

LESSON 6: LOWER BACK

Grade-Level Outcomes

Primary Outcome

Fitness activities: Demonstrates competency in 1 or more specialized skills in health-related fitness activities. (S1.H3.L1)

Embedded Outcome

Stress management: Identifies stress-management strategies (e.g., mental imagery, relaxation techniques, deep breathing, aerobic exercise, meditation) to reduce stress. (S3.H14.L1)

Lesson Objectives

The learner will:

- demonstrate proper breathing techniques while performing asanas.
- review asanas learned previously.
- demonstrate new standing and lower-back asanas.

Equipment and Materials

- Yoga mat for each person
- Block
- Appropriate yoga music

Introduction

Today, we will add staff pose to our regular warm-up [see lessons 1 and 2]. After that, we will practice some new asanas. Now that you've learned the basics, try to extend your stretch and push your bodies. We also will start to explore stress during the cool-down of this lesson. This will build over the next few lessons.

Instructional Task: Beginning Asana Sequence

■ PRACTICE TASK

Have students curl their toes under and push up to downward dog.
Drop knees into caterpillar.
Cobra
Downward dog
Repeat the flow two times.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Encourage students to get their chins as close to the mat as they can. It requires more upper-body strength.

What to Look For

- Caterpillar: Students putting their chins close to the mat.
- Students are moving under control.

Instructional Task: New Asanas, Lower-Back Focus

■ PRACTICE TASK

Demonstrate the new poses.
From downward dog, have students move onto their knees and begin the following sequence:

- Gate
- Half circle
- Camel
- Child's pose

Repeat sequence on the other side.

Refinements

Half circle:

- Make sure students' support hand is directly under the shoulder. Other arm should extend as far as possible.

Camel:

- Push the shoulder blades together.

Extension

Camel:

- Be sure to progress through camel: Hands on lower back first, one hand on heels at a time (see differentiation).

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Gate and half circle: Remind students to work at their level.
- Camel: If students are not comfortable with the tops of their feet pressed flat against the mat, have them go back to toes curled under, heels up.

What to Look For

- Students are breathing while holding the poses.
- Did students stop at their level or push themselves?
- Students need encouragement to push the limits.
- Are students pushing too hard?

Instructional Task: Standing Asanas Review Sequence

■ PRACTICE TASK

From child's pose, move into downward dog.

Rag doll

Roll up slowly to quiet mountain.

Triangle

Warrior I

Warrior II

Five-pointed star

Repeat on the other side.

Roll down to rag doll.

Hands to floor

Student Choices/Differentiation

- Remind students to use the block in triangle if they need it.
- Remind students to challenge themselves by sitting lower in the warriors and keeping arms straight.

What to Look For

- How are students transitioning between asanas?
- Are they moving with flow?
- Am I still correcting minor mistakes?

Instructional Task: Cool-Down

■ PRACTICE TASK

Have students lie on their backs in savasana (corpse pose).
Cue with breath counting.

EMBEDDED OUTCOME: S3.H14.L1 As students are relaxing, their heart rates coming down, ask them to think about stressors in their lives. Cue with examples.

Student Choices/Differentiation

Those whose lower backs are uncomfortable may keep the knees up with feet on the floor.

What to Look For

- Did the class demeanor change when you asked them about their stressors?
- Did you notice physical tension?

Formal and Informal Assessments

- Teacher observation and correction
- Journal assignments (see homework)

Closure

Quiet the mind; chime the gong. Have students listen and focus on the sound as long as they can.

Reflection

- How are students' transitions?
- How are students doing on the new poses?
- Are their movements flowing from one pose to another?

Homework

Journal assignment:

- During savasana, I had you think about stressors. Make a list of the things you were thinking about.
- How did this affect your savasana practice?
- Log all of your physical activity outside of class. Include what you did and how long you did it.

Resources

Brown, C. (2003). *The yoga bible*. Cincinnati: Walking Stick Press.

Martin, K., Boone, B., & DiTuro, D. (2006). *Hatha yoga illustrated*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Stephens, M. (2012). *Yoga sequencing*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Internet keyword search: "warrior 1," "warrior 2," "camel pose," "gate pose," "half circle pose," "child's pose," "five-pointed star pose"