

Tree Pose: Balance Effort & Surrender

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Standing straight on the left leg, bend the right leg, and place the right foot on the left thigh. Stand thus, like a tree on the ground. This is called vrksasana.

—Gheranda-Samhita II.36

Nature is miraculous! Every year millions of deciduous trees get through the challenges of colder winter months by naturally drawing energy to their core, and thickening the sap into a sort of dense sweetness that is self-sustaining.

We are also called to draw our energy within during winter months and can support this innate inclination by the simple practice of Tree Pose (*Vrksasana*). With strong energetic "roots" moving towards earth, and energy rising upwards, Tree Pose shows us how to be centered in the core of our being. As we are connected with our breath in each moment, and maintain steady focus—we fan our inner fire with just the right amount of effort. Too little attention to form, our tree will be limp; too much effort, our tree will break. Tree Pose is a practice in striking a balance between effort and surrender. When we experience this balance in the pose, we can recognize that it is merely a reflection of our innate state of balance within.

Vrksasana (vrik-SHAHS-anna)

vrksa = tree

asana = stable posture

Step by Step Practice

1. Stand with the feet hip width apart (*Tadasana*). Bring hands together, palm to palm at the heart center.
2. Root strongly through the left foot and open the right hip. Bring the sole of the right foot to the inner calf or inner thigh (not knee); or modify by keeping the right toes on the floor and placing the right heel on the inner left ankle.
3. Experience being grounded at the base and uplifted through the crown, while breathing gently through the nostrils for 6 to 10 complete breaths, with eyes gently focused and still.
4. Lower the right leg and return to *Tadasana*, standing position with arms relaxed by the sides. Pause for a few moments with awareness inwardly focused. Then repeat on the opposite leg. 🌿

Note: Always use your best judgment about which practices are useful for your unique situation. Consult with your physician if needed. Study with a hatha yoga instructor for more detailed practices.

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