

Balancing the Physical Body

Anatomically, balance in the body refers to skeletal alignment and muscular function. Correct alignment is a function of the whole body, not just of a single part. So one must think of the body as a whole system, in any pose. This does not come from brute strength and determination, but from awareness and intelligence, whether that is based on ability, memory, or kinesthetic feeling.

Left and right, upward and downward, forward and backward, strength and flexibility, activity and rest...these describe natural balances in body movement. Every yoga pose integrates these aspects of experience. The challenge and freedom in one side of the body should be reflected in the other. In that way, effort is balanced by relaxation, creating evenness and harmony in the body. If you approach your yoga practice in this way, you will never be bored.

Balance these aspects of the pose:

Skeletal Alignment: Recline with bent knees. Line up shoulders & hips, knees, heels & toes. Release the bones to gravity

Foundation & Levity: Upward Press in Standing Mountain. Dig in the heels and press palms upward. Send equal energy in both directions.

Stability & Mobility: Block / Stair Balance (stand sideways). Squeeze hips toward centerline. Move free leg.

Direction & Spacing throughout the shape: Tree variation. Lift knee to front or side; arms reach wide to side. Hold on to chair, counter or wall for assistance.

Contracting & Extending: Side Plank (from Plank). Fully engage core: lengthen arms, legs, and spine. Hand on block, back to wall for support.

Intensity of energy: Active & Passive: Cow's Face Pose. Engage legs, core, and scapula. Relax shoulders and eyes, and SMILE!

