

Mountain Pose

Level 1 / Posture 15

Benefits:

A fundamental posture for doing all standing poses properly.
Builds better every-day posture.

Body Parts Used by This Posture:

Entire body. Especially spine.

Good Before: All standing postures; Sun Salutation

Good After: All standing postures; Sun Salutation.

Builds you up for: Better execution of standing postures.

Mountain Pose 2

Energy Centers Used: All

OK – “Mountain Pose” is just yoga’s way of saying “standing up”. Of course, we can’t make it *that* simple for you. In yoga, there are ways to stand, sit, lie down, breathe, etc., that bring the most benefits and allow you to do postures most effectively with the least amount of injury.



Try this at the beginning of every practice and before each standing posture. It will give you a heightened sense of how your weight falls and will eventually help your weight to fall down to your feet and “into the ground”, (“grounding”). It will also line you up properly for doing the standing poses well, for the most benefit and the least injury. The Mountain Pose becomes very meditative; it slows you down - so you’ll be more meditative and more focused when you do the next posture. Also, if you hold this position after each standing posture, it gives you a chance to notice the benefits of the standing pose you’ve just done.

Yoga Snack Mountain Pose is great to practice anywhere, because, hey!, it just looks like you’re standing around! Try it at bus stops, in bank line ups, waiting a grocery check-outs. The possibilities are endless!

Start

By finding a free piece of wall

This should be flat, with no heaters along the floor or pictures or windows. Ideally, it should be wide enough to let you stretch your arms out.

Then

Stand against the wall. (Line your back against the wall.)

Stand with your arms by your sides, feet together.

Key You want the back of your head, your shoulder blades, your hips and the back of your heels all touching the wall.



Pelvic Tilt

Once you are in this position, do a slight Pelvic Tilt. This will help you stand straight without straining to do so and will help align your body well.

Discovery

Standing against the wall like this may feel strange. Some people feel like they're going to tip over. This is because your body is not used to working your muscles in this way. Some muscles are not in shape enough to hold this pose for long. In time, with lots of different yoga stretches, this position will feel more natural.

Tip Almost everyone tightens up their knees when they do this exercise. If you soften your knees, (unlock them), you will still remain standing, but your body won't be working as hard.

Hold the position and notice:**• Your knees**

Breathing out, soften them, unlock them. This is like holding your fists closed but not balling them up tightly. So your knees are straight, but not tightened.

• The crease between your thighs and your hips.

Breathing out, soften this by relaxing your thighs.

Tip As the crease between your thighs and your hips loosens, you might feel your weight dropping more fully onto your feet.

When well balanced, you will feel your weight resting just in front of your heels.

• Your Belly

Loosen your belly by taking a few breaths with your belly (abdominal breathing)

Push your belly out to breathe in

Squeeze the belly slightly to breathe out

• Your Chest

For several breaths

Notice the natural rise and fall of your chest, (without forcing or exaggerating the normal motion). Each time:

Breathe in & feel the chest expand and shoulders rise

Breathe out & and feel the shoulders dropping, letting go.



Advanced Details Lengthening the Spine

Strategy 1: Imagine that you're standing just a little bit taller, not so much that you can feel your body working at it, but just enough that you have the feeling that you're a little taller.

OR Strategy 2: Imagine each vertebrae on your back is like a pearl on an elastic string. Imagine someone is pulling at that string, gently, so that the beads are separating just a bit. Imagine each vertebrae, one by one, separating.

Continue standing this way while you go on to the next part:

Balancing Your Weight More Evenly on Your Feet

Notice where your weight falls on your feet. How even is it?

Tip Almost everyone puts more weight on one foot than the other; and stands more forward or back, rather than allow their weight to drop to the middle of their feet. See what's normal for you. (There's no right or wrong, pass or fail here. Honest. 😊)

To allow your weight to fall more evenly on your feet. Sway your whole body forward, back, left and right until your weight is more even.

Tip You'll probably not get your weight perfectly even. This is not the point. The point is to get it more evenly distributed between both feet & more to the middle of the foot.

Follow up

Now that you've taken the time to discover your body with the Mountain Pose, you might like to go straight into a **Complete Breath**, to wake up your breathing and to have a good warm up stretch.

Progress Markers

Even after you've mastered this stance, practice it against a wall to be sure you're still doing it well. This will encourage you by showing you your progress. You'll see your posture improving as you practice more and more yoga.

Try this exercise at different times during the day and at various points in a yoga practice. You'll be amazed how your posture changes throughout the day, and how stress affects it. You'll also see your posture improve after a nice stretch!