

# Module 3 Rooted in Service

## Methodology:

### Introduction to Sequencing:

#### • Importance of Sequencing in Yoga:

- Sequencing influences physical, emotional, and energetic experiences.
- Ensures safe, supportive movement and breathwork.
- Proper preparation and counterposes prevent injury and enhance body awareness.

#### • Traditional Sequencing (“The Arch”):

- Follows a structured flow from centering → physical effort → relaxation.
- Common sequence: **Centering** → **Warm-up** → **Sun Salutations** → **Standing Postures** → **Core Work** → **Balance** → **Deep Stretch** → **Inversions & Twists** → **Relaxation**.
- Benefits physical practice but may not fully address nervous system regulation, especially for trauma survivors.

#### • Healing-Centered Sequencing (“Waves of Regulation”):

- Prioritizes nervous system balance and embodied self-awareness.
- Alternates between activation and self-soothing to support self-regulation.
- Structure: **Energetic Release** → **Range of Motion Warm-up** → **Centering & Somatics** → **Strength & Resilience** → **Coordination & Focus** → **Integration & Relaxation** → **Closing Breathwork**.
- Encourages participants to connect with their body’s responses to movement and breath, creating a safer and more empowering experience.

### Trauma-Informed Sequencing: Key Elements

#### • Understanding Trauma in the Body:

- Past trauma can manifest as physical and emotional responses.
- Sensory triggers can bring up real-time emotions, making presence difficult.
- Trauma-informed yoga provides self-soothing tools and supports nervous system regulation.

#### • Core Elements of Trauma-Informed Sequencing:

##### 1. Energetic Awareness:

- Helps release or balance excess/low energy.
- Uses dynamic, natural movements like shaking, stomping, or rhythmic tapping.

##### 2. Range of Motion Warm-up:

- Encourages joint mobility and inward focus.
- Includes gentle spinal flexion, rotation, and shoulder circles.

##### 3. Centering & Somatics:

- Promotes breath and body awareness.
- Helps regulate the autonomic nervous system (ANS).

##### 4. Strength & Resilience:

- Builds physical and mental endurance.
- Engages the body with heat-generating postures.

### 5. Coordination & Focus:

- Enhances balance, flexibility, and mindful movement.

### 6. Integration & Relaxation:

- Uses restorative postures and breathwork.
- Supports calm, closure, and embodiment.

### • Goal of Trauma-Informed Sequencing:

- Helps participants move between activation and relaxation states.
- Encourages self-awareness and the ability to recognize and respond to embodied sensations.
- Creates a safe, supportive space for healing and self-regulation.

## Trauma-Informed Methodology in Action

### • Class Structure & Intent:

- Begins with a check-in for participants to share energy levels or focus areas.
- Moves through cycles of energy release, centering, and mindfulness.
- Sequencing mirrors the ebb and flow of physical and emotional activation, supporting awareness and resilience.

### • Example Trauma-Informed Class Flow:

#### 1. Arrival & Check-in:

- Facilitator welcomes participants and sets a supportive, non-judgmental tone.
- Props are available to meet individual needs.

#### 2. Energetic Awareness:

- Uses dynamic movements like shaking, stomping, or arm circles.
- Helps release excess energy or generate energy within the body.

#### 3. Range of Motion Warm-up:

- Gentle movements such as spinal rotations and hip circles.
- Encourages participants to explore “today’s body” without judgment.

#### 4. Centering & Somatics:

- Breath-focused grounding practices like *Three-Part Breath* or *Seated Mountain Pose*.
- Supports nervous system regulation and presence.

#### 5. Strength & Resilience:

- Engages the body with heat-building sequences (*Warrior variations*, *Sun Salutation modifications*).
- Encourages a sense of strength and empowerment.

#### 6. Coordination & Focus:

- Balance-focused postures (*Tree Pose*) and deeper stretches.
- Reinforces flexibility and mindful movement.

#### 7. Integration & Relaxation:

- Concludes with restorative postures, guided visualization, and closing breathwork.
- Fosters reflection, calm, and a sense of closure.

### • Why This Approach Matters:

- Balances energy release, focused movement, and relaxation.
- Supports participants in reconnecting with their bodies in a safe, empowering way.
- Encourages self-awareness, resilience, and personal healing through mindful practice.

# Yoga Philosophy:

## Ahimsa as the Foundation of Healing-Centered Yoga

### • Definition of Ahimsa:

- Ahimsa, meaning *non-harm* or *non-violence*, is a foundational principle of yoga.
- It is part of the Yamas, the first limb of the Eightfold Path of Yoga.
- Extends to thoughts, words, actions, and relationships with ourselves, others, and the world.

### • The Challenge of Practicing Ahimsa:

- While simple in theory, Ahimsa requires deep reflection on harm in our personal lives, communities, and society.
- Encourages awareness of how harm manifests and how to actively reduce it.

### • Exploring Ahimsa in Practice:

#### 1. Ahimsa and the Inner Journey:

- Recognizing and transforming harmful thoughts and self-talk.
- Cultivating self-compassion and mindful personal practices.

#### 2. Seeing Self, Seeing Others:

- Examining personal biases, judgments, and assumptions.
- Creating inclusive, welcoming spaces for all participants.

#### 3. Identifying Assumptions and Perceptions:

- Understanding systemic harm and societal narratives.
- Recognizing the impact of language and perspectives on marginalized groups.

### • Why Ahimsa Matters in Yoga:

- Encourages healing and connection within ourselves and our communities.
- Supports facilitators in cultivating a safe, compassionate, and inclusive practice.
- Aligns yoga with its true purpose... fostering unity, understanding, and peace.

## Ahimsa: The Practice of Non-Harm

- **Core Principle:** Ahimsa (*non-harm/non-violence*) is the foundation of yoga, encouraging mindfulness in thoughts, words, and actions to support healing.
- **Self-Reflection:** Harm exists not just externally but in self-talk and conditioned behaviors. Recognizing and transforming these patterns fosters personal and communal well-being.
- **Ongoing Practice:** Ahimsa isn't immediate—it requires time, awareness, and commitment to breaking cycles of harm and shifting inner narratives.
- **Expanding Awareness:** Reflect on harm within personal relationships, communities, and society. How do assumptions, fears, and interactions shape our engagement with others.

👉 Journal thoughts on where Ahimsa exists or is lacking and explore ways to cultivate non-harm in daily life.

## Seeing Self, Seeing Individuals; Listening & Learning

### • Beyond Observation:

- A trauma-informed yoga facilitator must go beyond simply seeing participants—practicing non-judgment, holding space, and avoiding assumptions.
- Discrimination in yoga spaces (age, body type, ability, gender, race, attire) must be actively recognized and

addressed.

#### • **Self-Reflection & Awareness:**

- Facilitators must critically examine their own biases, judgments, and assumptions.
- Listening to internal monologue and past influences helps identify insecurities and blind spots.
- Understanding personal reactions provides a foundation for creating an inclusive space.

#### • **Learning from Participants:**

- Truly seeing others begins with understanding oneself.
- Personal history shapes emotional reactions, influencing how facilitators perceive and interact with others.
- Unchecked biases and past traumas can unconsciously shape how facilitators engage with participants.

#### • **The Body as a Supercomputer:**

- All experiences—positive and negative—are stored in the brain and body, influencing responses and interactions.
- Positive experiences may create joyful emotional activations, while harmful ones can trigger survival mode responses.
- Without awareness, people may project their own history onto others rather than seeing them as they are.

#### • **Yoga as a Tool for Awareness & Healing:**

- Students use yoga to explore personal history, prejudices, and triggers...bringing awareness and healing to past harm.
- Facilitators create a welcoming environment by offering **invitational, accessible cueing** and **open-minded acceptance** of every participant.
- A trauma-informed space honors the individuality of all who join, allowing them to safely engage in self-exploration and healing.

### **Identifying Assumptions & Perceptions**

#### **Understanding the Impact of Assumptions**

- Recognizing our own assumptions can be unsettling and emotionally activating.
- Admitting ignorance, discomfort, or opposition to another's experiences can feel overwhelming.
- Avoiding this reflection can perpetuate exclusion, oppression, and systemic harm.

#### **False Assumptions & Their Consequences**

- Societal assumptions fuel discrimination, impacting mental health and well-being.
- Generational trauma and systemic oppression lead to **allostatic overload**, making individuals more vulnerable to harm.
- False assumptions generalize entire groups (e.g., "*All [group] think/act a certain way*"), reinforcing harm.

#### **Dehumanizing Language & Incarceration**

- Common terms used for incarcerated individuals reduce them to their past actions (*criminal, inmate, felon, offender*).
- Discussions often strip people of their humanity, defining them solely by offenses (*thief, addict, murderer*).
- Such language reinforces stigma, preventing meaningful rehabilitation and support.

#### **Broadening Perspective: Root Causes of Incarceration**

- Consider the factors contributing to incarceration:
- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs):** Trauma, violence, neglect.
- **Systemic Inequities:** Racism, homophobia, ableism, economic disparity.
- **Limited Access:** Education, mental health care, housing, nutrition.
- **Criminal Justice Policies:** Harsh sentencing, lack of rehabilitation programs.

## Practicing Ahimsa in Advocacy & Action

- Shift the social narrative from punishment to healing and rehabilitation.
- Advocate for justice system reform that includes trauma-informed support.
- Recognize the role of systemic harm in incarceration and work toward community healing.
- Use compassionate language that acknowledges humanity rather than reinforcing stigma.

By **changing our perspective and challenging harmful narratives**, we actively practice Ahimsa... not just in personal relationships but in how we contribute to broader social change.

## Embodied Anatomy:

### From the Ground Up: Rooting Through the Feet

#### The Foot as Our Foundation

- The foot provides stability and serves as the platform for movement.
- 100% of body weight passes through the feet when standing, requiring strength and adaptability.
- The foot's **26 bones and 32 joints** allow for flexibility and balance.

#### Adaptability of the Foot

- **Weight Distribution:** The foot changes shape to absorb and distribute body weight.
- **Terrain Adjustment:** Adapts to uneven surfaces for stability and mobility.
- **Yoga Practice:** Standing and seated postures require the feet to twist, compress, and adapt dynamically.

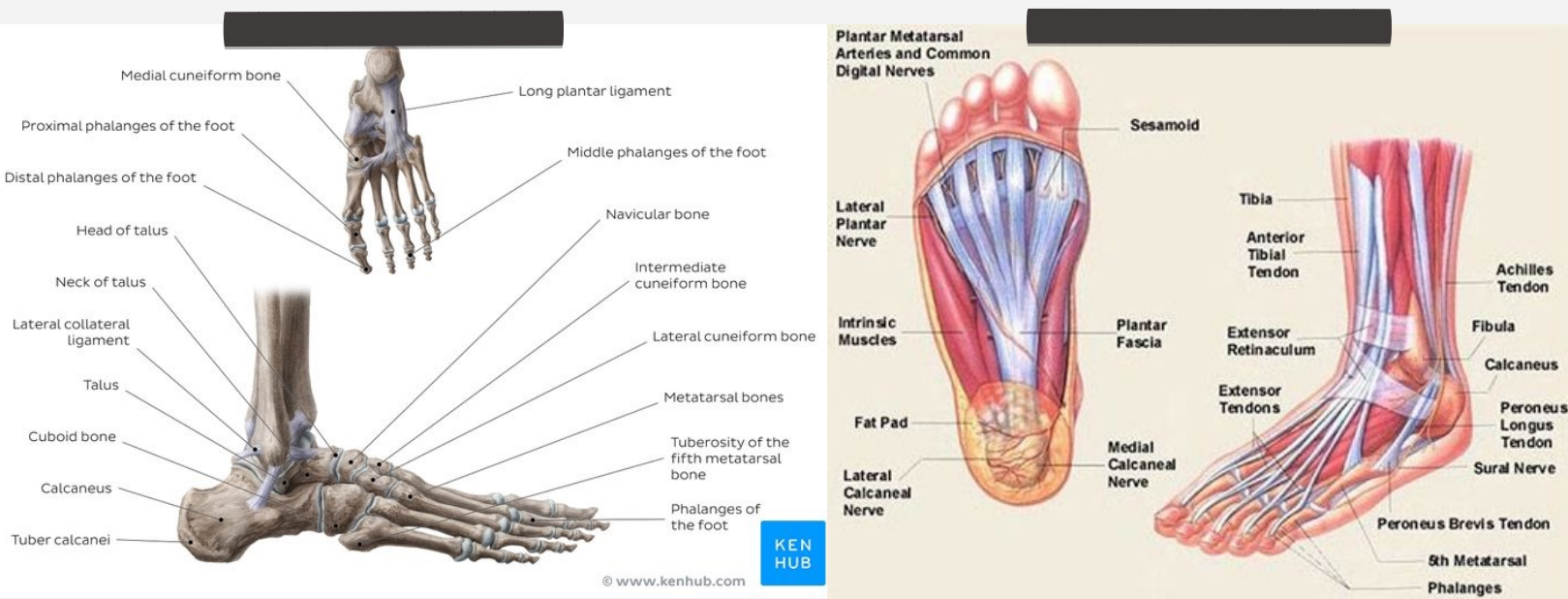
#### The Foot's Connection to the Earth

- Beyond being a physical foundation, the feet represent grounding and connection to the earth.
- Rooting through the feet fosters balance, stability, and a sense of presence in yoga practice.

#### Importance of Foot Awareness in Yoga

- Understanding the foot's structure helps prevent injury and enhances movement efficiency.
- Strength, balance, and flexibility in the feet support overall alignment and stability.
- Practitioners recovering from foot or ankle injuries benefit from focused foot awareness and strength-building exercises.

By appreciating the complexity of the foot, we enhance our ability to engage mindfully with our foundation... both physically and energetically... in our yoga practice.



## Building Core Awareness

### The Core's Role in Movement & Stability

- Supports **spinal stability, torso mobility, and movement of the upper and lower body.**
- Many experience **discomfort, trauma, or disconnection** from their core due to injury, digestive issues, or insecurity.
- Ahimsa (non-harm) should guide our communication and cueing when discussing the core.

### Physical & Spiritual Core Connection

- Yoga fosters **personal connection**, both physically and spiritually.
- The core muscles **anchor** our sense of strength and balance.
- Strengthening the **spiritual core** fosters comfort, contentment, and self-support.

### Core Muscles & Their Functions

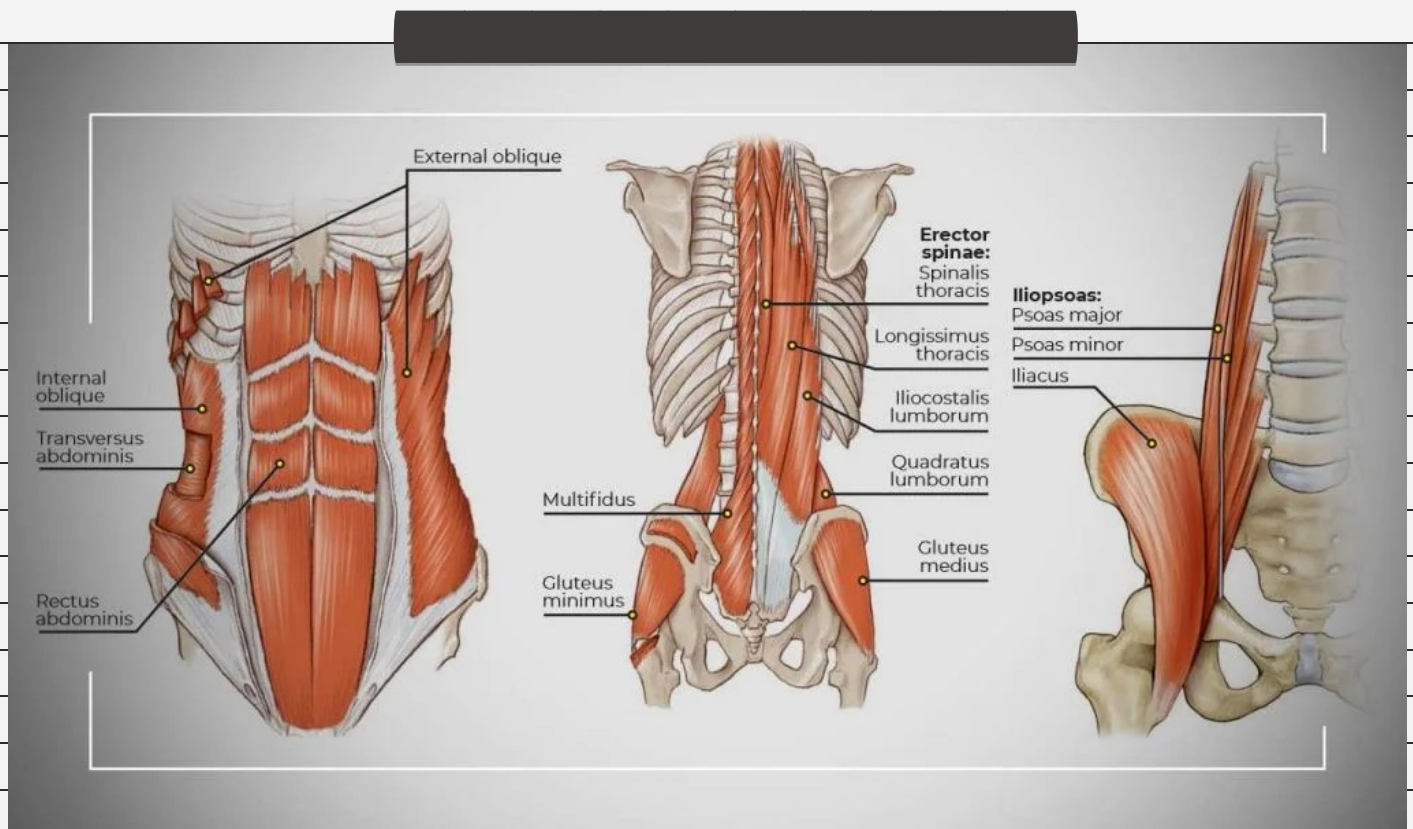
- **Abdominals (External Oblique, Internal Oblique, Transverse Abdominis, Rectus Abdominis):**
- Create a stabilizing girdle around the waist.
- Support movement of the spine and trunk.
- **Back Muscles:** Assist in spinal stability and mobility.
- **Gluteals & Pelvic Floor Muscles:** Play a role in posture and balance.

### David Keil's Insights on Core Functionality

- Abdominal muscles **connect the ribcage to the pelvis**, influencing spinal movement and stability.
- Though they may seem distant from the spine, they **play a crucial role in stabilizing and moving it.**
- Core engagement impacts **pelvic movement**, influencing posture and balance.

### Embodied Exploration

- Review core muscle diagrams to understand their structure.
- Move your body—twist, reach, and bend—to **observe how your core engages in movement.**
- Cultivate awareness of how the core **supports and influences** overall mobility.



## Exploring the Spine

### **Structure & Function of the Spine**

- The spine consists of **33 vertebrae** divided into five sections:
  - **Cervical, Thoracic, Lumbar:** Connected by **ligaments and vertebral discs** for mobility and shock absorption.
  - **Sacrum & Coccyx:** Fused vertebrae that support the pelvis and lower body.
- The **nervous system** is housed within the spine, making spinal health crucial to overall well-being.

### **Importance of Spinal Awareness in Yoga**

- **Back pain and injury** are common reasons individuals seek yoga.
- Keeping the spine **safe and healthy** is essential when guiding participants in practice.

### **Susi Hately's Insights on Spinal Awareness (from Anatomy and Asana: Preventing Yoga Injuries)**

- The spine is **central** to all movement, connecting to **fascia, blood vessels, muscles, and nerves**.
- A balanced and connected spine **nourishes, stimulates, and harmonizes** the body.
- When the spine functions optimally, movement becomes **fluid and effortless**, much like a well-conducted orchestra creating beautiful music.

### **Practical Application**

- **Cue spinal awareness** in yoga by emphasizing alignment, mobility, and core support.
- **Encourage mindful movement** to prevent injuries and promote spinal health.
- **Recognize the spine's role** as the foundation of movement, supporting strength, flexibility, and overall vitality.

### **Understanding the Spine: Stability, Mobility & Vulnerability**

#### **The Spine as a Pyramid**

- The **broad base and narrow top** provide stability, much like a pyramid.
- Vertebrae **become progressively smaller** from the lumbar to the cervical spine.

#### **The Spine as a String of Pearls**

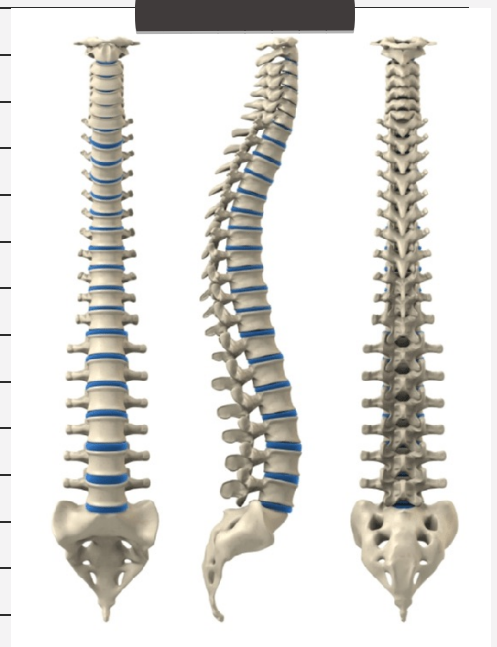
- The spine is **highly mobile**, with tiny vertebrae linked together like pearls on a necklace.
- Each vertebra moves independently while contributing to the overall function of the spine.

#### **Weak Links in the Spine**

- Each vertebral joint has a **different range of motion**.
- Vulnerable areas exist where spinal curves **change direction** (e.g., **cervical to thoracic, thoracic to lumbar**).
- These areas are more prone to **stress and injury**.

#### **Spinal Curves & Their Importance**

- **Cervical Spine** (neck): **Lordotic curve** (arches forward).
- **Thoracic Spine** (upper back): **Kyphotic curve** (arches backward).
- **Lumbar Spine** (lower back): **Lordotic curve** (arches forward).
- **Sacral & Coccyx** (pelvis/tailbone): **Slight kyphotic curve** (arches backward).



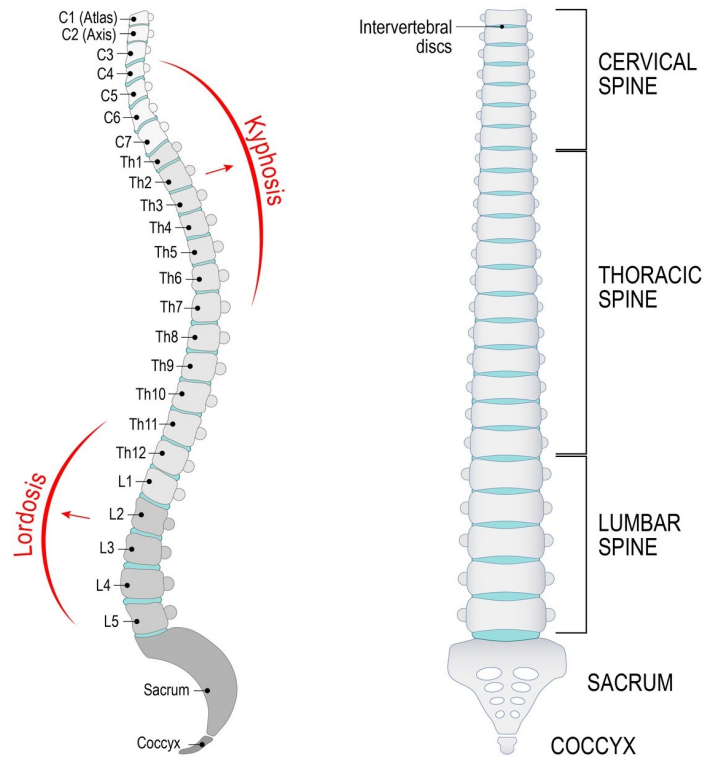
- Changes in curvature create areas that require **extra care and stability** in movement.

### Practical Considerations in Yoga

- **Lengthen before twisting, flexing, or extending** to protect the spine.
- **Engage the core** to provide support and reduce strain.
- **Cue mindful movement** to accommodate participants with back pain or injury.
- Awareness of spinal structure helps guide **safe, supportive yoga practices** that strengthen and stabilize the back.

### Spinal Curvatures & Considerations in Yoga

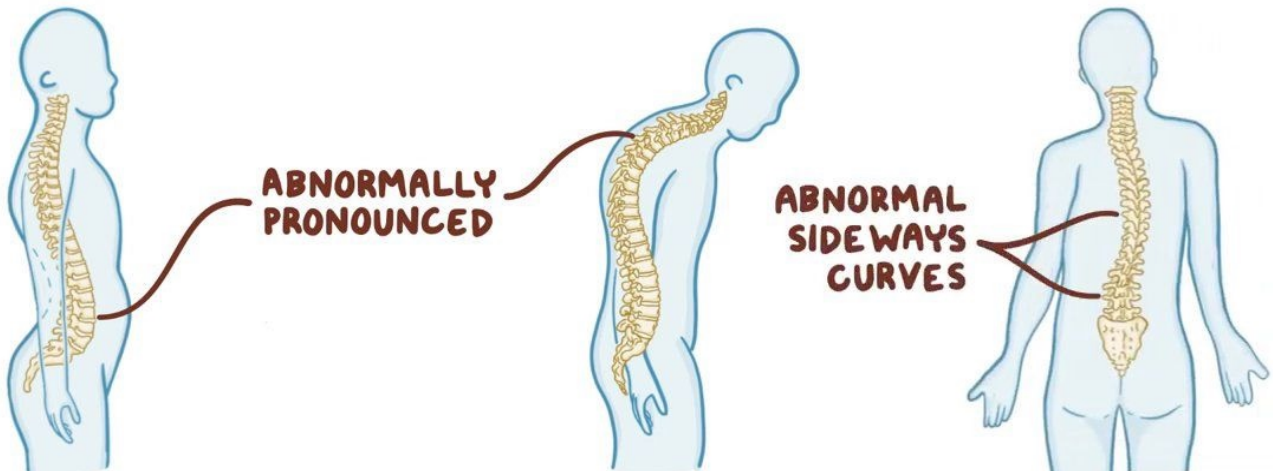
- **Lordosis** (lumbar inward curve), **Kyphosis** (thoracic outward curve), **Scoliosis** (side-to-side spinal curve).
- In **Mountain Pose**, participants may show **uneven shoulders, hip shifts, or foot variations** due to natural structure or past injuries.
- **Avoid forced adjustments**, especially for scoliosis, as they can cause pain or imbalance.
- Use **invitational cues** like:
  - *“Lengthen the spine with ease.”*
  - *“Root through the feet, engage the core, and soften the shoulders.”*
- Prioritize **self-awareness, comfort, and adaptation**, ensuring a **safe, inclusive** practice for all.



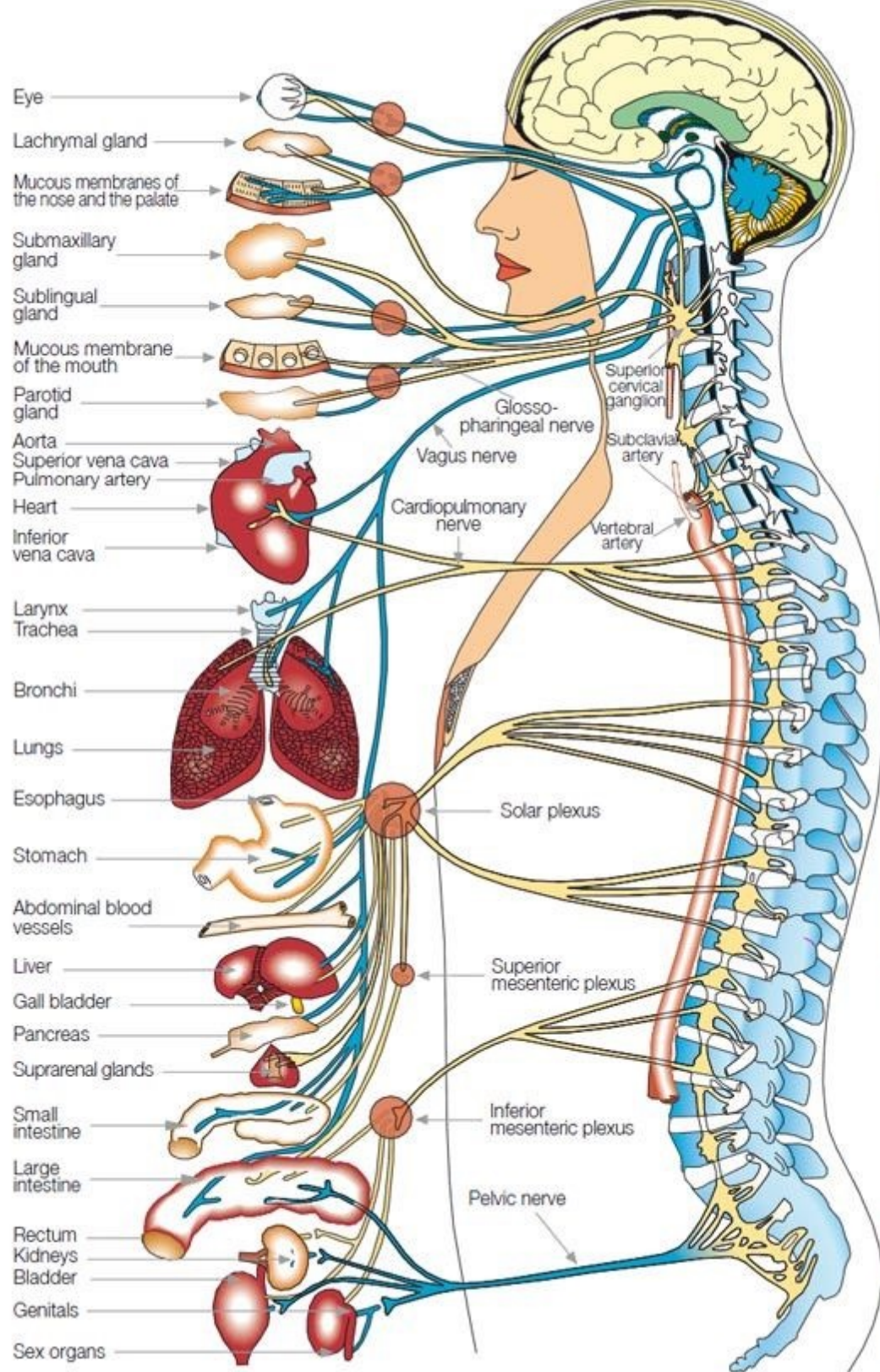
## (CURVATURES of the SPINE)

# LORDOSIS, KYPHOSIS & SCOLIOSIS

[HYPERLORDOSIS]      [HYPERKYPHOSIS]







VERTEBRAE	AREAS AND PARTS OF THE BODY	POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS	
<b>CERVICAL</b>			
C 1	• Back of the head	Headaches (including migraines, aches or pain at the back of the head, behind the eyes or in the temples, tension across the forehead, throbbing or pulsating discomfort at the top or back of head)	
C 2	• Various areas of the head		
C 3	• Side and front of the neck		
C 4	• Upper back of the neck		
C 5	• Middle of neck and upper part of arms		Jaw muscle, or joint aches or pains
C 6	• Lower part of neck, arms and elbows		Dizziness, nervousness, vertigo
C 7	• Lower part of arms, shoulders		Soreness, tension and tightness felt in back of neck and throat area
<b>DORSAL</b>			
D 1	• Hands, wrists, fingers, thyroid	Pain, soreness, and restriction in the shoulder area	
D 2	• Heart, its valves and coronary arteries	Bursitis, tendonitis	
D 3	• Lungs, bronchial tubes, pleura, chest	Pain and soreness in arms, hands, elbows and /or fingers	
D 4	• Gall bladder, common duct		
D 5	• Liver, solar plexus	Chest pains, tightness or constriction, asthma, difficulty breathing	
D 6	• Stomach, mid-back area	Middle or lower mid-back pain, discomfort and soreness	
D 7	• Pancreas, duodenum	Various and numerous symptoms from trouble or malfunctioning of:	
D 8	• Spleen, lower mid-back		
D 9	• Adrenal glands	- Thyroid - Heart - Lungs	
D 10	• Kidneys	- Gall bladder - Liver	
D 11	• Ureters	- Stomach - Pancreas - Spleen	
D 12	• Small intestine, upper/lower back	- Adrenal glands - Kidneys	
<b>LUMBAR</b>			
L 1	• Ileocecal valve, large intestine	- Small and large intestines - Sex organs	
L 2	• Appendix, abdomen, upper leg	- Uterus - Bladder - Prostate glands	
L 3	• Sex organs, uterus, bladder, knees	Low back pain, aches and soreness	
L 4	• Prostate gland, lower back	Trouble walking	
L 5	• Sciatic nerve, lower legs, ankles, feet	Leg, knee, ankle and foot soreness and pain	
<b>SACRO</b>			
SACRO	• Hip bones, buttocks	Sciatica, pain or soreness in the hip and buttocks	
<b>COXIS</b>			
COXIS	• Rectum, anus	Rectal trouble	

## Postures and Sequencing:

### Energetic Awareness

- Focuses on **how the body reacts to life's experiences** and how energy flows or becomes blocked.
- Aligns with **Ahimsa (non-harm)** by encouraging **self-awareness with compassion** and curiosity.
- Helps participants recognize how **harm and healing shape physical sensations, memories, and patterns.**
- Key focus areas: **feet, core, and spine**, which often **anchor or reflect energetic responses.**
- Supports **self-regulation, impulse control, and empowerment** through embodied awareness.
- Lays the foundation for the next phase: **Range of Motion Movement** in trauma-informed sequencing.

### Sequencing

#### • **Recognizing Participants' Energy:**

- Participants may arrive with **high energy** (nervous, excited, reluctant) or **low energy** (depleted, withdrawn, fatigued).
- Creating space for **awareness and balance** prepares individuals and the group for practice.

#### • **Personal Energy Awareness:**

- Notice how small actions affect energy—stomping, exhaling, shaking limbs, or deep breathing.
- These techniques can **ground, energize, or regulate emotions** in daily life.

#### • **Heart Rate Variability (HRV) & Nervous System Regulation:**

- Attuning to energetic shifts **supports nervous system balance** and **teaches self-regulation.**
- Over time, the body **develops muscle memory** for managing stress.

#### • **Facilitation & Adaptation:**

- Movement and breathwork **help transition** participants into the yoga space.
- **High energy** participants benefit from **shaking, stomping, or jumping** to release tension.
- **Low energy** participants can **activate their bodies** through the same movements.
- Can be facilitated **standing, seated, or adapted** for accessibility.

#### • **Observation & Customization:**

- Monitor participants' **mobility, range of motion, and energy levels** to **adjust sequencing.**
- **If energy is high**, extend movement-based releases.
- **If energy is low**, incorporate more **invigorating movements** before transitioning into mindfulness.

Balancing energy at the start of practice **supports deeper engagement** in mindfulness, self-awareness, and the next phase:

### Range of Motion Movement.