

SIDE WARRIOR POSE

- Begin in Mountain Pose (1) and work through to Star Pose (6).
- Turn the right foot out 90 degrees and slowly bend the knee to a right angle.
- Without rotating hips or shoulders turn the head to gaze to the right hand.
- Keep the back leg straight by consciously driving the rear heel into the floor. Use this as your anchor point.
- Work the heel of the front foot into the ground, ensuring the bent knee is in a line over the front foot.
- The body should be directly over the hips. The arms are actively reaching to infinity whilst the elbows are straight and palms down.
- Draw the shoulder blades down away from the neck. Rotate the back of the armpits forward.
- Imagine a string from the top of your head pulling you up to the roof whilst you also focus on grounding the force through your feet. This will ensure a long spine.
- Effort needs to be full to develop the posture. Repeat on other side.

Benefits

- Improves balance and flexibility.
- Stabilises thighs, knees and ankles.
- Calms the mind.
- Strengthens leg muscles and settles shoulders.

Beginners Advice

- Constantly be aware of the lower back lengthening, the bent front knee is over the shin or foot.
- Eliminate any forward or backward lean. Keep the shoulders and hips horizontal and in the same plane as the legs and arms.
- Breathe to soften any resistance in the pose.
- Practice this posture using a wall or something similar to support and provide feedback.

Challenge

- Challenge the balance aspect of this posture by closing your eyes and learning to balance without visual feedback.
- Focus your attention on your breath - notice if your mind wanders to other thoughts, ideas or outside distractions and refocus back to your breath.
- Deepen the pose by sinking the hips whilst maintaining the posture.
- Use the pose to 'battle' with a partner. Start facing your partner in Mountain Pose (1) about 2m apart, bow and both step right foot to Side Warrior Pose. Challenge your partner to remain focussed on each other's eyes the longest. When the focus is broken come back to Mountain Pose and bow to acknowledge the end of the battle. Repeat on the other side.

Adjustments / What to look for

- Alignment is important in this posture.
- Shoulders are relaxed and arms are horizontal.
- Body is upright, not leaning over front foot, check on lengthening the spine.
- Legs are strong and actively pushing into the ground for support.
- Maintain hips and shoulders in a horizontal position facing the side.
- Check for even distribution of weight between both feet.
- Relax into the pose with the exhale.
- Head is going up with eyes looking down leading arm.

