



Yoga For You

Ray Madigan and Shelley Choy

Vrksasana

(Tree Pose) » In Vrksasana we learn to balance on one leg while keeping the body firm and steady. The practice of this pose brings strength and flexibility to the muscles, bones and joints of the legs. Mental focus and concentration is improved, and one becomes calm and poised through the practice of this pose.

- 1) Stand with the feet together in Tadasana (see previous week's column).
- 2) Without disturbing the left leg, bend the right knee out to the side, lift the foot up and use your right hand to place the foot on the inside of the left thigh. If the knee or hip is stiff, bring the foot to the left inner knee or lower. With regular practice you will eventually be able to bring the heel right to the top of the thigh, and the back of the right thigh will be in contact with the whole of the back of the calf.
- 3) Bring the hands on the hips and breathe softly through the nose.
- 4) When you have mastered this, extend the arms straight up in line with the shoulders.



COURTESY MANOA YOGA CENTER
Vickie Omura, left, Caitlin Ross and Nikki Armstrong show how Tree Pose can be practiced with your back against a wall for support, with one hand on the wall or in the middle of the room.

- 5) Do not let the left foot move; instead press the big toe mound, inner heel and outer edge of the foot evenly down. Grip the muscles of the outer left leg from the outer knee to the hip so that you feel these muscles grip to the thighbone.
- 6) Press the left foot into the floor and the right foot into the left thigh to bring a sense of stability to the pose. Stretch from the armpits to the elbows and the elbows to the fingers as you lift the spine and open the chest.
- 7) Now, keeping the arms straight, bring the palms together without losing this lift in the spine or collapsing the chest.
- 8) Stay for 10-30 seconds as you gaze softly at the imaginary horizon. Work to maintain poise and balance with the feet rooted firmly in mother earth while the trunk and limbs extend upward.
- 9) Exhale, return to Tadasana and repeat to the other 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 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.