

What is Qigong?

Qigong is an ancient Chinese health care system that integrates physical postures, breathing techniques and focused intention.

The word Qigong (Chi Kung) is made up of two Chinese words. Qi is pronounced chee and is usually translated to mean the life force or vital-energy that flows through all things in the universe.

The second word, Gong, pronounced gung, means accomplishment, or skill that is cultivated through steady practice. Together, Qigong (Chi Kung) means cultivating energy, it is a system practiced for health maintenance, healing and increasing vitality.

The gentle, rhythmic movements of Qigong reduce stress, build stamina, increase vitality, and enhance the immune system. It has also been found to improve cardiovascular, respiratory, circulatory, lymphatic and digestive functions.

Those who maintain a consistent practice of Qigong find that it helps one regain a youthful vitality, maintain health even into old age, helps speed recovery from illness, calms the mind and helps to reconnect with the spirit. Western scientific research confirms that Qigong reduces hypertension and the incidence of falling in the aged population. One of the more important long-term effects is that Qigong reestablishes the body/mind/soul connection.

When these three aspects of our being are integrated, it encourages a positive outlook on life and helps eliminate harmful attitudes and behaviors. It also creates a balanced life style, which brings greater harmony, stability, and enjoyment

Qigong's great appeal is that everyone can benefit, regardless of ability, age, belief system or life circumstances. Anyone can enrich their lives by adding Qigong to their daily routine.

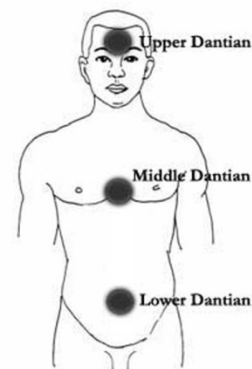
I suggest you start with the Eight Brocades which can easily be done at home each morning and will go a long way to improve your health, vitality and overall sense of well-being.

The Eight Brocades

The Eight Brocades are a set of qigong exercises that originated in China and have been practiced throughout the world for thousands of years. Each movement focuses on a different meridian to improve the flow of qi throughout the body. If practiced routinely, this practice will improve your health significantly. Please give it a try for at least 90 days and you will be amazed at the benefits you will experience.

The Eight Brocades are most often considered a medical qigong exercise set. I would suggest that you do them each morning. Go at a pace and do the number of repetitions that matches your fitness and health level. Gradually, work up to eight repetitions of each movement. By completing these qigong movements, you should notice improved health, increased energy, reduced stress, a revitalized mind and body, improved balance, and an overall sense of well-being.

Start by standing with your feet shoulder width apart with knees relaxed. Place your hands just below your navel over the lower dantien (center of qi) and breath while rotating your hips. The lower dantien stores energy or qi. Visualize the energy or qi entering this area while you inhale then visualize the toxins being released as you exhale.



Breathing instruction – Make sure you inhale through your nose while pushing out your abdomen. Exhale through your mouth while pulling your abdomen inward. This allows for the maximum amount of air to flow freely into your lungs. Do this 6 times before beginning the movements.

Roll your head and neck clockwise and then counterclockwise 8 times to loosen up.

Remember to stand straight and not tense up your muscles. Relax and enjoy the experience.

The Eight Brocades - Movement Instructions

Holding up the Heavens

1. Stand with your feet shoulder length apart.
2. Inhale as you raise your hands, palms up.
3. At chest level, start turning your palms out.
4. At forehead level, your palms should be facing front.
5. Continue to raise your hands overhead holding both hands as if to hold the sky. At the same time thinking of the sky, earth and yourself as a whole unit.
6. Rise up on your toes (if possible) as you extend your arms, palms facing the sky, fingertips close together and eyes watching your hands.
7. Exhale as you sweep your arms to the side, with your palms facing down, until you are standing flat footed.
8. Repeat . Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.



Practicing this movement helps build good posture. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, TCM, practicing this movement helps to regulate the Triple Burner, and relieve fatigue by activating the fluid flowing in the Triple Burner and ensuring proper nourishment throughout the body.

Drawing the Bow

1. Start with feet widely space and knees bent in horse riding position.
2. Exhale as you sink and cross your arms in front of you with the right arm in front of the left.
3. Inhale as you extend your left arm out to the left with your pointer finger and thumb creating an "L" shape. At the same time pull your right arm to the right side holding the string with your right hand as if drawing a bow. Your right elbow is bent. Your right and left arm should be in a straight line.
4. Exhale as your release the right hand and let the arrow fly.
5. Inhale as you drop your arms, palms down, in an arc to your side as your body floats up.



6. Repeat steps 3 - 6 on the right side. The left arm will be crossed in front of the body, the right arm will create the "L" shape and the left hand will hold the string.
7. Repeat Drawing the Bow on both sides. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.

Practicing this movement strengthens the muscles of the hands, arms, chest, waist and thighs. It focuses on the kidneys and spleen. According to TCM, practicing this movement, enhances the function of the respiratory and circulatory systems.

Separating Heaven & Earth

1. Inhale as you lift your hands, palms up, to stomach level.
2. Continue raising your left hand until your left arm is extended over head with your palm up and fingers pointing to the right.
3. At the same time, extend your right hand to your side, palm down with your fingers pointing to the front.
4. Exhale and return to the starting position, with both palms up at stomach level.
5. With your mind concentrating as if to lift up the sky with one palm and pressing down the earth with the other.
6. Now repeat with the opposite right hand up and left hand down.
7. Repeat Separating Heaven and Earth movements on both sides. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.



It stretches the muscles in the arms and shoulders. According to TCM, it strengthens the digestive system and aids in prevention of gastrointestinal disorders. It contributes to the ascending of spleen-qi and the descending of stomach-qi, thus promoting the digestive functions.

Shake the Heavenly Pillar

1. Stand with your feet in a comfortable stance.
2. Look straight ahead and gaze into the distance with your arms extended down at your side. Sink your shoulders.
3. Inhale as you turn your head slowly to the left.
4. Gaze behind you as far as you can. Turn your eyes so you are looking out of the corner of your eyes (backwards & downwards).
5. Exhale as you return your head to the center.
6. Repeat steps 4-6 on the right side.
7. Repeat looking on both sides. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
8. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



This movement is also known as "The Wise Owl Gazes Backward", "Looking Right and Looking Left", and "Looking Behind". As you warm up, turn your head farther each time. Move slowly, time your movement with your breathing. According to TCM, practicing this movement helps your lungs, immune system, and large intestines. It enriches the essence and blood, calms the mind, and promotes organ functioning. This is also good for the release of emotional pain.

Punching with Tiger Eyes

1. Step left to a wide Horse stance. Try to work up to two shoulder widths.
2. Make a tight fist with both hands & hold both fists at waist level with palms up.
3. Exhale as you punch out slowly with the left hand. Use a spiral motion and end with the left fist palm down, at chest level.
4. Your eyes are wide open and glaring. Imagine fire, determination, courage, or toughness. See the energy traveling out of your fist.
5. Inhale and relax as you bring your left hand back to the starting position.
6. Repeat steps 3-5 on the other side (ie extend your right hand)
7. Repeat punching with both hands. Work up to



being able to do 8 repetitions.

This movement is also known as "Punching and Glaring", "Punching with Angry Gaze", and "Clenching Fists and Looking with Eyes Wide Open". A wide Horse stance improves the muscles of the thigh. According to TCM, this movement helps stimulate and revitalize the liver and will strengthen your physical power and energy.

This is a stretch of the neck to the left and the right in an alternating fashion.

The Big Bear Turns from Side to Side

1. Step left into a wide Horse stance. (Try and work up to two shoulder widths.)
2. Bend your knees and squat down lower. Make sure you have a straight back and your knees are centered over your toes.
3. Place hands just above your knees with your thumbs on the outside of your legs and your elbows pointed to the side.
4. Inhale slowly as you shift your weight to the left, turn your chest to the left, and your tailbone to the right. Extend your right arm to help you turn to the left.
5. Exhale as you shift back to center.
6. Inhale as you shift your weight to the right, turn your chest to the right, and your tailbone to the left. Extend your left arm to help you turn to the right.
7. Repeat. Work up to being able to do eight repetitions.



This movement is also known as "Rotate Head and Trunk", "Search the Clouds", "Sway the Head and Wag the Tail" and "Shake Head and Sway Buttocks to Extinguish Fire in the Heart". As you are completing this movement, place your attention on the bubbling wells in the bottom of your feet. This movement will strengthen legs and waist. According to TCM, this movement benefits the lungs and heart, rids of heart fire, and causes the kidney-yin to ascend.

Touching the Toes and Bending Backwards

Warning: If you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, don't put your head below

your heart. Also, people with lower back stiffness or pain should not bend deeply.

1. Stand with feet at shoulder distance.
2. Inhale and raise your hands over your head while arching your back.
3. Exhale as you lean forward, with your arms reaching towards your toes. Draw your abdomen in and bend your knees slightly to grasp your toes (if possible).
4. Inhale as you slowly roll up, vertebrae by vertebrae.
5. Repeat and work up to being able to do eight repetitions. .
6. Do not over bend. Gradually over time your flexibility will increase.



This movement is also known as "Carrying the Moon", "Nourishing the Kidneys", "Touch the Sky, Press the Earth", and "Touch Toes to Reinforce Kidneys". This movement will stretch and lengthen the muscles of the lower back. According to TCM, this movement stimulates various meridians in the body.

Bouncing on the Toes

1. Stand with feet in comfortable position.
2. As you inhale, place the backs of your hands on your lower back and raise up on your toes.
3. Exhale as you drop back down on your heels to gently bounce your whole body.
4. Repeat. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
5. Try doing this with your eyes closed once your balance is improved.



This movement is also known as "Jolt Body to Keep All Illnesses Away", "Lift the Back", and "Cure the 1000 Illnesses". This movement will exercise your calves and thighs. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine bouncing in this manner stimulates the immune system and helps rid the body of many diseases.

To finish the Eight Brocades

1. Stand in a horse stance. Feet shoulder width apart with knees bent.
2. Place your palms, face in on your dantien, with your thumbs at navel level
3. Feel the qi radiate out from your dantien throughout your body.
4. Now, feel this energy radiate out through your pores and skin until you are enveloped by warm radiant energy.
5. For a few more moments, continue belly breathing as you feel the qi radiating around and through your entire body.
6. Rub your hands together and then “wash” your face with your qi enriched hands.
7. Pat down your shoulders, arms, chest, stomach, buttocks, and legs to stimulate the flow of qi.

Congratulations! You are on the road to improved health and wellness.