

Developing Better Poise & Balance

Level 5 Routine

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This routine develops all the muscles groups that help you with standing and walking with grace and elegance – the muscles that help you with balance. This includes your quads (thighs), your spine flexibility, your shoulders and your ankles. As you become better balanced, your breathing will become easier, movement will flow and you won't fight your body so much just to walk or move. A strong sense of balance is also essential for many sports, so this routine makes a good warm up and muscle developer for things like dance, golf and many track and field sports.

If this routine is too demanding for you, you might like to try our Level 2 mini-routines for balance.

Breathing Theme

After the warm up, use a breathing theme that encourages you to move with the breath, while also challenging you to stretch to your limit – like The Fourth Breathing Theme – Exploring the Edge. Do many repetitions, rather than hold for long periods of time.

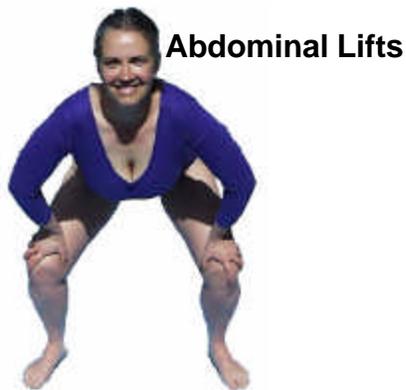
1st Phase: Move with the breath. Start any movement when you start breathing. Pause in the movement when you pause in your breath. Do this for a few repetitions.

2nd Phase: Still moving with the breath, make sure your breaths out are longer and slower than the breaths in. Do this for several breaths.

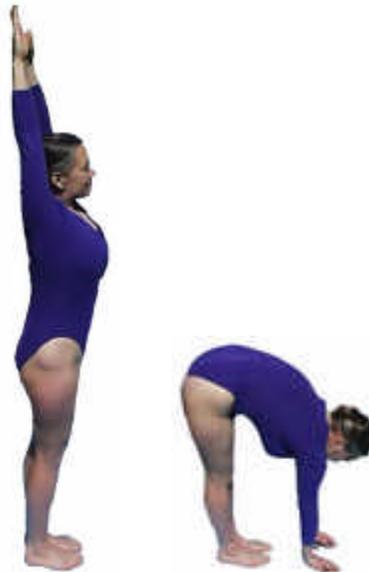
3rd Phase: Explore the edge. Still moving with the breath, see how much stretching you can get while you breathe in (or out) more and more, until you are completely full or completely empty of air. Do this for several breaths.

1. Warm Up Wake Up Your Breathing, your spine and shoulders. Do three rounds of each pose, to your fullest:

very deep breaths in, strong, long breaths out until all your air is gone, stretching for your limit each time.



Wood Chopper



Side Stretch or Side Bend



Can also be done with fingers laced together, palms facing the ceiling - giving a stronger stretch in the shoulders and inner arms.

Substitute Pose: You can achieve much the same results with the **Sitting Side Stretch**



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Level 5 Routine - Continued

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2. Breathing Practice

Practice a breathing exercise that will develop your breathing muscles and help you learn to coordinate your breathing. Especially recommended with this routine are *The Wave*, or *Chest Breathing 1* or *Chest Breathing 2*.

3. Meditation

Start by noticing the flow of your breath as it comes and goes. As you become more focused and settled, start taking a little longer to breathe out – each breath out taking a little longer than the last, (without spluttering or becoming uncomfortable), until breathing out is slow and leisurely.

4. Pelvic Lift



5. Half Bow If you like, you can make this increasingly difficult with each round, by moving to the Half Bow Extension and finally, the full Bow.



6. Alternate these three, into a flowing mini routine. This will loosen your spine and develop your shoulder strength. **Cobra, Puppy & Cat.** End in the Puppy and close with the Child Pose for a moment, returning to your meditation.



7. Twist



8. Dancer's Posture



9. Balance Posture at whatever level you are able to practice it.

