

Standing head to knee – *uttanasana*

The following is a description of how to build up the pose. It is inspired by the description given from Heinz Grill in 'The Soul Dimension of Yoga'.

1. Observe the picture of the pose, notice how the spine draws backwards and the spine and arms flow forwards towards the ground, this position brings with it the experience of 'going out of oneself'.

Come into the pose, stand with the legs together, bring the ankles together, notice how the legs gather more and more towards each other, raise the arms above the head, and move smoothly towards above, keep the shoulders relaxed. The legs are becoming long and slender as they gather towards each other, then stretch out far forwards and push the tummy region backwards, as you continue to lower the arms to the ground. The tummy draws back and contracts towards the thighs, the arms and spine stretch far forwards towards the ground. Bend your knees if you need, keep the shoulders relaxed. To come out either lengthen forwards and rise back to standing upright, or in a more gentle way - relax the legs and shoulders uncurl the spine as you return to standing upright.



2. The experience of 'going out of oneself' is created through the polarity based tension, which arises through the contraction and drawing back in the region of the lower abdomen, and the opposite movement that flows forwards through the spine and arms.

Come into the pose, ~~then~~ when the lower abdomen is close to the thighs bring your attention to drawing back through contracting inwards into this region, keep the shoulders relaxed. The lower abdomen, the region of the *svadhishthana chakra*, is where the exercise centres.



3. Just as the tide of the watery sea draws back, with a strong contraction, and then flows forwards towards the shore, so we too participate in a watery rhythmical movement that draws back and flows forwards.

Come into the pose with attention to the picture of the watery rhythmical tidal movement of the sea, but also to guiding the body into the form - with the tummy drawing back, and spine flowing forwards, also bend your knees as much as need and relax the shoulders. As you practice your attention goes from the imagined picture and to adjusting the body into the shape of the pose.

4. Flowing forwards through the spine is as if we 'go out of oneself'- the flowing forwards is like a crossing over into a newly felt spatial experience.

Come into the pose, draw backwards and observe the movement that flows forwards through the spine. It's a movement subtly felt as if we are 'going out of oneself'.

5. The experience of 'going out of oneself' has a liberating effect, like freely flowing out towards the earth below.

Come into the pose with attention to the idea of 'going out of oneself' and freely flowing towards the earth, adjust the body as needed to maintain the form.

6. Come into the relaxation pose, either reflect back on the exercise and notice what arises within or try to remember what steps were taken to build up the pose.