



**The Mountain Pose** is the basic standing posture in yoga. Its Sanskrit name is Tadasana. Outwardly, it appears deceptively simple but can in fact be difficult to achieve because we tend to develop poor postural habits that become established in our bodies over many years.

When this posture is performed properly, the body is standing in its own center of gravity, the ears, shoulders, hips, knees and ankles aligned perpendicular to the floor. This gives us tremendous linear strength. (Imagine linear strength to be like a circus performer standing on another's shoulders.) The body is balanced and the mind is centered. Let's try it.

1. Start by paying attention to how you stand: stand with your feet together, heels and big toes touching.

Take your mind down to the soles of your feet and do an assessment: Do you stand with your weight evenly on both feet or, do you place more weight on one side of your body than on the other?

Do you place more weight on the outside or the inside of each foot? Do you place more weight on the front or the rear of each foot?

Put your weight evenly on both feet. Imagine the soles of your feet are two miniature coffee tables,

with a leg on each corner. Place your weight evenly on the four corners of each foot. Press your feet into the ground.

2. Pull your shins back, so that your knees move back over your ankles.

3. Firm your thigh muscles by drawing your kneecaps up.

4. Lift your torso out of your pelvis. You should feel your abdomen lengthen as you do this. This helps to lengthen the lower spine and creates space in the abdominal cavity, making room for the internal organs to function correctly.

5. Now, roll your shoulders back and down. Do this two or three times, allowing your shoulders to loosen. This action helps to lift the breastbone out of the chest, creating space between the back of the breastbone and the front of the spine. This is an important action, as this opens the space occupied by the airway, lungs, heart and esophagus.

6. Bring your arms close to your side body, with your palms facing in. Extend your fingers. This action pulls the shoulders down, allowing the neck to extend up out of the shoulders.

7. Bring your ears back over your shoulders with the chin level to the floor. This may feel awkward, especially if you are sitting at a desk all day, using a computer and straining forward to look at the screen. This produces tightness in the neck and can result in tension headaches and pinched nerves in the neck. I like to call this corporate head. By bringing the ears back over the shoulders, chin level to floor, the proper position for the head is achieved. Now think about those big chunky bones at the behind your ears (mastoid bones). Let's lift those bones, extending the neck even more.

8. Soften your belly and breathe normally through the nose, mouth closed. With the eyes open, allow the backs of the eyes to soften. Feel the senses withdraw into your body. Now, imagine that you are Mount Fuji: Solid on the inside, rooted into the ground, towering into the sky. Soft, covered with snow on the outside, muscles lifting and separating the bones, the skin falling away from the muscles, like snow melting from the mountain. Stay in the posture for one minute.