

Spinal Movement

Flexion - Forward folds -

Primarily - stretch the posterior portion of the spine, primarily lumbosacral
Secondarily- stretch shoulders and neck & posterior musculature of the pelvic girdle and legs particularly the hamstrings

Extension - Backbends

Primarily - expand and stretch anterior musculature of chest and shoulder
Secondarily - strengthen the musculature of the back
thoracolumbar rhythm - don't want to collapse into lumbar spine

Types of Backbends

1. Prone postures that develop strength and resilience in the back muscles

Cobra

Locust, half -locust & variations of that



2. Backbends that utilize the muscles of the back as well as the shoulders and the arms to generate a back bend

Upward dog

Pigeon pose

Frog pose

3. Standing or kneeling backbends that involve asymmetry of the lower extremity. In addition to providing anterior stretching of the chest and abdominal areas, the asymmetric quality of these poses facilitates a deep stretching of the iliopsoas muscles.

- Warrior
- King Pigeon
- Low Lunge



Twists (horizontal planes)

Primary goal create rotation between the vertebral bodies of the spine, which builds strength and flexibility and maintains the elasticity of the intervertebral discs and ligaments.

Secondary goal of twisting is to adjust the relationship between the pelvis and shoulder girdles and the spine. The capacity for intervertebral rotation in the lumbar spine is limited. ***Important****

- Triangle pose
- Revolved Side Angle
- Seated Twist



Lateral Bends (Frontal Plane)

Types of lateral bends -

1. The torso is bent to the side

Primary intention - stretch the torso from the shoulder to the hip joint and laterally flex the spine.

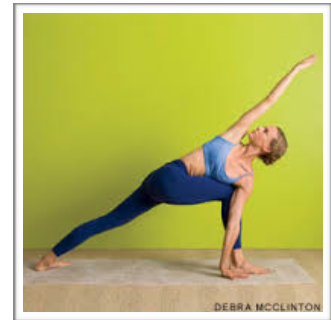
Secondary intention - the secondary intention is to stretch and strengthen the musculature of the shoulder girdle, hip joints, front of the pelvis, and the inner thighs

Tertiary intention - help restore asymmetries of the spine

Gate Pose

Extended side angle

Triangle Pose



2. One leg is abducted and rotated outward

Primary goal - strengthen and stretch the musculature of the front of the pelvis, hip joints, groin, and inner thighs. "Pelvic Opening"

Secondary goal - stretch the lateral portions of the torso and the structures of the shoulder girdle.

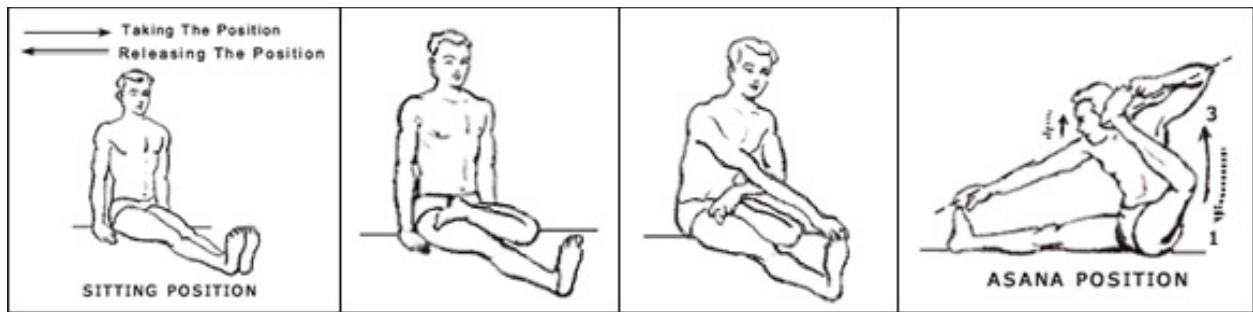
**Pure lateral flexion of the spine is rare in daily activity

Side reclining leg lift

Reclining big toe pose

Archer





Lengthening the Core: Extension

Lengthening and straightening of the spine, creating maximum space between the vertebral bodies and integrating the spinal curves.

Thus, extension is both the means and the goal of asana practice. In this sense, all postures can be considered extension postures.

Primary goal - in extension postures is to bring the spine to maximum vertical alignment, integrating the spinal curves without strain or compression.

Secondary intention is to extend the arms and legs, augmenting the extension of the spine, creating space in the shoulder and hip joints and improving circulation.

Tertiary Goal - Enables deeper movement in bends & twists.

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