

This season's vinyasa flow practice is designed to balance the cold, contracting nature of winter with postures that are expansive and build heat.

The third chakra, Manipura, is located in the belly (solar plexus) and is associated with the element of fire, or 'agni'. In Ayurveda, the holistic sister science of yoga, we stoke the 'fire' in our belly to move through stagnant energy and ramp up our metabolism. In yoga, we can use heat-building postures, core work, and strong pranayama practices to activate Agni and warm us up from the inside out.

I love practicing a sequence like this in the winter because I feel like it supports my natural state during this season; I often feel heavy, slow-moving, cold and stale. Using yoga to counter the challenges that come with the 'dead of winter' feelings is an excellent way to increase your energy and warm you up!

Instruction

Begin your class with Kapalabhati pranayama from seated to initiate the process of increasing the body's heat. Then come into table pose and do a few sets of table balance crunches (draw opposite elbow to knee) as warm up. Press into Downward Facing Dog, then wave forward to plank and then back to down dog. Repeat this 10 times (students can do this on their forearms as a modification for wrist pain). From Down Dog, raise right leg and step forward to high lunge. Hold for 10 breaths, step back to Down Dog and repeat the second side.

Begin your modified vinyasa: Mountain pose with a round of Kapalabhati followed by Crow then jump or step back to 4-Limbed Staff Pose, then Upward Dog, Down Dog, jump or step forward to Upward Boat, then Arm Pressure Pose (Bujapidasana), then cross ankles the other way and repeat Arm Pressure Pose. Repeat this vinyasa for a total of 3 times.

Come to stand at the top of the mat and complete Extended Hand to Big Toe Pose, Warrior 3, and Standing Splits all on the right side. Complete on the left side. Vinyasa, then step back and do High Lunge, Triangle, and Eagle Pose all on the right side before completing on the left.

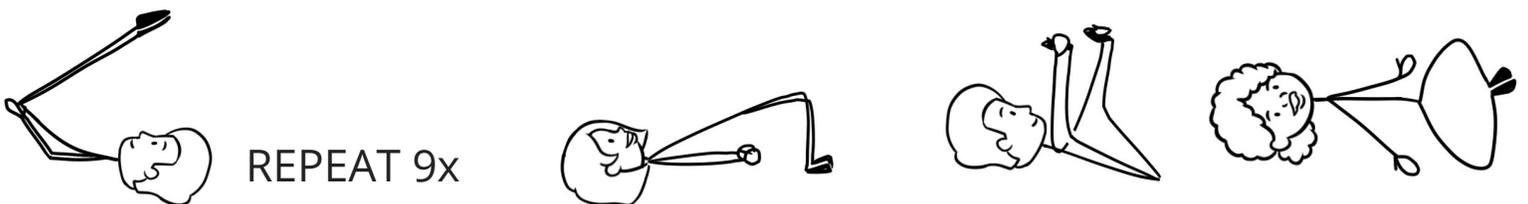
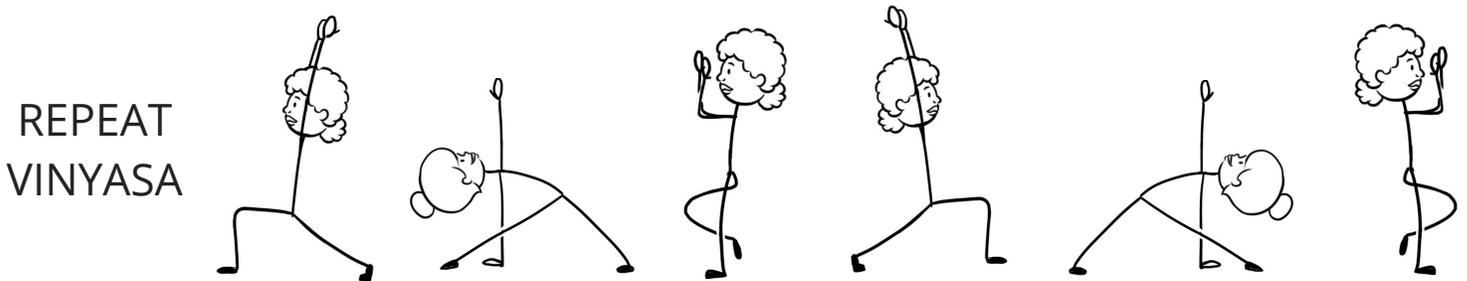
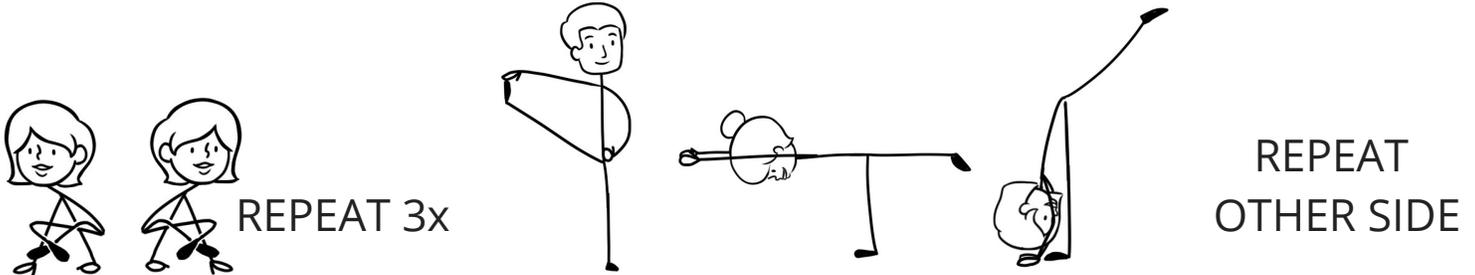
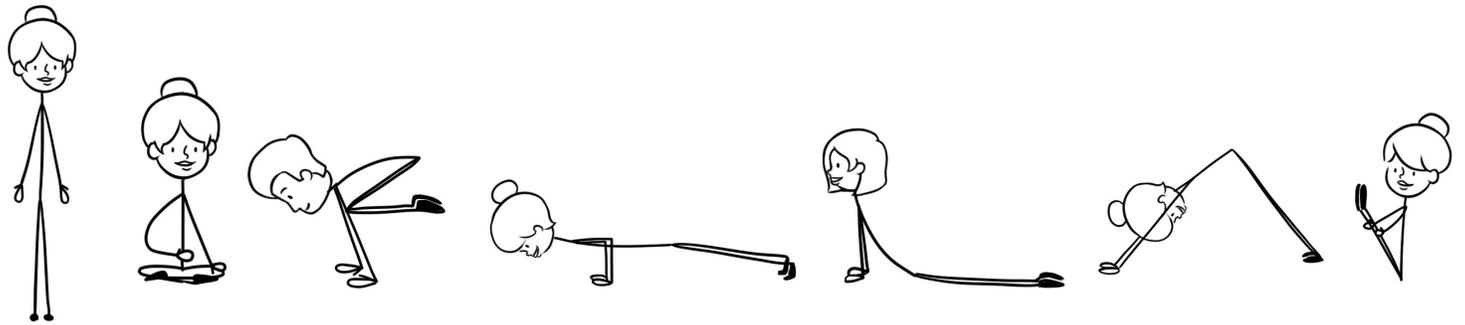
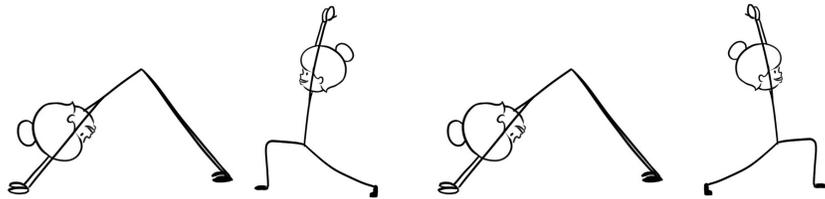
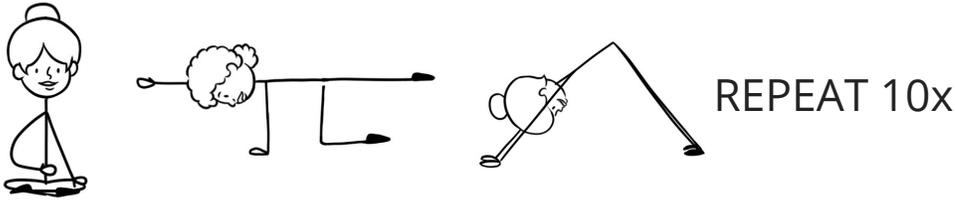
Lie on your back and come in and out of Half Shoulderstand 9 times, then release the hips down to the floor and extend both legs straight up into the air. Make giant circles with the legs keeping the shoulder blades glued to the mat. Teach Bridge Pose, then balance all this strengthening work with Happy Baby and Supine Bound Angle.

Enjoy!

Fiery Flow Sequence

December 2018

Sequence



If you want to engage your students with a deeper understanding of the sequence, speak to the practice of Ayurveda.

BONUS

Here's how you might get a bit more in-depth:

The quality (Dosha) of winter is called Kapha which is cool, slow and heavy. In Ayurveda, we learn to balance this energy by invoking the energy of opposing doshas like Pitta which is energetic, heat-building, lean and strong. We can invoke Pitta energy through not only our yoga practice but also through diet. Try incorporating more spices into your meals during the winter months. Some traditionally prescribed spices in Ayurveda include ginger and cinnamon. These spices help to increase circulation and get the systems of the body moving.

Want to learn more about Ayurveda? It helps to get to know the practice better by understanding how Ayurveda can contribute to your personal health. Try doing a few Ayurvedic quizzes online to get to know which doshas are prevalent in your body. I encourage you to do several quizzes as they can have different questions and answers depending on their source and theory.