

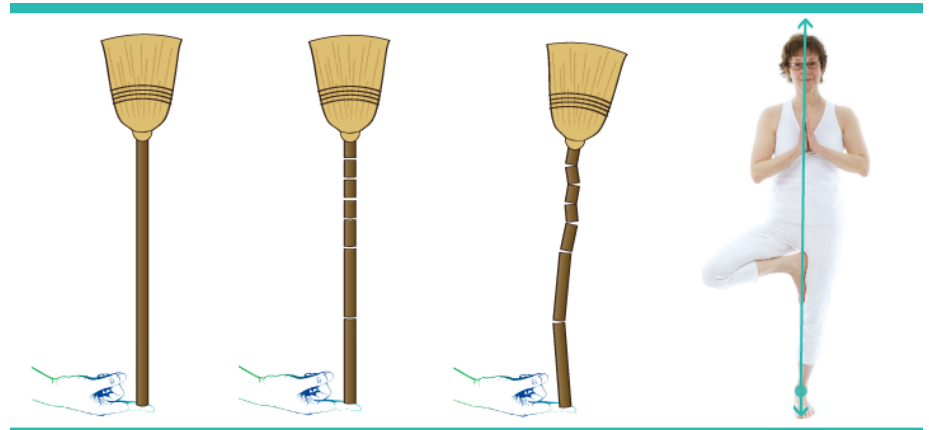
HOW TO WORK WITH BALANCE POSTURES

Static yoga postures teach your body how to maintain stability on an unstable base.

THE “BROOMSTICK EFFECT”

It is not hard to balance a broom on your finger because it is in one piece. It would be much harder if it consisted of several different pieces with somewhat loose joints between them - you would have to negotiate the position of each part. It works the same with your body in the balancing posture.

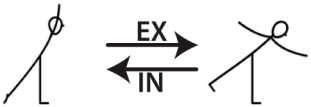

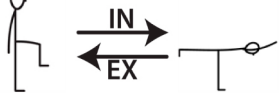
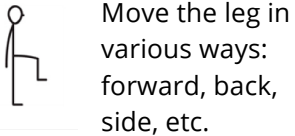
To make the balancing act easier, try to “turn your body into a broomstick.” We do that by *creating maximum length*. It means that we would want to lengthen up along the axis, creating length and stability in the body and minimizing the wobbliness of individual parts. That way the body becomes an integrated whole, a unit that is much easier to manage.



Our balance is challenged most when we are in motion. There are three types of **dynamic balance**:

1. Dynamic steady-state (maintaining a steady position during walking)
2. Proactive balance (anticipation of a predicted perturbation)
3. Reactive balance (compensation of an unpredicted perturbation)

Here is how we can train for dynamic balance within our yoga practice:

	<p>1. MOVE IN AND OUT OF THE BALANCE POSE</p> <p>Moving in and out of the pose helps us refine our movement patterns. Through the process of <i>facilitation</i> we teach both the body and brain how to handle the shift in balance. We do it over and over again so it becomes more automatic.</p>
	<p>2. MOVE WITHIN THE BALANCE POSE</p> <p>Move your leg, or arms, or body while holding the pose (keeping the base steady). This trains your body and brain to anticipate a potential challenge to your balance and adjust accordingly (proactive balance).</p>
	<p>3. MOVE BETWEEN TWO OR MORE BALANCING POSES</p> <p>Alternate balancing on one leg and then another. Your body and brain will need to negotiate two different balancing challenges (dynamic steady-state balance).</p>
	<p>4. TRY DEFYING EXPECTATION MOVEMENTS</p> <p>Challenge your students on the spot without giving them a warning of which version of the balance pose is coming next so that they have to react to the challenge in real time (reactive balance).</p>