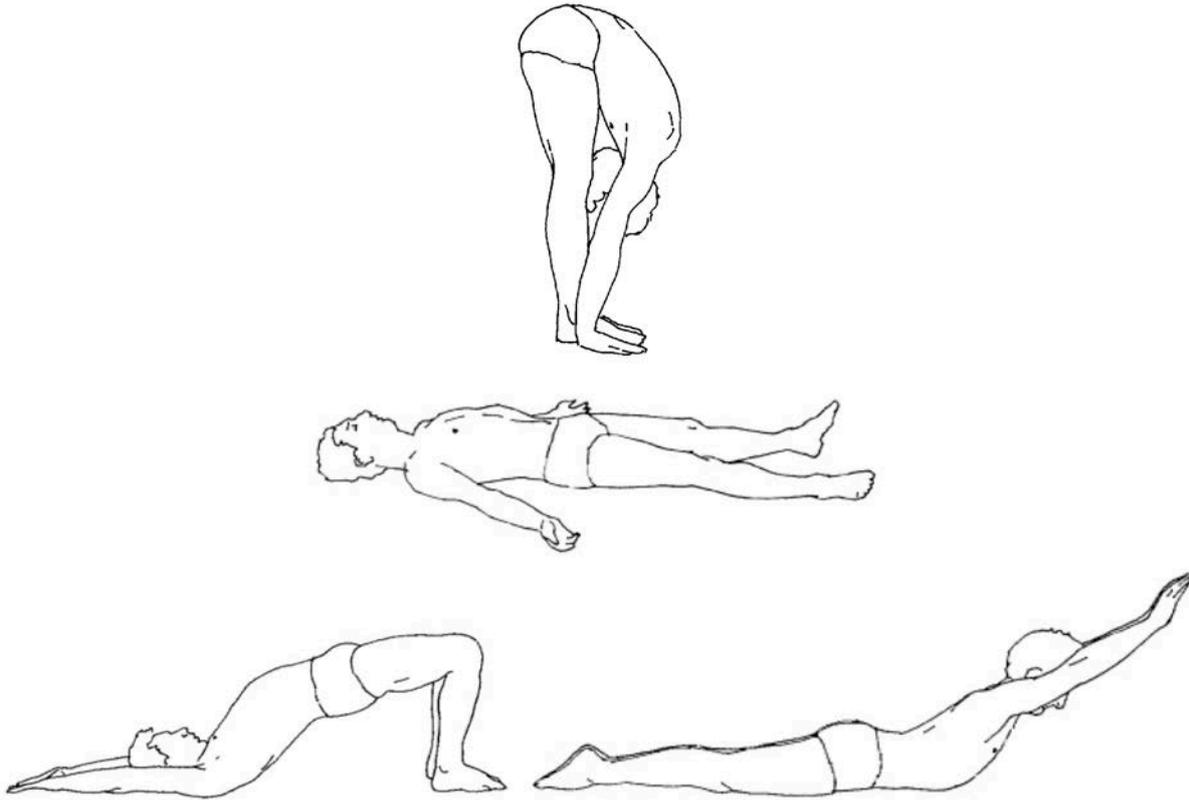


## The Viniyoga of Āsana -

### 3. The Principles used in Constructing an Āsana Practice



So how have the various schools of Yoga come to ideas of using rest, preparation, counterpose, etc as planning principles in the practice of Āsana?

Also if we have certain principles underpinning how we work, how do we apply them to students already set in a particular mode of Āsana practice?

**For example:**

- Perhaps if they have a physical problem then you have something to work with. However you need to be tactful about pointing such things out, maybe waiting.
- Otherwise you can try to meet them halfway i.e. adding a couple of things to their practice they know and a couple they don't.

If they have been practising in this way for several years what does it matter if it takes several months to influence their Āsana practice. We must consider changes within what is acceptable to each and everybody as basic principles of Āsana practice.

Though in terms of Yoga practice within adult lifestyles the priorities need to be based as much, if not more, around how they practice, rather than what they practice.

For example:

When less Āsana time available than they would like, rather than coping with a more cramped than usual daily mindset, we can consider reducing the number of Āsana the student is used to, or reducing the number of repetitions, or perhaps the length of the stays.

Or, we can even considering lengthening the breath, thus again using fewer Āsana, but all with a longer breath than usual. Here the Bhāvana could be to observe the effect of a more spacious than usual Āsana breathing within the students more usual Āsana.

Thus, we can think of approaching a refresh of the student's relationship with their practice through progressively slowing the patterning of their breathing. To do this a student has to reconsider their practice, not in terms of what we do with their body, but what they do with the breath within their body.

All, whilst remembering within our considerations and choices, that the longer term purpose of varying the forms or numbers of Āsana is to facilitate access to the overall function of Āsana. In other words purposeful change rather than changeless purpose.

The next post will consider the direction of one's Āsana practice.