

Yoga for You

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Utthita Trikonasana (Extended Triangle Pose) – Arm Back

This is a standing *asana* in which the legs are kept firm and straight, providing stability for the torso to extend and open. The *asana* gets its name from the triangular shapes formed by the limbs and trunk. In this variation, the upper arm is stretched back to help rotate the trunk, open the chest and move the shoulder blades into the back.

1. Take the outer edge of your left foot to the wall and step the right foot about 4 to 4-1/2 feet apart. Align the right heel with the left arch.
2. Straighten both legs fully. Keep the right leg turned out 90 degrees and the left leg facing forward.
3. Now, lift and open the chest as you face the trunk forward.
4. Inhale and stretch the right arm up to lift and extend the right side of the body, then exhale and stretch your trunk over the right leg taking the right hand to the floor, your shin or to a block. Press your feet into the floor and tighten the knees to straighten the legs.
5. Stretch the left arm up and gaze at the hand as you work to open the front of the body.
6. Now with an exhalation, move the left shoulder blade into the body and stretch the left arm back. Keep the left arm in line with the shoulder as you work to rotate the waist and chest to the ceiling.
7. Hold for several breaths, then inhale and bring the left arm up. Keep the legs straight as you come out of the pose. Do to the other side.

Practice of standing *asanas* develops balance, confidence and an experience of the vast space within the body. The mind first connects with the outermost layers of the physical being. Then, through focused, steady practice, consciousness penetrates the more inner layers of one's being and becomes quiet, meditative and serene.



Extend the upper arm and back to help open the chest and trunk.