

HOW TO DESIGN A YOGA PRACTICE FOR A GOAL POSTURE



1 SELECT A POSE → → →

2 CLARIFY YOUR REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE POSE

STRUCTURAL

TO WORK A SPECIFIC BODY AREA
(Ex: Dhanurasana is effective for stretching the anterior structures of the body – chest, solar plexus, hip flexors and thighs).

TO MOVE THE SPINE IN A PARTICULAR WAY (Ex: Dhanurasana is useful in mobilizing the thoracic spine).

ENERGETIC

TO MOVE ENERGY IN A CERTAIN WAY
(Ex: Dhanurasana has a strong brhmana effect - it is likely to build the energy up).

TO AFFECT BREATHING PATTERNS
(Ex: Like most backbends, Dhanurasana helps to stretch the anterior structures of the torso, facilitating deeper breathing).

PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL

MANIFEST SOME IDEA
(Ex: Dhanurasana can be used to facilitate the idea of “heart opening”).

ENCOURAGE A PARTICULAR STATE OF MIND (Ex. Dhanurasana is a difficult posture and mastering it can give a student a sense of power and accomplishment).

OTHER

REPRESENT A PARTICULAR THEME
(Ex: Dhanurasana is a deep backbend and can become a pinnacle in a backbending practice).

CHALLENGE THE BODY IN A DIFFERENT WAY (It is beneficial to move the spine in all directions and challenge the student’s physical abilities in a responsible way).

ASK YOURSELF

IS THE POSE APPROPRIATE FOR THE STUDENT(S)?

Ex: Dhanurasana is NOT recommended for students with lower back problems, as well as shoulder, neck and knee issues.

IS THE POSE APPROPRIATE FOR THE CONTEXT?

Ex: It is not a good idea to do Dhanurasana late at night, because it might leave the student feeling wired.

4 ANALYZE BIOMECHANICAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE GOAL POSTURE

on the level of skeletal structure, joint positions and muscle actions. Start from the spine, then move to the shoulder/pelvic girdle, then out to the extremities. These are the areas that need to be prepared before the student can attempt the pose.



WHAT IS THE GENERAL POSITION OF THE SPINE IN THE POSE?

(We will need to include similar positions to prepare)
Ex: Dhanurasana is a prone symmetrical backbend.

IS IT A FIXED-FRAME OR AN OPEN-FRAME POSTURE?

(Fixed-frame postures require additional compensation)
Ex: Dhanurasana is fixed-frame if holding on to the ankles.

SPINAL ACTION

Ex: Thoracic and lumbar spine extension.
To prepare: contract/stretch upper and lower back.

SHOULDER GIRDLE ACTION

Ex: Shoulders are internally rotated and extended back.
To prepare: Mobilize the shoulders, then do similar action.

PELVIC GIRDLE ACTION

Ex: Hips are extended, knees are flexed.
To prepare: Contract glutes, stretch hip flexors, bend knees.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND HOW TO MINIMIZE THEM

COMPRESSION OF THE LOWER BACK



Create support via abdominal contraction
Focus on curving the thoracic spine
Don't hold on to the ankles

PRESSURE ON THE SHOULDER JOINT



Use the strap on the ankles
Don't hold on to the ankles
Don't lift the knees off the floor

TORQUING THE KNEES



Avoid moving the knees apart
Don't lift the knees off the floor
Don't hold on to the ankles

TENSING THE NECK



Look forward, not up
Avoid pulling the shoulders up
Don't hold on to the ankles

