

Creative Sequencing, with Anna Sugarman

Introduction and overview, 03:33

Creativity – whatever form your art takes – is the ultimate labour of love. The creation of a new sequence is a journey, along which many potential obstacles can arise. These include creative blocks, imposter syndrome, perfectionism, FOMO and more... In this course, Anna will share her personal methods to help spark your creativity, along with some tried and tested tips and tricks to instantly spice up your sequencing.

MODULE 1: CREATIVITY

Practice: Coffee break – High flying, energising flow, 24:55

Like a mid-morning or afternoon espresso, this shot of asana will wake you up! Starting and finishing in Lightning Bolt pose sets the tone – this quickie is for amping up creativity and energising the mind and body. Twists and crescents release grogginess, and flying from trees and eagles into airplanes inspires through play. Return to your day ready to rock on!

What is creativity? 01:21

Anna offers some definitions and misconceptions about the nature of creativity.

Neuroscience and creativity, 09:20

In this session you'll learn about how three networks in the brain responsible for the wandering mind, focused thought and selective attention can be strengthened during your yoga practice.

Flow state, 02:16

The state of 'flow' was originally associated with the state of being so completely in the moment that you lose track of all time and sense of 'self' but this can be applied to any activity or practice, including yoga. Anna talks about the nature of flow and its benefits to our students.

Roadblocks to creativity, 07:20

There are a number of things that can hinder our creative process, including time pressures, perfectionism, anxiety, fear of failure, comparison/imposter syndrome... In this reassuring session we'll dive deeper into a few of these and learn how to recognise them and what to do about them.

Inspiration station, 06:51

If you feel you always have to come up with something original for your classes, this session is for you. It's packed with ideas of how to get your creative juices flowing. Remember: creativity inspires creativity!

Inspiration meditation, 20:26

A specially created meditation which begins with a few minutes of bouncing and shaking to help you let go of any creative blocks and shake up some extra inspiration. It then follows with a seated meditation which guides you to tune into awareness.

Why creative sequencing? 02:12

In this session, we'll discover the benefits of a 'set' sequence (like Ashtanga, Bikram, Sivananda, etc..) and at the same time, how recognising and honouring our ever-changing and evolving needs can be helpful.

MODULE 2: INTENTION***Practice: Flow with intention, 33:36***

Set an intention and power it with emotion! This practice starts with a brief guided meditation to set the tone for the intention that shines through this practice. We then move in way that embodies the feeling we've invoked. This fluid sequence, which includes balancing Half Moon pose and options for crow, harnesses the breath and heightens your presence.

What is your Why? 09:12

Yoga is, among many things, a practice of self-inquiry. Often we know exactly why we're on the mat...but sometimes it takes a little more investigation. The class invites you to delve deeper into your intention for practicing and teaching – because knowing your 'Why' can be a powerful point from which to start, as well as situate yourself.

Intention: How? 07:27

"At the end of the day people won't remember what you said or did, they will remember how you made them feel," said Maya Angelou. This is especially true in yoga. This class invites you to ask yourself: how would you like to **feel**? And how do you evoke such sensations or emotions on your yoga mat? We'll explore the importance of embodying and invoking emotions, and the resonance this can have on those you teach.

Inspire your students to inquire, 01:53

The last session was a little exercise in *self* inquiry; this class offers you several questions you can use to inspire your students to set intentions, understand their 'why' and make their practice their own.

MODULE 3:***Practice: Back to basics Vinyasa flow, 44:55***

Come back to basics in this well-rounded, full body Vinyasa flow that centres around the breath. Expect traditional Sun Salutations, with variations for all levels, leading into a Dancing Warrior sequence. We conclude with some hip openers, a shoulder stand, and backbends to send a calmer, more energized you off the mat into the world.

Basic skeleton sequence, 28:13

Anna shares a 'skeleton' sequence, which draws from the Primary Series in Ashtanga yoga to comprise a 60-minute, well-rounded practice. It includes centering, warm up, Sun Salutations, standing poses, inversions, backbends, cool down, and Savasana – along with suggestions of different transitions and modifications you can make. In the following modules, Anna breaks down each section so that you can dive more deeply and familiarise yourself with each layer.

Basic sequence suggestions, 01:22

Anna offers some advice and reassurance on how to make this skeleton sequence your own.

Anna's pie, 01:05

Here's a little template you can use to plan and organise your sequences - remember you can vary the amount of each 'slice' according to what you'd like to offer your students.

MODULE 4***Warm up, 04:06***

There are infinite ways you can start a yoga class - be it bringing awareness to, or warming up a specific body part you'll work on later, setting a specific intention, instructing a breath practice, or introducing the theme of the practice. In this session, we'll explore a few of these.

Practice: Feel good now, 45:53

The only time is now. And now's the time to feel as good as you possibly can. This full-body flow is designed to warm up your whole self by taking you on a journey around your mat... From side stretches to gentle twists, through creative crescent lunges, varied skater poses, and dancing warriors ... all the way to a scrumptious rest and finishing up the same way you began. Before you step off your mat, feel how far you've come and choose what to take off the mat, into the world.

Layering, 05:11

Layering - gradually introducing sections upon which you'll build - is a helpful way to structure a yoga class as you can maintain the 'flow' of a class without having to interrupt it to explain what you want to teach. Anna offers some examples of ways you can do this.

Practice: Breathe and Flow, 49:44

A playful, breath-centric flow to enliven your senses, stabilise your nervous system, sharpen your mind and soften your body. We begin with spine mobilisation and calming breath work. Then we flow into a juicy sequence with variations for all levels to stay cool or build heat and difficulty – there are even some options for handstand prep. Finally, we wind down with a few sweet Yin postures to bring us back to our breath – the element that links the mind, body and soul, in the union that is yoga.

Repeat, 01:51

Though the focus is on innovation and creativity here, repetition is an essential part of teaching and learning. It helps save you some time and it helps students to become more familiar with the sequence, which in turn, gives them space to explore the movements and drop more deeply into the flow.

MODULE 5***Practice: Clear and calm to spar and sweat, 1hr 09***

Breathe and calm the nervous system before flowing through two rounds of lunges with shoulder mobilisation and optional side planks, side stretches in crescents, dancing warriors and tree poses... Conclude with hip and heart opening, twisting and resting.

The 3% rule, 08:06

The 3% rule refers to the idea that we only have to change our habits and movement patterns by a tiny amount to make a huge difference to the way something feels. It also reminds us that we don't always have to come up with wildly innovative sequences every time, making them hard to teach, cue and follow. Here are a few suggestions of some (tiny but noticeable) changes you could try.

Between flows, 11:53

Some suggestions of how you can incorporate the '3% rule' each time you come to the top of the mat, in between Sun Salutations or Vinyasa flows. Here we explore different variations of side bending and chair pose, plus standing balance options.

In Downward facing dog, 12:14

Anna offers some idea of variations you could offer your students whilst in Downward Dog.

Movement in static poses, 16:65

Inviting your students to add some movement, strengthening elements or even self-massage to static poses can add an extra layer of inquiry and curiosity to their practice. Here we'll explore some of these options.

Drishti, 05:20

Drishti, or gaze, relates to the fifth limb of yoga (sense withdrawal). Incorporating a focal point in our practice can help to keep the mind focused and engaged, as well as stop us falling over in Tree pose! Anna shares how she likes to use it when teaching meditation or Savasana.

Practice: Lovely layered Vinyasa Flow, 1hr 21

Whether you're practicing for the joy of making your soul shine and heart sing, or studying creative sequencing, this multi-faceted Vinyasa flow is a journey through a series of sequences within sequences, which build upon themselves. It includes traditional yogic elements, innovative low to high lunging Chatarangas, and dancing warriors designed to heat the body and inspire the mind. I move from more instructions to less talking, and there are energetic cues to help you truly be present, feel and embody your practice. This one's designed to send you off the mat with higher vibes and fewer worries.

MODULE 6

Practice: Dancing Mandala flow, 1hr 09

Twist and turn as you dance with the breath in this Mandala flow. Create sacred geometry on your mat and within your body, discovering sweet spaciousness through a journey from front to back, light to dark, masculine to feminine and back again... Absorb heart-opening prana inspired by sun salutations, dancing warriors, forward folds, hip openers, strength and softness.

Significance of sides, 02:31

Switching directions on the mat can offer a layer of playfulness, fun or challenge to your practice but there are other reasons why it's interesting to teach classes that switch sides and change directions. Learn more about them here.

Quarter turns, 07:41

Find out how you can start to incorporate some (3%!) direction switches on the mat.

Half turns, 04:38

Some suggestions of how to implement half turns into your sequencing.

Mix 'em up! 11:49

Anna breaks down the sequence she uses in class, which uses layering to move from a quarter to a half turn - plus a suggestion of how you can prevent yourself from getting mixed up when you teach a sequence like this!

Mandala, 02:41

In a Mandala flow you make your way halfway, or completely around your mat – the rhythmic nature of which can make the sequence feel more like a moving meditation.

Asymmetry, 05:45

So far we've explored the mat using symmetry; here we'll look at how we can introduce some asymmetry into our sequencing.

MODULE 7

Never seen before moves, 06:55

Drawing inspiration from other movement modalities such as Tai Chi, dance or martial arts can add a fun and interesting element to your teaching - here are a few things you could try.

Practice: Intention, breath, presence, 1 hr 2mins

Soar upon the breath through Eagles, Airplanes, Skaters and Warriors in this active practice where presence resounds. Intention, breath, presence - and Flying Ninja Kicks! This hip opening dance with the breath will have you twirling into the Universe!

Speed, 04:52

Slowing down or pausing can impact the energetic resonance of a practice and help students to check in with how they are feeling. Here's how it might look in a Vinyasa flow.

Practice: Groove and move your energy, 45:41

Open your shoulders and heart (and most of the rest of your body too!) in this sequence designed to get the energy flowing. Draw the breath into the heart centre and expand it into the space beyond – the space that not only you move through on your mat, but that we all move through together. Groove through Warriors and Side Angles with some extra pizzazz... Goddesses, Skaters, Standing splits and Dancers... Eventually making your way to the earth for twists and Boats before Savasana!

MODULE 8***Themes, 02:40***

Coming up with a theme for your class can be where your creativity really has the chance to shine! Here are some ideas to get you started.

Practice: The Hara: Flow from your centre, 51:04

This practice brings awareness to your centre – not your abs (though it is a pretty strong flow) but your Hara; your physical centre of gravity, and also your vibrational, spiritual centre. This area, which houses many major organs, is where both the earth and the universe feed us biologically and spiritually. Fold, reach, expand and move from the Hara in this nourishing, creative sequence through twists and turns, Warriors and Eagles... Rise from Savasana feeling centred and balanced.

Bookends, 02:02

Introducing your theme at the start of class and returning to it at the end is a good idea, but consider how you'll weave it through your class too. Remember – your theme should support and elevate your sequence, rather than taking the 'starring role'.

Practice: Unshakeable trust, 1hr 03

During rocky times, yoga has the capacity to stabilise our mind, body and soul. We begin this practice in Hero's pose, with the unshakable trust mudra – a circuit that keeps your beautiful energy flowing and helps to establish unshakable trust in yourself, emotionally and spiritually. We follow this with traditional Sun Salutations to warm the body, and dancing Shivas to shake it up, inspire the mind and tickle the soul. We continue with some hip opening, backbends, twists and then a scrumptious Savasana to fully energize the chakra system as we comfort and calm the nervous system.

Music, 02:30

Learn why using music is more than just sharing your exquisite taste in tunes! Here's a look at how Anna uses music in her teaching.

MODULE 9***Peak pose, 08:37***

Working toward a specific or 'peak' pose (or even including lots of mini peak pose sequences) is another way of theming your classes. Here's an overview of some of the things you need to consider.

Practice: Yogi playtime – Handstand tutorial, 11:42

Get your heart above your head in this playful Handstand tutorial! Inversions energize, improve focus, develop core strength and balance, work with gravity to alleviate the circulatory process... And they're fun! Suitable for all levels to play at their own pace.

Body part specific, 01:07

You might also choose to focus on a specific body part - for the list of poses Anna refers to here, please refer to the handout / page xx of the manual.

Practice: Hhhhot core flow! 32:59

This core-centric sequence begins on the mat with crunches, and flows full circle. From forearm to side plank variations, fallen triangles, crescent moons, a little ninja, a lot of twist, and loads of heat. I was breathing fire by the end!

See ya later, alligator! 00:54

A final word and thank you from Anna.