

BASIC STANDING POSES – FOUNDATION FROM THE LEGS

Standing Poses are the best basic poses to begin our practice with, as they bring us into contact with our connection to the Earth. The intelligence of the feet – How the feet are working – brings intelligence up through the legs and pelvis allowing the upper body its greatest freedom to open. When we feel confident and strong in our feet and legs, our foundation, the spine can lengthen more freely, the chest can open, and we feel like an open blossom nourished by its roots. Through the practice of Standing Poses, we begin the process of integrating the physical body with the subtle emotional, mental and spiritual body. Emotionally we feel calm and grounded, mentally we are sharpening our awareness, and spiritually we are experiencing inner connectedness, and peace. Alignment of the feet and legs, especially the ankle and knee joints, is utmost for the seed of awareness to grow.



Ann Barros is a senior Iyengar yoga instructor with over 30 years teaching experience, including 5 years at UCSC, and over 40 successful Yoga In Bali tours. She has led workshops both domestically in California and Colorado, and internationally in Singapore, Jamaica, Greece, Mexico, Jakarta, as well as her beloved Bali, which has become her second home. Ann first studied with BKS Iyengar in India in 1976 who personally guided her into curing her own scoliosis. She is certified by the Iyengar Yoga Institute of S.F. since 1980, and later that year after studying again in India, first came to Bali. Ann's teaching approach is compassionate, yet challenging, with emphasis on precise and careful alignment of the joints for the greatest freedom: strength and flexibility, balance in the body, quieting of the mind, and a soaring of the spirit.



1.) TADASANA - The Mountain Pose begins with the awareness of the feet. How the weight is spread wide throughout the whole foot. Bring the feet together until the mound of the big toes touch. Feel the weight in a tripod base – Mound of big toe / Mound of little toe / and the heel. Widen the toes apart. Lift the inner arches of the feet – this brings awareness all the way up the legs. Slightly tuck the pelvis, so that the pubic bone moves forward. Lift the front and back waist evenly. Allow the shoulders and arms to drop freely. Create a small backbend from the sternum and collarbone. Allow the inner shoulders to soften down from the ears. Bring the hands together into Namaste – prayer position. Practice Stillness and Connectedness. Hold for 10 - 20 deep breaths.



2.) VRKSASANA – The Tree Pose – Start from Tadasana, and then with a deep inhalation, bring the right foot up to press into inner thigh of the left leg. Immediately energize and press the right

foot into inner left thigh, and equally press (harden) inner left thigh into the right heel contact. This way there is stability, equal pressure from heel to inner thigh and from inner thigh to heel. Focus on the (right) standing foot – the tripod base of the foot. Stay with the awareness in the standing foot. If wobbling occurs, practice with a wall behind for support and slowly move away from the wall. Bring the hands together into prayer position (Namaste). Keeping the eyes soft, focus on a point in front of you and from time to time, change the focal point so that the eyes do not become too hard. Practice Stillness and unwavering Stability. Hold for 10 – 20 deep breaths / Release bent leg back to Tadasana on exhalation / Repeat other side.



3.) TRIKONASANA – Triangle Pose – Stand in an equilateral triangle – forward (right) foot at 90 degrees pointing in line with the parallel lines of the yoga mat. Back (left) foot should be turned in at 45 degrees. The distance between the feet is the length of your leg; therefore it is an equilateral triangle. The right knee must be

pointing in the same direction as right foot with tremendous energy in lifting the kneecap. The left knee is slightly turned in to be in line exactly with the left foot. In the Iyengar tradition, much awareness must be brought to the knees and ankles in harmonious alignment. On inhale, lift both arms, and on deep exhalation breath, shift the pelvis to the back foot (left) direction, and move the right leg femur head deeply into the back of the hip socket to allow the hips to open. Keep the underneath (right) waist long and stretching out through the arm so that both sides of the torso are equally lengthening. Let the right hand rest on a block, or floor and lift the left hand energizing straight up



4.) VIRABHADRASANA II - Warrior Pose – Stand with the feet about 4 - 5 feet apart. Similar to Trikonasana, place the right foot at 90 degrees pointing in line with the parallel lines of the yoga mat. Back foot (left) should be turned in at 45 degrees. With a deep exhalation, bend the right knee until the right thigh is parallel to the floor and the shinbone is perpendicular, so forward (right) leg reaches a right angle. Take care that the right knee is bent directly over the foot, and not leaning inward at all. The challenge is to keep the weight evenly in both feet, as the weight will tend to shift over the forward (right) foot. Bring more awareness into the back (left) foot, and keep the weight equally placed in both feet. Elevating the chest, lift the arms straight out from the shoulders and look over the forward (right) hand. Both thighs are externally rotating which allows the hip joints to open. Keep the legs

grounded, and the upper body including the pelvis light and lifting up out of the legs. Practice Determination. Hold for 10 – 20 deep breaths / Straighten forward knee to come up on inhalation / Repeat other side.



5.) VIRABHADRASANA I - Warrior Pose – Stand in the middle of the mat with feet 3 - 4 feet apart. Turn the right foot parallel to the mat pointing forward, and turn the back (left) foot in about 60 degrees. In this variation of Warrior Pose, the hips, knees, and ankles are all in parallel lines. Hold your hipbones as you turn to face the right leg. On inhalation, lift both arms overhead so that the ears are in line with the arms. On exhalation, bend the right knee into 90 degrees. To protect the lower back from over-arching, soften the lower ribs into the body, soften the waist, and lead forward from the pubic bone. Create a small backbend at the top of the spine, lifting up from the collarbone. Energize the arms up to vertical and slowly lift the head up to gaze up between the palms facing each other, or closed palms, if possible. Keep awareness in the back (left) leg and take care that the back knee is not bending even slightly. Practice Willpower. Hold for 10 – 20 deep breaths / Straighten forward knee to come up on inhalation / Repeat other side.

6.) PARVSVOTTANASANA – Intense Side Stretch – Similar to Virabhadrasana I, Stand in the middle of the mat with feet 3 - 4 feet apart. Turn the right foot parallel to the mat pointing forward, and turn the back (left) foot in about 60 degrees. Place 2 blocks on either side of the forward foot. Hold the hipbones as you turn the pelvis to be squared off facing the forward leg. Hips, Knees and feet should all be parallel. On exhalation breath, bend at the hip joints at the same time lengthening both sides of the torso and stretch the arms overhead and then reaching out to rest on toward the sky. Look forward at first and sense the place where the inner shoulders are dropping down from the ears so that the neck is long. Once the underneath neck is lengthened, then turn the head up to gaze up at the left hand. Practice Confidence. Hold for 10 – 20 deep breaths / Lift upper body back to vertical on inhalation / Repeat other side.



7.) ADHO MUKA SVANASANA - Downward Facing Dog Pose – Start kneeling in the middle of your mat in Cat Pose. Spread wide the fingers and keep the elbows very

straight. Use a belt just below the elbow creases for support to keep the elbows from bending or hyper-extending. The elbow creases should be facing each other. Tuck under the toes of the feet, and with Exhalation breath, straighten the legs and lift the weight of the pelvis. Stretch the whole Spine vertically up, Lift the tailbone, stretch open the backs of both knees. Try to bring the heels all the way down to the mat. If the heels are not yet in contact with the mat, bring another folded mat under the heels, so that the heels can have contact down into the folded mat. Send deep exhalation breaths through the backs of the legs. Relax the neck, eyes, and soft tissue of the face, letting go of the weight of the head. Remember to soften the inner shoulders away from the ears so that the neck is free. Hold for 10 – 20 deep breaths / Practice Endurance. Coming out of Dog Pose, bend both knees and curl into fetal position (Child'Pose). Relax the shoulders, elbows and wrists as well as all the effort in the legs.



8.) UTTANASANA – Intense Stretch (Forward Bend) – Begin in Tadasana – Bring awareness again to the feet with the weight spread wide through out the whole foot. Practice the tripod base in both feet and keep the kneecaps very actively lifting. Sweep the arms overhead and hinge forward from the hipjoints, lengthening the whole Spine as you descend over the legs toward the floor. If possible, rest the fingers on the floor, or use 2 blocks underneath the fingers. Try to hold the head up and stretch the spine; then move the hips a little forward toward the head so that backs of legs are perpendicular to the floor. Deepen the pose as you deepen the exhalation breath. Finally, exhale deeply moving the trunk closer to the legs and rest the head on the knees. After a few more deep breaths, lift the head up and then stretch the arms up overhead to come up to Tadasana.