

**NORTH JERSEY CENTER FOR  
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# QIGONG

*An Introduction to the Ancient Practice of  
Harmonious Integration of Body, Breath and Mind*



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**Notice:** Oriental Medicine is a professional system of medicine. Persons wishing to have treatment should be sure their practitioner is a Licensed health care professional. This booklet should not be construed as medical advice. Please contact a licensed health care provider for more information or information about your specific case.

# QIGONG - THE BASICS

## THE SCIENCE OF QI

All traditional Chinese sciences can be considered sciences of “Qi” (氣, 炁). The concept of Qi permeates Asian languages and cultures and has been an integral part of Chinese thought for at least 3,000 years. In the broadest possible sense “Qi” is the animating force that defines the universe. Light, heat, magnetic energy, and gravity are all manifestations of this universal force. Climate and weather are other manifestations of Qi (the word for weather in Chinese is *Tian Qi* 天氣, “heaven’s Qi”). The human body is filled with Qi, the vital substance that animates all aspects of life and the physiological processes that keep the body going.

Chinese physicians, over the last 3,000 years, have specialized in recognizing imbalances in the body’s Qi. On an essential level, all diseases, pains or dysfunctions are deviations in the balance of human Qi, and all traditional Chinese medical therapies are thus intended to reestablish homeostasis if Qi. This can be accomplished by treatments such as acupuncture or Chinese herbal medicine, or by practicing special exercises known as Qigong (also written Chi Kung).

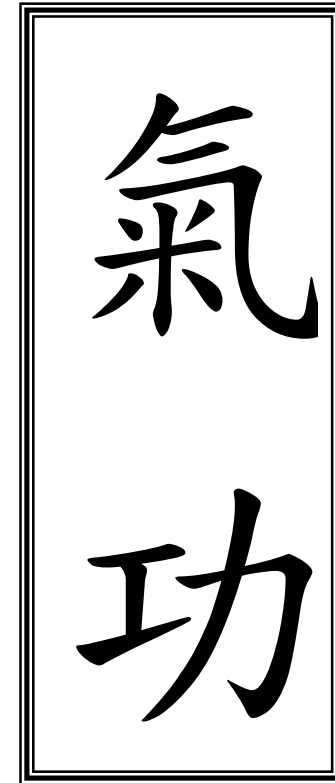


## WHAT IS QIGONG

The word Qigong describes a wide variety of traditional Asian practices designed to regulate and balance the body's internal vital force – Qi. While the word “Qigong” is a relatively new term (developed during the twentieth century), the systems known as Qigong have been practiced and revered in Asia for over 2,000 years. Like martial arts, there are many, many schools of Qigong practice, each with different training methods and purposes.

Between 1972 and 1974 Chinese archeologists excavated the tomb of Li Cang, a nobleman who died in 186 BCE. This discovery, known as the Ma Wang Dui tombs, yielded an incredibly rich source of texts on a variety of topics, as Li Cang was an avid book collector. A significant number of the manuscripts were devoted to topics of health preservation via specialized breathing and stretching exercises. These practices are the earliest textual example of Qigong-like exercises and demonstrates that Qigong has been a significant part of health regimens in China for more than a millennium.

The word “Qigong” itself is a combination of the term “Qi” and the word “Gong.” Gong (功) means any type of consistent hard work or effort that takes a long period of time. Any type of significant endeavor is a type of Gong. A skillful professional, whether they be a cook, physician, martial artist, or musician, all develop their own unique form of Gong. The word “Qigong” thus refers to any practice of exercising the body's Qi that requires consistent, long term and significant effort.



## **CLASSIFYING TYPES OF QIGONG**

Even though there are hundreds, if not thousands of Qigong systems, most can be classified by their main training goals. For the most part Qigong exercises can be classified as Medical, Martial or Spiritual Qigong.

### **Medical Qigong**

Medical Qigong exercises focus on regulating Qi for the purpose of treating disease or maintaining health. These practices represent the widest range of Qigong exercises and range from moving routines to meditative arts. Some common forms of medical Qigong include Six Healing Sounds and the Eight Pieces of Brocade.

### **Martial Qigong**

Martial Qigong systems were developed and practiced by serious fighters and professional soldiers. Their goals involve increasing the strength of striking power and increasing the body's ability to be struck without being damaged. Highly developed martial Qigong practitioners can break solid objects like bricks with their bare hands or be struck in sensitive areas of the body (such as the throat or groin) without being hurt. Examples of martial Qigong systems include Golden Bell, Iron Shirt, and Iron Palm.

## Spiritual Qigong

Spiritual or Religious Qigong is practiced for the purpose of achieving spiritual development or enlightenment. These systems are the most advanced and closely guarded Qigong practices and they often develop the health and wellbeing of the practitioner as well (such as the Medical and Martial systems). In China, two main groups – Buddhists and Daoists – have developed Qigong for spiritual growth. Daoists in particular have developed very advanced forms of Qigong, also known as Inner Alchemy, and many practitioners live well past the age of 100 as a result of the health benefits of such practices. Some examples of Daoist Qigong include the Microcosmic Orbit Meditation, Fusion of the Five Phases, and Enlightenment of Kan and Li Meditations.



**Li Qing Yun**

This photograph was taken in 1927 at the residence of General Yang Sen. What is remarkable is that Li, at the time of this photo, was already 249 years old. Li was born in 1678 and as a young man traveled with itinerant herb dealers thus learning the practice of Chinese herbal medicine. He was taught Qigong by a wandering Daoist who Li met near Mount Emei near the Tibetan border. According to Li, the Daoist was already over 300 years old when they met.

Li spent most of his life collecting herbs in the mountains, although he did serve in the military (he joined that army at age 71) and married 14 times. He eventually died in 1928 at the age of 250. His obituary was run in the New York Times on May 6, 1933.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF QIGONG PRACTICES**

There are many approaches in the various schools of Qigong that exist today. Many systems rely on very physically vigorous and demanding routines while other schools of Qigong are purely meditative in nature. Other seemingly unrelated activities, such as practicing medicine, playing music, or painting calligraphy, can also be classified as Qigong practices. Actually, just about anything can be classified as a type of Qigong so long as they include three aspects, known as the Three Regulations.

### **Regulating the Body 調身**

All Qigong exercises include some sort of physical training. Vigorous and demanding physical movements characterize some Qigong exercises while others are non-moving seated meditations. Even in meditative practices proper posture is important however. Qi flow is influenced by certain movements or held postures. Thus physical training of some sort facilitates the process of rebalancing Qi.

### **Regulating the Breath 調息**

Deep breathing allows Qi to enter deeply into the body. Specific breathing patterns influence the movement of Qi in the channels internally. Deep and patterned breathing induces states of relaxation helping to relax and open the channels, opening blockages in the normal flow of Qi. Qigong uses this aspect of the breath to effectively rebalance the channels of the body.

## **Regulating the Heart-Mind 調心**

Chinese medicine believes that the Qi follows the Yi (intention). It is well known that thought patterns can influence every aspect of our being, including our health. Qigong practitioners learn to rebalance their own energy or consciously absorb more energy from around them by concentrated intention through meditative practices or visualization techniques. Regulating the extremes of the emotional mind allows a practitioner to maintain center and balance even in the face of stress or turmoil.



## **A SIMPLE QIGONG - ABDOMINAL BREATHING**

Here is a simple Qigong that anyone can practice, even with little or no experience with Qigong. This exercise is designed to increase Qi in the body, and can be used at any time when one feels fatigued or under stress. If practiced at night it centers the mind and allows for a deeper state of relaxation and more restful sleep.

Stand with feet shoulder width apart or sit comfortable with spine erect. At night this can be done lying on one's back in bed. Close the eyes and place both hands, palm over palm, face down over the navel. With eyes closed take slow deep breaths, each time allowing the abdomen to softly expand outwards with the in-breath. Do not force the breathing although try as much as possible to make slow, inaudible breaths.

While breathing in visualize that energy from all around enters into the nose and moves down into the lower abdomen, as if filling a balloon with air. This energy can be visualized as a brilliant golden light or as a warm current of air. After several repetitions often the lower abdomen will feel filled with a warm and tingling sensation – the sensation of extra Qi permeating the body. Practice daily as often as desired for 5 to 10 minutes at a time.

## **QIGONG TAUGHT AT OUR CENTER**

### **Simple Moving Qigong and Relaxation Technique**

There are several easy exercises, such as the abdominal breathing above, that induce deep relaxation and rebalance the acupuncture channels of the body. This class teaches a series of such Qigong for general health purposes.



## **Six Healing Sounds Gong** 六字決養生功

The Six Healing Sounds are based on the Chinese medical concepts of the internal organs. Each of the most essential six organs can be regulated and balanced with a combination of posture, breath, and sound intonations. The practice of healing sounds thus revitalizes and rebalances the internal organs. They can be used for general health maintenance or even treating specific diseases.

## **Daoist Meditation** 道家靜功

Daoist meditation refers to a wide variety of meditative exercises that use visualizations to rebalance Qi and increase vitality without physical movement. Practitioners adept at meditation techniques can rebalance themselves simply with the power of their own mind and intention. Classical Daoist meditation techniques offer modern Qigong practitioners a way to experience deep relaxation and healing.

## **Dao Yin Self Massage** 自我按摩療法

This class teaches practitioners to use easy self-massage techniques to balance the channels and reduce physical and emotional tension. Physically manipulating the body in combination with breathing and visualization is more effective than massage alone.

## **Pangu Shengong Moving Form** 盤古神功動功

Pangu Shengong (PGSG) is a complete system of Qigong developed by the renowned Qigong Master Ou Wen Wei. PGSG is a form of moving Qigong that uses simple hand movements and visualization techniques to absorb the energies of the sun and moon to increase immune function and rebalance Yin and Yang in the body. PGSG requires only 20 to 30 minutes of practice each day but thousands of people worldwide have used it to treat all sorts of chronic illnesses.

## **Pangu Shengong Non-Moving Form** 盤古神功靜功

The non-moving form of PGSG is the second level of training in this system. It is a more advanced meditative Qigong that, unlike the moving form, can be practiced at any time and in any location while simply sitting with the eyes closed. It strongly develops the Shen and cognitive ability, as well as balanced the central nervous system. Students who learn this form must have previously learned the PGSG Moving Form and have practiced it for a minimum of two months.

## **Daoist Seasonal Qigong** 二十四氣坐功導引法

The Daoist Immortal Chen Dan (Chen Tuan) is credited with developing a set of Qigong exercised that harmonize the body with each of the 24 seasonal divisions in the classical Chinese calendar. Furthermore, these exercises help target specific acupuncture channels and treat a variety of diseases. The regular practice of Seasonal Qigong is an excellent method of harmonizing the body with the external environment. This form is also quite special as it was passed down in a direct unbroken lineage from the Daoist Immortal Chen Dan to Dr. McCann, our resident instructor.

## **QIGONG THERAPY**

Qigong Therapy is when a practitioner channels universal Qi into a patient for the purposes of healing. Also known as external Qi therapy, this practice, like acupuncture, rebalances Qi in the body and can replenish lost or damaged Qi. Treatments are subtle yet deep and powerful. The patient often feels a sense of warmth or tingling as well as a sense of deep relaxation. An acupuncturist trained in Qigong can also direct Qi through the needles, combining acupuncture with Qigong therapy for an even more profound and long lasting therapeutic effect.

## **ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR**

**Henry McCann, DAOM, LAc, Dipl OM** has studied and taught Asian martial arts for over 30 years and various forms of Qigong and Daoist meditation for 20 years. His profound experience with Qigong led him to choose a professional career in Oriental Medicine. After completing a B.A. at Oberlin College and a B.M. at Oberlin Conservatory he lived in Japan as a Fulbright fellow to the University of the Ryukyus. Dr. McCann then attended the New England School of Acupuncture, the oldest college of Oriental Medicine in the United States, and finished his doctoral degree at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine

Dr. McCann is a core doctoral degree faculty member at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine, and lectures regularly throughout the United States and Europe. He is a disciple of Wang Feng Ming and has studied Asian movement arts in the classical master – private student method. Dr. McCann is a certified instructor of Pangu Shengong, a 12<sup>th</sup> generation lineage holder of Chen Family Taijiquan, a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation lineage holder of Hunyuan Chen Style Taijiquan, and a lineage holder of Qigong originating with the Daoist Immortal Chen Tuan.



## **THE NORTH JERSEY CENTER FOR ACUPUNCTURE AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE**

The North Jersey Center for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine offers the full range of classical Oriental medical therapies in a modern clinical setting. The center is staffed with state licensed health care professionals who also maintain the most advanced national board certifications in Oriental Medicine.

### **THERAPIES AND AVAILABLE SERVICES**

Acupuncture, Chinese Herbal Medicine,  
Diet and Lifestyle Counseling  
Instruction in Qigong, Qigong Therapy, Medical Massage

Henry McCann, DAOM, LAc, Dipl OM  
Candace Sarges, MAc, LAc, Dipl OM

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