Scoliosis Yoga Therapy Principles & Practices

Assessment Questions

1. Find out which side is tight, short, collapsed & concave - Left or Right? Left is more common.
2. Is the concave ("cave") side in just thoracic spine or also lumbar? C or S Curve?
3. Is there a hump on the convex side? Does it stick out? Are the ribs spread? Does it also rotated the spine in the same direction as the convexity? i.e. Right convex side = rotates to the right; Left convex side = rotates to the left. How does that affect ROM (Range of Motion)?
4. Where do you experience pain or discomfort? Which side? Both for S curve? Or?

Principles & Practices

1. Lateral bends to stretch concave side(s) - see Parsva Poses - Use poses appropriately for thoracic or lumbar spine - Poses with arms work more stretching upper back and those with legs work more on the lower back
2. Rotated twists to de-rotate - See Parivrtti Poses. Note: It may actually harder to rotated towards your rotated side b/c spread ribs on convex side block the range of motion any further - this calls into question what side to work on in Yoga Therapy. Work on side with less ROM? Is the curve in upper or lower back? Upper body twists vs. lower body twists - other 1/2 of body is stable when twisting the other 1/2
3. Lots of asymmetrical poses for lengthening & strengthening, concave & convex sides alternately
4. Strengthen the convex side of the thoracic spine with arm balances - side plank on the convex side OR with asymmetrical poses that use arms
5. Strengthen the convex side of the lumbar spine with 1/2 śalabhaśana (locust) or cakravakāsana with leg movements; leg balances also work asymmetrically
6. Strengthen the core = whole back, pelvic floor and abs & neck stabilizers
7. When lying on back, prop up concave side(s) with blanket/face clothes - Iyengar Yoga
8. When lying on front, prop up up concave with blanket/face clothes - Iyengar Yoga

S Curve=
Right Thoracic-Left Lumbar

Note: Reverse S is possible ~ S is front view of a person
C Curve =
Right Thoraco-Lumbar

OR
Right Thoracic

\[ \text{L\,\,concave} \quad \text{R\,\,convex} \quad \rightarrow \text{Curve in Middle of Spine} \]

\[ \text{L\,\,convex} \quad \text{R\,\,concave} \quad \rightarrow \text{Curve in Upper Back} \rightarrow \text{you will see a large hunch / bump in upper back = convex side} \]

\[ \text{small compensating curve possible} \]

*Note:* Reverse C is also possible

Left Lumbar Curve

\[ \text{L\,\,convex} \quad \text{R\,\,concave} \]

Note: Reverse is possible
Application: Practices

All Parśva/Asymmetric Poses including Side Planks for Convex side

All Parivṛtti Poses

Purvātana Poses - Back Strengtheners & Hip/ Hip Flexor Openers

Pascimātana Poses - Core Strengtheners & Lower Back Stretches
Special Desikachar Asymmetric Poses

Cakravakasana- One Knee in Front of the Other on Concave Lumbar Side

Dvipadapitham: One Foot in Front of Other on Concave Lumbar side

Uttanasana: One Foot behind Other on Concave Lumbar side

Svanasana: Maggie Modifications

for scoliosis (thoracic)

for unstable pelvis/slumped back