to start or can't remember what was taught in class. Lack of time and outside obligations tug at us daily. So how does one start a practice at home?

Understanding that home practice allows us to explore and embody what we have been taught in group classes is key. And while group classes are a wonderful way to get some advice and direction, the individual experience allows us to deepen our relationship with ourselves learning how to turn inward and really listen to our body, mind and spirit.

See if you can start to make your practice an expression of what is alive in you now. That type of practice will help you stay present during your time on the mat

Examples:

- Are you tired from travel? Do restorative postures.
- Feeling energetic? Use a vigorous session to channel energy (make challenge and strength your focus)

This type of approach can serve as a model for staying present all day.

Practice allows us to gain access to energy that is already within us.



Grouping postures is also another useful and easy way to create a pattern for your practice. One way of grouping postures is listed below:

- **Standing**
- **Forward Extensions**
- **Twists**
- **Backbends**
- **Inversions**
- **Restorative**

Refer to your binder for posture groups. These listings can be used to create a simple focus practice for the day or week. We have also provided IYAGNY outlines that use all of these poses to create a well balanced practice.



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Note how going inward seems more possible
when the mind is more settled



Once a simple well rounded practice is created and learned, expand on it by varying it each day or week.

Pick a time to practice. Commit to it by writing it on your calendar.

*In any practice sequence approach, remember to feel the effects of one pose before choosing the next pose. This brings us to the most important aspect of yoga – **inner awareness**.*

Example Approaches

1) Include 1-2 postures from each posture group.

2) Divide up the week so that by week's end, each posture group has been practiced:

Monday concentrate on standing postures

Wednesday focus on backbends

Friday practice inversions

Each of the above day's focus on more rigorous poses. Then Tuesday and Thursday focus can be on forward bends and seated postures. Saturday can be twists and Sunday can be relaxation with restorative poses.

If you decide to do a practice with a focused concentration, try variations of poses to allow a deeper experience and release. Allow time for counter poses. So if you did forward bends, try some postures that employ extension. If the pose/counter pose method is used, try to examine if the body feels it needs a counter pose first and why.

If you chose a focus for your practice, assure a warm up at beginning and relaxation at the end.

3) Pick a focus for the week alternating:

Do a focused practice, say forward bends. On even days, complete poses that work the focus area. On odd days, complete a well rounded practice. The following week, switch the focus to another posture group.

4) Use the AM Sequence



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5) **Identify weak poses**, groups of poses or parts of body as weak areas in your practice. You may want to give these areas or poses more time and attention until you feel you have achieved a deeper understanding and balance.

6) **A theme practice can be developed examples:**

- Hip Opener
- Low Energy or Fatigue
- Strength of Legs and Spine
- Heart openers
- Strengthen arms and mobility in the back
- Relieving tension in the lower back
- Improved Balance
- Practice for Relaxation

