

Urdhva Baddhangullyasana (Upward Bound Finger Pose) - Stage 2

Urdhva Baddhangullyasana is a standing pose where the fingers are bound together and the arms are stretched overhead. This pose is wonderful for creating flexibility in the wrists, arms and shoulders and relieves tightness in the neck. People who work at computers, taxi drivers, surfers, hair stylists, or anyone whose activities cause tension in the neck and upper body, will gain great benefit from this *asana*.

- 1) Find an even surface and stand with the feet together. Look down at the feet as this will help you to be more conscious of them. Bring the big toes to touch evenly together and press them down. Keep them pressing down as you spread the weight to the inner heels and outer edges of the feet. Distribute the weight evenly on both feet.
- 2) Take your hands to the thighs and, looking at the thighs, press them back until you feel the weight come to the front edge of the heels. Do not shift or move the feet about. As you press the thighbones back, notice that the kneecaps lift up and the legs become firm and straight.
- 3) Keeping the thighs back, take one hand to the lower belly and the other hand to the buttocks. As you lift the pit of the belly up, draw the buttocks down to the floor. This lifts the pelvis to vertical, prevents the buttocks from sticking out, and minimizes arching of the lower back. Keep the legs firm and straight.
- 4) Maintain the position and actions of the feet, thighs and pelvis as you roll the thighs in so the knees point straight forward.
- 5) Spread and open the chest, by turning the upper arms out, and bring the shoulder blades into the back. This is *Tadasana* (Mountain Pose).
- 6) Interlock the fingers all the way up to the webbing of the palms. There should be no light visible at the interlock. Straighten the arms and extend them to the front in line with shoulders. Turn the palms away from the trunk so that the thumbs face the floor. Roll the forearm bones in to help you to keep the interlock. Do not let the shoulder hunch, but pull the shoulder blades down, away from the ears. Roll the upper arm bones out to help do this. The arm muscles should feel like they are gripping and entwining the arm bones.
- 7) Keep this grip in the arms and fingers as you take the arms into a vertical position directly over the head. Do not let the back arch and work to maintain *Tadasana* in the trunk. Lift the palms and arms to lift the trunk. This is Stage 1. (See last week's column.)
- 8) Now, inhale as you lift the chest and stretch the head back so that you gaze between the eyebrows. Stretch and open the throat. This action stimulates and regulates the thyroid glands. Hold for up to 30 seconds, working to keep the chest lifted.
- 9) With an exhalation bow the head as you lift the sternum up. Rest the chin on the notch of the sternum and gaze into the chest. Work to keep the shoulders back and the chest lifted. Hold for the same amount of time as you did when you looked up.
- 10) Exhale and bring the arms down, change the interlock of the hands and repeat.



This posture nourishes the thyroid gland and relieves tension in the neck, head and shoulders.