

HOW TO CREATE A SHORT TARGETED YOGA PRACTICE FOR PHYSICAL TENSION

When we design a short yoga practice for a specific body part, our primary goal is to increase circulation to the target area. That is why dynamic movements work better than static ones, and contracting the muscles works better than stretching them. Here is a simple template for creating a short targeted yoga practice. Let's use it to create a short practice for the hip flexors for folks who sit a lot during the day.

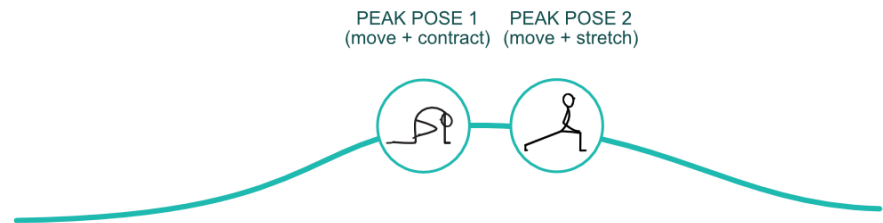
Step 1: Identify the target area. (We will be targeting the hip flexors.)

Step 2: Specify what kind of movements you will use to target it.

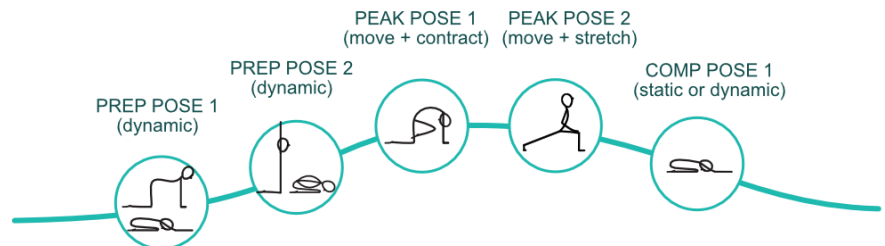
(Hip flexors are actively involved in flexing of the hip and passively involved in extending of the hip.)



Step 3: Pick one pose that engages the target area and increases circulation to it, and one pose that gently stretches it. This will be the peak of your practice. (For the hip flexors we will use adaptation of Cat pose (Marjariasana) to contract them and Lunge pose (Anjaneyasana) to stretch them.)

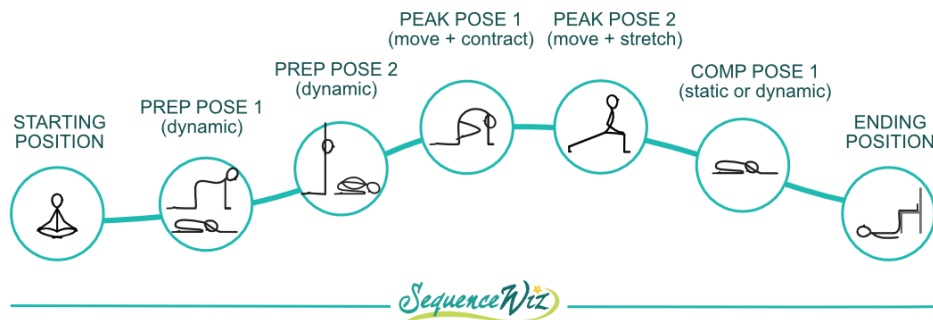


Step 4: Pick 1-2 dynamic poses that will prepare your body for the peak pose and 1-2 poses that will compensate for it. (We will use Chakravakasana and Vajrasana to warm up the hips, and Child's pose to compensate.)



Step 5: Pick the starting position (supine, seated, kneeling or standing) that is best suited for your target area. It is also useful to take into account your personal preferences, time of day you will be doing the practice and your space set up. (We will start in a comfortable seated position on the floor which works for many scenarios.)

Step 6: Pick the ending position (supine, seated, standing). You will need to decide which resting position would help to relax the target area, and what would be the best position to transition you to whatever you want to do next. (We will finish with the feet up on a chair because it allows the hip flexors to relax fully and will enable us to do a short visualization for the hip flexors.)



If you have more time, you can have more than one peak. And that's it! There is no need to be too creative or intricate with short yoga practices – they need to be clear and straight forward. The most important part is to move mindfully with the breath.