QI GONG

WHAT IS QI GONG?

Qi (pronounced chi) is the Chinese word for “life energy”. According to Chinese medicine, qi is the animating power (energy) that flows through all living things.

Gong means “work” or “benefits acquired through perseverance and practice.” Thus, qigong means working with the life energy and learning how to control the flow and distribution of qi to improve the health and harmony of mind and body.

Qigong is a self-healing exercise and meditation, an ancient, evolving practice that includes healing posture, movement, self-massage, breathing techniques, and meditation. Through these various methods, qi is accumulated and stored in the body, like filling a reservoir. Impure or polluted qi—the essence of disease—can also be cleansed and refined into pure, healing qi. The goal of some qigong practices is to discharge and eliminate the impure qi in a manner similar to breathing. Breathing is a process of absorbing a pure source of energy, oxygen, and eliminating the impure, carbon dioxide. Like proper breathing, qigong practice can make this exchange more efficient.

Qigong is called a “practice” or “training” because, unlike medication, it is not “prescribed” for a limited period of time, but rather practiced daily. This is easy to do because qigong is as enjoyable as any sport, yet does not require a great expenditure of time or money. Students generally practice an average of 20 to 40 minutes each day. There is no need for special equipment or a large workout space.

Anyone can practice qigong. There are techniques suitable for every age and physical condition. Qigong includes standing, seated, and supine methods. With only slight adjustments in technique, it is possible to practice most standing exercises from a seated or lying down position. This makes qigong an ideal exercise for the disabled.

WHY PRACTICE QIGONG?

Most important, qigong is a way to prevent disease and improve health. Stress causes a general state of physical and mental tension. This can lead to disease and pain. Scientific research has proven that prolonged stress is a contributing factor in most of the “diseases of civilization”: high blood pressure, headaches, digestive disorders, arthritis, cancer, heart disease and respiratory disorders.

Qigong is a systematic training in psycho-physiological self-regulation. It teaches you to deal intelligently with stress, to keep the body relaxed and supple and your internal energy strong and healthy, and develops skills to regulate the health, balance, and movement of healing energy in the mind (“psycho”) and body (“physiological”). The world may not be peaceful, but we can do much to create peace from within.
BASIC BREATHING EXERCISES

THE COMPLETE BREATH

1) Stand or sit erect, with a straight spine.
2) Inhale steadily through the nostrils, filling the lower part of our lungs first. Your abdomen will push out.
3) Fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs, breastbone and chest.
4) Fill the next highest part of the lungs, expanding and lifting the upper chest, and the upper six or seven pairs of ribs.
5) Draw the abdomen in slightly, to fill the highest part of the lungs.
6) Retain the breath for several seconds. This will allow maximum contact with the alveolar surfaces, and result in optimal intake of oxygen.
7) Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position, drawing the abdomen slightly inward and upward. When the air is completely exhaled, relax the chest and abdomen.

The Complete Breath should be taken in one smooth, continuous motion, and should take about 2 seconds to inhale, and somewhat longer to exhale. With practice, inhalation can be extended to 5 – 10 seconds. It may help to practice the Complete Breath in front of a mirror, with your hands on your abdomen, to feel the movements. Once you have learned this technique, you will find it innately pleasurable, and will tend to keep doing it. The Complete Breath is a vital importance to everyone. Children, though, and especially babies, usually breathe this way naturally.

The effects of the Complete Breath are:
- Increased calmness
- Reduction of toxins
- Increase in pranic intake
- Reduction of physical tension
- Enhanced oxygenation of the blood
- Increased consciousness of unconscious acts
- Synchronization of personal breath rhythm with universal vibration
Qi Gong Movements for Stress Reduction

**Horse Riding Stance:** feet are shoulder with apart. Hips and shoulders are over the feet. Chin is slightly tucked.

**Chi or Qi:** is the Chinese word for life energy. The animating energy that flows through all living things.

**Dan’tien:** a two and a half inch ball about two and a half inches below the navel, where vital energy is stored.

**Breath:** Inhale to a slow count of 4; filling the abdomen first and then filling the lungs. Pause for a slow count of 2, then exhale for 4 slow counts; pause for a slow count of 2; then repeat the sequence.

Movements

**Regulates the Breath:** Bring hands up and arms out in front of the body and shoulders; then with slightly bent elbows, bring your arms down to your sides. Inhale coming up; exhale moving down into the Horse Riding Stance.

**Expands the Chest:** Bring hands and arms out in front of the body and shoulders; then turn hands so fingers face each other and move arms to the side coming straight out from the shoulders. This is one long slow inhale. Move arms to in front of the body with hands face down; with slightly bent elbows, lower arms to your side. This is a long slow exhale.

**For energy:**

**Big Roc Stretches Wings:** Arms move up and down from the sides. Begin with palms down; the back of the hands face each other when above the head. Keep your shoulders relaxed. Inhale upward; exhale downward. When moving downward, bend the knees into the Horse Riding Stance.

**Wind Swirls Lotus Flower From Inside to Outside.** With your both palms facing down, hands pointing out at the dan’tien, begin the movement by pushing movement by pushing straight out. As you move hands away from the body, the knees are in a gentle a gentle squat position with a slight bend at the waist. When your arms are stretched out about as far as they can go without locking elbows. Then circle your arms/hands in an outward motion, to bring them back to the dan’tien straightening up as you come back, push your abdomen forward as the hands create the last quarter of the circle and return to center. Repeat the motion making a large circle each time you return and continue moving straight out from the center. Inhale going out and exhale coming back around to the center.
End movement by pushing hands forward, with a slight bend to waist and knees, then pull hands back to the dan’tien and place both palms on the dan’tien.

Meditate on the chi returning to your dan’tien.

**Wind Swirls Lotus From Outside to Inside.** Now move the hands in an outward circle, palms down, and make a wide circle around and out to the full stretch of your arms, with out locking your elbows. As you move hands away from the body, the knees are in a gentle squat position with a slight forward bend at the waist. When your arms/hands are fully stretched, bring them straight back to the dan’tien---hands still pointing outward, palms down. Push your abdomen forward as the hands create the last quarter of the circle and return to center.

Stop the movement at the dan’tien, placing both palms on the dan’tien.

Meditate on the chi returning to your dan’tien.

Repeat each movement 3-5 times each for one cycle. Then repeat the cycle over and over for 5 to 10 minutes to reduce stress and boost energy.

Your **hands** may experience a feeling of warmth or a tingling sensation as you do the movements.