

## Yoga For You

Ray Madigan and Shelley Choy

### *Utthita Trikonasana*

#### **(Extended Triangle) »**

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. *Utthita Trikonasana* brings strength and suppleness to the legs and hips and strengthens the sides of the trunk.

With practice, your legs and hips will gain elasticity and you might be able to take your hand all the way to the floor. You may also do this pose by taking the hand to the shin as shown.

Practicing standing *asanas* encourages balance, confidence and an experience of the vast space within the body. The mind connects with the outermost layers of the physical being, and through focused, steady practice, consciousness becomes quiet, meditative and serene.

1. Stand on an even floor. If the floor is slippery, use a yoga mat. You might also need a yoga block. Place the block on the right and to the back of the mat.
2. Jump your legs about 4 feet apart. Point your toes forward and straighten your legs.
3. Turn your right leg out 90 degrees and your left foot slightly inward. Your right heel should line up with the arch of your left foot. Place the block outside your right ankle.
4. Press your feet down evenly so your weight falls on the big toe mounds, inner heels and outer edges of your feet. Lift your knees up and straighten the legs fully. You should feel your leg muscles pulling the thigh bones up into your hip sockets, providing trunk support.



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Nikki Armstrong, left, Kim Schaper and Alison Sherwood show how the Extended Triangle Pose can be done by taking the hand to the floor, to a block or to the shin.

5. Keep your right leg turned out as you turn your left leg, pelvis, trunk and shoulders straight ahead. Open your chest by stretching your arms horizontally in line with the shoulders.
6. Take a couple of breaths, then take a deeper inhalation, lift the chest and, as you exhale, extend the side of the trunk in line with your right leg while moving your right hand to the block.
7. Press your right hand into the block as you lift the muscles and bones of the arm up into the shoulder. Spread your chest wide as you reach into the air with your left arm. Turn your head and gaze softly at your left hand.
8. Hold the pose 10 to 30 seconds as you lengthen your trunk and head in line with your right leg. Expand and open the pelvis, abdomen and chest.
9. To come up, press your feet firmly down, then tighten and lift your leg muscles. Keep the right side of your trunk and waist in line with your right leg as you pull with the left arm to bring yourself up.
10. Change your leg positions and repeat to the left side.

**Ray Madigan** and **Shelley Choy** are certified Iyengar Yoga teachers and co-direct the Manoa Yoga Center at Manoa Marketplace. Visit [www.manoayoga.com](http://www.manoayoga.com) or call 382-3910. Manoa Yoga Center, the authors and the Star-Bulletin take no responsibility for any injury arising from the practice of these yoga postures. Readers should seek a doctor's approval before commencing this yoga practice.