

Structural Alignment

The second A of the three A's of Anusara yoga – (Action, Alignment and Attitude) often seems so subtle. Begin this practice by, standing in *tadasana* (mountain pose), position the feet hip width apart, the spine straight; draw the upper thighs wide by rotating the inner thigh back. Align the shoulders -- take the upper arms toward your ears, then straight back with the shoulder blades drawing towards each other; finally move the shoulder blades down toward the waistline. In addition to aligning the shoulders over the hips, this practice continues our work on the arm and shoulder strength by drawing added attention to elongating and lifting the back muscles. With each in-breath, expand the kidney area -- especially on the last part of the breath. Keep the chest lifted as you continue to engage the shoulder loop throughout these asanas.

Asanas



Tadasana
Mountain



Parsvakonasana
Side angle Stretch



Vasisthasana
Side Plank



Virabhadrasana
Warrior 2



Garudasana
Eagle



Setu Bandha
Sarvangasana
Bridge



Navasana
Boat



Pincha Mayurasana
Peacock



Janu Sirsasana
Half Bound Angle



Halasana
Plow

Application. Begin with the physical alignment required for each asana by slowing your actions and using the breath to take you deeper into the pose. Steadfastly hold the pose. Tone the arms by spreading the fingers. You may wish to practice supported drop-backs along with *setu bandha sarvangasana* to increase the effort of the hips in backbends.

Photos by Alyce Henson

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