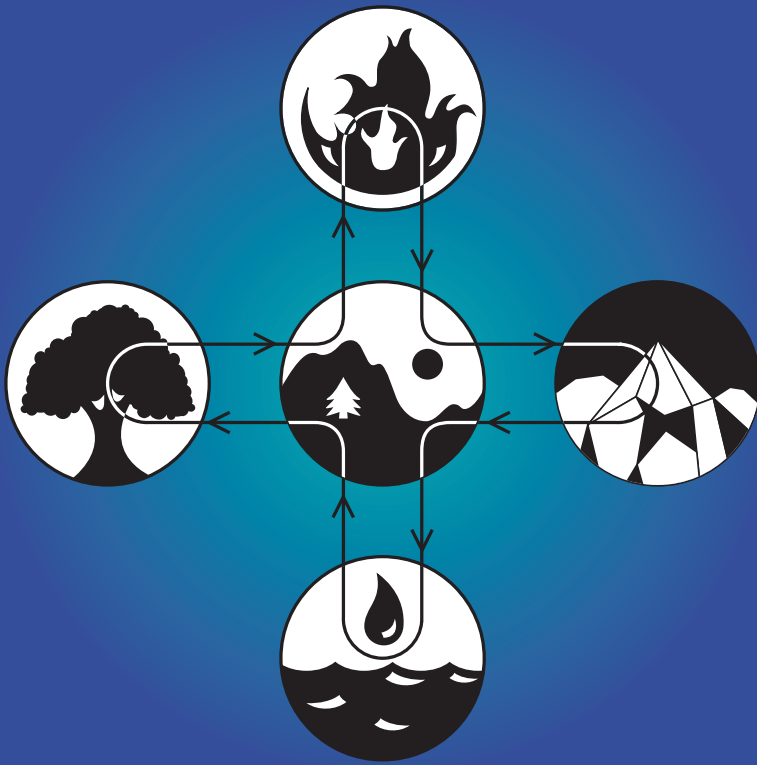


# QIGONG

## THROUGH THE SEASONS



*How to Stay Healthy All Year with  
Qigong, Meditation, Diet, and Herbs*

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FOREWORD BY KENNETH COHEN



## SUMMER QIGONG

In the three months of summer, it is important to be happy and easygoing and not hold grudges, so that the energy can flow freely and communicate between the external and the internal.

*(The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine)*

This season's practice centers on the culmination of Supreme Yang Qi development: forming warm interpersonal relationships and then creating wholehearted connections with the Dao. As the wellspring of limitless energy, the Dao enfolds the earth and the universe in a benevolent embrace; its basic principle proclaims that every human being has the core virtue of essential goodness. Our destiny is to fully realize basic goodness, to express it, and to help others know it as well. The presence of kindness, generosity, and love signify spiritual awakening. The process begins with cultivating Heart Qi.

### Awakening the Qi

#### *Warm the Dan Tian*

Use your right palm to rub 36 times clockwise around your navel. Then replace your right palm with your left and rub 36 times counterclockwise.

#### *Beat the Heavenly Drum*

Cover your ears with the heels of your hands. Then tap with the fingertips on your occipital bone for about 10 seconds.

#### *Massage the Kidneys*

Form loose fists with your hands, then massage up and down over your lower back 36 times.

Do Awakening the Qi only once.

### Northern Star

Start by standing with your feet together and your hands at your sides. Then shift your weight onto your right leg.

*Inhale* as you lift your left arm out in front and then overhead (Figure 7.2). Your left palm faces forward, your fingers spread like the rays of a star. Think of standing tall with a vertical connection between earth and heaven.



*Figure 7.2: Northern Star*

*Exhale* slowly through your mouth as you lift your right arm and left leg out and up in a diagonal line (Figure 7.3). Do this in front of a mirror while training—it will help you align your diagonal arm and leg.



*Figure 7.3: Northern Star*

At the end of exhaling return to the starting position with your hands at your sides and feet together.

*Inhale* as you shift your weight to your left leg and raise your right arm out and up (Figure 7.4).



*Figure 7.4: Northern Star*

*Exhale* as you lift your left arm and your right leg out to form a diagonal line (Figure 7.5). Both your palms face forward, with your fingers spread. Your chest is lifted, and your gaze is straight ahead.



*Figure 7.5: Northern Star*

At the end of exhaling return to the starting position.

*Inhale* and shift your weight to your right leg, raise your left arm and repeat the movement.

Do eight repetitions.

*Visualize that your “solar plexus” (just below the sternum) is a pivotal point where vertical and diagonal lines of energy from earth and heaven are flowing through your body.*

## Mixing Yin and Yang

Stand with your feet wide apart and your hands at your sides. Bend forward at the waist, then squat down until your hands touch the floor and cross your wrists with your palms up (Figure 7.6). It does not matter which wrist is on top.



*Figure 7.6: Mixing Yin and Yang*

*Inhale* slowly as you stand up; as you do so, your crossed hands turn in toward your chest, then they roll down and forward with your wrists still crossed (Figure 7.7). This is the “mixing” action of energy through the LDT. The crossed wrists with the arms close to the body is a very yin posture. Inhaling is a yin activity.



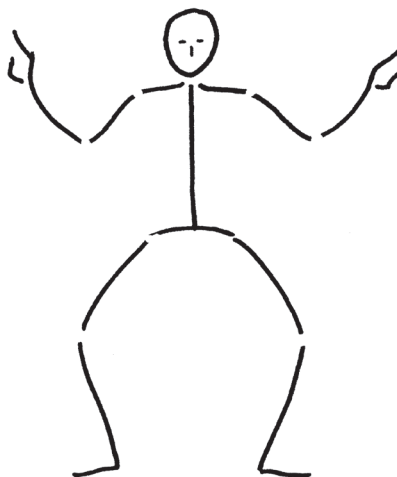
*Figure 7.7: Mixing Yin and Yang*

Continue inhaling until your crossed wrists are overhead, and your knees are straight (Figure 7.8). This is the end of the inhalation.



*Figure 7.8: Mixing Yin and Yang*

*Exhale* slowly through your mouth as you uncross your wrists, spread your arms laterally, circle your arms down with your palms facing laterally, and bend your knees (Figure 7.9). The spread of the arms with palms facing outward with exhalation is a very yang expression.



*Figure 7.9: Mixing Yin and Yang*

*Inhale* gently as you straighten your knees and lift your palms up to your solar plexus (Figure 7.10).

This is a rather short inhalation.



*Figure 7.10: Mixing Yin and Yang*

*Exhale* as you bend forward at the waist, with your knees almost straight to get a stretch in your hamstrings and lower back (Figure 7.11). Your wrists are not crossed.



*Figure 7.11: Mixing Yin and Yang*

Finish the exhalation as you squat down and cross your wrists with your palms up (Figure 7.12). Either hand is on top.



*Figure 7.12: Mixing Yin and Yang*

*Inhale* and repeat the movement. Do eight repetitions.

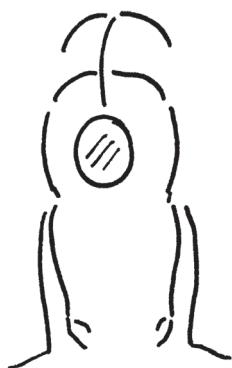
*Visualize that you are lifting yin energy out of the earth, mixing it through the LDT, and transforming it into the yang energy of heaven.*

### Waiting at the Temple Gate

Stand with your feet wide apart and your hands at your sides.

*Inhale* slowly into the LDT.

*Exhale* through your mouth as you bend over from the waist (Figure 7.13). Your knees are straight but not locked. Relax with your head and hands down toward the floor; feel a nice stretch in your hamstrings.



*Figure 7.13: Waiting at the Temple Gate*



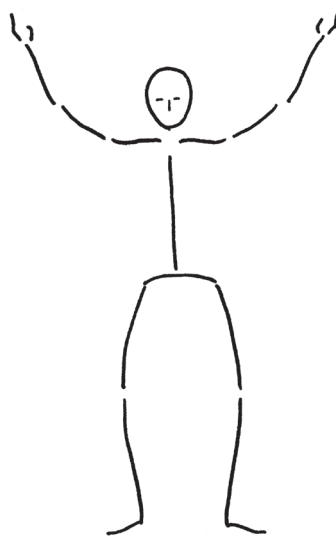
At the end of your exhalation, give the floor/earth a sharp tap with your fingertips, like flicking water off the fingers. There should be an audible sound from the tapping. Think of this as calling forth energy from the earth.

Now squat down with your elbows touching inside your knees (Figure 7.14). Your arms extend to the sides, your palms facing forward in an open posture.



*Figure 7.14: Waiting at the Temple Gate*

*Inhale* slowly as you stand up with your arms moving outward and upward in a large circle (think of this as gathering energy from the environment). Continue inhaling as your knees straighten (Figure 7.15).



*Figure 7.15: Waiting at the Temple Gate*

Finish the inhalation when your hands meet overhead in a prayer posture (Figure 7.16).



*Figure 7.16: Waiting at the Temple Gate*

*Exhale* very slowly through your mouth and bring your hands down the midline to the level of your heart (Figure 7.17). Then sharply and audibly give a final exhalation as you quickly bend your knees so that you are in a semi-squat. Your hands remain in prayer position at the MDT.



*Figure 7.17: Waiting at the Temple Gate*

*Inhale* as you stand up and lower your hands to your sides. Stand comfortably erect.

*Exhale* as you bend over and repeat the movement. Do this three times. At the end of the third repetition hold the semi-squat praying hands position (Figure 7.17) and take three slow breaths. While doing this, let the phrase “What does it mean to be waiting at the temple gate?” drift through your mind. Lightly contemplate “waiting,” “gate,” and “temple.” You may or may not have an answer. It doesn’t matter; you are simply planting a seed of spirituality into your consciousness.

## Heart Qigong

This qigong practice will calm the *HeartMind* and elevate the Spirit. Done in three steps with a nice even rhythm, it equally uses the three aspects of qigong: body movement, breathing, and mental intention. This qigong exercise is an all-time favorite with many of my students as it smoothly activates the three *dan tians* with a pleasant pumping action of open/close and up/down movements guided by the breath and concentration. Many people feel this internal energy moving after only a little practice. The combined mental intention, regulated breathing and body motion create a strong connection between earth and heaven by raising the qi up through the *Taiji Axis*. An important factor that makes Heart Qigong a premier exercise for the Fire Phase is the use of *Shanzhong* as an energetic focal point during the practice. This energy gate controls the qi flow as it moves through the middle *dan tian*. *Shanzhong* is located on the midline of the chest, eight finger-widths below the clavicles. It is a master point often used in acupuncture and qigong for opening the chest to relieve stagnation of qi, relaxing the Heart and reducing anxiety, conveying energy and information through the *Taiji Axis*, and nurturing kindness and communication.

Begin by standing with your feet about shoulder-width apart, and your hands at your sides. Slightly bend your knees. Mentally make contact with the “Bubbling Well” acupuncture point on the soles of your feet just behind the toes. Bring your hands to the LDT with the palms up and middle fingertips almost touching (Figure 7.18).



*Figure 7.18: Heart Qigong*

*Inhale* and slowly lift your hands up to your chest as your palms turn toward *Shanzhong*, and straighten your knees (Figure 7.19). Finish inhaling.



*Figure 7.19: Heart Qigong*

Visualize gathering qi from the earth, and bringing it up to the MDT.

Exhale through your mouth and turn your palms away from your body; push your hands outward and away in an arc (Figure 7.20). Bend your knees. Finish exhaling, with your arms extended laterally and your palms facing out.

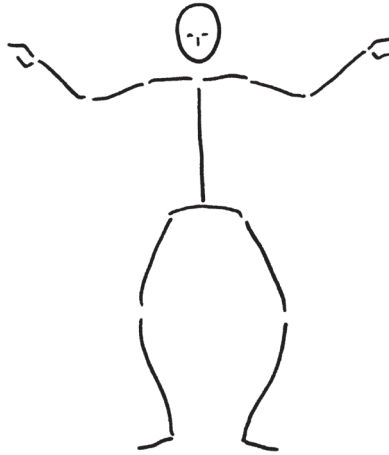


Figure 7.20: Heart Qigong

Visualize exhaling any toxins or stress from your chest.

Inhale, bend your elbows as if you were encircling a ball (Figure 7.21), and bring your hands back to *Shanzhong* as your knees straighten.



Figure 7.21: Heart Qigong

*Think of bringing fresh qi into your Heart.*

*Exhale*, bend your knees, and keep your palms facing *Shanzhong* as you finish exhaling (Figure 7.22).



*Figure 7.22: Heart Qigong*

*Visualize healing qi sinking into your Heart.*

*Inhale* slowly, and let your elbows down so that your forearms are vertical, your wrists are touching, and your fingers are up with your forearms parallel as your knees straighten. Your hands form a “flower” under your chin (Figure 7.23).



*Figure 7.23: Heart Qigong*

Finish inhaling when your hands are straight up above your head (Figure 7.24).



*Figure 7.24: Heart Qigong*

*Visualize lifting your Spirit to the heavens.*

*Exhale* as your arms open widely and circle downward, your knees bend and your hands descend to the level of the LDT with the palms up (Figure 7.25), as in the beginning position.

*Visualize returning your Spirit to earth.*

Do eight repetitions.



*Figure 7.25: Heart Qigong*

## Sealing the Qi

### *Whole Body Tapping*

Use your palms to tap over each arm, your trunk, outer legs, inner legs, abdomen, lower back (use your fists on your back). Do this three times.

### *Arms Horizontal*

Put your arms straight out to the sides, with your fingers pointing up, for one breath.

### *Heaven and Earth*

Inhale and lift your hands laterally and then overhead, with the palms pointing to heaven. Rise up on your toes and hold your breath for a few seconds. Slowly exhale, lower your heels, and with your palms facing the earth, lower your hands to the LDT.

### *Seal*

Cover the LDT with the palm of your right hand. Place the palm of your left hand over your right hand with the thumb tucked under your right hand. Stand quietly for three breaths.

Do Sealing the Qi only once.