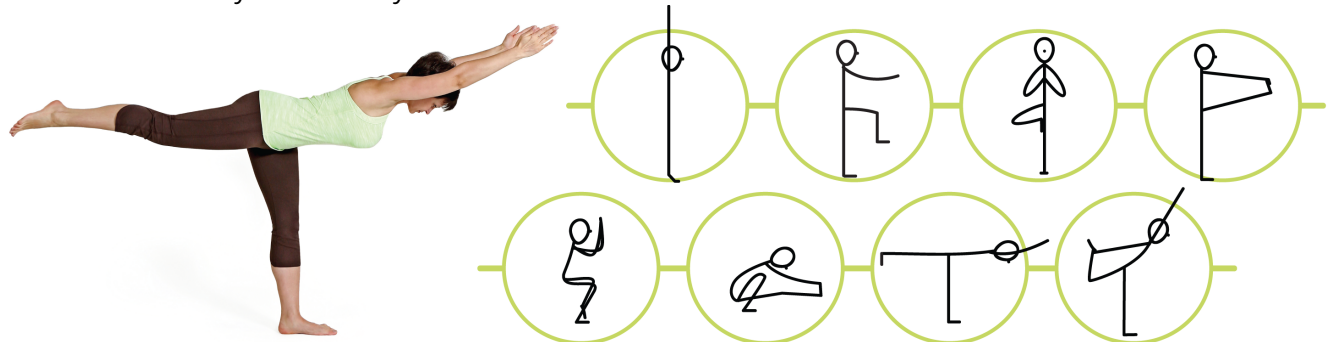


FOUR TYPES OF BALANCING POSTURES

There is no other way to train your balance other than to practice balancing. "The key to accomplishing balance postures is the ability to achieve equilibrium on the unstable base, using the displaced body weight as a counterbalance," says Gary Kraftsow. In yoga we can use feet, toes, hands, forearms, butt and even head to form that base, which means that the counterbalancing will be happening between very different parts of the body and accomplish different things. Here is how we can classify the balancing poses in yoga.

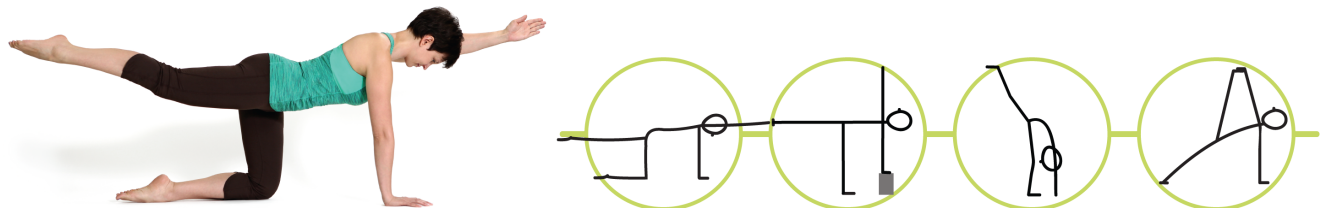
1. Leg Balances are practiced while standing on the toes or on one foot. There is no question that to be fully functional human beings we need to be able to carry and support our own weight in the upright position. Leg balances help us refine the way we hold and move body weight; they are the most useful poses to strengthen and stabilize the body for our daily tasks.



2. Arm Balances are practiced while standing on the hands, or forearms and hands. They emphasize strengthening of the muscles of the arms and shoulders, as well as the lower back, abdomen and pelvis. If you have weakness or injuries in the wrist, elbow, or shoulder joints, be very careful with those postures or skip them altogether.



3. Arms-leg balances distribute the weight between one leg and one or both arms. Poses like this are useful for strengthening the core and integrating the upper and lower body. Some poses in this category are cross-lateral movements; they are supposed to activate both brain hemispheres and heighten cognitive function.



4. Seated balances require that we counterbalance the weight of the upper and lower body, which requires strong core engagement, as well as hip and leg strength. Those poses are easily adaptable to students of any level of physical conditioning.

