

Holding the Heavens

The palms rise slowly and press gently upward.

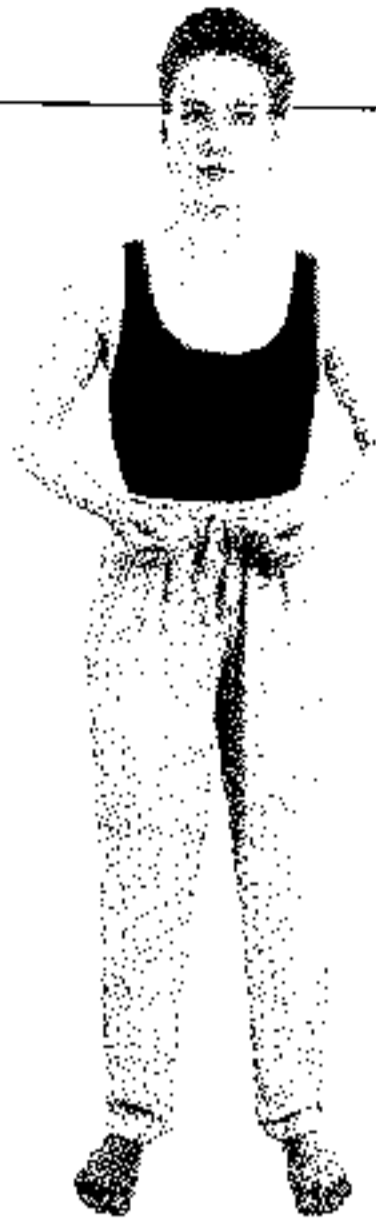


Figure 1

- Start with legs straight but not locked, the hands in lightly closed fists just above the hips (see figure 1). Slowly open the hands and lift the palms in front of the body (see figure 2), gradually turning the palms toward you as they rise above shoulder height (see figure 3).



Figure 2

- When the palms are at face level, rotate the hands so that they face outward and then upward (see figure 4). At the same time, raise the eyes and head slightly to look skyward, past the hands. Sense a subtle feeling of pushing upward. Do not extend the arms fully, and raise the hands no higher than the top of the head.



Figure 3

- Gently and slowly lower the hands, rotating palms toward the body, lowering the eyes to look straight ahead. Bring hands to rest, in lightly closed fists, at waist level (see figure 5).

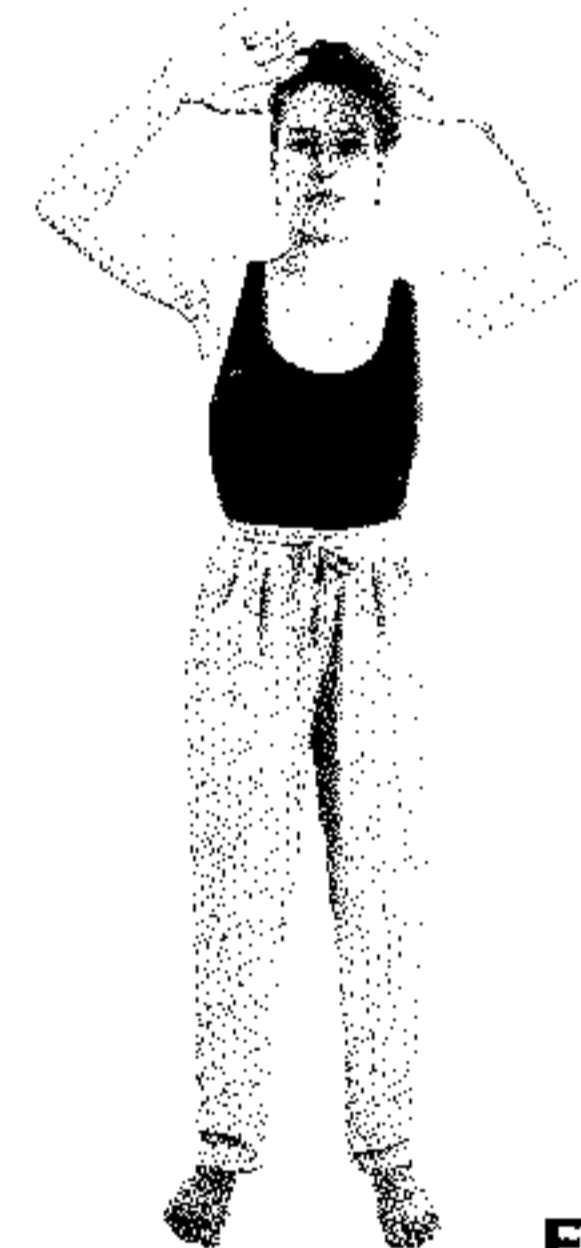


Figure 4

- Repeat 20 times.

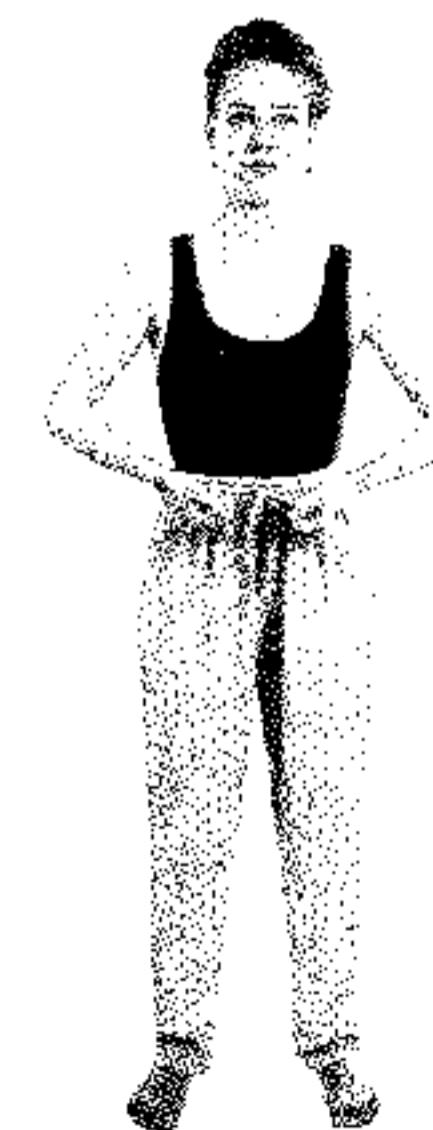


Figure 5

Points to remember:

- The physical movement is small and gentle. You may extend mentally upward through the palms, but keep the actual pushing motion slight.
- The opening and closing position feels stable and rooted. Do not allow your rootedness to diminish as you raise your hands.
- As the arms sink down, do not let the back collapse, but keep the spine straight. Try to have an upward feeling in your spine, as though it were attached to a cord suspended from above.

Sitting Meditation

After finishing the exercises, take five to 15 minutes to sit quietly.

- Sit on the edge of an armless chair with the buttocks and legs supporting your weight. Your back should not touch the chair. Plant your feet firmly on the floor, shoulder-width apart, knees bent at a 90-degree angle. Keep your shoulders and elbows down throughout this meditation. Rest the hands, palms down, on the knees. The back should be straight at the waist but slightly rounded at the shoulder and neck.
- Look straight ahead, chin parallel to the ground, throughout the meditation (even when your eyes are closed).
- Close your eyes. Visualize a beautiful scene. Practice this for five to 15 minutes (build up over time).
- When finished, rub your hands briskly together for a few seconds, then rub your hands on your face and head.