

Energy Exercises - Qigong - Chi Kung - Chinese Yoga

(say "chee gung")

This gentle and relaxing exercise has proven to be a highly effective way to maintain your health, reduce stress, increase energy and vitality, and promote healing from a wide variety of disorders.

"Qi"
Energy



"Gong"
*Work
with
Skill*



Calligraphy for Qigong
by Jiang-ye Jiang

Qigong, China's 5,000 year old system of self-healing combines the energy work of Oriental medicine with meditation and physical movement. In the USA our National Institute of Health (NIH) recognizes Qigong as an important form of complementary medicine. NIH has funded millions of dollars in research grants which scientifically prove the many benefits of practicing Qigong. The effectiveness of Qigong has been proven in China by its beneficial impact on the health of millions of people over thousands of years. People from children to centenarians have used these enjoyable, gentle exercises to:

- Slow or reverse the degeneration of aging
- Prevent or to improve healing of illnesses and injuries
- Boost athletic and intellectual performance
- Deeply relax the body and mind
- Improve sexual function
- Reduce stress
- Relieve depression

For most people, the first and foremost benefit of Qigong lies in helping to relieve or prevent chronic health problems. In China, Qigong is used to help relieve a range of disorders including: stress, obesity, diabetes, asthma, poor circulation, internal organ problems, arthritis, nerve pain, bad backs, joint problems, hypertension, autoimmune disorders, cancer and general physical disease.

Qigong, a part of Chinese Medicine, along with acupuncture and therapeutic massage are based on the concept of "Qi - Chi" - internal energy - the life force. Qigong increases Qi, vital life force energy. Cultivation of Qi through practicing Qigong is one way to heal injuries and illnesses, improve your general health or develop certain abilities. Chinese medicine is a holistic system which treats the whole person in context of family, relationship and environment.

Qigong exercises are sometimes called "Chinese Yoga". History tells us that Qigong and Yoga had common origins thousands of years ago. In fact some forms of Qigong called DaoYin have postures almost identical to some Yoga postures but with the additional benefit of prescribed ways of moving Qi, subtle-energy, through the body to maintain health or create healing. Qigong is generally even simpler and more specific than Tai Chi. Doctors in China regularly prescribe Qigong and Tai Chi as therapy for high blood pressure, poor circulation, asthma, nervous diseases, impotence, arthritis and back, neck and joint problems. Tai Chi and Qigong both include meditation techniques and are extremely effective for calming and stilling the mind, releasing stress and slowing down the process of aging.

Qigong

Qi means energy or breath, while *gong* means working with skill. Thus any exercise that works with breath training could be called a *Qigong* practice. The most important training is allowing the breath to become very natural. The qualities of natural breathing are for the breath to become *quiet, soft, smooth, even, long* and *deep*.

Each thought and emotion registers in the breath. For example, we hold our breath when concentrating on a math problem; we pant when sexually aroused; we sigh and breath laboriously when depressed. Conversely, each change in the breath influences the mind. Returning the breath to its natural resting state activates the relaxation response, shifts the neurotransmitter profile and is highly beneficial, restorative and healing to both body and mind.

People practice *Qigong* for different reasons: for improved health and fitness, healing, to improve martial arts skill, and for spiritual development. The more physically active *Qigong* exercises strengthen and repair the subtle "wiring" of the energy body, and develop a strong and supple matrix for the movement and refinement of *Qi*. Certain *Qigong* standing postures also help to "ground" one's energy as the foundation for tapping into the limitless reserves of transpersonal *Qi* in Nature.

Like Native Americans, the early Chinese - Daoist shamans saw that through understanding and connecting to nature and animal powers they could restore outer balance and harmony with the forces of the universe. For example: the Daoist emperor Yü the Great, of the early Hsia dynasty, ecstatically danced the movements of a bear to harmonize heaven and earth and to stop the floods in his land. His dance of the bear's energy was successful; he stopped the flood and saved his people. His dance was known as "The Pace of Yü," and is still practiced today.

It was not long before ancient Chinese people transferred this same reasoning to the microcosm of their own bodies. Of the earliest know *Qigong* forms, many were derived from the movements of animals. The *Qigong Classics (Tao Yin Tu)*, discovered in the tomb of King Ma in 1973 and dating back to the second century BC, illustrated over 40 *Qigong* postures used for promoting health and healing specific illnesses; over half of these postures were animal movements. Hua T'o, the renowned second century Taoist physician, wrote, "Flowing water does not become stagnant; active door hinges do not rust." Therefore, Hua T'o devised a series of *Qigong* exercises for his patients know as the *Wu Jin Xi (Wu Chin Hsi)* or "Five Animal Frolics," based upon the movements of the crane, bear, monkey, deer and tiger.

Unlike Western exercise, which focuses primarily on muscular development and cardiovascular fitness, *Qigong* exercise is concerned with strengthening all of the internal systems. There are specific exercises for nourishing each of the internal organs, the sensory organs (eyes, ears, etc.), the tendons and ligaments, and the reproductive organs. There is even a whole system of *Qigong* exercises for strengthening the bone matrix and marrow.

Regular *Qigong* exercise has been scientifically determined to enhance one's ability to emit high levels of electrical, magnetic and sub-sonic charge. This ability of *Qigong* practitioners is being used extensively in China for healing; there are now hundreds of *Qigong* hospitals and clinics throughout China where ailments ranging from arthritis to cancer are being successfully treated with *Qigong* therapy, either by itself or in conjunction with acupuncture, herbs or Western medicine.

Qigong Alliance International PO Box 540, Ely, MN 55731
Websites: www.QigongTeacher.com www.Qigong-Alliance.org www.Dao-of-Well-Being.com
Phone: 218-365-6330 E-mail: Kali@QiCentral.org

Copyright © 2007-2010 by Rebecca Kali