

# V

## YIJINJING

*Yijinjing* is a type of dynamic *qigong* for limbering up the tendons. It is attributed to Bodhidharma, the founder of the Chan school of Buddhism in China, during the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589). As it is easy to learn it has long been a popular form of exercise. The first illustrated record of *Yijinjing* did not appear until the Song Dynasty (960–1279). Many styles emerged as it was spread and passed down, but the common practice at present is the set of exercises compiled by Pan Wei of the Qing Dynasty and included in his book *Major Methods of Health Preservation*. In the late Qing Dynasty, Zhou Shuguan renamed *Yijinjing* “the Twelve Wei Tuo Positions” in Volume 16 of his book *An Illustrated Book of Exercises to Benefit the Internal Organs—Promoting the Metabolism, Limbering Up the Tendons and Refreshing the Marrow*. The book contains 12 illustrations by Pan Wei. The following text and illustrations are from that book.

### WEI TUO PRESENTING A PESTLE FORM 1

Stand straight, with the feet a fist's width apart. Throw out the chest, and tighten the abdomen. Hold the head erect, and look straight ahead. Keep the mouth closed, and let the tongue rest on the palate. Cup one hand in the other in front of the chest. With the eyes half-closed, inhale deeply through the nose and exhale through the mouth 30 times. (Figure 5.1)

### WEI TUO PRESENTING A PESTLE FORM 2

Following the previous form, concentrate the weight on the balls of the feet. Extend the arms forwards, with the palms facing up, horizontally from the shoulders, and then to the sides. Breathe as in the previous exercise. Repeat 30 times. (Figure 5.2)

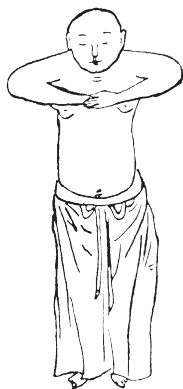


Figure 5.1  
Wei Tuo Presenting a Pestle  
Form 1



Figure 5.2  
Wei Tuo Presenting a Pestle  
Form 2

### WEI TUO PRESENTING A PESTLE FORM 3

Raise the arms above the head, with the palms facing up. Straighten the elbows, and strain the palms as if holding the sky. The fingertips should point towards each other at a fist's distance apart. Straighten the knees, and stand on tiptoe, with eyes looking upward at the fingertips. Breathe as in the first two positions. Repeat 30 times. (Figure 5.3)



Figure 5.3  
Wei Tuo Presenting a Pestle  
Form 3

### PLUCKING A STAR AND REPLACING IT WITH A DIPPER

Following the previous form, lower the arms to shoulder height. Bend the left elbow, and place the left forearm behind the back. Clutch the left shoulder blade. Turn the upper body leftward, keeping the lower part still. At the same time, raise the right hand above the head, with the palm facing the head. Look at the right palm and count from 1 to 30. Then turn the upper body to the front, and draw the right hand down to the chest. Move the right hand across the right part of the chest horizontally to the back to clutch the right shoulder blade. Move the left arm from back to the front of



Figure 5.4  
Plucking a Star and Replacing  
it with a Dipper

the chest, and position it as the right arm mentioned above. Count from 1 to 30. Then draw both arms to the back, with the backs of the hands together. (Figure 5.4)

### PULLING NINE OXEN BACKWARDS BY THEIR TAILS

Following the previous form, take a big step forward with the right foot to form a left bow step, bending the right leg and straightening the left one. Clench the right fist and raise it towards the upper right, with the elbow bent and the thumb facing the waist, as if lifting a huge weight. Clench the left fist in front of the chest, and bend the left elbow. Raise the upper left arm horizontal to the shoulder, and let the forearm dangle. Turn the head left slowly, and fix the eyes on the left fist. Breathe 30 times as in the previous positions. Then cross the fists in front of the lower abdomen and change to the right bow step. Repeat on the other side. Finally, cross the fists again in front of the lower abdomen. (Figure 5.5)



Figure 5.5  
Pulling Nine Oxen Backwards  
by their Tails

### EXTENDING THE CLAWS AND SPREADING THE WINGS

Following the previous form, open the fists with palms outward, and draw the arms back to the sides. Raise the arms at the front to shoulder level. Stretch the arms forward, with the eyes focused on the hands. Straighten the legs, and apply the toes to the ground. Breathe 30 times as in the previous positions. Then clench the fists and bend the elbows. Draw the fists to the sides of the waist. (Figure 5.6)



Figure 5.6  
Extending the Claws and  
Spreading the Wings

### NINE GHOSTS DRAWING A SWORD

Following the previous form, open the fists, raise your left hand upwards, and then place the left hand behind the back to clutch the left shoulder blade as in Plucking a Star and Replacing it with a Dipper. Raise the right hand over the head, to encircle the head with it. Turn the head to the left, with the four fingers of the right hand clinging to the groove along the edge of the left ear. Press the head against the hand. Extend the right elbow back as far as possible, and look straight forward. Breathe 30 times as in the previous positions. Hold the head erect, and move the right hand to the right side of

the head. Stretch the right arm out horizontally to the right. Bend the right elbow, letting the right forearm dangle. Breathe 30 times as in the previous positions.

Repeat on the opposite side of the body. (Figure 5.7)

### THREE ROCKS FALLING ON THE GROUND

Adopt the horse-riding stance, with the feet about one yard apart. Turn the toes slightly in, and the knees out. The knees should make approximately a right angle with the hip joints. Raise the hands to the level of the ears, and then move them downwards with the palms down, until they hang loosely by the thighs. Strain both hands with eyes and mouth wide open. Take 30 deep breaths. (Figure 5.8)

### DRAGON EXTENDING ITS CLAWS

Lift the right hand to the side of the chest. Clench the fist, and turn the upper body to the left. Open the right fist, stretch the right hand with the palm up toward the front left, and stare at the right palm. Take 30 deep breaths. Then turn the right palm down, and lower the right arm without bending the elbow. Bend the waist



Figure 5.7  
Nine Ghosts Drawing a  
Sword



Figure 5.8  
Three Rocks Falling on the  
Ground

with the movement of the right hand. Move the right arm across the knees, and stretch it out and to the front. Straighten the waist, drawing the right fist to the right side of the chest. Turn the upper body to the right, and repeat the above movements on the other side. Take 30 deep breaths. Finally, return the body to an erect position, with the fists clenched at the sides. (Figure 5.9)



Figure 5.9  
Dragon Extending its Claws

### HUNGRY TIGER POUNCING ON ITS PREY

Take a big step forward with the right foot to form a right bow step, pressing the toes to the ground. Lean the upper body forward, with the fingers apart and slightly bent. Raise both hands with the palms up level with the top of the head. Move the hands down across the ears to the front of the body, and then lower them to the ground in front of the extended right foot. Press the ground with the fingers spread and the arms straight. Raise the head, and look forward like a tiger about to pounce on its prey. Take 30 deep breaths. Return the body to the erect position. Repeat the above movements on the other side, and then take 30 deep breaths. Finally, stand straight. (Figure 5.10)

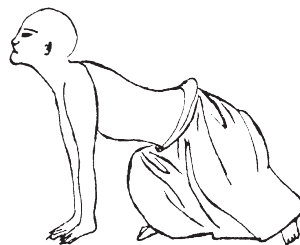


Figure 5.10  
Hungry Tiger Pouncing on  
its Prey

### MAKING A DEEP BOW

Stand with the toes pointing outwards and the heels a fist's width apart. Clasp the back of the head with both hands, with the palms covering the ears. Bend at the waist and straighten the knees. Touch the knees with the head. Take 30 deep breaths. Return to the erect position with the hands still clasping the back of the head. (Figure 5.11)

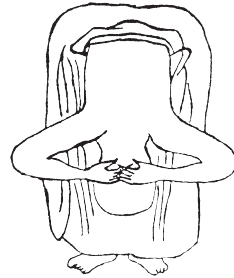


Figure 5.11  
Making a Deep Bow

### RAISING THE TAIL

Move the hands, with the fingers interlaced, to the top of the head. Turn the palms up, and stretch the arms upwards. Then reverse the palms, and move them downwards along the chest. Straighten the knees, and bend the waist, pressing the palms on the toes. Hold the head up, and look straight ahead. Do not raise the heels. However, if you are unable to touch your toes, move the heels up and down in coordination with the breath. Take 30 deep breaths. Finally, return to the erect position, stretch the arms forward horizontally with the fingers interlaced and palms forward. (Figure 5.12)



Figure 5.12  
Raising the Tail