

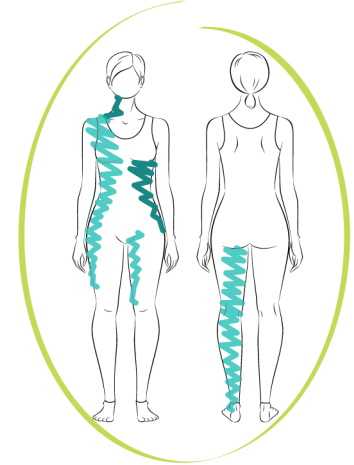
Utthita Trikonasana (Triangle Pose)

Asymmetrical lateral bend

Utthita Trikonasana is a powerful lateral bend that is useful for improving breathing capacity, increasing spinal mobility, creating better body symmetry and better range of motion in the shoulders and hips.

WHY

- To laterally flex the spine (to lubricate the discs and build strength and flexibility in spinal musculature)
- To stretch the lateral structures of the torso (obliques, quadratus lumborum, iliacus, tensor fasciae latae and iliotibial band)
- To strengthen the lateral structures of the torso (obliques, quadratus lumborum, iliacus)
- To facilitate deeper breathing by working the intercostal muscles and expanding the ribcage
- To create more balance between the right and left sides of the body
- To stretch the inner thigh and hamstrings (if one foot is turned out)



HOW

START: Begin in standing with your feet wide apart, left foot turned out and right foot turned slightly in.

MOVE IN/OUT OF THE POSE

Inhale: Widen the chest and bring the arms out to the sides.

Exhale: Gradually contract the abdomen and bend sideways to your left, placing the bottom hand on the left leg (try to keep the body in one plane).

Inhale: Lift back up, arms out to the sides. Repeat few times and then stay in the pose.

STAY IN THE POSE

Inhale: Lengthen the spine, pulling the chest away from the navel and widening the collarbones.

Exhale: Progressively contract your abdomen, monitoring the position of the pelvis.

Continue to breathe like that keeping the body in one plane.

FOOT POSITION

Both positions are acceptable and will produce very different effects on the body. If you keep the feet parallel to each other and wide apart, most of the stretch



will take place in the lateral structures of the torso; it will also minimize the risk in the sacroiliac joints. If you turn one foot out, you will get a deeper stretch in the lateral structures of the torso and add an intense stretch in the inner thigh and hamstrings of the turned-out leg. It will also increase the load on the front hip and create more stress in your sacroiliac joints.

Utthita Trikonasana (Triangle Pose)



POTENTIAL RISKS

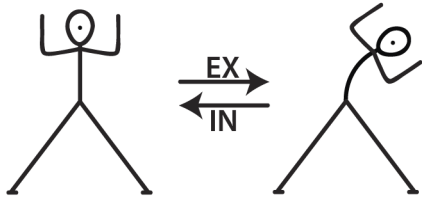
- Compression and strain in the lower back area
- Stress in sacroiliac joints
- Stress in hip joints
- Muscle strain in the neck and shoulder

TROUBLESHOOTING

Most potential misalignments in this pose happen because the student is striving to put the hand down on the floor or as far down the leg as possible. This is not necessary. The hand can lend wherever it lands.

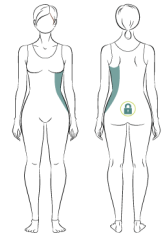
Utthita Trikonasana ADAPTATIONS

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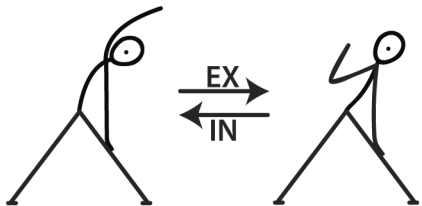


“CACTUS ARMS”

To protect your sacrum and work the sides of the body, keep your feet parallel and straight as you bend sideways. Keeping your butt and upper back against the wall will help to maintain “pure” lateral flexion of the spine.

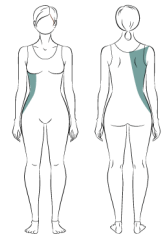


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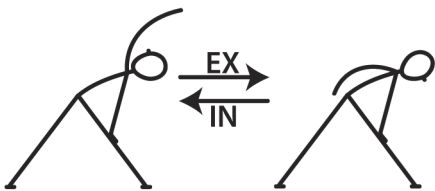


“SIDE PUMP”

To strengthen the lateral structures of the torso and upper back one side at a time. On the exhale shorten the right side of the torso lifting slightly out of the side bend and pulling the elbow down toward the hip.

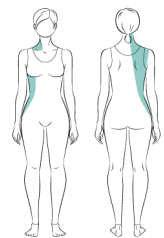


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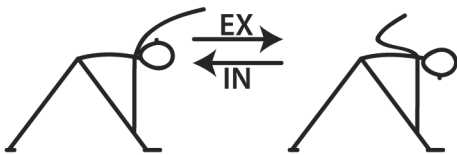


ARM SWEEP

To stretch the side of the torso and relieve tension in the neck. On the inhale raise the arm up and look at it, on the exhale move the arm toward the hip, turning the head away. Be sure to keep the shoulder relaxed as you sweep the arm.



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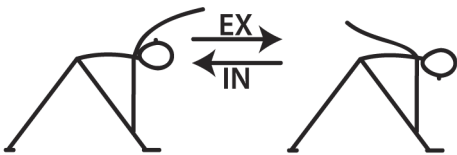


ELBOW PULL

To stretch the side of the neck and strengthen the latissimus dorsi muscles. On the inhale raise the arm up and look at it, on the exhale pull the elbow down toward the hip, turning the head away.

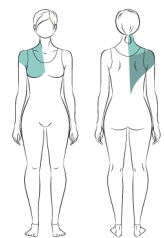


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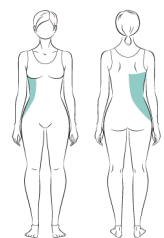
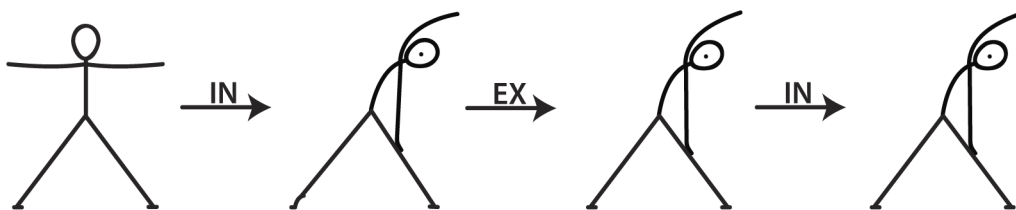


“HITCHHIKER”

To stretch the neck and shoulder by externally rotating the arm. Stick your thumb out as a hitchhiker. On the inhale bring the arm over the head with the thumb pointing back, on the exhale bring the arm toward the hip with the thumb pointing up.



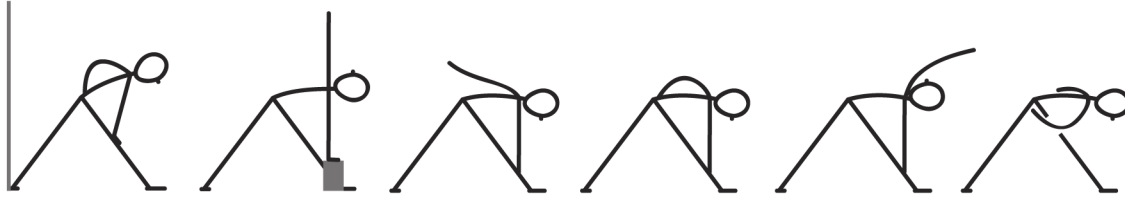
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HEEL LIFT

To deeply stretch the lateral structures of the torso, specifically quadratus lumborum muscles; very useful if one hip is chronically higher than the other. On the inhale raise the right arm, bend sideways and lift the right heel off the ground. On the exhale plant the right heel down. On the inhale lengthen through the right side, pressing the heel down. On the exhale come out of the pose.

Utthita Trikonasana ADAPTATIONS (continued)



OPTIONS FOR HOLDING THE POSE

After repeating the pose few times stay in the position that helps you accomplish the goal that you are after. In any position you can place the back heel against the wall for more stability and/or place your supporting hand on the block.

- Holding the “hitchhiker” position will stretch the side of the neck and front of the shoulder.
- Placing the arm behind the back will stretch the top side of the neck while internally rotating the shoulder.
- Holding the arm over the head and looking up will stretch the side of the torso and strengthen the neck.
- Wrapping the arms behind the back will strengthen the upper back while strongly stretching the shoulders and neck. Do not attempt this version if it makes you loose your alignment on the pose.

Utthita Trikonasana ADAPTATIONS – Your Notes

1.



2.



3.



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