

Part II – Medical Qigong for Health

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Medical Qigong has two main types of practice; namely self-healing and healing others. Generally, all forms and types of Qigong are designed to improve the practitioners' health. Depending on the school of Qigong, the self healing training methods consist of Breathing, Movement, Meditation (Stillness), Sound (Vibration) and Visualization (Dao Yi, Leading the Qi). Each of these methods has its unique purposes and strength. Most Qigong training system uses one or more of these methods, therefore, it is important for the practitioner to understand their own needs and practice the type of art that addresses their need. A complete training system must use the combination of all the four methods to achieve holistic healing effect.

I benefited a lot from Wellness Medical Qigong as it has helps to improve some of my health problems that I have suffered for more than a year, as follow:

- (1) Lower backache, left shoulder ache, left armpit, and left breast ache – I felt the clearing effect of these areas after the training.
- (2) Sleeping problem for many years – experience sound sleep after the 1st day training.
- (3) Indigestive problem, always produce a lot of gas and no appetite.
 - No gas produces during the first day of training.
 - When wake up the next day, feel very hungry and have good appetite.

--- Liew LM, Female

The above is one of many testimonials of a student who attended my training. It is this kind of experience and the satisfaction in helping others that keep me going in training others and continue more in depth research in the Art. I will, in the later article explain how the healing works.

Qigong healing is no mystery; it has been documented more than 5000 years ago in China. To understand how it helps to alleviates ailments, basic knowledge on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is useful.

Yin & Yang in the Body

The ancient Chinese conceptualized of Yin and Yang explains and describes how things function in relation to one another. The Yin/Yang theory is based on the idea that all phenomena are the product and influenced by, the interaction between nature's two polar tendencies. This polarization is reflected in our daily lives, for example, by the union of man and woman; the mechanics of electricity; the merging of day and night. Yin and Yang are complementary opposites and describe the process of change in the relative world. Below are some examples:

- Mind (Yin) and Physical Body (Yang)
- Acid (Yin) and alkaline (Yang)
- Blood flow to the heart (Yin) and from the heart (Yang)
- Solid organs (Yin) and hollow organs (Yang)
- Cold (Yin) and hot (Yang)

It can be said that everything is composed of Yin and Yang in differing proportions; when the proportions are relatively balanced, harmony prevails. An example of the dynamics of the Yin and Yang of body function is the effect on changing breathing types on the pH levels of the body. The lungs immediately compensate for a change in pH (relative acidity or alkalinity), by changing breathing patterns. Deeper breaths blow off carbon dioxide. This creates less carbonic acid in the buffer system. By simply breathing more deeply the body becomes more alkaline. By the same token, shallow breathing allows carbon dioxide to accumulate, causing more acidic.

From the Western Medicine perspective, the body consists of 14 major systems. In anatomical and physiological terms, there are Muscular, digestive, respiratory, circulatory, nervous, immune, reproductive, endocrine systems etc. In general, the body is in homeostasis when its needs are being met and its functions are occurring smoothly. Virtually every organ system plays a role in maintaining the constancy of the healthy internal environment. Communication within the body is essential for homeostasis, and this is accomplished primarily by the nervous and endocrine systems.

From the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the balance of Yin and Yang is most important. To achieve this balance, proper diet and the Qi flow to various organs must be healthy. In addition, both the physical body and the mind and spirit must be healthy and balance.

Maintaining a perfect balance between Yin and Yang will result in perfect health. An imbalance of Yin and Yang causes disharmony and illness in the physical body. Energetic dysfunction at the physical level may be reflected by imbalances in the paired meridians of the body. For every organ, there is energetic flow through two sets of meridians. The equal flow of Qi energies through the right and left meridians of the body reflects the basic Yin/Yang concept.

Meridians

The human body has Eight Extraordinary Main Qi (energy) Channels and Twelve Primary Meridians. Among the eight channels, two of them, the Tu (Governing channel or Yang Channel at the back of the body) and the Ru (Conceptual channel or Yin Channel at the front of the body) are closely related to the Central Nervous system and the Autonomic Nervous system. Qi flow in these two channels form a circular movement known as Inner Orbit or Microcosmic, in Qigong terms. This flow will stimulate the two nervous systems and also all the various glands and organs linked to them.

The Twelve Primary Meridians

The Twelve Primary Meridians are link, either from the hand or the leg to a respective internal organ, along the meridians there are hundreds of acupuncture points. The Twelve Primary Meridians are:

From the fingers:

- Hand Great Yin *Lung Meridian* (Shou Tai Yin Fei Jing)
- Hand Yang Bright *Large Intestine Meridian* (Shou Yang Ming Da Chang Jing)
- Hand Absolute Yin *Pericardium Meridian* (Shou Jue Yin Xin Xin Bao Luo Jing)
- Hand Small Yang *Triple Warmer Meridian* (Shou Shao Yang San Jiao Jing)
- Hand Small Yin *Heart Meridian* (Shou Shao Yin Xin Jing)
- Hand Great Yang *Small Intestine Meridian* (Shou Tai Yang Xiao Chang Jing)

From the toes

- Leg Great Yin *Spleen Meridian* (Zu Tai Yin Pi Jing)
- Leg Yang Bright *Stomach Meridian* (Zu Yang Ming Wei Jing)

Leg Absolute Yin *Liver Meridian* (Zu Jue Yin Gan Jing)
Leg Small Yin *Kidney Meridian* (Zu Shao Yin Shen Jing)
Leg Great Yang *Bladder Meridian* (Zu Tai Yang Pang Guang Jing)
Leg Small Yang *Gall Bladder Meridian* (Zu Shao Yang Dan Jing)

There are thousands of secondary meridians branch out from each of the Twelve Meridians lead the Qi to the bone marrow, bone, internal organ and skin. Similar to the blood circulate through the blood artery and capillary system.

The Three Dan Tians (Energy Centers)

The body's energy circulation requires a "battery" for power supply. The Dan Tians are for this purpose. The Lower Dan Tian (Xia Dan Tian) is located one to two inches below the navel, Middle Dan Tian (Zhong Dan Tian) located at the lower sternum and Upper Dan Tian (Shang Dan Tian) is located at the lower central forehead also known as third eye.

The Lower Dan Tian is the residence of Qi energy and is regarded as our body main Energy Center. To enhance the Qi in the Lower Dan Tian, you can use the most common and popular way which is known as Normal Abdominal Breathing method. After each inhalation, you hold your breath for a couple of seconds and slowly exhale; you can feel the exhale air is warm. After about ten minutes of such exercise you can feel the warmth in the Lower Dan Tian like a furnace.

The Middle Dan Tian is located at the diaphragm which is highly conductive in nature. It stores the Qi that is converted from air and food, known as Post-Birth Qi (Hou Tian Qi). The Qi accumulated in Middle Dan Tian can effect our emotion; therefore, Middle Dan Tian is regarded as our body main Emotion Center.

The Upper Dan Tian is related to our brain, spinal cord and central nervous system. Therefore, the stimulation of Upper Dan Tian will stimulate the body hormone production. This will affect the renewal of our body cells, ancient Qigong practitioners regard the Upper Dan Tian as the key for longevity; it is our body Spiritual Center.

The Art of Qigong Breathing

There are various methods of Qigong breathing, namely:

- Normal Breathing, also called Chest Breathing
- Normal Abdominal Breathing
- Reverse Abdominal Breathing
- Embryonic Breathing
- Skin Breathing
- Five Gates Breathing
- Third Eye Breathing

Each method has its specific purpose. In Medical Qigong; Normal Abdominal Breathing is commonly used. In this method of breathing, the abdomen expands when you inhale and withdraws when you exhale.

The Science of Breathing

We breathe to live, and live by breathing. This is how important breathing is to our survival. Breathing goes on twenty-four hours a day. It can be regulated by our mind; however, since our minds are occupied most of the time, it is done unconsciously by the respiratory control centers

located in the two lowest segments of the brain stem. Our **minds and will** can override the rhythms generated by this control centers.

The autonomic nervous system consists of a vast network of neurons that controls viscera, blood vessels, and glands throughout the body. Interestingly, the research shows that breathing can influence the autonomic nervous system. Slow, soft and deep breathing will reduce blood pressure; achieve calmness and sense of stability. Our ability to control breathing consciously gives us access and influence to our autonomic nervous system.

The best breathing method to produce a beneficent effect on the autonomic nervous system is 2:1 breathing; take twice the time to exhale as to inhale. In medical terms, the heart rate and breathing connection is called *respiratory sinus arrhythmia*. Doctors know that *pursed-lip breathing* is helpful for those with obstructive lung disease. The main reason is it's lengthen exhalations slows the heart rate, decrease the amount of air remaining in the lungs after exhalation and reduces fear and anxiety.

The amount of air the respiratory system can take is divided into four types of lung volume:

- Tidal Volume; amount of air that moves in and out in one breath. It amounts to 500ml during relaxed breathing.
- Inspiratory Reserve Volume; additional air you can inhale after a normal tidal inhalation. It amounts to 3,300ml.
- Expiratory Reserve Volume; additional air you can exhale after a normal tidal exhalation. It amounts to 1,000ml.
- Residual Volume; amount of air remain in the lung after you have exhaled as much as possible. It amounts to 1,200ml.

The best breathing method is to inhale as much fresh air as you can to take in more oxygen and to exhale as much still air as you can that contain carbon dioxide. To achieve this is the deep abdominal breathing method with 2:1 ration on exhalation and inhalation. This method allow our lung to its full total lung capacity of 3,800ml; the total of tidal volume plus inspiratory reserve volume. It is four times more than the normal tidal volume of 500ml. This method of breathing is one of the Qigong Breathing methods, Normal Abdominal Breathing method that are taught in the traditional Qigong training for health improvement.

Self Healing using Qigong

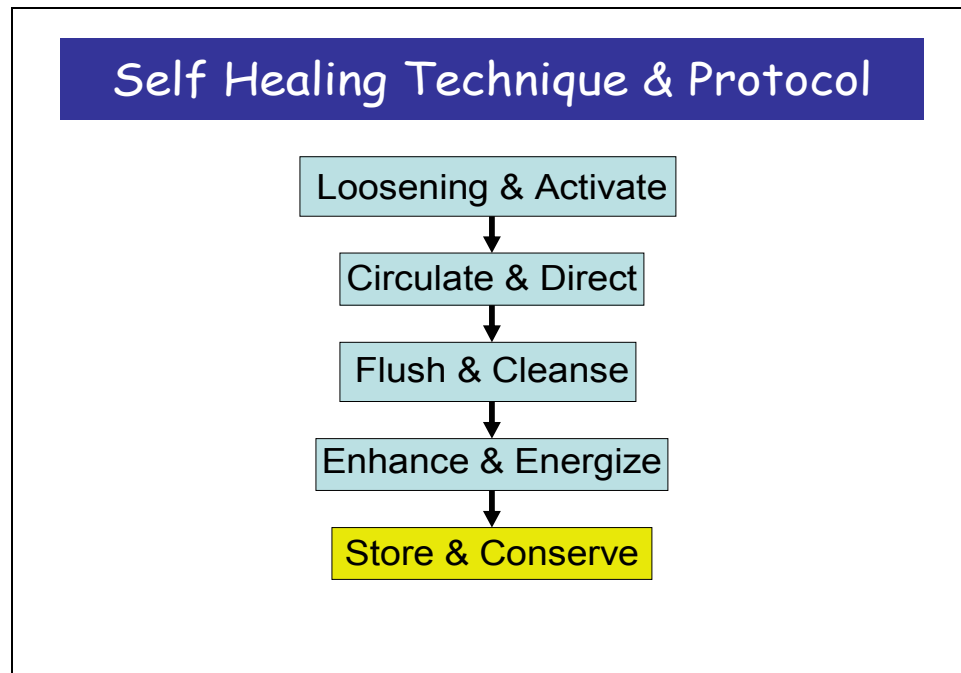
The way to use Qigong for self healing is first to locate and identify the root cause of the problem. It is due to Qi blockage, depletion or imbalance. Next to enhance internal Qi, and then use the strong flow to clear the blockage, energize or balance the affect part of the body.

The Qi can be enhanced and generated by various methods; the easiest and simple method is the use of Qigong Normal Abdominal Breathing method. Once the Dan Tian Qi is abundant, the Qi will flow to the main channels then to the twelve meridians. You can use movement to lead the flow along the meridians; this is known as Dao Yin method.

In self healing, besides the breathing technique, one may practice other methods like sound vibration and meditation to achieve holistic effect.

For beginners, he must first of all understand and experience what is Qi, after that he can learn how to activate and enhance his own internal Qi, follow by how to circulate and direct Qi to the

various part of the body. Once he is able to achieve this, he can start learning self healing techniques. The procedure on self healing can be summarized as below:



Loosening and Activate Qi – the more loosen the body the easier the Qi flows. Therefore, loosening is the initial part of the exercise; follow by activation of the Qi flow.

Circulate and Direct Qi – the Inner Orbit along the main channels and flow of Qi along the twelve meridians is the next part of exercise, if the problem in the affected area is not serious, the flow will help to clear the problem. However, if the flow not able to clear the problem, directing the stronger flow to the affected area is the next thing to do. If need to, the help of a Medical Qigong master to clear the area is recommended.

Flush and Cleanse Qi – there are Flushing and Cleansing techniques to assist in the clearing of the affected area.

Enhance and Energize Qi – enhancement of Qi is required on a regular basis to help maintain the health status. After enhancement of Qi, it could be used to energize the affected area.

Store and Conserve Qi – at the end of the practice, one must store the Qi at the energy center for use whenever is needed. Learn how to conserve Qi to avoid the unnecessary wastage.

Note that to achieve the above; you may have to practice two to three different types of Qigong exercises using different training methods to complement each other. For example, you may practice three sets of exercises as below:

1. First type to mainly loosening the body activates the meridians, enhance the Qi and store the Qi.
2. Second type to enhance and energize all the organs and the whole body, circulate and direct Qi use Dao Yin technique.
3. Third type to Gather, Circulate, Flush, Energize and Store Qi.

Understand your need and use the respective exercise that suite you most.