

STANDING OVERHEAD ARMS

- Begin by standing in Mountain Pose (1).
- Slowly and evenly raise your arms sideways keeping them straight and energised until they are above your head and alongside your ears.
- With palms facing each other keep shoulders down and soft. Search for height as if someone is pulling you up by your arms whilst keeping the shoulder blades down and wide, away from the neck.
- Strive for the feeling of being long and stretching up but also pushing into the ground evenly with your feet.
- Keep stomach and throat soft and breathe evenly.

Benefits

- Improves posture and length of spine.
- Stabilisers thighs, knees and ankles.
- Explores range of movement in the shoulders.
- Calms the mind.

Beginners Advice

- You can improve your balance by standing with your feet slightly apart 5 to 10cm.
- Have a partner assist by lifting overhead arms from the wrists and providing 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.
- Gather with the in breath and lengthen with the out breath.

Adjustments / What to look for

- Alignment is important in this posture. From side on look for a long line through the wrists, ear, shoulder, hip, knee and ankle.
- Excessive swaying with eyes closed- therefore open the eyes.
- Lateral leaning (leaning to one side) ask the student to try and be as long and straight as they can with awareness on the soles of the feet.
- Shoulders are relaxed and arms are vertical.

