



## Guide to Qigong

## **QIGONG: (Exercises 1 – 8 of Tai Chi Qigong, and Settling the Qi -18)**

### **1) Tai Chi Start**

This is one of the simplest Tai Chi and Qi Gong Exercises but you can go as deep as you wish. There are many facets and ways of working with this exercise. Essentially we are moving the body up and down with the breath. We can use the Lao Gong point to focus the mind or move the mind through the body from the feet. With the latter we are pushing down through the feet, allowing the body to rise up, with the in breathe, and then melting, softening, and relaxing the body with the out breath.

This exercise is very grounding, helping us to align the body and create waves of force (Qi) up and down the body. We can learn a lot from just this one exercise. This movement is also known as Open Tai Chi and is the opening movement of many traditional styles of Tai Chi.

The exercise focuses on the **Lao Gong** points in the centre of the palm. When you do this exercise your whole body will be stimulated, the blood circulation becomes stronger so the movement is good for the heart, poor circulation and arthritis. It also helps improve your posture.

Key words: **release and align**



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with your feet shoulder width apart.



2. Allow your arms to float up in front of your body, until they are about shoulder height (breathing in).



3. Slowly lower your arms until your hands are roughly level with your waist, slightly bending and softening your knees (breathing out).
4. Repeat.

### **Tai Chi Start - Training Tips:**

Try to avoid collapsing your knees inwards and allow your breathing to lead your movement (rather than allowing your movement to lead your breath). Go at a pace that suits you.

## 2) Opening The Chest

Here we extend the first movement, by turning the palms to face one another (aligning **Lao Gong** points) and tilt forwards as if being drawn forwards from the heart. We allow the body to open and this helps the Qi to flow out into the hands via the Heart/Heart Protector and Lung meridians.

As we move back and allow the hands to come back together, we align the body vertically. There is spontaneity here, allowing the movement to be natural and unforced. We are not looking to stretch the arms out in a traditional sense but more accurately we are looking for a sense of opening. This is followed by a sense of closing with the second in breath. The movement of gently moving/tilting forwards and back also massages the **Yong Quan** point on the sole of the foot.

Key words: **opening**



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with your feet shoulder width apart, as with the first exercise.
2. Allow your arms to float up in front of your body, until they are about shoulder height (breathing in).



3. Turn your hands so your palms are facing your upper chest. Open your arms out to the side, tilting your body forward slightly (breathing out). Feel the pressure increase in the front part of your feet.



4. Bring your arms back together until your hands are shoulder width apart with the palms facing one another (breathing in). As you do this, allow your body to come back to a vertical position.



5. Turn your palms to face the ground. Then slowly lower your arms until your hands are roughly level with your waist, slightly bending your knees (breathing out).
6. Repeat several times.

### **Opening the Chest - Training Tips:**

This really is an excellent exercise for raising your spirits and increasing the Qi flow to the lungs and heart.

As you do this exercise, try and feel your whole body opening and closing. Allow any tensions to melt away.

### 3) Rainbow Dance

Here we shift the weight and engage the process of lifting and sinking in conjunction with the breath. The palms align with the eyes and **Bai Hui** point on the crown of the head. We also focus in keeping the body aligned, and avoid twisting the knees. Allow the supporting foot to really “receive” the weight.



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with your feet slight wider than shoulder width apart. Bend your right leg, putting all of your weight into it.
2. At the same time raise your left hand to shoulder height, gazing at the open palm. Raise your right hand and hold it above your head with the Lao Gong point facing the top of your head and the Bai Hui point.



3. Begin gently shifting your weight to the other (left) leg, as you move your arms in a natural circle above your head.



4. Transfer to the right and bend your left leg. Bring your right hand down to shoulder height and gaze at it. Bring your left hand above your head with the Lao Gung point facing the top of your head and the Bai Hui point. (You should now be in the direct mirror image of the beginning posture).
5. Now continue alternating between left and right sides, keeping the breathing natural and relaxed. (you may find your breathing falls into a pattern of in on



the way up and out on the way down, depending upon the speed of your movements).

### **Rainbow Dance - Training Tips:**

You may get some stiffness or ache in the shoulders and arms, especially if you do this exercise for a few minutes. Try relaxing and softening around any tension to help release any blocked Qi.

Once you have established the movement, then enjoy the gentle 'dance' of this exercise as you shift your weight from side-to-side.

With much of the focus in the upper part of your body, don't forget to maintain a connection with the earth through the soles of your feet and avoid any sense of twisting or collapse in your knees.

### **4) Separating The Clouds**

In this exercise the palms align with the **Lower Dan Tian**. This exercise strengthens the Qi in and around the body.



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with your feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent and the back straight. Place your palms over the Lower Dan Tian.



2. Allow your hands to rise up along the centre line of your chest until the palms come just above your forehead, slightly straightening your legs (breathing in).



3. Separate your palms and turn them away from you, circling them down and around to either side of your body, bringing them to rest again at the Dan Tian, bending your knees (breathing out).

### **Separating the Clouds -Training Tips:**

Allow any tensions to melt away, especially as you breathe out.

With all this focus in the upper part of the body, don't forget to maintain connection with the earth through the soles of your feet.

### **5) Repulse the Monkey**

This one is multi faceted, with waves up and down the body and horizontal circles too. It is also the first exercise that may really challenge your coordination. We also align the Hegu point with **Tong Zi Liao**, on side side of the head.

This is one of the movements that is taken from traditional Tai Chi. Those of you who have done some Tai Chi practice will find this movement very familiar.

Key words: **the movement should feel alive and fluid.**



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with your feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bend and the back straight, as with the first exercise. Your right hand rests in the left at your centre.



2. Turn to your left, keeping your knees and feet in alignment. As you do this, raise your arms to shoulder height, palms facing down, right arm forward and left arm back.



3. Bend your left arm, bringing the back of your left hand up towards your temple. Turning back to face ahead, allow your left hand to pass above your right hand just in

front of your mid-chest (feeling the connection between the Lao Gong points).



4. Push your left hand forward, drawing the right hand back, passing the waist with the palm turned upwards (breathing out as you press forwards).





5. Continue drawing your right hand back, allowing it to rise up to shoulder height. (breathing out as you turn to the side) You should now be in the mirror image of the posture in number 2. above.

Repeat on the other side.

### **Repulse the Monkey - Training Tips:**

Keep the weight equal in both feet and avoid twisting the knees. Turn from your centre i.e. the middle of your body/hips and waist area. As you turn to the side breathe in as you bend the elbow and press forwards breathe out.

### **6) Rowing The Boat**

The hands come up to the sides of the head and we then tilt forwards from the hips. We move back as the hands go forwards and then when we align vertically we sink and release down.

Key words: **movement in two directions.**



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with your feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent and the back straight. Your palms should be open and relaxed, out to either side below waist height facing forwards.

2. Circle your palms up in a wide circle (breathing in), straightening your legs slightly.



3. Tilt forwards slightly at the waist, pivoting at the hips and keeping the back straight and the head in alignment (begin to breathe out).

4. Continue by moving your hands through the air in a forwards direction (still

breathing out). As you do this, move the body back to a vertical position. Bring the hands down to the sides of the body again, let the body relax and sink slightly.

Repeat the movement.

### **Rowing the Boat - Training Tips:**

Whilst sinking down don't collapse the posture, and whilst raising up don't lose your connection to the ground. If you find it hard to breathe out for so long, add an extra in breath and out breath.

## **7) Lifting The Ball**

We align the Hegu point with Huan Tiao point and turn to the corner, lifting the opposite palm. The body turns gently from side to side.

Key words: **move from the centre; allow the movement to be a continuum.**



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with your feet shoulder width apart, knees slightly bend and the back straight, as with the first exercise. Turn your left foot out about 45 degrees. Shift your weight onto your left leg, allowing the heel of the right leg to come off the ground. As you do this raise your right arm so it lines up with your left shoulder, palm facing up. Your left hand should move slightly back so the Hegu point lines up with the Haun Tiao (also known as the Jumping Round point) in your left buttock/hip.





2. Keeping your body relaxed, turn your right palm over, transferring your weight into your right leg. At the same time, drop your right hand down to the side of the body, bringing your left hand up in front of you.



Breathing in to one side and breathing out as you turn back to the centre, repeat the movement several times.

### **Lifting the Ball -Training Tips:**

Allow the movement to be light and dynamic. Pay attention to the alignment of the weight supporting leg and hip.

## 8) Turning to Look at the Moon

Similar to the previous movement but we imagine we are holding a large ball at head level and we turn a bit further.

Key words: **Soften the upper body.**



1. Starting with your weight equally balanced between both legs, your palms facing one another at the height of your temples.



2. Turn your whole body to the left, shifting your weight into your left leg, raising the heel of your right foot. At the same time look in the same direction in which your

hands are pointing (i.e. up towards the “moon”).



3. Keeping your body relaxed, turn the body, allowing your knees to bend, gradually shifting your weight into the other (right) foot.



**Gazing at the Moon – Training Tips:**

Stay connected to the supporting foot and avoid twisting the knee. Allow your eyes to softly gaze in the direction you are facing, always keeping the palms of your hands in your peripheral vision.

### **18) Settling and Balancing Qi (Sao Gong)**

Before going into the next of the Qi Gong set, we want to introduce an important exercise to settle the Qi. It also helps with grounding and conserving any energy you have generated from your practice, calming the mind and the nervous system.

Although this exercise is the last one in the Qi Gong set, we are introducing it now because, at the end of every practice you should do this exercise. This exercise helps bring Qi down the centre line back to the Lower Dan Tian, where it can be stored.



1. Stand in a relaxed and quiet stance with the feet shoulder width apart. Palms facing up with the finger towards one another but not touching. Palms about the same height as the waist.



2. Raise the palms up to the height of your heart and gently raise the heels too (breathe in).



3. Turn the palms when they get to the height of your heart and bring them down again (breathing out). Heels come down to the floor as you do this.

Repeat this exercise at least six times after each practice session.

## **QIGONG: (Exercises 9 – 18 of Tai Chi Qigong)**

### **9) Pushing Palms**

In this movement we turn the waist and push outwards with the opposite palm. We focus our intent gently into the palm, without tensing the body.

Key words: **Connect the turn of the body with the movement of the arm.**



1. Stand with your feet shoulder width or slightly wider. Slightly bend and soften your knees, keeping your back straight and upright. Hold your hands loosely at your waist, the back of the right hand resting in your left palm.



2. Turn to the left, bringing your left hand back to your waist (palm facing down). At the same time push your right palm out in front of you as you turn your waist to the left (breathing out).

3. Withdraw your hands back to the starting point (this time the back of the left hand resting in the right palm). Breathing in as you return to the centre.



4. Repeat the movement on the other (right) side.

### **Pushing Palms – Training Tips:**

Try not to lean or push your shoulders forwards and allow the movement to come from

the centre of the body.



## 10) Cloud Hands

We begin with the palms facing the mid line of the body at Heart level and lower Dan Tian level. We turn to the side and turn the palms as if holding a ball. We swap the hands and turn in the opposite direction.

If you have difficulty moving both hands together at the same time, you can practice one hand at a time, gradually moving both hands when you feel more comfortable with the movements.

Key words: **Always turn in the direction of the upper palm.**



1. Start with your feet shoulder width apart or slightly wider, the knees slightly bent. Hands as shown.
2. Turn your waist towards your left turning both palms over so they face one another (as if you were holding a large ball of light between your palms on your left side).



3. Allow your left palm to circle down and the right palm to rise up until they are at the level of the Dan Tian and chest respectively.



4. Turn to the front with both palms facing in, as shown.



5. Turn to the right and hold an imaginary ball (right hand on top).

Repeat the process by swapping the hands again and turning back to the original position etc.

### **Cloud Hands - Training Tips:**

Breathe naturally in and out through the nose. There is no set sequence to the breathing in this exercise.

This is one of the more complicated movements, but it is well worth persevering with it. Allow your movements to flow.

## 11) Touching the Sea, Looking at The Sky

We begin in a 'Bow' stance (Tai Chi Stance) and place the hands over ZuSanLi, the 3 Mile acupuncture point (Stomach 36, below the knee). Moving back we open the arms outwards, as we go forwards we bring the palms back the 3 Mile Point. This exercise can revive your Qi and help strengthen the legs and stomach Qi.

Key words: **Opening and closing. Keep the back straight.**



1. Adopt a 'Bow' stance, feet approximately shoulder width wide, with the right foot forwards and the left foot at 45 degrees. Begin with your weight in the back (right) leg, the arms opening out above your head, palms facing forwards. Body upright, keeping the front foot on the ground, breathing in.



2. Shift your weight towards the front (right) leg. As you do so, lean forwards and downwards, relaxing your arms down in front of you until they cross over just below your (right) knee.

Breathe out as you go forwards and in as you go back. Repeat several times, then change sides.

**Touching the Sea, Looking at The Sky – Training Tips:**

Avoid twisting the knee or pushing the knee beyond the toes. As you shift the weight back, make sure you don't lean back, putting pressure on the lower back.

## 12) Pushing The Wave

Here we align the points Hegu (Large Intestine 4) and Yun Men (Lung 2). We push forwards with the out breath and sink back with the in breath. We also raise the heels and toes in order to stimulate the Kidney Qi (via Kidney 1/Yong Quan).

Key words: **Allow the hands to be soft and the Hegu Point to be open and relaxed.**



1. As with the previous exercise, adopt a 'Bow' stance, feet approximately shoulder width wide, this time with the left foot forwards and the right foot at 45 degrees. The toe of your front (left foot) is raised off the ground. Lift both hands to shoulder height, bringing them towards your chest, so that the Hegu (Large Intestine 4) and Yun Men (Lung 2) points face one another.
2. Begin pushing forwards, bringing the weight into your front (left) leg as you breathe out.



3. Shift all your weight onto your front (left) leg, straightening the leg and raising the heel of your right foot off the ground.

4. As you breathe in sink back, transferring you weight into your back leg, raising the toes of your front (left) foot.

5. As with the previous exercise, perform several times and then repeat on the other side.

### **Pushing The Wave– Training Tips:**

Sense the connection between the Hegu and Yun Men points. Allow the movements to be smooth, avoiding any sudden changes.

### 13) Flying Pigeon

We begin with the weight forwards in the front leg with the arms in front of us with the palms facing inwards (aligning the Lao Gong points). As we sink the weight back we open the arms outwards (in breath) as we go forwards we bring the arms inwards (out breath). This emphasises flow of Qi in the arms and opens the chest and lungs.

Key words: **Opening and closing**



1. Adopt a 'Bow' stance, feet approximately shoulder width wide, with the left foot forwards and the right foot at 45 degrees. Keep your front foot firmly planted on the ground. Open your arms out to the side about shoulder height, palms facing forwards. (breathing in)





2. Shift your weight forwards, closing your arms as the weight comes into your front (left) leg. Allow the heel of your rear leg to come off the ground (breathing out)



3. Breathe in again as you draw your weight back, opening your arms out again (as in 1, above). Repeat the movement several times and then repeat on the other side.

### **Flying Pigeon – Training Tips:**

Look for a sense of opening rather than stretching when you open out the arms with the in breath.

## 14) Punching

In a shoulder width stance we make relaxed fists at the hips. With the out breath one fist comes forwards and with the in breath we bring it back. We continue with the other fist.

Key words: **Keep the arms relaxed. Focus the intent down the arm to the fist.**



1. Start with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, holding your fist gently at waist level, palms up.
2. Punch gently forwards with alternate fists, letting your fist rotate as it moves forwards.

### **Punching – Training Tips:**

Keep your shoulders relaxed, and the elbows slightly bent. Keep your back straight and your attention forwards in the direction of the fist.

## 15) Flying Wild Goose

As we breathe in we come up, as we breathe out we come down (sinking/melting). This is a very simple but effective exercise for calming the nervous system.

Key words: **The movement feels like a bird in flight.**



1. Stand naturally with the feet shoulder width apart, arms relaxed by your side. Gently raise your arms from the shoulder followed by the elbows, wrists, and fingers until your arms are level with your shoulders (breathing in).



2. Gently relax your arms allowing them to flow down from the shoulder, elbows,

wrists, and fingers bending your knees slightly (breathing out).

### **Flying Wild Goose – Training Tips:**

Be careful not to loose your connection to the ground. Allow any tensions to melt away with the out breath.

### **16) Turning Like A Wheel**

We make circles with the arms by turning the hips, starting from a low position (as low as is comfortable). We do this slowly for a few turns then reverse the direction.

Key words: **Keep the distance between the hands the same throughout.**

**Note** – Although, if practiced correctly, this exercise can help relieve backache, it is important to go gently and never overstretch (especially if this causes discomfort or pain).



1. Stand naturally with your feet shoulder width apart. Bend forwards as far as feels comfortable with your hands towards your toes.



2. Slowly swing your arms to your left side allowing your right hand to cross in front of your body.



3. Continue this circular movement out to your left side.



4. Continue the movement until your arms come above your head with the fingers pointing up to the sky.



5. Continue the movement down to the other (right) side.

Complete the circle and repeat several times then repeat in the other direction.

**Turning Like A Wheel – Training Tips:**

Allow the body to relax as much as possible. Move from the hips/centre of the body.

## 17) Marching While Bouncing A Ball

This is ideal for improving coordination and rebalancing the brain. We connect movements of the hand to the foot, alternating between one side and the other.

Key words: **Try to feel that the hand and foot are actually connected.**



1. Stand naturally and relaxed with the feet shoulder width apart, palms facing back. Begin to raise your left hand and foot together.



2. In this movement your hands move gently up to about shoulder height at the same time as you raise your knee, so your thigh comes up to the horizontal. Repeat on the

other side, continuing the marching action raising the same knee and hand.



3. This exercise can be extended further to raise the opposite knee and hand. This can be fun and really tests your co-ordination!

### **Marching While Bouncing A Ball – Training Tips:**

Take your time at first, gradually increasing the speed.



## 18) Settling and Balancing Qi (Sao Gong)

This exercise helps bring Qi down the centre line back to the Lower Dan Tian, where it can be stored.



1. Stand in a relaxed and quiet stance with the feet shoulder width apart. Palms facing up with the finger towards one another but not touching. Palms about the same height as the waist.



2. Raise the palms up to the height of your heart and gently raise the heels too (breathe in).



3. Turn the palms when they get to the height of your heart and bring them down again (breathing out). Heels come down to the floor as you do this.

Repeat this exercise at least six times after each practice session.