

Creating Short Ashtanga Sequences

- The series is no magic spell or combination lock for enlightenment. It was made by a man for a young body, relatively recently. It is not the word of god nor perfect.
- It was Jois who innovated the set sequences, not Krishnamacharya
- Krishnamacharya's method is an inner one: tristana. He taught dynamically to suit each individual.
- We are trying to get people into yoga, so we meet people where they are.
- Worry about the fine print later if appropriate for that person to practice the current idealized blueprint of Ashtanga.

Short sequences may be done for several reasons either personally or professionally.

Personal level

- lack of time
- lack of energy
- lack of motivation
- injury

Professionally (no more 'half-primary' as the only option!)

- To be able to meet studio given short class times.
- To keep the class fresh and inspired.
- To offer more varied movement patterns to your students.
- To give more of an overview of the territory of the Ashtanga practice and make it accessible.
- To get people interested enough to want to try the Mysore class.

To structure a balanced short-form class we should aim to include each of the following:

- Dynamic movement
- Forward fold
- Back extension
- Twist
- Inversion
- Therapeutic ending

Below is an outline to follow to create your short sequence whenever you wish to. Play around with what works for you, one beauty of the Ashtanga sequence is that you don't have to think about what you are going to do, which takes away the stress of practice itself, but try to think of this as play and once you have done it a few times creating your sequences will also become second nature and could free you up later on with more energy for the full practice, whatever that means for you.

As a general rule, you can create your sequence following the approximate percentages:

- 10% sun salutations
- 20% standing
- 40% sequences
- 10% backbends
- 20% closing and rest

Sun Salutations:

- 3 A + 3 B
- Sun Salutations are the obvious dynamic movement – they should be done at a reasonable tempo as a warmup.

Standing Postures

- We can take out the twisted variations, plus UHP, Ardha Badha (weren't in the original standing), and Warrior Sequence if necessary (duplicates sun salutations)
- Choose one or two from each group of standing postures below.

Group 1

Pandagusthasana
Padahasthasana

Group 2

Trikonasana A / B
Parsvakonasana A / B

Group 3

Prasarita padottanasana A, B, C, D

Group 4

Parvottanasana
Utthita hasta padangusthasana

Seated Postures

- Originally, Primary and Intermediate were both done together. This is most relevant regarding the early backbends, so we always add them on before Urdhva Dhanurasana
- The postures are grouped, so we shall pick one from the following group today.
- Originally, there was a lot less jump back/thru vinyasas, and sometimes only between groups.

Group 1: In this group, all are essential.

dandasana
Paschimatanasana
Purvottanasana

Choose one posture from each of the groups below:

Group 2:

ardha baddha padma paschimatanasana
tiriang mukha ekapada paschimatanasana

Group 3

janu sirsasana A, B, C

Group 4

mairchyasana A, B, C, D

Group 5

navasana
bhujapidasana
kuramasana

Group 6

garbha pidasana
baddha konasana
upavistha konasana

Group 7

supta konasana
supta padangusthasana

Group 8

ubhaya padangusthasana
urdhva mukha paschimatanasana
setu bandasana

Closing Sequence

- Make sure to leave time for these last postures. As much as the yoga practice is aimed at a light stimulation of the nervous system, these last postures should be used to balance this effect so that the individual finishes practice feeling calm and grounded.
- In these postures, the breath should be slowed, and the postures held for a longer number of breaths.

Group 1 – try to do all of these

salabasana
dhanurasana
urdhva dhanurasana/dhanurasana/ustrasana

Group 2 – choose one of these:

sarvangasana
sirsasana

Group 3 – try to do all of these:

badha padmasana
padmasana
savasana

Things to bear in mind:

- Many people simply don't have the lotus ability and require modification. This doesn't mean they need to be stopped early in their practice.
- The breath count used to be at least 8 per posture (if not more), with vinyasas between postures much less. The current speed for many is not good for the nervous system.
- There is no one way to practice, just as there is no one body. 'Mysore style' originally meant not only self-practice but individually adapted practice.
- Practice in Mysore is a blueprint or ideal (it's an intensive/yoga holiday) it's not meant to be the norm.
- Practice should leave you feeling better, not worse. Healthier, physically, and mentally with energy to face your day. If this is not the case, it's your experiment, adjust it!