

## Sweigardian Lines and Mula Bandha

These are alignment instructions I've adapted from Lulu Sweigard's Human Movement Potential, often called "The Sweigardian Lines" and from instructions by Ramanand Patel on mula bandha.

1. Slightly bend the knees and untuck the tailbone.
2. With the pelvic floor, not buttock muscles, tuck and straighten the legs.
3. Using the backs of the hands, let the flesh of the buttocks soften down the backs of the legs (Sweigard uses the image of the buttocks being like soft bread dough). As if they are connected, draw the pubic bone up toward the T-12 vertebra. This will make the pelvis vertical.
4. Grounding through the inner thighs down to the ball of the big toe, draw the anterior iliac crests toward each other to broaden the sacrum. It will feel like hip pockets moving around to the sides. This action slightly internally rotates the femur bones and moves them deeper into the hip sockets.
5. Lift the collar bones so the top of the rib cage feels level (Banker's Pose).
6. Draw the heads of the humerus away from the upper ribs, creating space (correctly positions head of humerus in glenoid fossa).
7. Activate the line from the anterior iliac crest to the center of the kneecap.
8. Lengthen the line from the center of the heel to the ball of the big toe.
9. Keep the chin level and lengthen the body from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head.

Applying these alignment instructions, especially keeping the pelvis vertical and lifting the collar bones, helps improve movement of the legs at the hip joints and arms at the shoulders.

Feet parallel	Look down at the feet to make sure they're parallel, hip width apart.
Thighs back	Use your fingers to push the tops of the thighs back and move the inner thighs back. Notice how the space at the pelvic floor opens.
Front up	Keeping the space open, shift the pelvic floor forward to bring the crests of the pelvic bones vertical. As you inhale, imagine the breath moving up the front of the body like a wave. As the breath comes up the front it lifts up the kneecaps, front of the pelvis, chest and collarbones.
Back down	The breath washes over the face and flows down the back. As the breath flows down the back the shoulders roll over and down the back, the trapezius muscles drop down the back and the buttocks and tailbone drop down. Use the backs of the hands to drop the buttocks.
Waist back	Move the sides of the waist back
Narrow the front of the pelvis and widen the back of the pelvis like you're zipping up a pair of tight jeans ("The Sweigardian Zipper").	

## Mula Bandha

In Tadasana: untuck the tailbone to soften and fold the groins in, let the buttocks tuck by moving the flesh forward over the sitbones. The pelvis should now feel aligned vertically and the groins are still soft. Without changing the position of the pelvis, draw the pubic bone and tailbone toward each other, draw the sit bones toward each other - the action will be that of the center of the perineum drawing upward. Without changing the position of the pelvis, descend the tailbone feeling a subtle sensation of the sacrum lengthening downwards and a space opening in front of the tailbone; tuck the tip of the tailbone into that space to create a subtle lift through the center of the body up to and through the crown of the head.

Maintain it throughout your practice. In asymmetrical positions such as Trikonasana the position will challenge you to maintain the equality of action of the two sides. In symmetrical positions such as Virasana, the sides will still not be the same because your body is not symmetrical. You will be challenged to find the equality of action between the two sides.