

*Urdhva Namaskarasana* (Upward Palms Joined Pose)

*Urdhva Namaskarasana* arises out of *Urdhva Hastasana* (last week's column). In this pose, the sides of the body are full stretched and the spine lifted. The shoulders gain mobility and stress in the neck is relieved.

- 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) Now 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) Now, extend the arms to the front and in line with the shoulders. Keep the arms firm, straight and parallel with the fingers extended and the palms facing each other.
- 7) With an inhalation raise the arms to vertical so that they are in line with the ears. Do not let the back arch and work to maintain *Tadasana* in the trunk.
- 8) With an exhalation, join the palms. In the beginning, the arms bend and one loses the lift in the side of the body. Work to keep the elbows straight and the arms vertical by stretching the inner surfaces of the arms from the armpits to the palms and fingers.
- 9) Learn to hold the pose for up to a minute with even breathing through the nose. Practice to maintain an overall upward lift.



*Work to join the palms without bending the elbows.*