

MERIDIAN QIGONG

EXERCISES

**Combining Qigong, Yoga,
and Acupressure**

A simple
lying-down
routine for
everyone



DR. YANG, JWING-MING



“Master Yang is one of America’s most sought-after instructors of qigong.”

—The Omega Institute

Quickly Improve Your Health to Heal and Prevent Injuries

Each morning before getting out of bed, Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming practices a series of movements he has combined based on decades of experience. He will teach you his special daily exercise routine.

Follow along and learn how a unique combination of simple yoga stretches, qigong movements, and acupressure techniques can relieve energy stagnation and rejuvenate your entire body.

All the exercises can be performed lying down or sitting, if preferred. Meridian qigong will quickly improve your general health, helping you to heal and preventing injuries. With regular practice you will notice your entire body feels loose and comfortable. You will react to stress with a greater sense of calm, and your circulation will increase.

With this book you will

- Understand the link between yoga and qigong
- Learn basic acupressure with traditional tui na (pushing and grabbing) and dian xue (cavity pressing) techniques
- Supplement your qigong practice with yoga stretches
- Know which acupoints and meridians to stimulate
- Relieve many common ailments, including insomnia

“In this book, I have compiled these qigong movements from my more than fifty years of practicing and teaching experience,” Dr. Yang writes. “I sincerely hope that *Meridian Qigong Exercises* is able to inspire you and make your life healthier.”

Dr. Yang is among the world’s most respected instructors of martial arts, tai chi, and qigong. *Meridian Qigong Exercises* is a profound addition to his incredible body of work.



Yang, Jwing-Ming, PhD, is a world-renowned author, scholar, and teacher. He has been involved in Chinese martial arts since 1961 and maintains over 55 schools in 18 countries. Dr. Yang’s writing and teaching include the subjects of kung fu, tai chi chuan, massage, meditation, and chin na, and he is a leading authority on qigong. Dr. Yang is the author of over 35 books and 80 videos.

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Praise for *Meridian Qigong Exercises*

More than twenty years ago, I stepped into my first taiji class with Dr. Yang, in a studio room behind an auto dealership in Andover, Massachusetts. The class began with taiji qigong movements as a way of orienting the students to qi and helping us feel our own body's qi. For me, this was the first time I had ever experienced qi, and thus began my lifelong journey into qigong and taiji. Since that time, Dr. Yang has led the Western community in the exploration of qigong. He has published countless books on the subject, educated by his teaching experience and many translations of ancient documents.

As qigong and “complementary” medicine have grown in popularity in the United States and Europe, Dr. Yang has provided rational, simple explanations for the benefits of qigong movements, breathing, and the mind-body connection. He has explored, taught, and written about countless qigong sets and practices from the medical, martial, and spiritual schools. His clear-eyed insights have opened up this mystical, complex art and mapped many of its secrets to Western science and understanding.

The term *yoga* has evolved in our contemporary culture to describe a wide range of practices and styles—the best of which involve stretching the body while cultivating a mind-body connection. In his latest book, *Meridian Qigong Exercises*, Dr. Yang elucidates a series of simple, accessible stretches that open and activate the body's qi channels and massage the organs. He provides a terrific overview of the health benefits of several of the acupuncture points along the channels. Adding self-massage allows the practitioner to explore these points and their effects.

It has been a great joy for me to study from and develop a friendship with Dr. Yang. The inspiring arc of his career has spanned from his small New England base to a worldwide network of schools and many publications, to his current focus at the YMAA Retreat Center, where he teaches a small group of committed students who spend their days developing the martial, health, and spiritual sides of qigong, taiji, and Shaolin gongfu. All of us are fortunate to have Dr. Yang's formidable intelligence and skills focused on revealing and exploring these great arts. *Meridian Qigong Exercises* is another gift from Dr. Yang in his journey to bring the health benefits of qigong to the Western audience.

Bill Buckley

Registered yoga teacher; certified taijiquan, chin na, and qigong instructor (YMAA); owner and chief instructor at GateWay Taiji, Qigong, and Yoga in Portsmouth, New Hampshire

Early in my training I found my way to the Tai Chi Farm Festival held by the late Master Jou, Tsung Hwa at his farm in Warwick, New Jersey. It was a mecca for those seeking to share their tai chi and qigong experience. Well-known teachers from all over the world gathered to present their teachings as an offering of respect to their beloved friend and colleague, Master Jou. This welcoming environment is where I met Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming in 1997.

Having studied with several teachers already by that point, Dr. Yang provided a key missing step on my journey. Many teachers at that time were still in the mode of restricting the information they would give out, as if the knowledge were a treasure that shouldn't easily be spent. Dr. Yang was of the opposite mind. If there was a question, he would answer it, and he would answer it completely, all the way to its root, to the place where his mind had taken it on his own inquiry.

It was a stunning revelation to me at the time that a person could and should learn to analyze qigong and decipher its meaning and purpose. That by learning the principles of energy flow and body mechanics, one could determine how a qigong exercise would influence the body. I was hooked. I knew that if I spent the time to learn the principles that Dr. Yang taught, I would have the "road map," as he calls it, to find my way. I have been his student ever since and received master-level certification in qigong through his school, YMAA, in 2012. Dr. Yang's open style of deep inquiry and sharing has inspired me to continually raise the bar of what I learn and teach, pushing me to be a better student and teacher as the years go on.

Dr. Yang has a very rare interest and talent for translating ancient Chinese documents to bring their knowledge to the modern world. The singularity of this talent is not just in the translation process but also in his ability to interpret the deeper meaning of the words. This requires the unique ability, gleaned from his many years of study, to experiment with the material to plumb its depths and fully bring it to life.

Dr. Yang has gone one giant step further over his long career. He has added to the ancient wisdom by creating his own styles that are based on his training and experience and profound understanding in order to fill in the gaps of what modern qigong has to offer.

Dr. Yang's experience makes him eminently qualified to create a new style of qigong: Twelve Meridian Ground Qigong Yoga. This new qigong integrates the methods of increasing circulation through the muscles and joints interpreted from his experience with muscle/tendon changing qigong (see Dr. Yang's *Qigong, The Secret of Youth: Da Mo's Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Classics*, 2000) and the methods of self-massage utilizing acupressure points (see his *Qigong Massage*, 2005).

Our lifestyles create challenges the ancients never had. In my more than twenty years of experience teaching qigong and tai chi and practicing qi healing, I have learned many qigong styles and healers' techniques. The tools in this book unveil a new powerfully relaxing and accessible healing form that fills a missing niche, the transition from

DR. YANG, JWING-MING

Meridian Qigong Exercises

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It is recommended that before beginning any treatment or exercise program, you consult your medical professional to determine whether you should undertake this course of practice.

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Foreword

This book is special.

Dr. Yang's previous work has presented detailed instruction and theory for all of the most popular qigong forms, tracing back the roots of the art in the process. He has clarified, simplified, and preserved these classics forever, poring over all available documents in order to make his teaching as accurate and effective as possible.

He has given the world expositions on the two-thousand-year-old Daoist "Five Animal Sports"; Bodhidharma's Buddhist "Muscle/Tendon Changing" and "Brain/Marrow Washing Qigong" from 550 CE; and the popular thousand-year-old series known as the "Eight Brocades." He has passed down the ancient Shaolin White Crane qigong system from his own personal lineage that he mastered in his youth during thirteen years of ongoing study with his Master Cheng, Gin-Gsao (曾金灶). He has transmitted the most comprehensive qi theory as it pertains to taijiquan and all martial arts, after decades of research and practice. One of Dr. Yang's major accomplishments has been compiling, translating, and cross-referencing hundreds of documents in his ongoing creation of a unified theory of qigong.

Now nearing the age of seventy, Dr. Yang gives us *Meridian Qigong Exercises*, the book and companion video, his own personal daily qigong regimen, combining the most effective movements from multiple disciplines. This routine can be done on a chair or in bed, and it systematically improves the function of your entire physical and energetic body. I highly recommend this instant classic.

David Silver
Cape Cod Qigong
Cape Cod, Massachusetts

Foreword

In traditional Chinese medicine, the most important key to attaining health and healing is the free flow of qi in the body's meridian system. Much like a river that needs to flow from a mountaintop to the ocean and cycle back again through evaporation and condensation, qi needs to flow smoothly and abundantly through a continuous cycle in our bodies. This cycle promotes the cleansing, detoxification, and nourishing of our internal organs and is crucial for maintaining good health. When the organ system becomes imbalanced, toxins can accumulate and block the qi flow. This blockage is what leads to various ailments, pains, and discomforts in our bodies.

Meridian qigong can play a major role in regulating our qi in accordance with the body's natural rhythm. Simple exercises, such as wiggling your toes from the moment you wake up to pressing acupressure points on your hands and feet before you sleep, can help change the way you feel during the day and at night. These exercises can be easily integrated into your daily routines, such as while brushing your teeth or taking a shower. Over time, this practice builds awareness of the body's meridians and how they relate to different signs and symptoms. With regular practice, you will naturally learn to recognize these connections and know how to remove irregularities in your own body's energy.

I was first introduced to qigong by my father when I was eleven years old. Since then, the more I learned about qigong, the more I discovered how it could help me develop a stronger body, mind, and spirit. Also, the healing effects of qigong fascinated me. This interest eventually led me to pursue my degrees in clinical exercise physiology and traditional Chinese medicine. My studies gave me a systematic way to better understand the intricacies of qi, specifically how qi imbalances can lead to various illnesses. With this deeper understanding of how qi works in our bodies and in nature, I developed a strong belief that we can and should be very active in our own healing process.

Throughout the years, it has been a great joy of mine to observe the deep and significant impact my father has had on people's lives all over the world. I have been moved by the stories people share with me of how he has helped them better manage their conditions, such as chronic back pain, knee problems, arthritis, asthma, and even cancer. He has made this ancient knowledge of qigong accessible to our modern-day lives. Never has he ceased to amaze me with his innovativeness, pursuit of knowledge, and sincerity to share. He has been, and remains to be, the source of my inspiration.

I invite you to discover the ways in which qigong has inspired and impacted my life, and I hope it can do the same for yours.

Kathy Yang

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BSc in clinical exercise physiology from Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, USA*

Preface

Over the last fifty years, I have been searching for and compiling information on the qigong and yoga (which is essentially Indian qigong) that can be effectively used to benefit today's society. Our lifestyle today is very different from that of a hundred years ago. We are all busy and have less time. In addition, due to pollution in our air, water, and even the energy itself, this world has become the most difficult, contaminated, and harmful living environment ever existing in human history. In this situation, the body is constantly detoxing, and people commonly develop abnormal qi (energy) circulation patterns. For this reason, qigong and yoga practice have become more important than ever. Because of its emphasis on maintaining smooth qi and blood circulation, these internal arts have been commonly used to maintain body health and extend life span. With regular practice, a practitioner will be able to regulate the abnormal qi circulation and strengthen the body's vital force.

These qigong exercises focus on opening the twelve primary qi channels (meridians) in the early morning right after you wake up. When you sleep, your body's hormones are produced, and part of their function is to expedite the body's metabolism. But when we metabolize unclean food, water, and air, the body begins to accumulate toxic material. Early morning exercises and drinking water immediately after waking up are the crucial keys to help remove the toxins built up during sleep.

In this book, I have compiled these qigong movements from my more than fifty years of practicing and teaching experience. These qigong exercises focus on cleansing the body's twelve qi channels so the irregular qi circulation can be corrected. Practicing daily will help you regain your health and maintain your vital energy.

In addition, I also introduce some effective and easy self-massage routines, using tui na and cavity acupressure techniques that allow you to enhance the qi circulation in the channels. These cavities are selected from traditional Chinese medicine and commonly used in acupuncture.

Once you have practiced for a while with this book and companion DVD, you will be able to comprehend the theory behind it and may even create new movements that are more suitable for your lifestyle, body shape, and environment. These exercises only offer you some ideas and references to get started. You should keep your mind open and dare to experiment with new exercises, while listening to your body's subtle feedback. I sincerely hope that *Meridian Qigong Exercises* is able to inspire you and make your life healthier.

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming
YMAA California Retreat Center
September 15, 2013

Chapter 1: Meridian Qigong Exercises

1-1. Introduction

Before you begin practicing, there are a few points you should understand. These exercises are designed to be done in bed, and ideally, you'll be able to memorize them so you can practice without the book or DVD. But at first, you'll need the book or the video by your side. Before we start exercising, let me explain the benefits and the best time to practice.

Benefits of Exercises

To gain the most benefits from the meridian qigong exercises and acupuncture, it is highly recommended that you practice all of the movements. These movements are designed in an order ideal to motivate the qi and blood circulation. However, if you feel the number of repetitions is too many or too few, you may adjust to fit what you need.

Benefits

1. Increasing Health and Longevity

The benefits you can gain from these exercises are not only to maintain your general health but also to slow down your aging process. The key of reaching these goals is to keep practicing regularly so that the body is able to get rid of the waste, and you can regain your vital force.

2. Relaxing and Reconditioning Your Torso (Spine and Lower Back)

Many exercises focus on torso movements that can not only loosen up the torso but also rebuild its strength. In Chinese medicine, the muscles/tendons that wrap around the torso are considered an organ called triple burner (sanjiao, 三焦). When these wrapping muscles/tendons are loosened, the internal organs can be relaxed. Consequently, the qi and blood can smoothly circulate in the organs. In addition, through these exercises, you will also condition your torso and spine, especially the lower back. Therefore, to those who already have spine or lower back problems, these exercises will help you to regain health.

3. Opening the Twelve Primary Qi Channels (Meridians)

All exercises are designed to open up or to reactivate the qi's circulation in the twelve primary qi channels. Once these channels are wide opened, the qi can circulate abundantly and smoothly. This will thus enhance the blood circulation as well. Qi and blood circulation is the crucial key to getting rid of the body's toxins, especially when done in the early morning, right after waking up. In addition, if you practice before your sleep, you will loosen up the body and improve the qi and blood circulation. This will help you get rid of the toxins that have accumulated from daytime physical activities. Practicing before you sleep will provide a good circulating condition for the body's metabolism during your sleep. However, you may experience that it is harder to fall asleep because the enhanced circulation may excite your mind and body.

4. Strengthening Internal Organs

Another benefit of enhancing qi circulation in the twelve primary qi channels is to recondition your internal organs such as the kidneys, spleen, liver, lungs, and heart. When the qi's circulation in the twelve primary qi channels is enhanced due to the more abundant qi circulation provided, the internal organs can be conditioned and rebuilt. It is known in Chinese qigong practice that the crucial key of rebuilding the internal organs' healthy condition is through abundant qi circulation. After all, if there is not enough energy circulating in the internal organs, then there is nothing that can be used to recondition the organs.

5. Improving Joint Problems

Many exercises focus on stretching and exercising the joints. When you lie down, the physical body is relaxed, especially the joints. Therefore, it is the best position for stretching and exercising the joints and enhancing the qi's circulation in the joints. This is the crucial key to healing and reconditioning.

6. Improving the Digestive System

Some of the exercises emphasize the abdominal area's movement and massage. Through these exercises and massage, the qi will circulate following the bowel system. This is the key to improving the function of the digestive system.

7. Preventing Prostate and Breast Cancers

Through the shoulder and hip joint exercises, the qi stagnant around the breast and prostate areas can be removed. In Chinese medicine, it is recognized that smooth qi circulation is the key to preventing or treating cancers. Naturally, correct exercises and massage are the two most common treatments for cancer problems.

I hope this introduction has convinced you of the effectiveness and the benefits of meridian qigong. Please allow at least three months of practice to verify these benefits.

The keys to making this happen are patience and consistence. If you find this is beneficial to you, please introduce these exercises to others such as your friends and family.

Important Points

1. Time of Practice (練習時間)

To gain the most benefit from these exercises, there are three optimal times that you can practice.

- A. Right after waking up (剛睡醒)—Best time
- B. Right before sleep (睡前)—Second-best time
- C. Dusk (傍晚)—Third-best time

2. Do Not Practice with Full or Empty Stomach (不要飽食、空肚)

There are a lot of swaying and circling motions in these exercises. If you have a full stomach when you do these exercises, you will feel very uncomfortable. It is important to feel comfortable and relaxed. Naturally, if you are too hungry, that will also affect your exercises; you should eat a little bit of food first. However, if you feel comfortable right after you wake up, that would be the best time.

3. Drink Plenty of Water (喝水足量)

If you feel thirsty during practice, the waste in your body will not move adequately. Water is a necessary element to help cleanse the body. If you can, place a glass of water next to your bed so you will have it right when you are waking up.

4. Breathe Naturally (呼吸自然)

Breathing is a crucial key to repelling waste in the body. Plenty of oxygen will offer you a high level of metabolism. Therefore, when you practice, you should breathe naturally and deeply. Holding the breath can only cause tightness of the body.

5. Adequate Number of Repetitions (運動量適度)

The right amount of exercise is always the key to progress. Too much will harm you, and too little will not be effective. In addition, you must consider how much time you have. If you rush through, even though you have done a lot of exercises, the result will not be as great as when you take time and relax. You must build up a habit of enjoying it instead of treating it as a necessary task. If you find that your body is a little bit sore the next day after practice, it is normal. However, if the soreness is significant, it implies you should proceed more slowly and more gradually.

To complete all of the exercises recommended, it will take about forty to fifty minutes. If you find that there are too many exercises, you may divide them into two or three groups and practice them alternatively. You may also select those exercises that are more beneficial to your needs. For example, if you have lower back pain, you may want to practice those exercises that focus on the lower back. If you have hip or knee joint problems, you may want to emphasize more on the hip and knee exercises. Naturally, you can always adjust the number of repetitions as well.

We will also introduce some important tui na and acupressure techniques in the next chapter. Again, if you find it takes too much time for you to do all of them each time, you may design your own schedule. For example, exercise in the morning, and massage before you go to sleep.

1-2. Meridian Qigong Exercises

Preparation



First lie facing upward, and completely relax. Remain calm throughout each exercise. Open your legs slightly, and place your arms comfortably beside your body. Inhale slowly and deeply, and then gently and slowly let the air out. Bring your attention to your body's feeling, and pay attention to the feeling in each area you are focusing on throughout the exercises. Remember, feeling is a language that allows your mind and body to communicate through the nervous system and qi (energy) circulation. If you are able to establish a deep feeling right at the beginning, you will have accomplished at least 50 percent of the effectiveness of these meridian qigong practices. Repeat this relaxed breathing at least three times.

Facing Upward

Arms/Legs (臂/腿)

1. Extend and Squeeze Fingers/Toes (Arms Straight Upward) 張指/張趾與握拳/握趾(上伸臂) 停 10 秒，重複 2 次

These exercises will lead the qi from the twelve qi channels, which are connected to the twelve internal organs, to your extremities. This is the first step to enliven and open the channels and improve your qi circulation right away.



Extend both arms upward.



Open and stretch your toes and fingers as far as you can for ten seconds.



Next squeeze your toes and fingers inward, tightly, as if you are squeezing tennis balls in your hands, and hold for ten seconds. Repeat two more times.

2. Stretch Wrists/Ankles (Palms Facing Each Other) (拔腕/提足) (對掌)
(手胸前) 停 10 秒, 重複 2 次

This exercise will stretch the tendons and ligaments on the front side of the wrist area. Naturally, the tendons (Achilles) and ligaments on backside of the ankles will also be stretched. Your wrists and ankles are the two most important joints. The twelve channels pass through these two joints. When your wrist and ankle joints are opened and relaxed, the qi can reach the fingers and toes smoothly.

Chapter 2: Self-Massage—Tui Na and Dian Xue

2-1. Introduction

Tui (推) means “push,” and na (拿) means “grab.” Therefore, tui na massage means the massage focused on techniques of pushing and grabbing. Tui na is one of the main massage techniques developed in China. Tui na massage has commonly been used for injury treatments and also infant sicknesses. From tui na, the cells can be stimulated to a higher energized state, and the irregular qi circulation can be corrected.

Dian (點) means “pointing,” and xue (穴) means “cavity.” Dian xue massage is also called acupressure. By applying pressure to some acupuncture cavities, the qi circulation in the twelve primary channels (meridians) can be manipulated. Consequently, many sicknesses can be prevented or healed.

Traditionally, it would take at least ten years of learning and practicing for a tui na and dian xue masseur or masseuse to reach a professional level and become a healer. However, there are many cavities and techniques you can use for basic health prevention or even some level of healing that do not require long-term professional training.

Professional tui na and dian xue masseurs must know approximately 108 cavities of the more than seven hundred cavities in the body. Through these cavities, without using needles, the qi circulating in the primary qi channels can be manipulated and improved. To learn massage, the first step is self-massage. Through your experience with self-massage, you will see the accuracy of pushing, grabbing, and cavity press. The most important aspect of all is to develop the feeling of the power and its penetration. This feeling is a crucial key in becoming a good masseur. However, if you wish to become a professional tui na and dian xue masseur or masseuse, you still need to find a professional school or experienced massage doctor to guide you to the depth of this massage art.

This chapter will cover only a small portion of tui na and dian xue massage techniques. Through self-massage you will be able to feel and experience the effectiveness of these massages. When training yourself, it can be very beneficial to be familiar with some important cavities and their related illnesses. Most important of all, by massaging these cavities often, you will be able to maintain your health.

The best time to practice these massage techniques is right after waking up. This is because when you are sleeping, your physical body is relaxing and not in action, and the qi circulation slows down. Early morning massage will help you enhance the qi circulation and energize yourself. The second best time is right before sleeping. Through massaging these

cavities, you are able to open up the qi channels that can be stagnant after a whole day's activities. The only disadvantage to self-massage is you will not be able to easily massage your own back area where there are many important crucial cavities for health maintenance.

It takes about twenty minutes to massage yourself each time. However, if you don't have too much time, then you may massage every other day. Naturally, you may also massage these cavities whenever you wish.

In this chapter we will introduce self-massage divided into five sections: I. Head and Neck; II. Chest and Abdomen; III. Lower Back and Hips (Facing Upward); IV. Lower Back and Hips (Facing Sideways); and V. Limbs.

2-2. Tui Na and Dian Xue Self-Massage

Self-massage has many benefits and advantages. Once you understand these benefits, you will realize that your health is in your hands, and you don't have to rely on other people's help.

Benefits and Advantages of Self-Massage

1. You can massage yourself any time and any place. You don't have to take a masseuse with you or find one when you need one.
2. Because you are the one massaging yourself, you have control over the feeling and power used. Through feeling, you always know how much power is needed and how effective it will be for you. When you receive a massage from someone other than a highly professional masseur or masseuse, oftentimes the power used does not match the desired or ideal pressure.
3. From self-massage, you will be familiar with many massage techniques and the correct feeling. Not only that, the knowledge you will gain through understanding the concept and experimenting will offer you a lifetime of benefits.

Disadvantages of Self-Massage

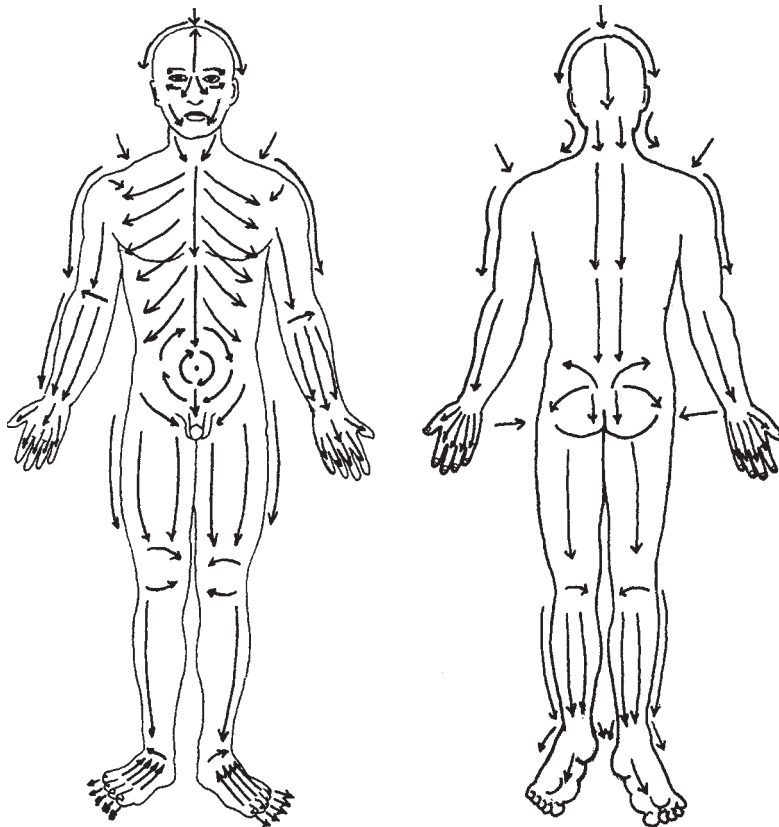
1. You cannot massage your upper back between the shoulder blades, and the upper back is considered one of the major areas that need to be massaged. This is because the upper back area is the key junction area where your energy is communicating between the head, shoulders, and lower torso.
2. Because you need to use physical movement to massage yourself, there is more tension, both mentally and physically.

Before you get involved in the practice of this chapter, there are a few general rules and tips you should be aware of.

General Rules

1. The number of repetitions or the duration of massage suggested is adjustable because everyone has different sensitivity and body structure. You should experience it, and gradually adjust it for yourself.

2. If you find your time is limited, you may alternate the qigong exercises and massages daily. Naturally, if you have time, it will be better if you can do qigong exercises first, followed by massage. You can also choose to do one in the morning and the other in the evening.
3. Dian xue (cavity press) is able to stimulate the deep areas of the body so the qi circulation in primary channels (meridians) can be regulated. In addition, through cavity press, the stagnant qi accumulated in the cavity areas can be brought to the surface. This will help to release the qi knots or stagnation. Then, if you follow with circular rubbing, you will be able to spread the qi to the wider area on the surface. Finally, use tui na to push the qi away from the stimulated area. Usually, for releasing the qi, the direction of pushing is from top to the lower part of the body and from center of the body to the sides, torso, or the limbs.



Massage pathways on the body in general qigong massage.

4. There are two common cavity-stimulation techniques: press vibrating and rubbing with circular motion. When you press and vibrate, usually you use a sharper area of your fingers, such as the tip of the thumb or toes, so the power can be more penetrating.

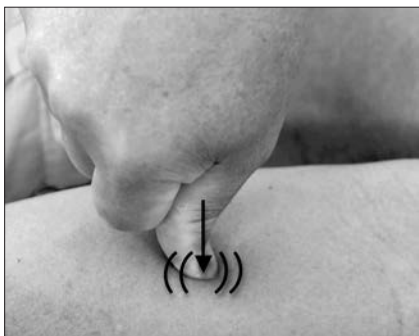
Good stimulation is about ten seconds. After that, allow the muscle tissue to relax for a few seconds, and then stimulate again. Then you should rub the area with a softer part of your fingers or foot. The rubbing massage is able to bring the stagnant qi from deep within the body to the surface. Not only that, it can also help to spread the qi to a wider area and allow the body to naturally and more easily disperse it.

5. Fingernails and toenails should be cut short because the tips of fingers and toes will often be used for cavity stimulation.

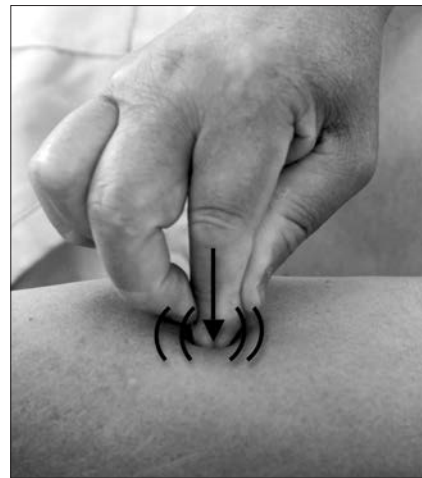
Basic Cavity-Stimulation Techniques

There are more than two hundred basic qigong massage techniques existing in Chinese history. However, the most common ones number about fifty. Among these fifty, a few of them are specialized in cavity press massage (點穴按摩, dian xue an mo). Here we will introduce a few that serve the purposes of this book.

1. Press and Vibrate with Hand (Zhen Zhan, 震顫). Pressing is used to generate deeper penetration, and the vibration is used for stimulation. The common places of the hand to use to stimulate are the tip of the thumb, index finger, or middle fingers. In order to enhance the pressing and vibrating, usually one or two other fingers is used to support the first joint of the pressing finger. For example, the index finger is used to support the thumb, the thumb is used to support the index finger, or the thumb and the middle finger are used to support the index finger.

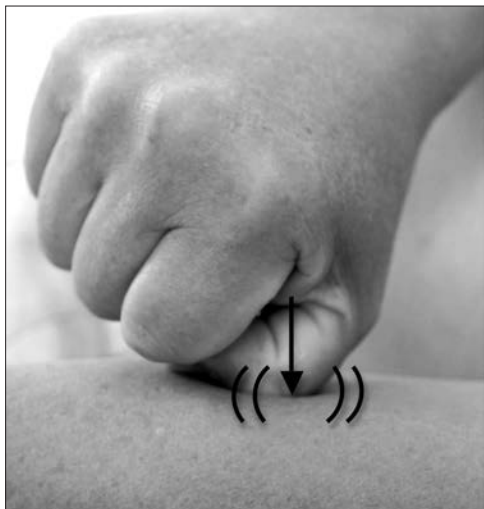


Using the tip of the thumb, index, or middle finger to stimulate.

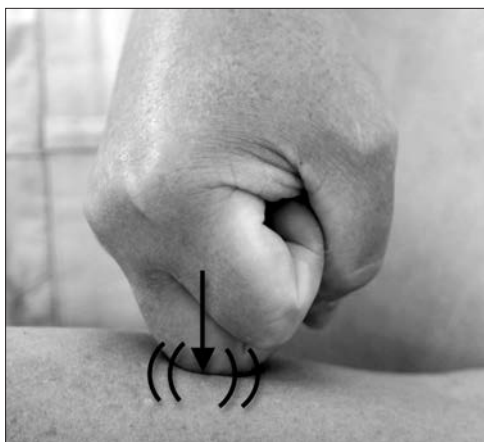


(Pictures from left to right.) Using the index finger to support the thumb, the thumb to support the index finger, and the thumb and middle finger to support the index finger.

Other than fingertips, the knuckles are also commonly used: for example, the knuckle of the thumb with support of the index finger, the second knuckle of the index finger with support of the thumb, the second knuckle of the middle finger with support of all other fingers. Often, the base knuckle of the pinky is also used while holding a fist to stimulate cavities. You can see there are so many options that you can use for cavity stimulation. Even though we demonstrate only a couple of options as examples, you should also try other possibilities. Soon you will realize that some options can be easier and more effective for you than others.



Using the knuckle of the thumb with the support of the index finger, and using the second knuckle of index finger with support of the thumb to stimulate cavities.



Using the second knuckle of the middle finger with support of all the other fingers.

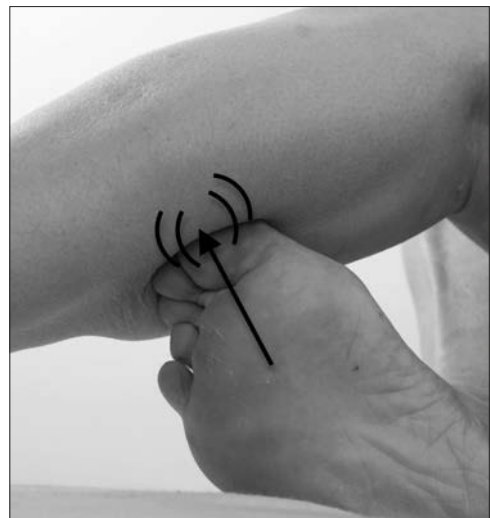


Using the base knuckle of the pinky while holding a fist to stimulate cavities.

2. Press and Vibrate with the Foot (Zhen Zhan, 震顫). Compared to the hand, the foot is much less used for cavity press massage. This is because most people are not skillful in using the foot to massage. However, if you know how to use it, the advantage is that the pressing power can be stronger, but the disadvantage is that the area massaged will be wider than if the hand is used. There are three areas that can be used for cavity press massage. The first is the tip of the big toes. The places massaged usually are the back of the knee or calf. The second area of the foot that can be used for massage is the heel. Usually, the areas covered are the inner side of the leg and foot. Finally, the base knuckle of the small toes can be used to massage the back of your foot.



Using the tip of the big toe to do a cavity press on the back of the knee.



Using the tip of the big toe on the calf.



Using the heel of the foot.



Using the base knuckle of the small toes to massage the back of your foot.



3. Circular Rubbing Motion (Quan Rou, 圈揉). Stabilize your contact, and gently rub with a circular motion. When you use circular rubbing for massage, the power will not be as penetrating as pressing and vibrating. That means you can massage the same areas but reduce the power to half. Often, in order to be more comfortable and cover a bigger area, the front of the thumb, index, or middle finger is used with the support of the other fingers. Frequently, a few fingers can be used together, such as the index and middle fingers or the three middle fingers.

Massage Sequence

I. Head and Neck (頭、頸部)

1. Top of Head (頭頂)

Begin the massage sequence with the head. Using gentle circles together with press and vibrate will help you to loosen up the fasciae between the skin and skeleton and improve the qi and blood circulation on the top of your head.



First put both palms on your scalp, and gently circle them.

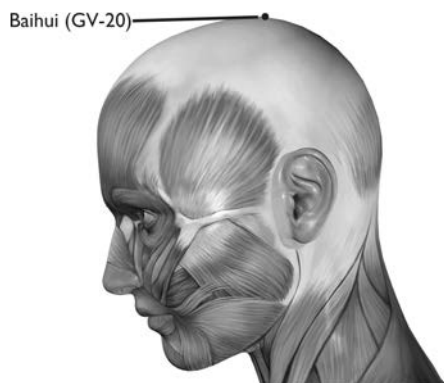


Next use your fingers (avoid fingernails) to press the skin of your head, and vibrate them gently. Begin from the center, and then move to the sides—from the forehead, then gradually to the back.

Next use your index and middle fingers to press, and gently vibrate the baihui cavity at the top of your head (百會, GV-20) for ten seconds. Then gently rub the area in a circular motion ten times in each direction.



Massaging baihui can help ailments such as headache, lightheadedness, hemorrhoids, wind stroke, seizures, insanity, extreme nervousness, shock, high blood pressure, deafness, tinnitus, low blood pressure, a hangover, dizziness, fainting, coma, insomnia, irritability, chronic diarrhea, and so forth. Circle in each direction twenty to thirty times.

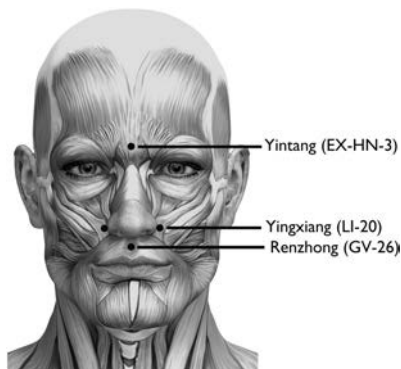


Baihui (百會, GV-20) cavity.

Finally, use all five fingers to press and push from the center of the head to the sides (ten times).

2. Center of Face (面中)

Massaging the face is an important part of Chinese medicine.



Yintang (印堂, EX-HN-3), yingxiang (迎香, LI-20), and renzhong (人中, GV-26) cavities.



Use your middle finger to press and vibrate the yintang cavity, your third eye area (印堂, EX-HN-3) for ten seconds. Repeat. Then gently circle the cavity ten times in each direction.

Chapter 3: Qigong Theory Review

3-1. General Qigong Concepts

In this section, we will review the traditional concepts of qi and qigong. This can be helpful even if you have some qigong experience, and this is essential if you are a beginner. We will discuss the scope of qigong practice, the differences between external elixir (wai dan, 外丹) and internal elixir (nei dan, 內丹) qigong practice, and the differences between qigong schools in Chinese history. Then, in order to understand the practice concepts, the theories of yin-yang (陰陽) and kan-li (坎離) will be explained. Finally, we will summarize the relationship of qigong practice to health, longevity, and spiritual enlightenment.

1. Traditional Definition of Qi

In this subsection, we will first define the general concepts of qi, followed by the narrow concepts of qi. To understand the meaning of qigong practice, you must first have a clear idea of how qi is defined.

A General Definition of Qi 氣之廣義

Qi is the energy or natural force that fills the universe. The Chinese have traditionally believed that there are three major powers in the universe. These three powers (san cai, 三才) are heaven (tian, 天), earth (di, 地), and man (ren, 人). Heaven (the sky or universe) has heaven qi (tian qi, 天氣), the most important of the three, which is made up of the forces that the heavenly bodies exert on the earth, such as sunshine, moonlight, the moon's gravity, and the energy from the stars. In ancient times, the Chinese believed that heaven qi governed the weather, climate, and natural disasters. Chinese people still refer to the weather as heaven qi. Every energy field strives to stay in balance, so whenever heaven qi loses its balance, it tries to rebalance itself. Then the wind must blow, rain must fall, and even tornadoes or hurricanes become necessary in order for heaven qi to reach a new energy balance.

Under heaven qi is earth qi. It is influenced and controlled by heaven qi. For example, too much rain will force a river to flood or change its path. Without rain, plants will die. The Chinese believe that earth qi is made up of lines and patterns of energy as well as the earth's magnetic field and the heat concealed underground. These energies must also be in balance; otherwise, disasters such as earthquakes will occur. When the qi of the earth is balanced and harmonized, plants will grow, and animals will thrive.

Finally, within earth qi, each individual person, animal, and plant has its own qi field, which always seeks to be balanced. When any individual living thing loses its qi balance, it will sicken, die, and decompose. All natural things, including mankind and our human qi, grow within and are influenced by the natural cycles of heaven qi and earth qi. Throughout the history of qigong, people have been most interested in human qi and its relationship with heaven qi and earth qi.

In the Chinese tradition, qi can also be defined as any type of energy that is able to demonstrate power and strength. This energy can be electricity, magnetism, heat, or light. For example, electric power is called electric qi (dian qi, 電氣), and heat is called heat qi (re qi, 熱氣). When a person is alive, his body's energy is called human qi (ren qi, 人氣).

Qi is also commonly used to express the energy state of something, especially living things. As mentioned before, the weather is called heaven qi because it indicates the energy state of the heavens. When something is alive, it has vital qi (huo qi, 活氣); when it is dead, it has dead qi (si qi, 死氣) or ghost qi (gui qi, 鬼氣). When a person is righteous and has the spiritual strength to do good deeds, he is said to have normal qi or righteous qi (zheng qi, 正氣). The spiritual state or morale of an army is called energy state (qi shi, 氣勢).

You can see that the word *qi* has a wider and more general definition than most people think. It does not refer only to the energy circulating in the human body. Furthermore, the word *qi* can represent the energy itself, but it can also be used to express the manner or state of the energy. It is important to understand this when you practice qigong, so that your mind is not channeled into a narrow understanding of qi, which would limit your future understanding and development.

A Narrow Definition of Qi 氣之狹義

Now that you understand the general definition of qi, let us look at how qi is defined in qigong society today. As mentioned before, among the three powers, the Chinese have been most concerned with the qi that affects our health and longevity. After four thousand years of emphasizing human qi, when people mention qi, they usually mean the qi circulating in our bodies.

If we look at the Chinese medical and qigong documents that were written in ancient times, the word *qi* was written “炁.” This character is constructed of two words: “无” on the top, which means “nothing,” and “火” on the bottom, which means “fire.” This means that the word *qi* was actually written as “no fire” in ancient times. If we go back through Chinese medical and qigong history, it is not hard to understand this expression.

In ancient times, Chinese physicians or qigong practitioners were actually looking for the yin-yang balance of the qi that was circulating in the body. When this goal was reached, there was “no fire” in the internal organs. This concept is very simple. According to Chinese medicine, each of our internal organs needs to receive a specific amount of qi to

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