

Generally speaking:

- We must decide what will be most helpful to our students and use our common sense to determine which of the different teaching methods e.g., demonstration, verbal instruction etc. will be most helpful at any point in the class.
  - It is not acceptable to work alongside students for long periods, especially when the practice being done does not allow us to clearly see students, for example whilst in Down Facing Dog.
  - Once we are able move your position in the room so you can see the class from different perspectives.
  - Scan the group when you know there is a particular practice which may be potentially problematic, for instance when:
    - there is an important alignment or use of aids e.g. vertical thighs in Ustrasana or padding beneath upper back in Sarvangasana
    - students are entering or leaving a more complex asana.
- We can give additional guidelines and if necessary, it is always possible to bring a group out of a practice and start again, if your instructions have been misconstrued in some way.
- Always remember there is a difference between looking and actually seeing!

## Physical adjustment:

By physically adjusting students we can help them to experience a pose more fully, focusing upon establishing a **good foundation**, and raising the awareness of the **space to move into**. To do this we need to:

- Possess a 'student-centered' attitude i.e. focusing upon what you can do to assist each student rather than 'filling in time'.
- Recognize and honour a student's physical or psychological limitations e.g. tight hips, hamstrings, anxiety etc. (remembering it is function first and form second).
- Offer possible modifications and use of aids in a positive spirit, inviting students to try these so they will have a more beneficial experience of the asana
- Be aware of the primary benefits or purpose of an asana so this takes precedence (because when we modify a pose sometimes, we can choose whether to focus on one part of the body or another)
- Communicate with the students inquiring about their experience.
- Help a student achieve what they could then do independently.

Note:

- Always gain consent from the student before adjusting 'is it okay if....?'
- Imagine students can read your intent from your touch
- Offer physical adjustment in a calm measured manner with no sense of hurry
- Never exert any physical force and generally do not encourage students into compression, with the exception of twists, always moving them into opening
- Often with the placement of a hand we are seeking simply to bring awareness to an area

We will also find that once we know some possible adjustments these can be applied wherever the same movements are being done so for instance for:

## Observation & Physical Adjustments

<b>1.Jathara Parivritti</b> Revolving Stomach Pose	i) To increase health and flexibility of the spine, mobilizing lower back muscles & hips ii) To open chest and shoulders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can realign positioning of arms so at shoulder height, palms up.</li> <li>• Can place a block under head and/or thighs if needed.</li> <li>• Once in the pose can place a hand lightly upon the lead shoulder and the other hand lightly on the top thigh to indicate how to move into the twist.</li> <li>• If the back remains straight (extended) can ease legs closer to arm, maybe straightening legs.</li> </ul>	
<b>2.Ardha Matsyendrasana</b> Half Sage Pose	i) To increase health and flexibility of the spine ii) To open chest and shoulders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note: proportions vary so may need blocks beneath buttocks and possibly under back hand as we should not lean backwards to any great degree.</li> <li>• Before twisting can aid the sense of lift in spine by placing a hand at thoracic spine between and just below the shoulder blades.</li> <li>• Can gently assist movement into the twist by inviting lengthening of spine as inhale and as exhale keep one hand at thoracic level and other to front shoulder inviting them to twist. Only guide, never push!</li> <li>• Once in the pose, can again use this method to invite a deepening of twist where renewing the length on the inhale allows for more twisting.</li> </ul>	
<b>3.Bhujangasana</b> Cobra Pose	i) To strengthen the spine ii) To release the anterior body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From sphinx with elbows forward of shoulder can hold around ankles and invite the student to raise up using back muscles, keeping hips to floor so knees and legs do not contribute; here elbows may lift from floor.</li> <li>• In Cobra can gently smooth around the shoulders from front to back suggesting an external rotation of shoulders, and then slide hands downwards at shoulder blades inviting the student to retract and depress shoulder blades.</li> <li>• In Cobra can place a hand across upper chest just beneath collar bones spreading hand wide to indicate opening at chest and can place a hand at thoracic spine asking a student to lift up into your hand to encourage straightening of the thoracic spine (Remember for backbends it is the extension or straightening of the thoracic region, which dictates the intensity of the arch and focusing here helps to ensure we are not compensating by pushing into the cervical or lumbar regions).</li> </ul>	
<b>4.Ustrasana</b> Camel Pose	i) To open front of body esp. chest, thighs & hip flexors ii) Strengthens back muscles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note: If thighs are not vertical, meaning adverse compression of the lower back may occur, then the version adopted is too intense and a modified version is needed such as keeping hands to the lower back or lowering hands to a block</li> <li>• Can place your hand beneath shoulder blades to direct awareness to the thoracic spine, asking students to lift away from your hand.</li> </ul>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can also simultaneously hold the head in the other hand giving gentle traction (If done then you will need to hold the head as they adduct thighs and lift by leading with the chest). Then helping to lift the head as they return out of the pose.</li> </ul>	
<b>5.Adho Mukha Svanasana</b> Down Facing Dog Pose	i) Lengthen spine ii) Lengthen whole back of body
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whilst in the pose can stand in front of the student and place one hand to the sacrum (avoid the lower back) and very gently press indicate an upwards 45 degrees movement whilst the other hand is placed between the neck and shoulder blades, opening the hand to suggest opening this area.</li> <li>If the back rounds can instruct the student to bend knees, whilst keeping the legs strong &amp; active to direct the stretch to the back; or can stand behind placing hands either side at hips crease and gently draw backwards, whilst carefully checking there is no hyperextension at knees; can also use a belt around hips crease.</li> <li>Note: it may help students to imagine the lower arm is spiraling inwards and the upper arm spiraling outwards.</li> </ul>	
<b>6.Virabhadrasana II</b> Warrior 2 Pose	i) Increase strength of thighs & release of hips and adductors ii) Open chest and release shoulders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bending the front knee check the knee is aligned with the front foot, if not then turn the front foot in by a few degrees (80° works well for many) if this is not done then the front knee will twist inwards, causing long term problems with the collateral ligaments and possible irritation of the SI joints. May also need to allow the rear hip to slightly fall forwards.</li> <li>To move into the pose can support arms from beneath and ensure student keeps shoulders above hips, shoulders relaxed as move into the pose.</li> <li>Once in the pose can support the weight of the arms from beneath and invite students to release shoulders.</li> <li>Can place your foot against the student's back foot and sandwich the back wrist and hand in your hands, gently drawing back inviting the student to open at the heart and release the shoulders; this helps to keep the weight well distributed between the feet i.e. no leaning forwards.</li> <li>Note: arches of feet must be kept raised.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.Trikonasana</b> Triangle Pose	i) Release hips & adductors ii) Strengthen legs, stretch side of body, release shoulders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bending the front knee check the knee is aligned with the front foot, if not then turn the front foot in by a few degrees (80° works well for many), if this is not done then the front knee will twist inwards, causing long term problems with the collateral ligaments and possible irritation of the SI joints.</li> <li>To enter the pose can hold below arms, inviting students to release the shoulders, helping students to lower to a natural point whilst restricting any forward bending or twisting.</li> <li>As enter the pose can place a hand on the front hip to keep pelvis level and avoid collapse of lower side of torso.</li> <li>Once in the pose can stand behind placing a hand lightly on the rear hip indicating this area can open, but no pulling!</li> </ul>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is also possible to redirect the upper arm to the vertical position, encouraging student to lift up out of the lower arm rather than sinking downwards, but be aware that you do not destabilize the student by acting too quickly.</li> <li>Note the lower hand will often need to sit on the top thigh or blocks; arches of feet must be kept raised.</li> </ul>	
<b>8.Parsvakonasana</b> Lateral Angle Pose	i) Stretch upper side of body, strengthening legs ii) Release groin and hips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bending the front knee check the knee is aligned with the front foot, if not then turn the front foot in by a few degrees (80° works well for many) if this is not done then the front knee will twist inwards, causing long term problems with the collateral ligaments and possible irritation of the SI joints. May also need to allow the rear hip to slightly fall forwards.</li> <li>Can hold beneath arms as move into the pose, helping student move into correct level, i.e. front arm to thigh, block etc.</li> <li>Can instruct student to keep front knee from falling forwards, as you draw top shoulder back.</li> <li>Can place hands on either side of the torso indicating outwards spiral of the pose</li> <li>Can carefully align upper arm indicated stretch continues down to rear heel.</li> <li>Note: arches of feet must be kept raised. Also, that for many students this pose requires them to flex deeper into the pose, becoming more grounded and steadier – with many misalignments occurring because the feet are too close together. If students need to keep feet closer then the focus of the pose is to still maintain openness and stretch, connecting the whole top side of the body in a straight line.</li> </ul>	
<b>9.Prasarita Padottanasana</b> Spread Leg Pose	i) Stretch adductors & hamstrings ii) Lengthen spinal column, releasing the neck
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can place one hand on sacrum and other between shoulder blades, to establish connection with feet and lengthening of spine respectively.</li> <li>Note: feet apart as far as first feel inner thigh muscles, both arches lifted, weight must also be felt in toes. May need support beneath hands and micro-bend at knee if there is any hyperextension at all.</li> </ul>	
<b>10.Virabhadrasana I</b> Warrior 1 Pose	i) Increase strength of legs & spinal extension ii) Release shoulders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check placement of feet so they are hip width apart, back foot turned out a few degrees, if stride too great or rotate back foot out too much then can strain collateral ligaments and twist the SI Joint. May need to offer a block for rear heel.</li> <li>With arms to sides check hips are forwards, can place hands on hips and gently press down inviting the student to resist the movement, which will engage the legs.</li> <li>Can release shoulders by placing hand gently on the top of shoulders; students may need to take arms wider with elbows bent to keep this area open.</li> <li>Can place a hand at the thoracic region and ask the student to lift up into the palm.</li> </ul>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can anchor the pose by holding around the back ankle inviting students to medially (inwardly) rotate the back leg.</li> <li>• Note: for balance students may need to take feet wider apart to sides of mat.</li> </ul>	
<b>11.Parsvottanasana</b> Flank Stretch	i) Release hamstrings & lengthen spinal column ii) Release shoulders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check placement of feet so they are hip width apart, back foot turned out a few degrees, if stride is too great or rotate back foot out too much then can strain collateral ligaments and twist the SI Joint. May need to offer a block for rear heel.</li> <li>• In pose can place hands on hips crease and draw them backwards, especially drawing the front leg hip back, so hips are level, checking that feels comfortable.</li> <li>• In pose can place one hand on sacrum and other on thoracic region to encourage grounding downwards through legs and lengthening of spine.</li> <li>• Note: it is often best to lower with front knee bent, possibly with a support for hands, then can straighten front leg if possible; when the hands are in reverse namaste (Anjali Mudra) then this helps to keep the spine lengthened and here we can smooth hands around the shoulders to indicate external rotation.</li> </ul>	
<b>12.Parvritti Trikonasana</b> Reverse Triangle Pose	i) Lengthen & Mobilise Spine ii) Tone legs & release shoulders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check placement of feet so they are hip width apart, back foot turned out a few degrees, if stride too great or rotate back foot out too much then can strain collateral ligaments and twist the SI Joint. May need to offer a block for rear heel.</li> <li>• To enter bend front knee and flex forwards at hips, lower hand to floor or block, can stand to back and draw hips back, especially the front leg side to lengthen the spine and balance the pelvis.</li> <li>• To assist the twist can stand to lower arm side, possibly with your leg against the lower shoulder and with the student's hand to hip can place hand on top shoulder and help to ease open the shoulder into a twist. Can then help to place the upper arm so extending from lower arm to upper arm. Ensure the back stays long, placing a block(s) beneath the front hand if needed.</li> <li>• Student may be able to straighten front leg and if so, may check the alignment of hips again, especially drawing the front leg back.</li> </ul>	
<b>13.Uttanasana</b> Standing forward Pose	i) Stretch hamstrings and posterior body in general ii) Lengthen spinal column, releasing the neck
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can place hands on sacrum (not lower back) and very gently press down to connect with feet.</li> <li>• Can also place hand on thoracic spine with no pressure to encourage lengthening of spine.</li> <li>• Note: may need blocks beneath hands or bent knees if the back rounds to avoid lumbar compression; ensure no hyperextension of knees, softening them if needed.</li> </ul>	

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<b>14.Balasana</b> Child's Pose	i) Release the spinal column
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place one hand at the sacrum and the other at the thoracic spine, no downwards pressure exerted.</li></ul>	

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