

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 , pronounced chee, means the life force or vital-energy that flows through all things in the universe.
- 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.

Qigong is made up of physical postures (moving or stationary), breathing techniques, and focused intentions. Some practices: increase the Qi, circulate it, store it, or use qi to cleanse and heal the body.

Qigong is a highly effective health care practice for self healing. Many health care professionals recommend Qigong as an important form of alternative complementary medicine.

Other more traditional exercises do not involve the meridian system used in acupuncture nor do they emphasize the importance of adding mind intent and breathing techniques to physical movements. When these dimensions are added, the benefits of exercise increase exponentially.

The gentle, rhythmic movements of Qigong:

- **reduce stress, build stamina, increase vitality, and enhance the immune system.**
- **improve cardiovascular, respiratory, circulation, lymph and digestive functions.**
- Western scientific research confirms that Qigong reduces hypertension and the incidence of falling in the aged population.

Benefits of a consistent practice:

- regain a youthful vitality,
- maintain health even into old age,
- helps speed recovery from illness.
- reestablishes the body/mind/soul connection.

People do Qigong to maintain health, heal their bodies, calm their minds, and reconnect with their spirit. 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.

Source: National Qigong Association



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Qi Gong Balancing Exercises

Always start in a natural standing position with whole body relaxed. Feet should be wider than shoulder distance apart. Keep your back straight and relax your shoulders and neck, keeping your head in an upright natural position.

- 1. Holding the Dantien** – connects Langong point of palms & Qihai point of dantien. Stand in Horse position. Men place left hand on the dantien and right hand over left. Women place right hand on dantien, and left hand over right. Relax whole body and lightly concentrate thoughts on your dantien. Slowly bend your knees and breathe out, keeping your back straight. Slowly straighten your legs and breathe in.
- 2. UP & DOWN: Dantien Up and Down** – good for lungs and stimulates dantien Qi. Separate hands so palms face upward and the fingertips point towards each other (with hands level with the dantien.) Slowly raise your hands from the dantien to the chest (Qihu points) and breathe in. Turn palms down so the Hegu point of the hand faces the chest (Qihu point) and lower your hands back to the dantien while breathing out and bending your knees.
- 3. OUT & IN: Opening and Closing the Dantien** - stimulates the dantien. Stand naturally with hands facing the dantien as if you were holding a small ball. Turn your palms out (thumbs pointing down) and push your hands forward and out while breathing in. Then turn your palms in and bring your hands back in towards the dantien as if you were squeezing the Qi into the dantien, while bending your legs and breathing out.
- 4. Turning head and twisting tail** – good for kidneys and helps lose weight. Breathe in on either side and out on opposite side. Lean to the left while raising your right arm and bending your right leg (keep left leg straight but relaxed with weight on it). Look at the hand. Do the same to the opposite side – lean to the right, raise left arm and bend your left leg.
- 5. Beautiful woman turns her waist** – helps back and kidney. Put your hands on your back over your kidneys as if you were holding them (palms in). Keeping your legs straight, rotate your waist 6 times in a clockwise direction and breath naturally. Then rotate your waist 6 times in the other direction (counter clockwise).
- 6. BEAR: Big Bear Stretches** – rotates spine, neck & shoulders, massages internal organs (focuses on heart & stomach). Open your chest and lift up your shoulders while breathing in. Roll your shoulders forward and down while closing your chest, bending your neck, back and knees, and breathing out. Repeat.
- 7. BIRD: Roc (big bird) extends its wings** – strengthen heart & lungs, lifts depression. Raise arms out to the side with the palms facing forward. Lean forward and close your arms until the hands cross (either hand on top). Lean back (not too far) bend your knees and open your chest and arms.

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- 1. SKY: Supporting the Sky** – good for lungs and breathing, and back
Hold your hands in front of your dantien so the palms face up and the fingers point to each other. Raise your hands up past the front of your chest so that the palms face the body and breathe in. As your hands come up, keep the back straight and when the hands reach the face roll your hands over so the palms face upward and stretch your arms up. Open your arms out to the sides, palms down, and lower them while bending the knees and breathing out. Keep the back straight until the hands are in the starting position.
- 2. Cloud Steps** - good for arthritis and circulation
Lift left arm and right leg slightly bending your standing leg, relaxing right arm. Lightly step forward with your right leg; keep your left palm open and press down and breathe out. Then lift your right arm and left leg and breathe in. Continue walking slowly.
- 3. Peeping Monkey** – strengthens spine, cures backache, stimulates Du channel along spine.
Begin by leaning to the left, bending your right leg and relaxing your left leg (put weight on right leg). Raise your right arm with your fingers touching the Yamen point on the back of the neck; bring the left hand to the back so the left Hegu point on the back of the hand touches the Mingmen point of your lower back. Repeat for other side.
- 4. Monkey Walk** - strengthens spine, shoulders and neck, and brings energy to heart lungs, kidney & spleen. Lift your right hand and touch the Yamen point on the back of your neck lightly with the fingers of the right hand. At the same time, step forward with your left leg, placing the foot lightly on to the outside edge so as to open the Yongquan point on the sole. Your left hand should move to your back and the back of the hand (Hegu point) touches the Mingmen point of the low back. Then close your left sole and shift your weight to your left leg allowing it to bend at the knee. Relax both hands and drop them to your sides. Then repeat to the opposite side. Try to walk in a circle.

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1. **Holding the Dantien** – connects Langong point of palms & Qihai point of dantien.
2. **Up and Down Dantien** – good for lungs and stimulates dantien Qi
3. **OUT & IN: Opening and Closing the Dantien (out & in)** - stimulates the dantien
4. **Turning head and twisting tail** – good for kidneys and helps lose weight.
5. **Beautiful woman turns her waist** – helps back and kidney.
6. **Bear: Big Bear Stretches** – rotates spine, neck & shoulders, massages internal organs (focuses on heart & stomach).
5. **Peeping Monkey** – strengthens spine, cures backache, stimulates Du channel along spine.
7. **Bird: Roc extends its wings** – strengthen heart & lungs, lifts depression.
6. **Sky: Supporting the Sky** – good for lungs and breathing, and back
7. **Cloud Steps** - good for arthritis and circulation
8. **Monkey Walk** - strengthens spine, shoulders and neck, and brings energy to heart lungs, kidney & spleen.

Warm up Exercises

Purpose: Prepare the body and mind for qi cultivation.

Center & Ground – Pull energy in like a turtle & bring attention to lower dan tien.

1 – Pat the Bear

- pat body – kidneys and low back with soft fists,
- Pat with palms down back of legs, up front of legs, groin, pause/breathe,
- Pat body -up side, armpit, heart point, down front of arm & up back, shoulder/hold elbow, across chest, down front, pause/breathe,
 - repeat to other side

2 – Bouncing Tiger (60 seconds) - bounce

3 – Hold the Moon, Reach the Stars (3)

- turn at heart, hold at top, bend over head, hold at top, down side with wrist at 90°. Breathe in on way up, hold at top, breathe out on way down.

4 – Twisting Dragon

- turn at waist with natural swing)

5 – Lazy Monkey Wakes Up (3)

- hang, shake,
- Ha x3,
- Up slowly with bent knees, back of hands together, bend back, sigh of relief (ah),
- repeat x3,
- move however you need to move

Vitality Qigong

Movement

1. **Starting Posture** “standing meditation”

- Feet forward at shoulder width, relax shoulders and dangle arms at side, Bend knees slightly, allow coccyx, sacral bone and pelvis to swing slightly under spine to straighten lower back – less forward, less lumbar curve “bowl of fruit”
- Breath deep & relax

2. **FLOATING ARMS** – float in field of energy

- Inhale and bring arms up in front to shoulder height, weight shifts on balls of feet, palms up
 - Exhale and float arms down
- Increase oxygen & nutrients in circulation (relaxation response), lower BP, circulate lymph

3. **BENDING LEFT & RIGHT**

- Stretch side arm up and over head with other arm relaxed at side
 - Breathe out as bend down, Breathe in as straighten up. Repeat to other side
- Muscles of spine & side to side flexibility, massage intervertebral discs toward center “fluff” pillow”

4. **SEED – FLOWER: Bending Front & Back**

- stretch arms upward (rotate out at face), hands up above head, palms up & open, look up (release) as breath in
 - Pull down & in with clenched fists, squish breasts, head down, elbows bent 90 degrees, contract all muscles & perineum (tighten) as breath out
- Pump lymph especially in breast, lungs strengthened, rib cage flexibility, flex spine & discs (decrease risk of breast cancer)

5. **SKY: Reach Upward, Stretch Outward** (Supporting the heavens) “Sky”

- Gently lace fingers, stretch arms upward (rotate out at face) as breath in
 - Hold with arms up above head and rock up on toes (hold breath)
 - Arms out and down sides with wrist at 90 degrees as breath out
- Increase lungs, work lower leg muscles & lymph, breath circulates lymph

6. **MOVING FROM INSIDE: Spontaneous Qigong** “Dancing in Chaos”

- Follow inner guidance: Wriggle, bounce, flow, massage, stand, make sounds,
- Releases emotional stress and tension, pent up energies, releases connective tissue of body

Source: The Healer Within book by Roger Jahnke & Qigong Chi Kung video www.feeltheqi.com

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Anti-Aging Benefits of Qigong

Research Compiled by Dr. Ken Sancier PhD,
Qigong Institute.org - research done in China in 1980s

- Balance meridians & organs of body (10-15 min)
- Immune system ↑ WBCs (30 min.) 2003 RCT Korea
- Hypertension: 30 min 2x/day, 20 yrs, 536 pts, RCT (same drug & hosp.)
 - lower BP and more stable long-term
 - CVA & mortality ↓ 50%, ↓ morbidity
 - heart function & microcirculation 1 yr. (↑ CO, ↓ peripheral resistance from 74% to 39%)
 - improved sex hormones (estrogen balance)
- Reverse senility (improved symptoms in 80% vs 45% exercise)
 - cerebral function, sex function, lipids, endocrine function
- Anti-aging hormone ↑ SOD (destroy free radicals), 30 min/day
 - ↑ phy. metabolism, qi & blood
- Cardiovascular Function (qigong vs reg. exercises) pilots - 4 wks
 - less change BP, HR, O₂ consumption, ↑ microcirculation, ↑ pulmonary ventilation
- Blood Flow to Brain 1-6 mths
 - Improved Symptoms: memory, dizziness, insomnia, tinnitus, numbness in limbs, vertigo, headache, lowered Cholesterol
- Cancer 2 hrs/day 3-6 mths
 - ↑ strength, appetite, wt gain, phagocytic rate, no diarrhea
 - slowed cancer growth & reduced tumor size
- Qigong + Drugs better than Drugs alone treat chronic illness
 - ↑ drug absorption/uptake tissues & cells, ↑ blood circ.

Research on Qigong - Neuro

- Paralysis (hemiplegia & paraplegia) qi tx & ex 1-2x/day
 - ↑ ROM, walking, daily functioning, restored damaged nervous system
- Pain
 - Bulging or herniated discs, frozen shoulder & tennis elbow, ankle sprain, athroslerotic leg pain, skin pain, emotional pain
 - fibrolyalsia -8 wks- less pain, fatigue, sleeplessness, ↑ function, mood, health
- Parkinson Dx less tremors, attacks, Sx
- Drug Addition - Heroin decreased detox time & Sx
- Healer intent changes DNA molecule shape
- qi emmissions - intercellular communication process

Outcomes with People with Disabilities

- Improved coping mechanisms and ability to calm themselves (de-escalate)
- Calmer, more focused, & happier, “easier day”
- Improved balance
- Improved muscle strength & flexibility
- Improved range of motion of constricted joints
- Ability to walk, and distance of walking
- General feelings of increased physical vitality
- Participation by typically reluctant clients
- Weight loss with frequent or daily qi gong
- Improved self esteem & self image

Key Elements of Qigong Program

- “Always stay in the comfort zone.”
- **Affirming Independence**
 - Respect the individual - inviting participation
 - Allow to work at own level
 - Progress over time (hand over hand, mirror, independent)
- **Celebrate success and new achievements**
 - Work in stages to learn exercises & skills
 - Recognize & celebrate for individual & group
- Peer assistance & interaction
- Be calm. Be grounded. Be compassion.