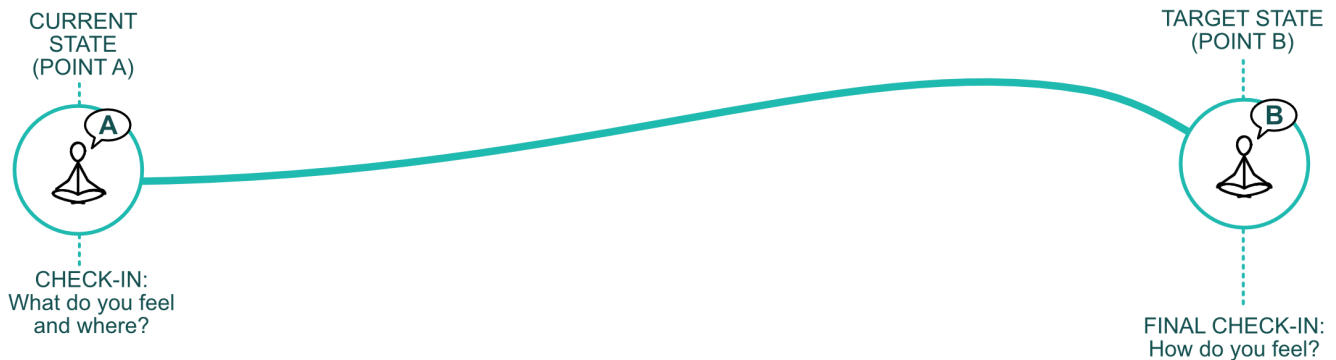


# HOW TO CREATE A SHORT YOGA PRACTICE FOR MANAGING THE STATE OF MIND

The main goal of yoga is to control and direct the activity of your mind. Once the mind becomes more settled, you can see yourself for who you really are, and the reality for what it is. The main tool to calm the activity of the mind is meditation. Here is a simple template for creating a short yoga practice to manage the state of your mind. Let's use it to create a practice to deal with strong emotions.

**Step 1: Identify the state that you are currently in – point A – and where you would like to end up (realistically) – point B.** In this example we will try to move from being mildly irritated (point A) toward feeling more balanced and clear (point B).



**Step 2: Think of a main theme for your practice that could help you move from point A to point B, and which meditation/reflection would cultivate that theme.** If you find yourself lost in the sea of possibility, or if nothing at all comes to you, it is always useful to fall back on the images of basic elements and their qualities, or images from nature. In our example, the main theme will be purification, and we will use the image of fire. Since we are dealing with emotions, we will want to use the energy of emotion as fuel for an imaginary fire to purify and bring more clarity. We will use the fire to purify the three main sites of the body where you might experience an emotion: head, chest and belly.

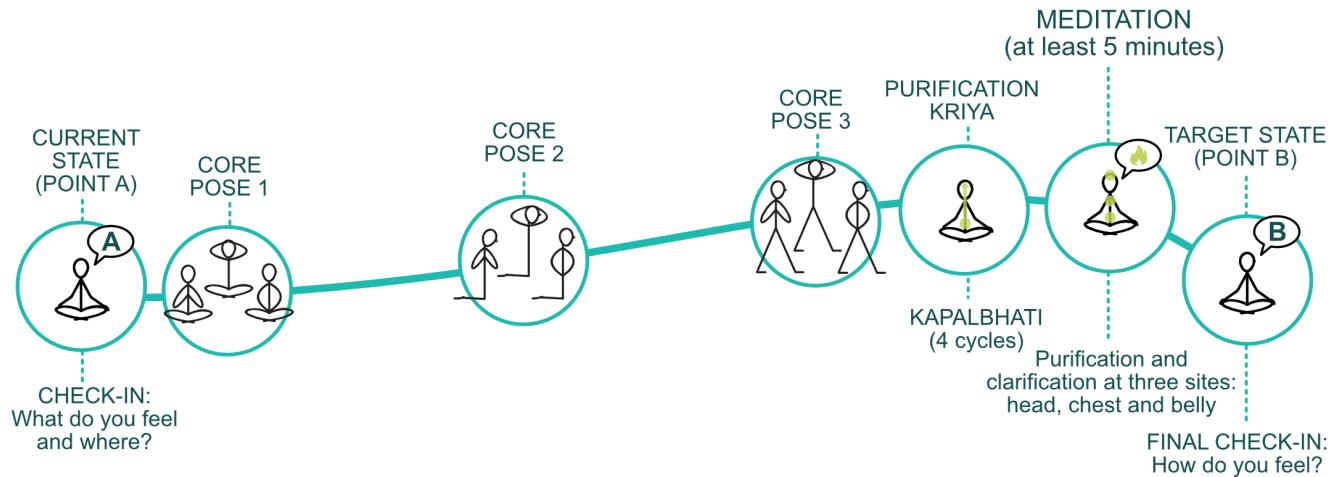


**Step 3: Assess the energetics of your practice.** Will this be a Brhmana, Langhana or Samana practice? The choice should be directly linked to your theme. This will guide your selection of poses and breath patterns. (Our practice will be Samana because we want to both purify (Langhana quality) and enhance (Brhmana quality). We will use the elements of both practices and add Kapalbhathi (purification Kriya).

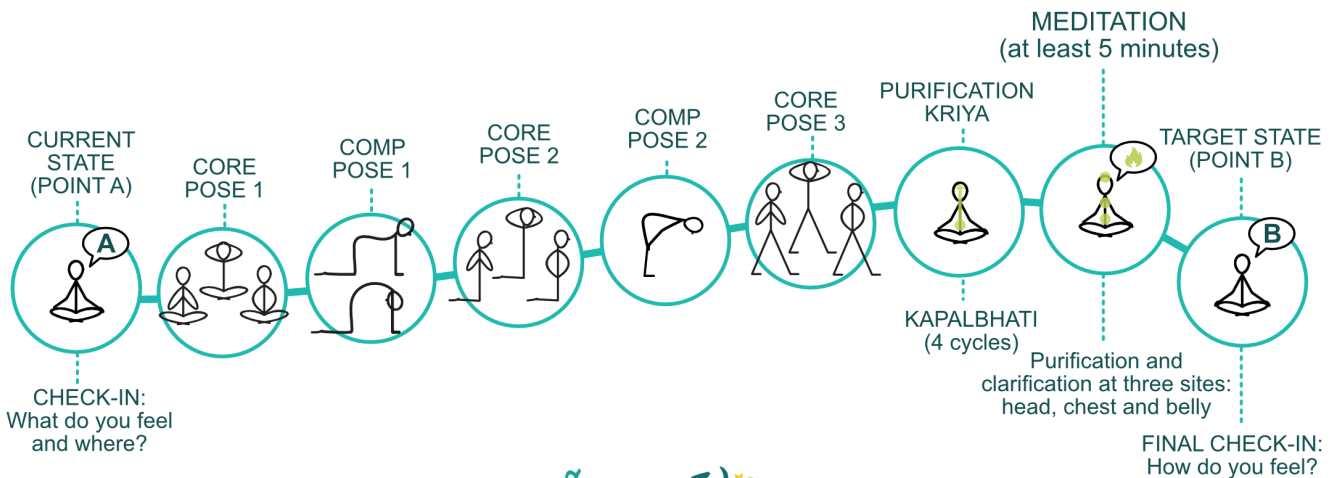
# HOW TO CREATE A SHORT YOGA PRACTICE FOR MANAGING THE STATE OF MIND

## Step 4: Think of how you can anchor your main theme in your body with poses and symbolic gestures.

Pick two-three poses where you will manifest that idea. These will be your Core Poses. (We will use the gesture of touching the head, chest and belly with hands to bring attention to those areas. We will do this gesture in Sukhasana, Vajrasana and part of Virabhadrasana 1.)



**Step 5: Pick two-three Compensation Poses for your Core Poses** that can also be used to support the main theme. (We will use Cat-Cow and Uttanasana to mentally follow the air as it moves through the head, chest and belly).



*SequenceWiz*

And that's it! You can change your starting and ending position, but generally speaking, for mind-centered practice it is best to start and end in a comfortable sitting position (on the floor, bolster, blanket or chair). This allows you to establish your theme and to deepen the breath at the very beginning of the practice, and then to observe the effect of the practice at the end. If you choose other starting and/or ending positions, you need to have good reasons for it.

Whatever you do, be sure to stay present with your experience for the entire practice. At the end of the practice take time to assess whether or not you were able to get to your target state, and analyze which elements seemed to work and which ones didn't. It's always best to be honest with yourself about your findings. You can use that information next time to fine-tune your practice.

*SequenceWiz*.com