Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong

Volume 2



Qi Cultivation Principles and Exercises

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AUTHOR OF **OPENING THE ENERGY GATES OF YOUR BODY**

Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong

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Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong

Volume 2
Qi Cultivation Principles and Exercises

Bruce Frantzis


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Photo by author

Zhang Jia Hua of Beijing, one of mainland China's foremost teachers of medical qigong

Introduction

While living in Beijing in the 1980s, I was fortunate to learn Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, a powerful energy cultivation system. It activates and balances the qi that travels through the major acupuncture meridians of your body. Besides providing the basic benefits of all medical qigong styles—boosting your immune system and reducing stress—Dragon and Tiger's specialty was cancer therapy, particularly the reduction of the side effects, both physical and emotional, of chemotherapy and radiation treatment. I was to see some of the "proof" of that during my final years of training as a qigong doctor, when I worked with cancer patients in a medical clinic.

Dragon and Tiger Qigong originated from the Chan Buddhist tradition about fifteen hundred years ago. It was used to keep the monks in the high clergy in optimal health.

I learned Dragon and Tiger from Zhang Jia Hua, a niece of one of the Chan Buddhist high priests. After the Communist revolution, Zhang's uncle decided to allow Dragon and Tiger to be released into the secular world. Since he had no living male relatives,[1] he decided to teach her all his qigong and Chinese medical knowledge.

Zhang developed great proficiency in the use of qigong for medical purposes, and became a doctor of Chinese medicine and vice president of the All-China Qigong Association. She also became the private physician to some high government officials and as a result was able to propagate this form of qigong for medical purposes during the chaos of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath in the 1960s and 1970s, when most other forms of qigong were temporarily suppressed and many doctors had fled the country.

During fifteen years of active teaching during that period, Zhang taught and qualified more than twenty thousand instructors. According to Zhang and many others within her field, these instructors spread the healing art to twenty million Chinese people.

Zhang agreed to accept me as a student after Liu Hung Chieh, the Taoist lineage master I was studying with, introduced me to her. A vigorous, seventy-year-old woman when I first met her, Zhang was an impressive teacher. She taught me privately in her home and at her clinic. It was her hope that I would teach this powerful healing art and train instructors when I returned to the West.

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[1] Classically in China, family secrets, especially those relating to qigong or martial arts, were passed down only to male relatives. The traditional rationale for this was that a woman would marry out of the family, and the family's patent secrets would then belong to the new family. This would then, in effect, destroy the family's privileged position and potentially impoverish future generations.

Cultivating Qi

Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 2 is a companion to *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1*, which taught the basics of this set's seven movements. This volume builds upon the material in the previous one. The main purpose is to introduce you to techniques that will enable your qi to move more completely when you practice the movements initially introduced in Volume 1. Also covered are basic principles of how your qi can be cultivated and developed within a specific internal energy practice.

This volume assumes you know how to do all seven Dragon and Tiger movements smoothly. Knowledge of these physical movements and the principles that accompany them prepares you internally for the next level: learning to activate, move and strengthen qi flow. Most important is cultivating internal awareness and relaxation, without which feeling or moving qi is difficult if not impossible.

The movements of Dragon and Tiger affect the basic acupuncture meridians that lie just below the skin. They are easier to feel and influence than the main energy channels of the body, which lie much deeper. Dragon and Tiger effectively enables practitioners to work with the body's qi in the following ways:

- Feel the qi along the acupuncture meridians and, as a next step, strongly move it with your hands at the level of the *wei qi* (also transliterated as *wei chi*). Wei qi is a layer of protective energy in the body that lies between the skin and the muscle.
- Sense how tension and stress in the body and mind impede the ability to feel and move qi.
- Recognize where qi is weak and strengthen it.
- Use qi to help heal injured parts of your body, such as knees or shoulders, as well as various illnesses.
- Use the breath to help release stagnant qi.
- Feel your etheric field (aura).
- Use circular movements to speed up qi circulation in the body, much like a water turbine, and super-charge it.

In this book, you will learn qi cultivation in two stages: 1) How to feel the qi moving along the meridians that you are influencing with your hands and fingers. 2) How to strongly pull and push qi along these meridians.

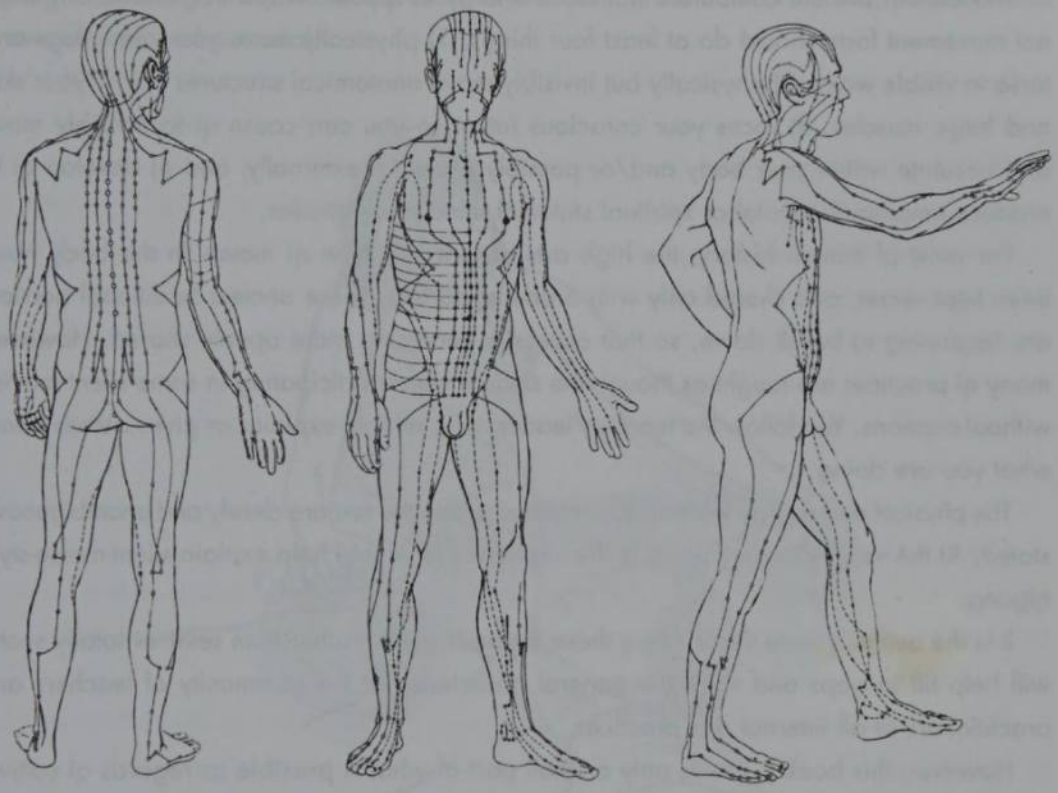


Figure 0-1
The Body's Acupuncture Channels and Points

Working with Qi Is the Core of Internal Energy Practices

All Taoist internal arts practices derive their power from the cultivation of qi in the body, mind and spirit. These practices include the internal martial arts of tai chi chuan, bagua zhang, and hsing-i; the therapeutic arts of acupuncture and qigong tui na; the self-healing arts of qigong and Taoist neigong yoga; the spiritual practices of Taoist meditation and

sexual meditation; and the related arts of feng shui and calligraphy.

Movements are the containers that move energy in specific ways. In general, any internal movement form should do at least four things: 1) physically move your arms, legs and torso in visible ways, 2) physically but invisibly move anatomical structures below your skin and large muscles, 3) focus your conscious intent so you can cause qi to invisibly move and circulate within your body and/or possibly project it externally, and 4) develop qi to produce emotional, mental or spiritual states of mind and attitudes.

For most of human history, the high arts of learning how qi moves in the body have been kept secret, and shared only with a privileged few. These ancient traditional barriers are beginning to break down, so that access is becoming more openly shared. However, many qi practices are taught as though the student were participating in some silent movies without captions. You follow the teacher/leader, who seldom explains or gives details about what you are doing.

The physical and energy techniques contained within the text are clearly and unambiguously stated. At the very least they provide the captions that would help explain silent-movie-style qigong.

It is the author's hope that making these methods public rather than semi- or totally secret will help fill in gaps and raise the general proficiency of the community of teachers and practitioners of all internal arts practices.

However, this book presents only a small part of what is possible as regards qi cultivation. It gives you a place to start understanding the art and science of how qi moves and is developed in the body, mind and spirit.

The Structure of This Book

This book is indispensable for all students of Dragon and Tiger because it teaches them how to take their practice to the next level and more effectively reap the health benefits for which this practice is renowned.

This volume is extremely valuable for those doing other martial art or qigong forms because it teaches core principles and exercises for cultivating qi in the body and mind that can be directly incorporated into these practices. Practitioners of healing arts will find this book valuable as a means for becoming sensitive to energy in others.

The techniques of Dragon and Tiger can also be directly incorporated into sexual qigong,[2] not only to increase the pleasure of lovemaking but also for healing purposes and to awaken spiritual potential.



Figure 0-2
Using Dragon and Tiger Techniques within Sexual Qigong to Clear a Partner's Aura

Chapter 1 discusses physical principles that underlie the energy methods within Dragon and Tiger and Taoist qi practices in general. This includes the importance in qi development of maintaining awareness and making movements circular.

Chapter 2 covers specific exercises to help you become aware of and move the shoulder blades in specific ways. It also includes exercises to relax the hands and feet.

In Chapter 3, you will learn how to use the shoulder blades and apply other physical principles within each of Dragon and Tiger's seven movements.

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[2] See Bruce Frantzis, *Taoist Sexual Meditation* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2012), Chapters 11–14.

Chapter 4 teaches basic energy principles, which underlie all Dragon and Tiger's seven movements, qigong and tai chi in general.

Chapter 5 has basic energy exercises to help you cultivate and feel qi, including how to find the ideal distance between your body and hands for tracing the correct energy pathways.

Chapter 6 teaches you how to incorporate energy principles and exercises into Dragon and Tiger's movements.

Chapter 7 introduces intermediate energy principles, including information about *neigong* (also known as nei gung or nei kung), the Taoist art and science of how to move energy through the body. The chapters that follow provide instruction that will help develop this skill.

Chapter 8 is about not only feeling energy flow, but also pulling and pushing qi with your hands.

Chapter 9 builds on the previous chapter and covers how to pull and push qi with your feet.

Chapter 10 discusses the concept of how to "grab" your qi.

Chapter 11 looks at the principles of working with the qi of the etheric body.

Chapters 12–13 teach you to simultaneously push and pull energy with your hands and feet to and from the boundaries of your etheric body.

Chapters 14–19 cover how to apply the pulling and pushing of energy within your wei qi, located just below the skin, within the movements of Dragon and Tiger.

Chapter 20 teaches you specific techniques to be used to end your Dragon and Tiger practice session.

The Importance of Teachers in Qi Cultivation

Although this book is a guide to cultivating qi within Dragon and Tiger, the usefulness of working with a teacher who embodies qi within his or her practice cannot be overstressed. Good teachers help guide you through learning each step thoroughly and integrating it inside you before going to the next one.

Perhaps more importantly, teachers can prevent you from developing energy in your body and mind too fast, which can lead to illness, false feelings of power, emotional instability

and disintegration. Only exceptionally disciplined students go slowly enough on their own to be able to absorb and integrate each step of qi development.

Traditionally, qi techniques would be taught through transmission by a qigong master, enabling students to actually feel the intention of a particular exercise or movement. Then when practicing on their own, students would know what to feel.

Having more relaxation and vitality in your life is what Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong is all about. Although the teacher can take you to the gate and show you what you need to learn, to reap the benefits, you must practice. Taking time to feel and then pull and push energy through your acupuncture meridians will dramatically speed up these benefits, improving your health and decreasing stress.

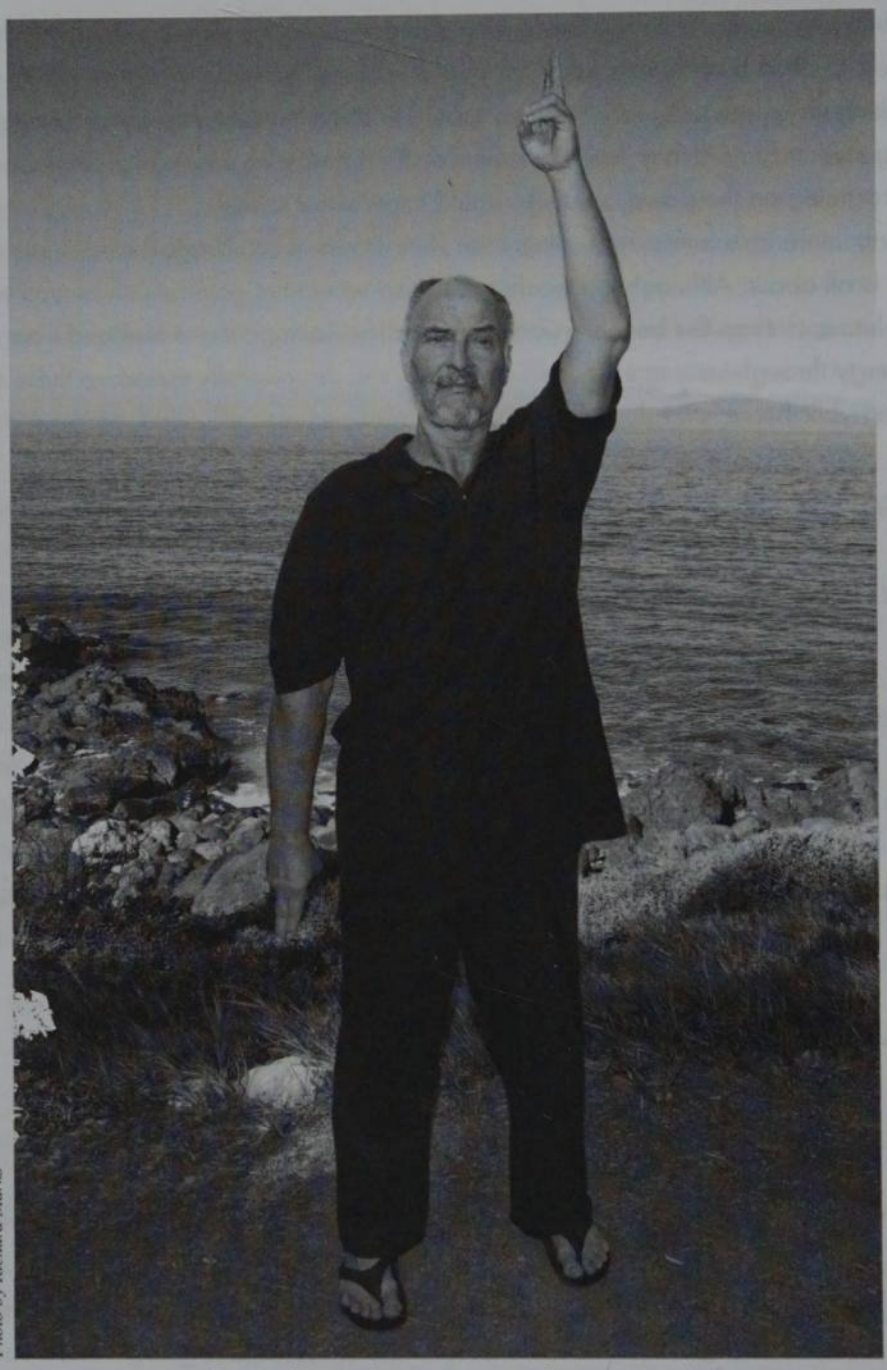
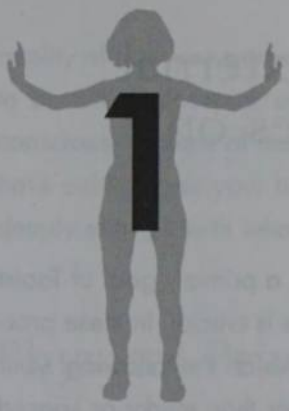


Photo by Richard Marks

The author performs the sixth movement of Dragon and Tiger Qigong.



1 Maintaining Awareness

The ability to feel and control energy depends on your ability to maintain continuous internal awareness or focus inside your body and mind. Without some level of awareness, many become frustrated doing internal energy work such as Dragon and Tiger Qigong. The problem lies not in the qigong itself, but in the lack of sufficient awareness to maintain internal concentration.

Many can't focus long enough either on their body movements or on the energy flows within them to gain most of Dragon and Tiger's wonderful benefits. Those who lack focus will likely suffer useless frustration and may not enjoy practicing.

When you first learned the movements of Dragon and Tiger, your first challenge was to pay attention to your movements and learn them well. Now your challenge is to increase your internal awareness and learn to simultaneously pay attention to the more subtle coordination within your movements and breathing as your hands and fingers trace the energy pathways. You will then progress to using your awareness to first feel then directly move qi along the energy pathways. The stronger your qi moves, the greater the health benefits of qigong will be, including boosting your immune system, reducing stress and anxiety, and increasing the joy in your life. This is what qigong is all about.

Your body is a living biosphere—the space you occupy and live in twenty-four hours a day. You need to have some awareness of what is going on inside you in order to positively change its condition for the better. If you cannot pay attention, your situation is difficult to alter, and you cannot acquire the tools that will help you make needed changes.

Western Education Focuses on External Thought; Taoist Education Focuses on Internal Awareness

Learning in a very precise way how to make the body conscious is a primary goal of Taoist arts, whether qigong, martial arts or meditation. Internal awareness is crucial. In these practices, you must be able to track the effect of your physical movements on the following: your breath; emotional moods; the sense of your mind being clear rather than murky or spaced out; and the patterns by which you are consciously moving energy within yourself.

Any educational process can have either an external or internal focus. From kindergarten through the university system, the Western educational system primarily trains your intellectual and mental capacities for *external* tasks and activities. Many intellectually brilliant people—from physicists to lawyers to social thinkers—can maintain prolonged focus on the problems at hand without becoming overly distracted in order to come up with solutions.

These same people, asked to focus inside themselves and simultaneously engage with their emotions, energy, breath and deeper parts of their mind and spirit, are unable at times to do so without the mind interfering with other thoughts, whether interesting or mundane. It is useful to recognize that in the West—whether physically through sports or in book learning of subjects such as physics, math, language, or use of computers—a basic educational goal has been to prepare you for the jobs you will perform as an adult. However, a Western education may have not done such a good job at consistently training your inner awareness toward what you live with twenty-four hours a day—the reality of your ongoing experience of the human condition.

You may not enjoy your human condition—for example, you may be chronically ill, anxious, or in physical or emotional pain. In an increasingly difficult and complex world, many external and internal circumstances prevent you from maintaining inner awareness. These range from subliminal emotional impulses to the endless wheel of endless internal dialogues—of what you are attached to or running away from, the job, money, the children, politics, how to make ends meet, what to make for dinner, where to go, fear of terrorism, and so on.

Qigong and other Taoist energy movement practices train you to look inside your body, mind and spirit. Doing so enables you to understand what binds you and diminishes the

quality of how you personally experience the human condition in your daily life. According to Eastern philosophy, until you learn how to feel deeply inside your body and become consciously aware of the formerly hidden recesses of your mind, you cannot learn how to have control over your body and mind and use them to improve the quality of your life or deeply engage with what spirituality means to you.

Physical Principles

There are sixteen fundamental physical principles within all Taoist qigong and martial arts movement practices that should be integrated into your Dragon and Tiger Qigong practice. These are as follows, and are described in detail in Chapter 14 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1:*

1. Obey the 70 percent rule: Go only to 70 percent of your capacity. Do neither too much nor too little.
2. Match your range of motion to the least capable or weakest link of your body rather than your strongest.
3. Remember that relaxation helps physical coordination; tension defeats it.
4. Keep movements fluid and smooth.
5. To determine how fast to do your movements, choose the speed that maximizes your sensation of qi, your ability to feel how well your body is moving, and/or your ability to recognize and let go of physical and emotional tension.
6. Do not lock your joints.
7. Link the movements of all the muscles and joints in your upper and lower body.
8. Your armpits must never fully close or they will block the energy from your spine to your arms.
9. Your shoulder blades must always be moving.
10. Your elbows should point sideways or down.
11. Your *kwa*[1] must always be moving.

[1] The area on each side of the body extending from the inguinal ligaments through the inside of the pelvis to the top of the hip bones.

12. Keep your perineum open.
13. If you get pain in your knees, reduce your range of movement.
14. Your palms or fingertips or both should always point toward where you want your energy to flow.
15. For women only—keep your arms from touching your breasts.
16. Work first on the physical movements, then master the qi mechanics.

Physical Foundations for Qi Development

A strong foundation in physical techniques allows your energy channels to open up and flow properly. These physical foundations are required before qi work can be integrated. The core physical building blocks for qi cultivation include

- Basic postural alignments
- Learning how to shift weight
- Turning movements that are initiated from the kwa
- Loosening and relaxing the shoulder blades, neck and back, which are often locked up because of computer work or bad posture
- Protective principles, such as how not to lock your joints or put excessive weight on the knees.

These principles are commonly included when learning the physical movements of Dragon and Tiger. They are also within Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body Qigong.[2]

Learning the core physical movements can be likened to building a strong container. It is important that this container does not have any structural problems or leaks. Once you have the basic physical movements, the next step is to put more of the qi work into the container. This is the goal of the following chapters.

Physical Movement, Circularity and Qi

All internal energy practices are based on circular movement. The underlying quality of all circles is that they have neither a starting nor an end point, instead having a seamless continuity where each part of the circle naturally flows into the others unceasingly.

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[2] One of the six primary qigong courses of the Frantzis Energy Arts® System. See Appendix for more details.

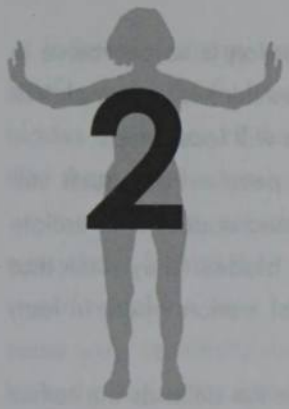
Physically, all Dragon and Tiger's movements are composed of circles, ellipses, arcs and curving lines. Energetically, to obtain complete, connected circulation of qi requires you to effortlessly establish circles moving at different speeds within all seven movements and the transitions between them.

Smoothness, fluidity and relaxation occur when your movements have no starts and stops, like a circle that has no beginning or end. The movements of Dragon and Tiger and their transitions flow one into another seamlessly, with no noticeable breaks.

The challenge will be to maintain enough internal awareness to coordinate movements of the upper and lower body, so that movements in your hip (kwa) and shoulder joints, knee and elbow joints, wrists and ankle joints, and finger and toe joints move and change direction together.

Generally, stops and starts within movements are an indication of tension or blocked qi. Noticing where this occurs will become increasingly important when you begin feeling and directing the movement of qi along the energy pathways.

When first learning qigong movements, most people find that tension within their muscular and nervous systems prevents them from being able to do seamless circular movements. At this stage of learning, seamless circularity becomes the goal.



2 Exercises for Loosening Shoulder Blades, Arms and Feet

Loosening the shoulder blades, arms and feet will stretch the connective tissues that surround your joints and help the inside of your body to relax and soften. The exercises described in this chapter are designed to help your movements become more fluid and relaxed so that you can circulate your energy more efficiently. Using your shoulder blades throughout the movements of Dragon and Tiger will help you refine your movements, coordinate them more efficiently and prepare you for learning to feel and move energy.

Practitioners of tai chi, other internal martial arts and forms of qigong that emphasize softness will find that learning these exercises, and those presented in Chapters 14–20, provides many benefits and upgrades their practice. The exercises are equally useful for improving performance in many sports.

Loosening Your Shoulder Blades

Loosening the shoulder blades is extremely important to practicing Dragon and Tiger's movements well. The shoulder blades should always be moving circularly in all directions—up and down and side to side—keeping movements smooth and relaxed. This is part of the advanced work within Dragon and Tiger that teaches you how to make your movements linked and hyper-coordinated.

When most of us think of moving or exercising our shoulders, our minds go to the large muscle mass that covers the top of each shoulder and upper arm (the deltoid muscles). These

muscles are what most of us think of as our shoulders. Shoulder tension is so pervasive in Western culture that when we see these muscles tensed and raised we think it is normal. We mistakenly believe that if we move these big muscles, our shoulders will loosen up.

The shoulder blade is the "hidden joint" of the body. Many people have such stiff shoulders and necks that they can barely feel their shoulder blades and cannot differentiate between the movement of the tops of their shoulders and shoulder blades. They think that when they move their shoulders they are engaging their full range of motion when, in fact, their shoulder blades are barely moving.

The shoulder's ability to move in a relaxed fashion does not lie in the deltoids but rather in the triangular shaped shoulder blade bones (scapulae) that are located lower down the back and rest on the ribs on both sides of the spine.

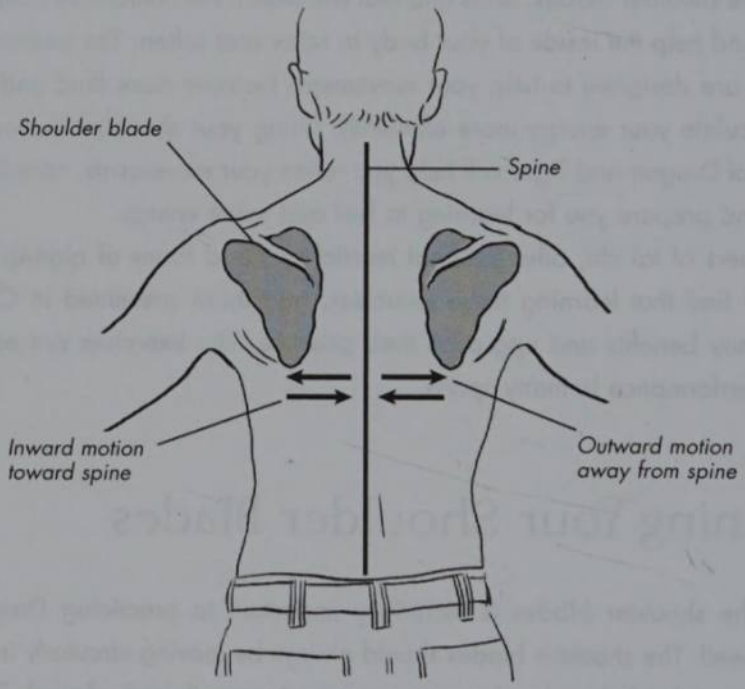


Figure 2-1
Shoulder Blades
These can move both toward and away from spine.

In internal energy work, the shoulder blade is called the root of the arm. If your shoulder blades move freely, your arms, neck and back muscles will also do so. If your shoulder blades are frozen or their motion is restricted, your arm flexibility and strength are reduced, and there can be tension and discomfort or pain in your neck, shoulders and upper back.

In our culture, people are encouraged to stand up straight, shoulders back. As a result, many have locked their shoulder blades back toward their spine. Imagine how little feeling would remain in your hand if you clenched it and held it shut for even a day or two. In the same way, sensitivity and mobility are lost in the shoulder blades if they are held back in a locked position for many years.

Fortunately, you can recover full use of your shoulder blades with time and practice. As you loosen the shoulder blades, tension and discomfort in your upper back and neck will begin to decrease and eventually may disappear entirely.

Exercise 1: Move Your Shoulder Blades

Step 1: Locate Your Shoulder Blades

Put your back against a wall and roll and rub against it until you can feel the difference between your backbone, your shoulder blades and the muscles of your upper back.

Once you are aware of the difference between your shoulder blades and upper back muscles, try to isolate and move your shoulder blades so they rub against the wall. Imagine you are scratching an itch by moving your shoulder blades in every direction. When you move your shoulder blades, the muscles around them also move.

Step 2: Move from the Bottom of Your Shoulder Blades

1. Keep your back against the wall. Now try to move from the bottom of one or both of your shoulder blades. The key to unlocking these is to learn to move them from the bottom, instead of pulling them up from the top. Try to move one or both shoulder blades just a small amount in each direction *(see Figure 2-1)*.

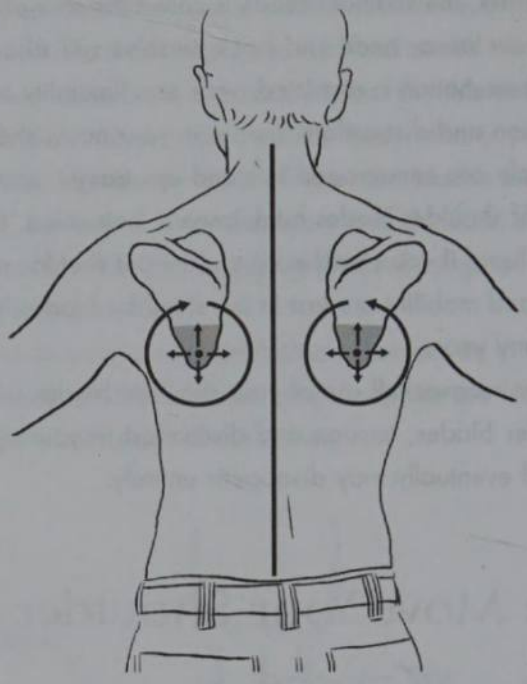


Figure 2-2
Circular Motion of Shoulder Blades
Shoulder blades are moved in a circle, both clockwise and counterclockwise, up, down, toward and away from spine.

2. Next, try to move your shoulder blades up, down, left and right. Then move them in small circles. Always try to initiate movement from the bottom of your shoulder blades. Your movements should feel as if you are massaging the muscles in the area. This massage can release the knots in the muscles and other soft tissues around your shoulder blades. Use the feeling of the pressure of them against the wall to give you feedback on your progress.

3. Once you can feel your shoulder blades moving against the wall, stand away from it and see if you can make these motions on your own. Move both shoulder blades together, up and down, down and up no more than a few inches. Go right and left. Do small circles and then try making larger circles.

   If you cannot do this easily, go back to the wall to move your shoulder blades. You may notice that when your scapulae go up or down, the tops of your shoulders

may want to follow. Your aim is to initiate movement from the bottom of your shoulder blades, not your deltoid muscles. Relax your shoulders and stretch the muscles in your upper torso as your shoulder blades move.

Eventually, you will loosen the muscles around your shoulder blades and be able to move them at will a few inches in any direction. They should slide smoothly and effortlessly, with no sense of tightening or holding.

Exercise 2: Make Circles with Your Hands, Wrists, Elbows and Shoulder Blades

In these next movements, your hands, wrists, elbows and shoulder blades should be continuously moving and making circles and arcs. The circling should never stop.

These circling techniques are especially helpful for people who are prone to repetitive stress injury, such as musicians, artists and those working extensively with computers.

Step 1: Rotate Your Elbow with Your Right Arm

Beginning Position: *Put your right hand in front of your body, on either your centerline or directly in front of your right channel, where your ascending hand normally finishes Movement 1 of Dragon and Tiger. Your palm faces up and your fingertips point directly to the left (across your torso) or as close as you can get within 70 percent of your capacity. Your elbow is slightly dropped and points outward from your ribs. In this position, your arm should be raised only as high as it can go without creating tension. Your armpit should be fully open.*

1. Place the tips of your longest fingers on some external object, such as a wall or chair, to help you isolate the movement of your elbow from these fingertips and keep them still. Once your control is sufficient, you will not have to touch an external object to keep your fingertips in the same position in space.
2. Focus on your right elbow. Move the elbow tip in horizontal circles, five times clockwise and five times counterclockwise, and in vertical circles, five times in each direction. Begin with small circles and gradually increase their size. Always make sure you have

enough reserve stretch so that you could make a 30 percent larger circle. When you want your elbow to go a little more forward, lightly stretch the inside of the armpit as you extend your elbow. Keep your shoulder's nest soft.

Step 2: Rotate the Hand and Wrist

Rotate the fingers, palm and wrist separately from the elbow. Feel how these circling actions gently massage your shoulders and neck. This massaging action increases blood flow into areas that are constricted.

Step 3: Rotate the Elbow, Wrist, Palm and Fingers Together

Begin with small circles and gradually increase their size. Alternate your arms so that neither gets fatigued.

As your circles become larger, gradually make the top, bottom, front and back of each circle smoother and smoother. Move your shoulder blade in conjunction with your elbow, without raising the tip of your shoulder, i.e., the place at the top of your shoulder joint where your shoulder and upper arm bones meet. Move in such a way that your elbow and shoulder blade are the opposite ends of a lever, with the tip of your shoulder as the stationary pivot point of the lever. When your elbow goes up, down, forward or back, your shoulder blade goes the opposite way, down, up, back or forward. In doing this procedure, it is helpful to have the inside of your armpit stay very soft. If the feeling in your armpit is hard, the movement of your shoulder blade will freeze up.

Step 4: Repeat Steps 1 through 3 with Your Left Arm

Exercise 3: Relax and Soften the Hands

Physical tension blocks qi. People store and carry physical tension in various key places in their bodies. When you release tension in these places, the rest of your body will relax, and your qi and blood will circulate better. The main places where this happens are your hands, feet, shoulders, eyes, jaw, genitals, anus, belly and lower back.

An easy way to begin relaxing your body is to make your hands as soft, pliable and relaxed as a baby's. This process, presented in steps, will increase your sensitivity to, and

maximize your power for, pulling and pushing energy in and out of your hands. Practice each step until you can do it with skill before moving to the next.

Practice each step first with one hand, then with the other and then with both together. Become very familiar with the differences in each hand's capabilities and even out these differences as best you can before moving on to the next stage.

This exercise and the ones that follow are excellent for preventing and treating arthritis and repetitive stress injuries such as carpal tunnel syndrome. As you do these exercises, your hands will become softer and more pliable. You may also begin to feel how your joints and ligaments could come under your conscious control.

These exercises will help you when you reach the chapters that teach intermediate-level energy work (Chapters 7–13). They will gradually wake up and enliven your nerves and lay the groundwork for you to feel and directly work with your qi.

In each step, first focus on your palm and then on the back of your hand. In general, the back of your hand is tenser and tighter than your palm. When you release tension in your palm it helps to ease tension in the back of your hand.

During each step, continuously monitor the tension and tightness in your hands as you open and close them. Remember, the primary goal of this exercise sequence is to have your hands become relaxed.

As you do each step, notice how these exercises work to loosen all the joints of your arms. As you learn to control the movement in the joints of your hands, be sure to let your wrists, elbows and shoulders move freely, without tension, strength or stiffness.

In all steps, remember the 70 percent rule.

Step 1: Consciously Relax Your Palms

Look at the palm of one hand and consciously relax it as much as possible. When you feel relaxation settle into your palm, turn your hand over and do the same with the back of it. Then do the same with the opposite hand.

Step 2: Move the Bones and Joints of Your Hand in Waves

Gently and fluidly move your fingers in an undulating motion. This should be done in an extremely relaxed and smooth manner, in such a way that it resembles the flowing, rhythmic, wavelike motion of an octopus moving its tentacles.

Step 3: Cup and Open Your Hand

Cup your hand slightly and bring each of your fingers to within two inches of your thumb, and then extend your fingers and thumb back into their original positions. Do this with as fluid a motion as you can. Become aware of moving each joint, bone and muscle in your hand. Cup your palm as your bending fingers and thumb move toward its center. This is known in Chinese as *lao gong*, an important energy point of the body. As you open your hand, extend your fingers and thumb but leave them slightly bent, so they remain loose and tension free.

Repeat this motion many times, until your palms and fingers, and finally the back of your hands, feel flexible and relaxed.

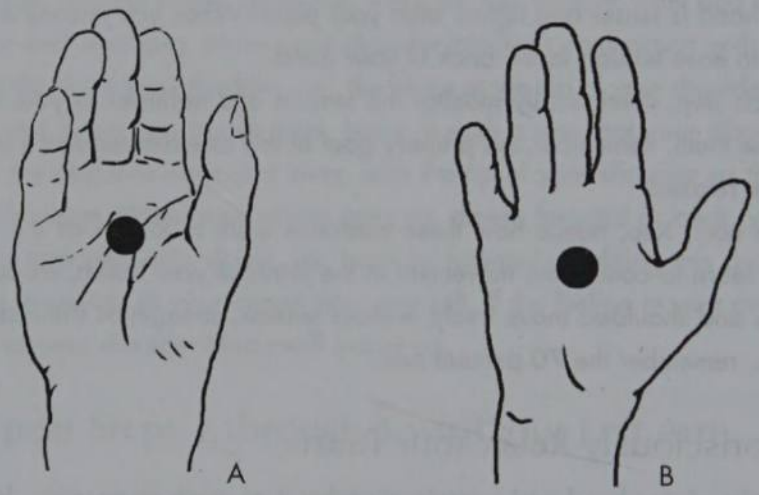


Figure 2-3
Cupping and Opening the Hand
A) Cupping the hand toward center of palm—the lao gong point.
B) Opening the hand, moving outward from center of palm.

Step 4: Cup and Open Your Hands More and Move the Bones of Your Hand

1. Gently increase the range of movement of your fingers and hands. This time move your fingers toward your thumb, but stop when they are about an inch from it. Increase the relaxation of your hand with each opening and closing.
2. Next, focus on moving the carpal and metacarpal bones in your palms *(see Figure 2-4)*. As you bend your fingers, focus on bringing the spaces between these tiny bones closer to each other, both lengthwise and widthwise. When you extend your fingers, focus on enlarging the spaces between the bones.

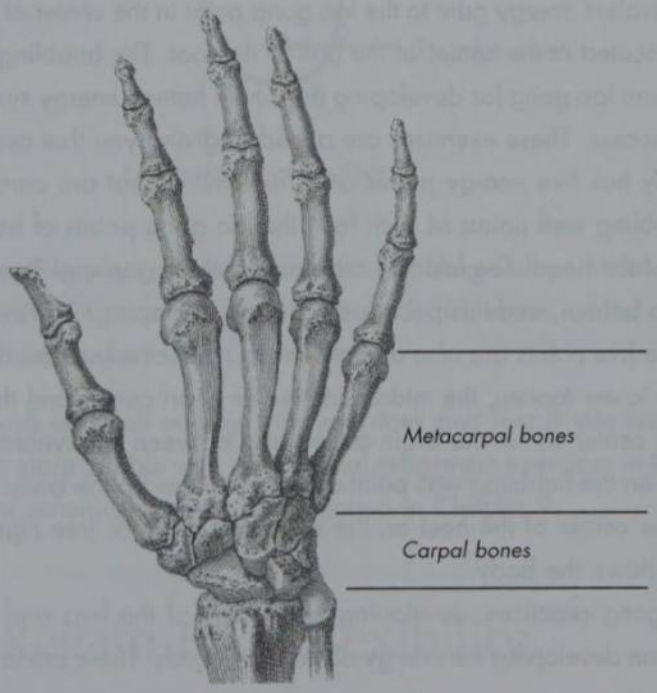


Figure 2-4
Bones of the Hand

The Importance of Having Soft, Flexible Feet

Feet are physically and energetically important. We walk and stand on them. They help us to keep our balance and act as shock absorbers. If our feet cease to function properly, shocks can pass through them into our knees, hips, spine and internal organs, and create stress in these places.

All the body's acupuncture meridian lines run through and end in the feet, just as they do in the hands and fingers. There are acupuncture systems that use needling from only the hand to the elbow and the foot to the knee. The massage practice of foot reflexology is based on the premise that every part of the body is reflected in the feet, and by relieving pressures and blockages in the feet, pain can be released from anywhere in the body.

The equivalent energy gate to the lao gong point in the center of the palm is the bubbling well point located in the center of the ball of the foot. The bubbling well point is even more important than lao gong for developing the whole human energy system. However, it is more difficult to access. These exercises are aimed at giving you that access.

The body has five energy points at its extremities that are completely interlinked. They are the bubbling well points of both feet, the lao gong points of both palms and *bai hui* at the crown of the head. The last two movements of Dragon and Tiger involve tracing energy pathways to bai hui, and this point is discussed in Chapter 12 of the previous volume of this series. These five points are also directly linked respectively to the body's three main energy centers, the lower *tantien,* the middle tantien or heart center and the upper tantien or third-eye psychic center within the brain above and between the eyebrows.

Pressure on the bubbling well point causes qi to rise up the body. Pressure on the *shi mian* point—at the center of the heel on the bottom of the foot *(see Figure 2-5)*—causes energy to descend down the body.

In all qigong practices, developing the energy of the legs and feet is considered more important than developing the energy of the upper body. There are three main reasons for this:

1. It is through the feet that we connect with the energy of the earth, which can nourish us immensely.
2. The bubbling well is the end point of the acupuncture meridian line that controls kidney energy—the primary source of the body's vitality. In acupuncture, the bubbling well point is known as the Kidney 1 point. By opening the energy channels of the kidney from the bubbling well points, strength and vitality can be greatly enhanced.

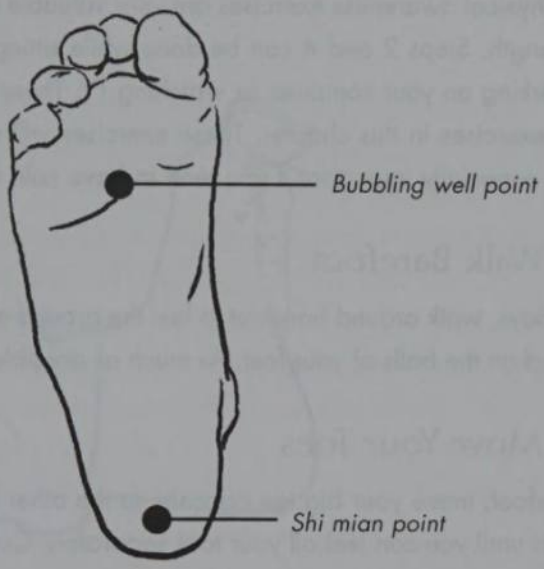


Figure 2-5
Energy Points of the Foot

3. Either opening up or putting physical pressure on the bubbling well point causes energy to rise in the body. Such rising energy awakens the body, increases mental alertness and helps to stave off depression.

It will be easier to push and pull energy with your toes and feet if you have softened your feet and made them more pliable with the physical refinement exercises in this chapter. Intermediate exercises for softening the feet will be found in Chapter 9.

Exercise 4: Regain Foot Flexibility

We are very aware of our hands. We use them in infinite ways. We usually recognize if our hands are stiff or loose. We strum our fingers (which increases their flexibility and keeps energy moving), but we do not normally strum our toes. We do not practice feet strengthening or flexibility exercises, which are commonly advocated for the hands in most sports. We wear soft gloves for our hands, but stiff and uncomfortable shoes for our feet and wonder why the painful problem of bunions surfaces later in life.

These physical awareness exercises are very valuable for helping you regain foot flexibility and strength. Steps 2 and 4 can be done while sitting and engaging in other activities, such as working on your computer or watching TV. These exercises make it easier to do the other foot exercises in this chapter. These exercises will also help regain blood circulation in the feet, especially important if you tend to have cold feet.

Step 1: Walk Barefoot

For a few days, walk around barefoot to feel the ground and grip with your toes. Also, try to walk around on the balls of your feet. As much as possible, walk barefoot inside your home.

Step 2: Move Your Toes

While barefoot, move your big toe opposite to the other four toes up, down and sideways. Practice this until you can feel all your toes separately. Continue until the motion of your toes becomes large enough that you can feel all the muscles and bones in your foot moving all the way to your heel and Achilles tendon.

Step 3: Pick Objects Up with the Feet

Try to pick objects up with your feet, such as towels, marbles, pencils or small rugs. This will further increase the flexibility and strength of your feet.

Step 4: Flex Your Foot Muscles

Flex the muscles of your foot, so that your toes and heel bend and move simultaneously toward your bubbling well point *(Figure 2-5)*.

This will help make your foot concave and increases the bend in your arch. Then straighten your toes and extend your heel back in the opposite direction. Do this for a while until your foot begins to soften and feel more pliable *(see Figures 2-6 A–B)*.

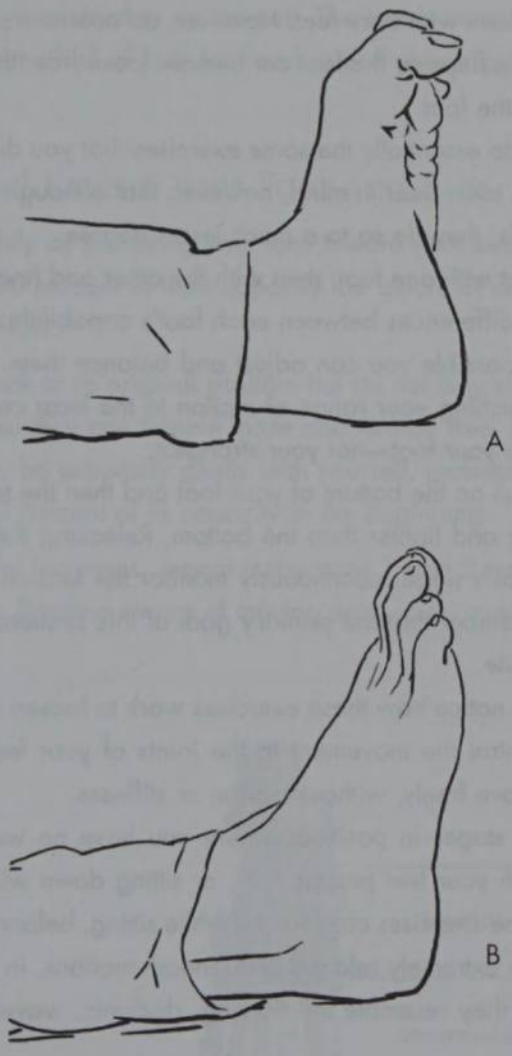


Figure 2-6
Bending and Extending the Foot
A) Bending arch of foot so that toes move toward heel
B) Extending heel and toes away from each other

Exercise 5: Consciously Relax Your Feet

These exercises are best done with bare feet. However, an alternative is to wear shoes with a soft, bendable sole or flip-flops so the foot can remain loose from the shoe. It is important not to constrict or encase the foot.

In Exercise 5 you will do essentially the same exercises that you did with your hands but instead with your feet and toes. Bear in mind, however, that although your feet can move in ways similar to your hands, they do so to a much lesser degree.

Practice each stage first with one foot, then with the other and finally with both together. Become familiar with the differences between each foot's capabilities before moving to the next stage, so whenever possible you can adjust and balance them. Remember to use the weakest-link principle, matching your range of motion to the least capable or weakest link in your body—in this case your foot—not your strongest.

In each stage, first focus on the bottom of your foot and then the top. In general, the top of your foot will be tenser and tighter than the bottom. Releasing the bottom will help you release the top. During each stage, continuously monitor the tension and tightness in your feet as you exercise. Remember that the primary goal of this sequence is to have your feet become relaxed and mobile.

As you do each stage, notice how these exercises work to loosen all of the joints of your legs. As you learn to control the movement in the joints of your feet, be sure to let your ankles, knees and hips move freely, without tension or stiffness.

At first, practice these stages in positions where you have no weight on your feet, for example, sitting down with your feet propped up, or sitting down with your legs extended. You must be able to do these exercises comfortably while sitting, before you try them standing.

Your goal is to achieve extremely relaxed and smooth motions, in such a way that when your feet curl in and out, they resemble the flowing, rhythmic, wavelike motion of octopus tentacles.

Step 1: Consciously Relax Your Feet

Look at the bottom of your foot and relax it as much as possible. When you feel relaxation settle into the bottom, do the same with the top of your foot.

Step 2: Move Your Joints and the Bones of Your Feet in Waves

Gently and fluidly move all the bones and joints of your foot. Flexing your foot causes your bones to come nearer to each other on the pull. The bones move away from each other on the push, as you open the ball of your foot and extend your toes. Remember to keep to the 70 percent rule.

Step 3: Bend and Extend Your Foot and Toes

1. Bend your foot slightly as you bring your toes toward your bubbling well point, bending them to about 20 percent of their capacity. Be aware of each moveable joint, bone and muscle in your foot.
2. Extend your foot back to its original position but do not fully straighten your toes. Leave them slightly bent, so they can remain loose and tension free. If you have bunions or other foot problems, be extremely gentle with yourself, perhaps opening and closing your foot to only 10 percent of its capacity in the beginning.
3. As your comfort level increases, repeat Instructions 1 and 2 repeatedly in as smooth a manner as you can. Become aware of moving each joint, muscle and bone in your foot.

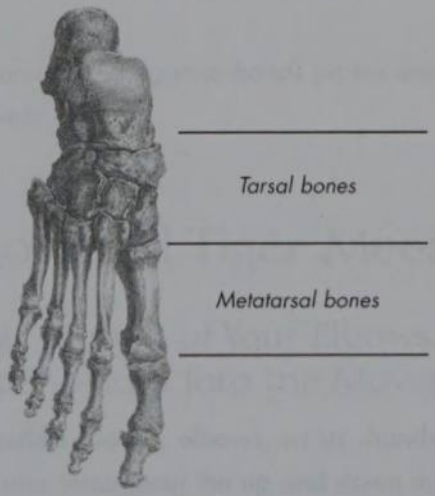
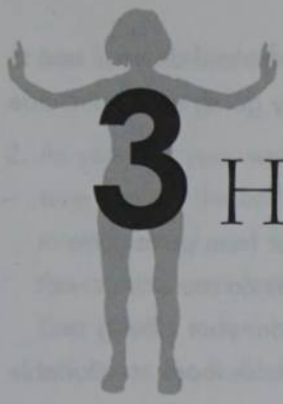


Figure 2-7
Bones of the Foot

Step 4: Bend and Extend Your Foot More and Move Your Foot Bones

1. Gently increase the range of movement of your foot and toes. Relax your foot more with each opening and closing.
2. Next, focus on moving the tarsal and metatarsal bones in your feet *(see Figure 2-7)*. As you bend your foot and toes, focus on bringing the spaces between these small bones closer to each other, both lengthwise and widthwise. When you extend your foot and toes, focus on enlarging the spaces between the bones.



3 Developing Hyper-coordination within Dragon and Tiger

You will now learn to incorporate the physical exercises and principles presented in the previous chapters into your movements. In these exercises, the shoulder blades are moved in specific ways. You may find that it is easier for you to move them in a different way than suggested. Feel free to explore. The important principle to be aware of is that in all of Dragon and Tiger's movements or transitions, your shoulder blades should continuously move and your arms should never stop or feel stuck in any way, not even for a microsecond.

Learning to loosen and move your shoulder blades and other physical exercises presented in this chapter will help you to increase coordination and circularity within the movements of Dragon and Tiger.

Make sure you pay special attention to keeping your hands on the energy pathways. It is important that you do not let them veer off.

Movement 1: Dragon and Tiger Meet [1]

Step 1: Incorporate Circular Motion of Your Elbows, Wrists, Fingers and Shoulder Blades into the Movement

During this entire movement, your shoulder blades, elbows, wrists, hands and fingers will be making large and small circles or arcs throughout the up and down movements of your hands. Otherwise, your movement will have a jerky quality that will not circulate your energy and blood efficiently.

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[1] To review how to do Movement 1, refer to Chapters 2–4 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1.*

Notice what your body feels like as your hands move up and down, and do your best to increase a sense of your blood or a sense of pressure simultaneously going down one side of the body and rising up the other.

Here are some places to pay special attention as you practice:

1. At the top of your ascending hand motion, let your hand turn over from palm up to palm down with a completely circular and smooth action that uses no more than two to three inches. In order for your hands to turn over without tension, your elbows and shoulder blades must circle. Keeping your elbows and shoulder blades loose, comfortable and not excessively stretched out is critical to making your movements smooth.
2. As your hands go around your hips, down the outside of your leg, and circle and point to the outside of your foot, your shoulder blades should rotate toward your spine. As your fingers and palm make a circle around your toes to the inside of your foot and start upward, your shoulder blades should rotate outward from your spine.
3. At the crossover points, when your palm faces your kwa, gradually and smoothly turn your palm up with a circular rotation of your elbow, wrist and palm.

Important Point to Remember

Let the hand that is following the energy pathway down the side of the leg complete the movement before circling around the foot to begin the upward movement. A common error is to "cheat" this movement by having the hand cut across the leg.

Step 2: Create a Pulley-like Action

Your goal is to create a pulley-like action between your hands and feet. The action of one hand and foot going down should cause the opposite hand and foot to rise. At the end of each rise, there should be a momentary feeling of hovering suspended in space, like a flying saucer in a science fiction movie. However, there is no actual pause.

The following suggestions to help you learn to do this can be explored in any order:

1. Play with breaking down your hand/foot movements into increments. Explore how you can get the rising and falling of your heel and hand to be exactly equal on both sides. When your left heel has risen some percentage of its total movement, your left hand and right hand and foot should have moved the exact same percentage of their total movement. Try this in various combinations of two: coordinate just both feet, or just

one hand and one foot, or just both hands, until you can do all combinations. Then put them all together.

2. As you shift your weight, finish with most of it on your heel. Simultaneously, exert pressure through the ball of the unweighted foot. Explore how finely you can play with the movements of your feet as you move them up and down and transfer pressure through the soles of your feet forward and backward between the ball and heel on each foot. Your goal is to feel how the downward pressure exerted by your falling (weighted) foot will cause the ball of your unweighted foot to rise.

Important Point to Remember

Try not to let your hips lift during weight shifts. The hips stay level and do not turn.

Step 3: Float Your Hands

Allow your hands and arms to become very relaxed, letting your arms develop the sensation of floating in air. This is especially important at the transitions between your hands' upward and downward movements. Be sure to incorporate the circling of your shoulder blades, elbows, wrists and fingers into these transitions between upward and downward motions.

Important Point to Remember

Keep the palms and fingers of the hand soft. Do not lock any of the small joints.

Movement 2: Dragon Looks to the Horizon [2]

Step 1: Develop a Whip Arm

The sideways arm movement in Movement 2 of Dragon and Tiger is sometimes referred to as a whip arm. Your arm should uncoil from your shoulder blade out through your fingertips, as though it were a whip.

1. As your hand moves from palm up on your centerline out to the side to form a beak hand, move your elbow first continuously sideways and then downward, as it unbends and extends to the side. The elbow moves evenly and smoothly.

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[2] To review how to do Movement 2, see Chapters 5–7 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1*.

2. Simultaneously and continuously open and extend your armpit.
3. Before you flick, feel your elbow and armpit sink down. Your elbow and beak fingers should be perpendicular to the ground.

Important Points to Remember

- Bring your hand up the middle channel to only about heart height.
- Do not overextend your arm or lock your elbow.

Step 2: Make Your Arm Motions More Circular

Focus on making each part of each section of your arm movements more round and circular by moving your shoulder blade. Each arm movement should seamlessly merge into the beginning of the next. Fluidity and continuous curving and rounding are your goals. Not closing your armpit helps achieve circularity.

Step 3: Whip Arm and Finger Flick—Go Out Strong and Fall Lightly

Before you flick, let your arm unfurl gently and softly gather energy into the fingers of your beak hand. Then flick explosively, letting the energy go strongly out. During the flick, your hand should remain soft and pliable. Your hand should not become claw-like, or your fingers stiff or tense. When the flick is over, let your arm go down to your side very gently and lightly.

Important Points to Remember

- Let the arm drop all the way down the side of your leg so your fingers face your heel.
- Do not close your armpit as your hand drops.

Step 4: Keep the Foot Flick Relaxed

As you flick, your leg extends out slightly from the hip and your toes point backward. Do not tense your foot or your toes. If you wobble, flick your toes and leg lower to the ground.

Step 5: Balance Your Foot Flick with the Hand Flick

As you flick, notice whether you have a tendency to flick forward with your hand with more emphasis than backward with your foot or vice versa. If so, try to bring the strength of these movements into balance.

Important Point to Remember

After you flick, put your toes down and rotate your body to the center. The foot follows the body and not vice versa.

Movement 3: Tiger Crouches[3]

Step 1: Rotate Your Shoulder Blades to Create an Elastic-band Effect in Your Arms

Movement 3 causes your hands to make strong circular motions. The circularity of the motion should be most pronounced when your hands are nearing the bottom of your foot and the beginning of the return up the leg and when your palms are approaching your *mingmen*[4] and returning toward the front of your torso.

When you are starting to do this well, the soft tissues of your arms, from your fingers to between your shoulder blades and spine, will begin to feel somewhat elastic and springy. With more practice your body will get more relaxed and your fasciae (connective tissues) will become more stretched.

1. As your hands circle from the mingmen toward the middle of your lower tantien and then down your leg to your foot, drop your shoulder blades slightly and move them slightly away from each other.
2. As your hands return from your foot, going up the leg toward your lower tantien, and then circling the *dai mai*[5] to the mingmen and spine, let your shoulder blades rise slightly and move sideways toward each other.

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[3] To review how to do Movement 3, refer to Chapters 8–9 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1.*

[4] This energy center is located on the spine, between the kidneys, directly opposite the lower tantien.

[5] A belt on a horizontal plane that circles from in front of the lower tantien around to the spine and mingmen, and then continues back around to in front of the lower tantien. Also known as the "great meridian," this is one of acupuncture's eight extraordinary meridians.

Important Points to Remember

- Your shoulder blades will be continuously moving throughout the movement.
- Do your best to keep your palms on the dai mai—do not let them stray up and down. The palms of your hands should face the dai mai.
- Remember, regardless of how your shoulder blades move, do your best to move the tops of your shoulders as little as possible, if at all. This may seem counterintuitive but is quite possible with practice.
- When your hand movements come up the leg, make sure that they return to the front of the torso before circling the dai mai. The hands must return to the front of the lower tantien before moving sideways to the kwa to start their movement downward.

Step 2: Exert Pressure on Your Heel on the Way Down and on the Ball of Your Foot on the Way Up

As you move your hands from your lower tantien down your legs, put pressure through the heel of your weighted front foot. This will cause energy to move down your leg more easily. On the way up, put pressure through the ball of your foot to stimulate rising energy.

Important Point to Remember

Throughout the entire movement, keep the back leg weightless, the heel slightly off the ground and the ball of the foot pressing into the ground.

Movement 4: Tiger Separates Her Cubs [6]

Step 1: Keep the Center of Your Hands at Heart Level during the Entire Movement

This will help to target the energy movement of the exercise directly into and through your heart and pericardium. The elbow points downward throughout the movement.

Step 2: The Shoulder Blades Lead the Hands

The impetus for your hands to move will now originate in your shoulder blades. Let your

[6] To review how to do Movement 4, refer to Chapter 10 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1.*

shoulder blades lead and your hands follow in direct proportion to the movements of the shoulder blades. Do not let the shoulder blade follow the hand.

1. When moving from left to right, slide the bottom of your right shoulder blade away from your spine to the outside to push your right hand out as it extends from a beak hand to a sideways-facing palm *(Figure 3-1 A)*. Feel as though your shoulder blade is circling slightly downward and is falling off your back. Your armpit and elbow should also feel as if they are sinking when they extend in proportion to the movement of your shoulder blade.

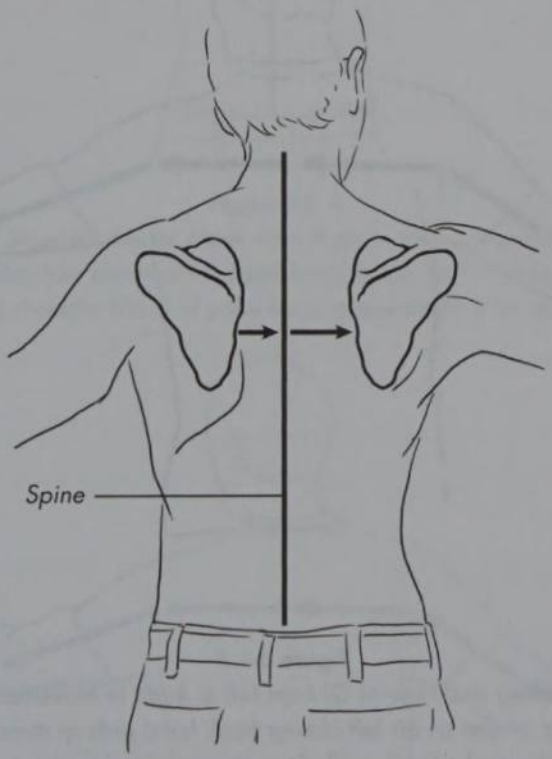


Figure 3-1 A
Movement 4: Both Shoulder Blades Move from Left to Right
Each shoulder blade alternates moving toward and away from spine.
Here movement is from left to right.

2. Slide the bottom of your left shoulder blade downward and toward the spine to pull your left arm in as your elbow and wrist bend and your hand forms a beak. The feeling of this side-to-side movement should be very relaxed and loose. The palm opening must be precisely coordinated with the beak hand closing. The breathing pattern and energy flow for this movement are shown in Figure 3-1 B.

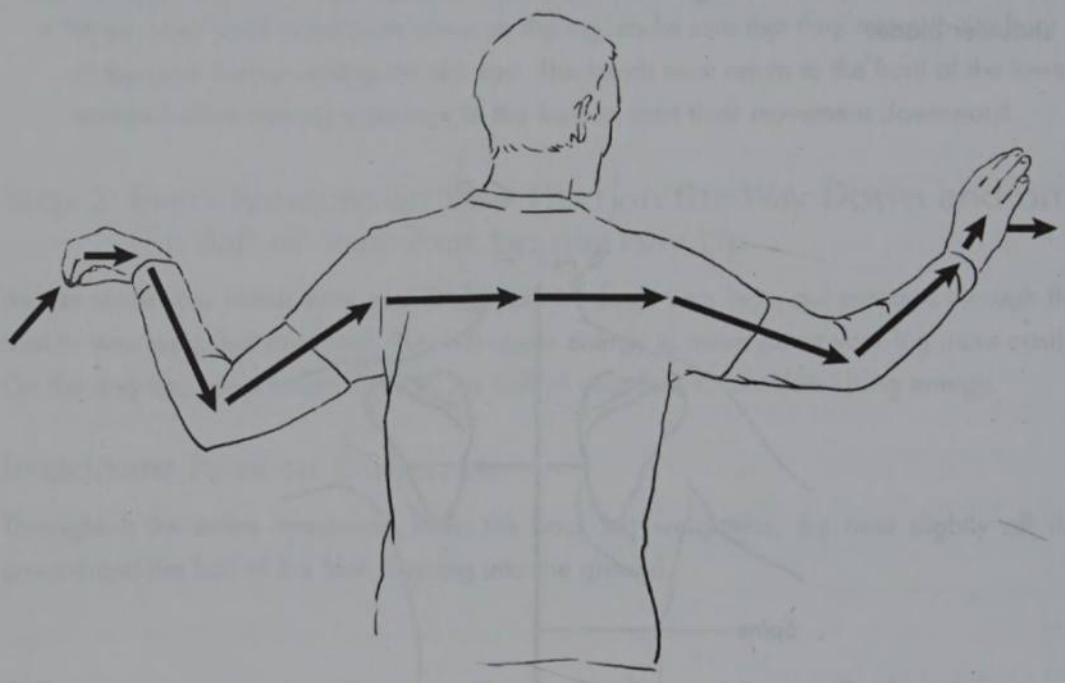


Figure 3-1 B
Breathing and Flow of Qi from Left to Right in Movement 4
Practitioner inhales as his left closing beak hand pulls qi through body, then exhales and releases pulled energy out of right extending palm.

3. When moving from right to left, reverse Instructions 1 and 2.

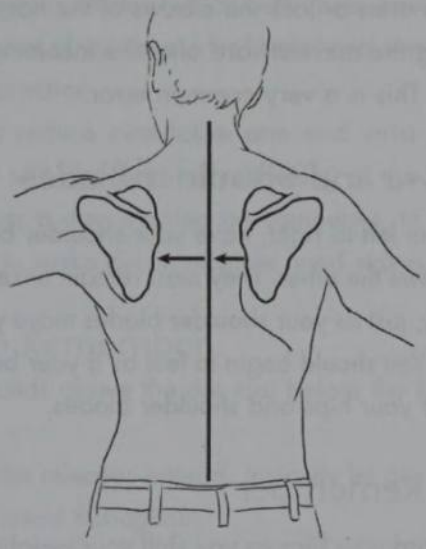


Figure 3-2 A
Both Shoulder Blades Move from Right to Left in Movement 4
Shoulder blade of the beak hand moves toward spine
and shoulder blade of palm hand moves away from spine.

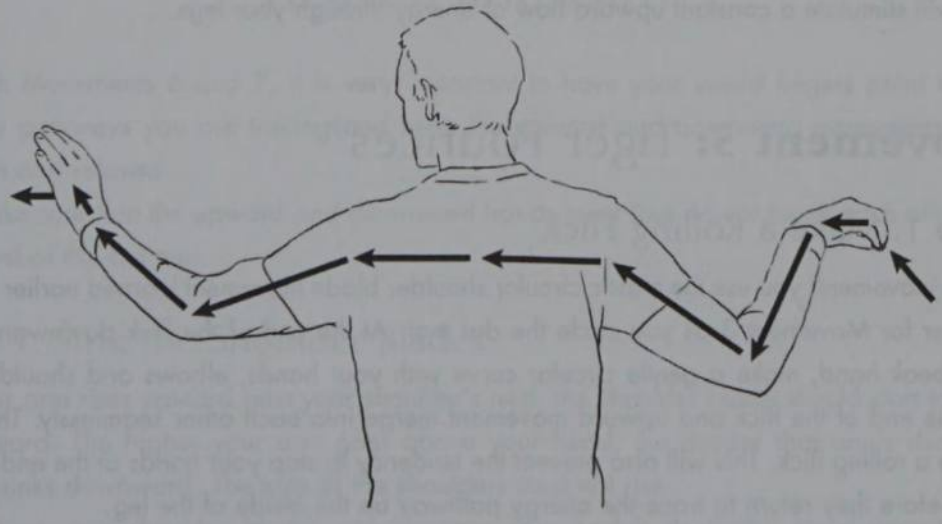


Figure 3-2 B
Breathing and Flow of Qi from Right to Left in Movement 4
Practitioner inhales as his right closing beak hand pulls qi through body,
then exhales and releases pulled energy out of left extending palm.

Important Points to Remember

- Do not overextend the arms or lock the elbows of the hand extending outward.
- Do not keep extending the arm outward after the incoming hand has closed and formed a beak hand. This is a very common error.

Step 3: Link Your Kwa and Shoulder Blades

As you shift your weight from left to right, have your shoulder blades and the hips move in sync. Neither leads nor follows the other. They must remain linked and move simultaneously and proportionally. Similarly, just as your shoulder blades move your hands, your hips cause your legs and feet to move. You should begin to feel as if your body is a liquid sloshing side to side within the "bottle" of your hips and shoulder blades.

Important Point to Remember

Do not bend your body toward your hips as you shift your weight. The torso remains upright.

Step 4: Maintain Continuous Pressure through the Balls of Both Feet

This will stimulate a constant upward flow of energy through your legs.

Movement 5: Tiger Pounces[7]

Step 1: Make a Rolling Flick

In this movement, you use the elastic circular shoulder blade movement learned earlier in this chapter for Movement 3 as you circle the dai mai. At the end of the flick downward with your beak hand, make a gentle circular curve with your hands, elbows and shoulders so that the end of the flick and upward movement merge into each other seamlessly. This will create a rolling flick. This will also prevent the tendency to stop your hands at the end of the flick before they return to trace the energy pathway up the inside of the leg.

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[7] To review how to do Movement 5, see Chapter 11 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1*.

The more challenging part of the movement is the timing needed to create a sucking, pulling-up reflex in your shoulder blades (which both move toward the spine) after the flick and the strong downward thrust of your shoulder blades and arms during the flick. Achieving this will take attention and practice.

This movement will help reduce cumulative arm and wrist shock for such athletics as tennis, golf and baseball. It will also help with stiffening of the arms, wrists and fingers for those who spend many hours a day working on computers. In martial arts, the movement helps to develop the ability to make quick, multiple hand strikes.

Important Points to Remember

- Do not lift the beak hands above the dai mai before the flick. This is a very common error.
- Do not push or force the release; instead, instantly let go.
- Keep the shoulders relaxed throughout.

Movement 6: Dragon and Tiger Pierce Heaven and Earth [8]

In both Movements 6 and 7, it is very important to have your sword fingers point to the energy pathways you are tracing and keep the upward and downward movements very smooth and relaxed.

Make sure that the upward and downward hands meet (but do not touch each other) at the level of the dai mai.

Step 1: Sink the Shoulder Blades

As your arm rises upward past your shoulder's nest, the shoulder blade should start to sink downward. The higher your arm goes above your head, the deeper that arm's shoulder blade sinks downward. The tops of the shoulders must not rise.

Sinking your shoulder blades can increase your body's flexibility. More importantly, however, this sinking action helps to bolster the qi flow between your torso and your arm

[8] To review how to do Movement 6, refer to Chapter 12 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1*.

in the acupuncture meridian lines that run parallel to and affect the left and right channels, which are deeper and, along with the central channel, are the principal energy channels of the body. This motion should increase the energy circulation along both the acupuncture meridians and the left and right channels.

Step 2: Create Space inside Your Armpits

To enhance the qi flow that enters into and moves along your left and right channels, it is necessary to create a sense of space inside your armpits. Use your intention—your feeling and internal awareness—to soften and expand the soft tissue and blood vessels inside your armpits and inside your shoulders' nests.

Step 3: Simultaneously Move Your Elbows and Knees

Move your elbows and knees simultaneously, especially at the very end of the piercing motion. As you pierce with your sword hands and unweighted leg, simultaneously open and extend (but do not lock) the crooks of your elbows and the backs of your knees. Between these piercing motions, lightly gather and close the backs of your knee joints and the crooks of your elbows without overly tightening these areas, keeping them as relaxed as your abilities allow. These are the two primary areas where a lack of internal movement can block the complete release of qi that enters into and moves along your left and right channels.

Step 4: Make the Piercing Action Very Long

Unlike the flicks of Movement 2 that are released quickly, the final piercing action of Movement 6 is slower, both as your piercing fingers go out and when they just begin to be pulled back in. Try to let the final full extension and initial retraction of your sword hand fingers each last at least two or three seconds before your arms begin to bend to move strongly in the other direction, at basically the same speed you have been doing the movements of Dragon and Tiger. Gently flex and release your hands and fingers so you feel as if all their joints and the space between their bones expand as you flick, and gather in as you retract. Let all the muscles of your body gently elongate and then shorten with the pulsing of your sword fingers.

Step 5: Balance Your Up and Down Piercing Movements

As you pierce, notice whether you have a tendency to pierce upward or downward more strongly. Try to bring these movements into balance, so both are done with the same relative intensity.

Movement 7: Dragon Soars to Heaven and Brings Back the Pearl[9]

Step 1: Softly Open and Gather in the Muscles of Your Kwa

Let your lower abdominal muscles and the muscles of your kwa gently come together in a relaxed way (gather in) and expand (open) in direct coordination with the flexing and flicking of your hands and feet. Gather in when your hands move toward your belly and softly open as you flick. The continual opening and gathering causes the soft tissues inside your abdomen to soften further and brings better circulation to your internal organs.

Step 2: Open and Close the Joints of Your Knees and Elbows

During the piercing actions, let your elbows and knees simultaneously extend. As in Movement 6, gently open and extend the backs of your knees and the crooks of your elbows and gather them back between your piercing actions. All four joints should open at the same time and in proportion to help your balance. Focus on pairing joints as you perform a motion: when you make a piercing action, focus on both knees; a knee and an elbow; the other knee and elbow; and both elbows. Then focus on feeling the openings and closings (bending and stretching) in all four joints simultaneously. Particularly important for balance is the matched feeling from each elbow to the opposite knee, which creates a feeling of two diagonal braces in your body.

This will increase the flexibility of your legs and arms and keep them from stiffening. It will also improve your balance.

When you can do this smoothly in Movement 7, go back and incorporate these physical movement principles into Movement 2.

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[9] To review how to do Movement 7, see Chapter 13 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1*.

Step 3: As You Pierce, Simultaneously Rotate Your Shoulders and Arms, and Sink Your Shoulder Blades

1. Just before you pierce at the top of your head, your upper sword fingers should be pointing down and your bent lower sword fingers should be pointing at your extended back foot.

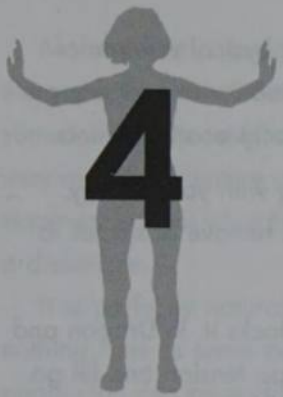
2. To begin the pierce, quickly drop your shoulder blades and simultaneously rotate each arm, elbow, wrist and hand in a whip arm fashion so that
   a. One arm travels upward and sideways and points your extended sword fingers at an angle between straight up and forty-five degrees from vertical. The rotation of your shoulder and arm downward will cause your elbow to point and sink straight down.
   b. Your other arm travels down and back and you point your extended sword fingers in the same direction as your back foot. The rotation and sinking of your shoulder and arm will cause your elbow to point backward, but you should still feel it sink.

3. Drop your shoulder blades even more and extend both your arms and fingers about an inch as you pierce up and out, and down and back, with your sword fingers and toes.

Utilizing these physical movement principles will increase the flexibility of your shoulder joints, bring circulation and increased flexibility to your neck and shoulders, and enable your energy to flow.

Important Points to Remember

- Both hands must continuously be in motion. A common error is for one hand to stop at some point in the move and wait for the other to catch up.
- Both hands must meet at the front of the torso at the level of the tantien.
- Do not lock your body in place after the flick; instead, allow the arm to continue to push slightly upward.



4 Basic Energy Principles

Learning how to feel and move energy in the body is essential to reaping the health benefits of Dragon and Tiger. In general, the maximum benefit occurs when body movements, the intention of the mind, and the flow of qi happen together. With gentle patience and practice, over time they will.

The energy principles presented in this chapter form the foundation for learning to feel and cultivate qi in your body.

Qi development could be compared to climbing a mountain. On approach, it has a simple shape that you can recognize and feel comfortable with. As you climb, however, the mountain becomes an infinite series of rocks, increasingly steep paths and handholds that equally challenge you going up and down. As you climb, the mountain acts like a focal

lens that brings up all sorts of things about your personal life and the way you perceive, interact, and deal with yourself, people and events. Once you know the mountain intimately, it remains the same mountain. However, your relationship with it now becomes increasingly comfortable, interesting and more alive than was apparent on your original approach.

Energy Principles

1. First work on the physical movements and then master the qi. This is a proven path to success. The physical movements are the vessel through which energy moves. If your tissues are constricted or your joints are closed, your energy cannot move where it

needs to go. Focusing primarily on your energy while ignoring physical mechanics can lead to either frustration at your inability to develop qi or instability in your energy system as qi is moved in inappropriate ways around physical blocks or stuck points.

2. Give yourself time before fully devoting your attention to working with your energy. By taking the time to learn the physical movements well, you will remove obstacles to manifesting your full energetic potential.
3. Relaxation helps develop and circulate qi; tension inhibits and blocks it. In Dragon and Tiger, paying attention to where qi is blocked will help you release tension and let go.
4. Relax and soften the mind. Negative emotions and mental churning are signs of tension in the mind. The more calm, quiet and still your mind, the easier it is to feel and move your qi.
5. Coordinate your breathing with the movement of your qi. Like tai chi or other forms of qigong, Dragon and Tiger uses special breathing patterns that follow and open up the flow of qi along the energy pathways.
6. Soften your eyes. At the end of each movement's energy projection, look intently but not forcefully in the direction you want your qi to move. At the end of an energetic projection, as you transit into the next phase of the movement, let your eyes go even softer to absorb energy.
7. Use your intent to move your qi along the pathways and out as you flick upward or downward.
8. Work toward feeling your qi both in your body and externally in space.
9. The mind leads the qi; the qi moves the fluids.

Qi Sensitivity

Many of the exercises in this book are designed to help increase sensitivity to qi sensations and strengthen them. The experience of feeling qi varies from person to person. It's difficult to say exactly what somebody will feel. Even in similar situations, people can experience energetic sensations very differently.

Moreover, it is important for teachers not to lead their students about how to interpret the experience of qi but to let them discover what they feel on their own. Describing what someone might or might not feel can arouse an expectation or even a hypnotic induction that may reduce the nature of what actually is felt. Thus, qigong teachers who make unequivocal statements about what their students should or should not experience may well be doing them a disservice.

It is perfectly natural that some will be very sensitive to qi and others will feel little or nothing, just as some people have a great ear for music and some have none at all. Most people fall into the middle, where the more you practice the better you get. If you cannot feel energy at all, as you practice the exercises below try to notice other symptoms of change within you such as shifts in your comfort level or mood.

It is important to understand that the sensations you may initially feel when doing these exercises are not qi itself, but the effects of your qi moving or not moving. The heat you may feel, for example, is likely to be your qi moving through your blood, causing it to move more fully through your hands. Tingling may be the qi moving through your nerves. Do not worry if these sensations come and go—the qi will still be there. Learning to feel the qi itself requires very subtle awareness that most people have to develop over time with practice.[1] These exercises will help you cultivate it.

It also bears repeating that the seven movements of Dragon and Tiger are immensely beneficial merely done as gentle, low-impact, therapeutic exercises. There is no requirement that you make an explicit effort to move energy.

Energy Blockages and Qi Reactions

If you have any serious medical or psychological problems, make sure you consult with your healthcare practitioner to ensure that qigong is appropriate for you before practicing the material in this book.

As you become sensitive to qi, you will also become sensitive to energy blockages within your body. Energy blockages can be of many kinds, from hard and stiff, to soft and mushy. A block at a specific place may be caused by an excess or a deficiency of qi. Any sensation you feel that impedes the smooth and easy flowing of qi—e.g., heat, pain, coolness, tightness, thickness or stagnation—indicates an excess of energy, i.e., a block of some kind.

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[1] More information on directly and indirectly experiencing qi may be found in the author's book *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*, revised edition (Berkley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2006), p. 241.

You may also feel sensations that indicate that there is a deficiency of energy in an area, a place where you cease feeling the energy pathways or where there is an abrupt decrease of feeling or a sense of deadness.

Whether you encounter a block caused by excess or deficiency, Dragon and Tiger's method for making things smooth and flowing again is the same. Repetitive passes through an energy pathway wear down the excess energy and clear it from where it shows itself, or build up and energize the area where you feel deficiency or stagnation. Each time you trace energy through an area, you stimulate that place in your body and leave energy behind to fill up a deficiency or carry away some blocked excessive energy.

If you discover a blockage while doing a specific movement, slow down and play with the area to see if you can smooth it out. If you discover a persistent block while doing the whole set of movements, you should put particular attention into that area every time you pass over it, addressing it through repetition.

It is important not to block the reactions, but instead relax any emotions and feelings of physical or mental tension that arise, letting them disperse and release in your body.

As you begin to refine your physical movements and develop sensitivity to the movement of qi, the emotional reactions—positive or negative—you may have already experienced from practice may become stronger. As your awareness of what is happening deeper inside your body increases, those reactions, which you may have once ignored or skirted, now demand your attention. These qi reactions are the response of the body and mind to the effects of energy beginning to flow more freely through previously blocked or stagnant places.[2]

These reactions may be felt during your practice or afterward. They may range from being mild to very strong and could affect you physically, energetically and emotionally. These reactions can vary from dull, aching pains to nausea and dizziness to heat felt locally or throughout your whole body. You may feel unwarranted anger or sadness or even unexpected happiness after the bound qi, which had blocked it, is released. You may experience unusually vivid dreams or awaken at night with your body vibrating, tingling or itching. Some may also have physical discharges, such as bowel movements or body odor.

These and many others are normal signs that your body and energy are waking up. Remember to follow the 70 percent rule: if these reactions are strong enough to make you feel as if you are straining, cut back your practice intensity or time.

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[2] Qi reactions are also discussed in Chapter 1 of *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1*.

If the symptoms are intense, reduce your practice to 30 or 40 percent of what you consider to be your normal amount, and check in with your teacher. If you are experiencing major physical, mental or emotional problems, stop practicing and seek medical advice from a qualified provider.

Try to practice regularly about the same amount each day. Remember to drink plenty of water.

Descending Energy Generates Ascending Energy

The basic rule about descending and ascending qi[3] is as follows: When energy descends in the body it automatically causes an opposite rising of energy. This ascending qi may occur in the same pathway or in another part of the body. For example, energy dropping down the left side will cause energy to rise up the right side and vice versa; energy dropping down the front will cause energy to rise up the back and vice versa.

Generally, putting pressure on the ball of the foot will help qi to rise in the body. Putting pressure on the heel will cause qi to fall.

Such a balancing action may or may not automatically happen when energy rises up the body. Ascending energy may cause some qi to flow down the body; however, if so, it is not necessarily an equal amount of energy that is descending.

In any form of qigong where one hand is rising and one hand is going down, you always put your intention on the descending hand to motivate the movement of the rising hand. Your body begins to feel like an old-fashioned, person-powered water pump, where the pushing down of the pump causes the water to move up and out the spout and regulates its pressure. Eventually you will feel internal fluid pressure changes because qi motivates the movement of your blood and other body fluids, and your intent will cause qi and the fluids to move more strongly. The maxim is as follows: The qi follows the mind and intent; the movement of fluids follows the qi.

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[3] More information about the functions of ascending and descending qi may be found in the author's book *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*, revised edition, pp. 58–59.

Train Your Emotional Habits

Whenever we work with energy, and especially when we project it, there is always both deliberate and unconscious intent involved. Your potential intent while doing the movements of Dragon and Tiger can vary considerably. It could be positive or negative, spiritual, demonic or neutral, as well as hateful, angry or loving, altruistic or egomaniacal. During Dragon and Tiger practice your goal should be to keep your intent clean since it patterns many of your attitudes regarding your general spiritual disposition that translates into how you may act, think and feel in your daily life.

Overcoming Our Human Limitations

Except for true saints, all of us have negative and often destructive emotional habits, which are the natural fallback positions we reflexively and usually unconsciously move into when various circumstances happen in our lives. Yet the possibility also exists that we could potentially act in a more positive way, one we just might prefer. In this way, our emotional responses can make us more centered and bring us inner peace. The aim is to become a balanced and kind human being.

When difficult situations happen and reflexively negative emotions—such as anger, hatred, fear, agitation, intolerance or greed—suddenly dominate your mind, wouldn't it be wonderful if, instead, more compassionate, loving and life-enhancing emotions arose?

Emotional habits are usually very repetitively trained behaviors, often begun in childhood and amplified or mitigated during every stage of our lives. My Taoist teacher Liu Hung Chieh always used to say that what you practice, you become. Practice negativity and you will become more negative. Practice positivity and you will become more positive. This is within your power to achieve, and its price is practice, not purely wishful thinking.

Bodhichitta

A powerful centering force that can overcome negative emotional patterns and lead people toward a more spiritual way of being is the Buddhist practice of Bodhichitta.

Dragon and Tiger is nominally classified as a Buddhist form of qigong, although the majority of its practitioners are doing it for health and relaxation rather than as a spiritual or religious practice. In the Mahayana school of Buddhism, Bodhichitta is a term that generally calls upon you to take action and extend your being (also referred to as Mind or soul), spirit, intent and qi outside yourself with compassion, love, generosity and loving kindness toward all other beings. This compassion should not extend just toward those to whom you are intimately connected, but universally to others no matter where they exist, regardless of whether or not you love or hate them, or believe you will ever personally meet or connect with them.

The Buddhist principle of compassion corresponds to the Christian ideal of universal love and the most repeated phrase in the bible of Taoism, the *I Ching:* "everything furthers." One meaning of this phrase is that all actions formed from the root of true Bodhichitta produce favorable growth for all beings, in all places and all times. The wonderful quality of this compassion or love is that it is the only natural force that can overcome and transform negative emotions, no matter how strong and ingrained they are.

Engaging Bodhichitta enables you to keep your intent clean and to gradually repattern long-standing negative emotional and spiritual habits.

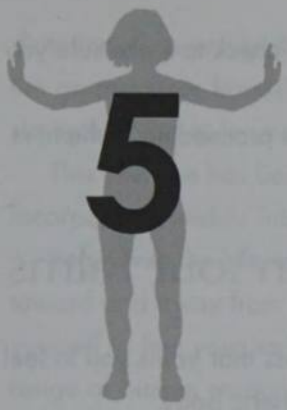
Being able to project and work with qi may bring about an idea that one is somehow special. Due to human frailty this can easily happen to anyone when they enter the world of working with subtle energies. Bodhichitta practice is a powerful tool to help avoid the potential egomaniacal tendencies that can arise from this attitude.

During Dragon and Tiger, practice by focusing on the quality of energy you pull or project away from your hands and feet. This gives you an opportunity to train your inner world and change your unconscious, habitual emotional set points from negative to positive.

Sending Bodhichitta to All between Heaven and Earth

To keep your intent clean, have the idea and a whole body sense of sending compassion out to benefit all life in a balanced fashion with each movement, flick, or piercing of your qi that you push and send out from your tantien and body. Have the same intent when you pull qi into your body and tantien, cultivating the sense that together with the qi, you are also drawing into yourself the compassionate, balanced forces of the universe with each pull.

Do your best to apply this principle to all seven movements of Dragon and Tiger.



5 Basic Energy Exercises

These fundamental qi exercises will help you cultivate a sense of energy in your body. Go slowly and practice each exercise until it stabilizes inside you. These exercises are common to internal martial arts and healing practices, and can be done standing, lying down, or sitting on a chair or on the floor.

Safe Qi Development

Qi travels through the nerves. All safe qi development practices work cumulatively and teach you to progress slowly. This allows you to develop a strong nervous system that forges solid links between the brain and the flow of qi. In this context, "strong" refers to the ability of the nerves to convey messages between the mind and the qi clearly, with sufficient insulation to avoid burnout. A strong nervous system allows messages to be delivered to the brain and the qi without conscious will or effort. The development must be slow and steady in order for it to become stable.

Overtraining or forceful training can damage your nerves, glands, internal organs and brain. When practicing, three precautions should be kept in mind at all times:

- Practice must be done within the proper limits, or the nerves will be stressed and damaged.
- Practice must lead to health and well-being, not to illness.
- The body must have time to balance and stabilize new energetic input.

Ideally, qi development is best practiced with a teacher who can check to make sure you are not going too fast or too slowly.

Learn each exercise thoroughly, in the sequence presented, before proceeding to the next.

Exercise 1: Feel the Energy between Your Palms

This exercise and the one that follows are the first part of the process that trains you to feel with your palms where the boundary lies between your skin and etheric body.

Having worked with the physical exercises that you learned for relaxing and softening your hands in Chapter 2 will make it much easier for you to feel energy.



Figure 5-1
Lao Gong, an Important Energy Point in the Body

The easiest place in the human body to feel your qi is in the center of your palms, known as lao gong in Chinese. This point is directly linked to your major energy centers[1] and is often portrayed as an eye in the palm of the hand in many esoteric and Tantric arts. The center of the hand is the most common therapeutic energy projection point in many types of healing work, including energy massage, the laying on of hands and spiritual healing.

In tai chi, qigong and yoga, in order for the energy from the spine to complete its natural energetic circuit to the fingertips, the qi must pass through and be amplified at the lao gong point in the center of the palm. If this point is not open, then even though you may already have sufficient energy in your body, it will get blocked from completing itself in either

[1] These major energy centers are sometimes called *chakras* in yoga and other Indian arts. In Taoism and other Chinese energy arts they are known as *tantiens* or, if smaller, as energy points.

direction. Conversely, the greater the degree of energy in the lao gong point that is opened, the greater your hands' sensitivity will become and the greater your ability to have the full strength of the qi in your body reach and express itself as power in your hands.

This exercise has been used for millennia to train children in Asia to feel qi and has been incorporated widely into all kinds of energy-sensitivity exercises in the West.

Begin with the center of your palms facing each other *(Figure 5-2 A–C)*. Move your hands toward and away from each other, until you can feel something between your hands. Allow yourself to feel your sensations and understand that their nature can change over time. The range of human response is very wide.

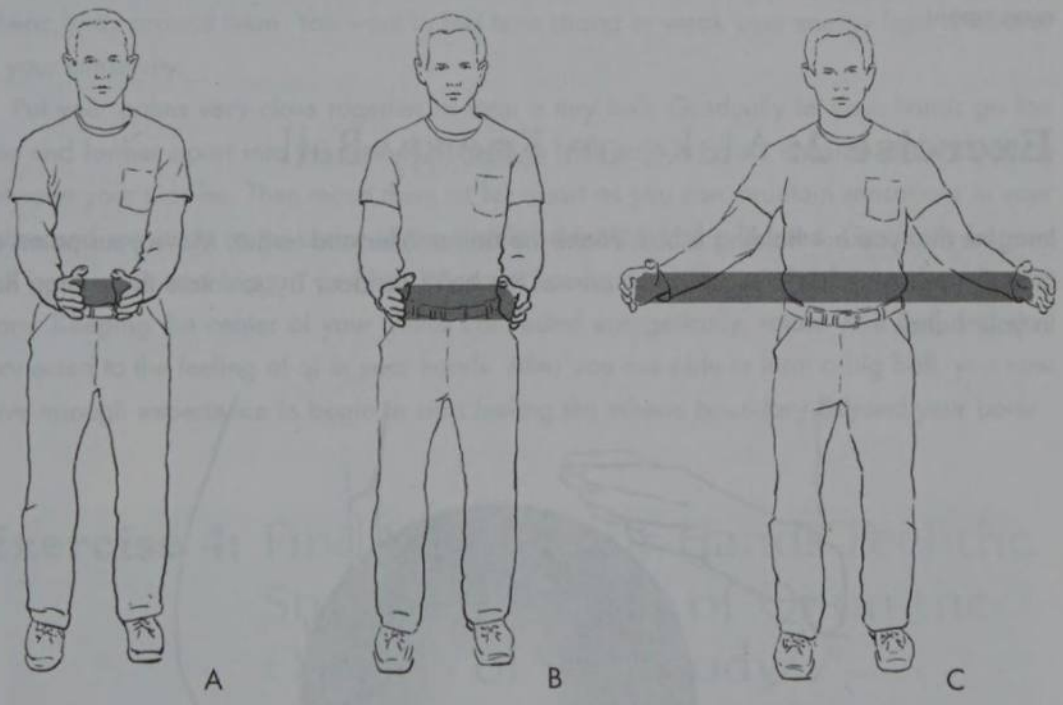


Figure 5-2
Learning to Feel Qi between Your Palms

1. Have your palms face each other and feel the energy between them *(Figure 5-2 A)*.
2. Increase the distance between your palms *(Figure 5-2 B)*. Find out if you can still feel qi as strongly as when your palms were closer together. However, if you have your palms too close, the qi sensations may diminish.

3. Move your hands farther apart. The qi sensations may become weaker or stronger *(Figure 5-2 C)*.

The most common sensations of qi are pressure, cold, heat and tingling, and these may range from nonexistent to very strong. Most people have some sensation, but others are completely insensitive to these sensations. Some people may be hypersensitive to qi or may exaggerate the strength of their experiences.

Play with and enjoy the feeling of the sensations, which may feel normal or new and unusual to you. Try this exercise both with your eyes open and with your eyes closed. With eyes closed, you may find that your sensitivity is equal to, weaker or stronger than with your eyes open.

Exercise 2: Make an Energy Ball

Imagine that you are holding a ball. Make the ball smaller and larger. Move your palms as though you are trying to touch every part of the ball's surface. Try to rotate the energy ball in your hands.



Figure 5-3
Making an Energy Ball

Play with these feelings, always making sure to keep the feeling of the energy ball intact. If you lose the feeling, bring your hands closer together and make the ball smaller, until the sensation of having a ball between your hands clearly reasserts itself.

Exercise 3: Become Sensitive to the Strength of Your Qi

In this step, your goal is to feel the strength (or weakness) of qi in your hands and of your etheric body around them. You want to feel how strong or weak your energy field is relative to your sensitivity.

Put your palms very close together to form a tiny ball. Gradually let your hands go farther and farther apart into the size of a medium ball, say, to about the size of the distance between your nipples. Then move them as far apart as you can maintain sensations in your palms and sensitivity to the space in the middle where the ball is located. Gradually let your ball get bigger and bigger, perhaps becoming as large as the width of your shoulders or more. Keeping the center of your palms connected energetically, rotate your ball and stay connected to the feeling of qi in your hands. After you are able to form a big ball, you now have enough experience to begin to start feeling the etheric boundary beyond your body.

Exercise 4: Find Where Your Hands Feel the Strongest Effects of Qi on the Outside of Your Body

When practicing Dragon and Tiger, there is an ideal distance from your skin where your hand, palm and fingertips can move and stimulate your acupuncture meridians to maximum effect. The purpose of this exercise is to help you find that ideal distance. This distance can vary by inches from day to day over any particular part of your body, and it can vary from one part of your body to another at the same moment.

During all the movements of Dragon and Tiger, you want to maintain this ideal distance to gain the maximum therapeutic benefits. You need to feel, rather than see, this distance.

If your hand is too close to your body, it will block the sensations of qi, in effect short-circuiting the energetic links and flows between and through your physical and etheric bodies. If your hand is too far away from your body, the sensations will get weaker and weaker and may cease altogether. There will also be a place where the sensations are at maximum strength. When first starting to play with qi and your etheric body, this place of maximum strength may in fact not be the exact boundary of your etheric body. However, as a working principle, it is close enough. Because this is the place where you can most easily feel the energy most strongly, it realistically provides you with the best chance of affecting your etheric body. This first field of energy exists just beyond the skin of a human being, where you can affect the qi inside your body during the practice of Dragon and Tiger Qigong.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you learn to become sensitive to and comfortably feel the qi outside your body. This may take time. It is quite common for many people to feel qi in their hands for quite some time, even years, before progressing to feeling their etheric field. One goal of learning energetic exercises like Dragon and Tiger is to increase and develop your sensitivity. Even if you don't feel anything, the physical movements cause energy to move. However, the more you practice these exercises to feel and direct your energy, the more your energy can move.

The ability to feel the qi in your hands or on your skin is not affected by the clothing you wear.

The Goldilocks Distance

We call this ideal distance between your hand and a part of your body the "Goldilocks Distance," because of its analogy to the children's story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. The distance from your hands (the porridge) can be too hot (too close to your body) or too cold (too far away from your body) or just right (just far enough from your skin to give you the strongest sensation of qi).

Finding this distance is an art rather than a science.

The Goldilocks Distance is not permanent but varies over time as the strength of your energy, both inside your acupuncture meridians and in your external etheric body, waxes and wanes. Such changes can occur within a matter of minutes or over the course of days or months.

In this exercise you will seek to find the Goldilocks Distance along various surfaces of your body. When you move your hands, you will stimulate energy flow in the acupuncture or other meridians located just under your skin.

Begin the exercise with eyes closed, and after you can clearly feel some sensations, alternate practicing with eyes open and eyes closed.

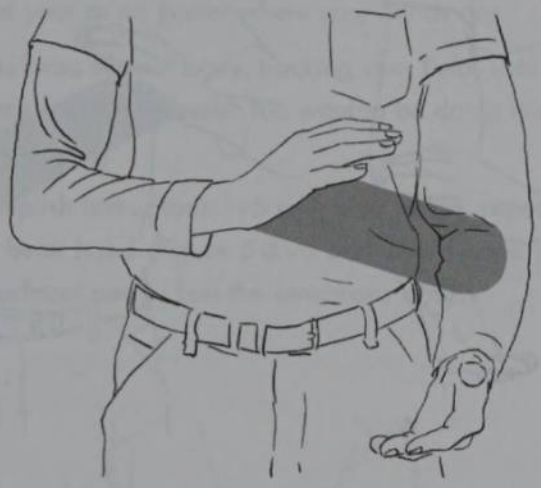


Figure 5-4
Projecting Qi from Palm to Opposite Forearm
Qi is projected from the palm to feel the connection between the etheric body and the skin of the opposite forearm.

1. Let your right palm face the inside, and then the outside, of your left arm. Move your palm up and down your arm from your fingertips to elbow to shoulder.

   Feel how this movement causes a sensation, of any nature, to appear on your arm or in your moving hand. Move your hand at different distances and speeds up and down until you can feel a connection between your etheric field and the skin of your arm. Over time you will begin to feel the energetic pressure in the space between hand and arm, just as you may have experienced in the previous energy exercises in this chapter when you had your palms face each other.

2. Next, start with your right palm and see whether the sensations get weaker or stronger when you bring your palm either closer to or farther away from your left arm, or in either the up or down direction. Try this on both the inside and outside of your arm.

Gradually gather data about the nature of your hand's connection to your etheric field and your skin, until you can begin to know what is too close, too far or just right—the Goldilocks Distance. This distance can vary by inches on different surfaces of your body.

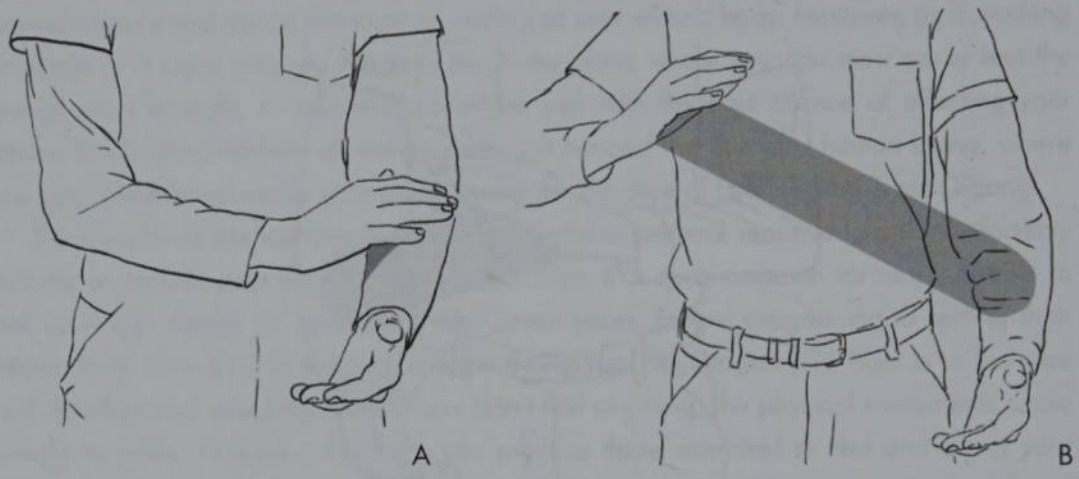


Figure 5-5
Finding the Goldilocks Distance
A) At too close a distance, qi sensations may diminish.
B) At distances farther away, qi sensations could get weaker or stronger.

3. Repeat Instructions 1 and 2 with your opposite hand.

Exercise 5: Feel for Qi Sensations on All Energy Surfaces of Your Body

1. Use one palm and then the other to feel for qi sensations on the front of your body, from your face to your perineum. See if one palm is more sensitive than the other.
2. Use one palm and then the other to feel for qi sensations on the sides of your neck, head and body.

3. Use one palm and then the other to feel for qi sensations on the back and front of your head and neck, and your lower back.
4. Do the same for the inside and outside surfaces of your left leg and foot. Then do the same for your right leg and foot.
5. Freely move your hands around your body. Over time, this will enable you to relax and spontaneously feel your qi no matter where your hands are.
6. Go over all the surfaces of your body, tracking your field, until you can stay on the Goldilocks Distance fairly effortlessly. You want to be doing this during every part of Dragon and Tiger Qigong.

Once you can accomplish Instructions 1–6 with your palms, repeat this sequence using the fingertips in both a beak hand *(Figure 5-6 A)* and sword hand *(Figure 5-6 B)* position to stimulate the body surfaces and to feel the sensations of qi.

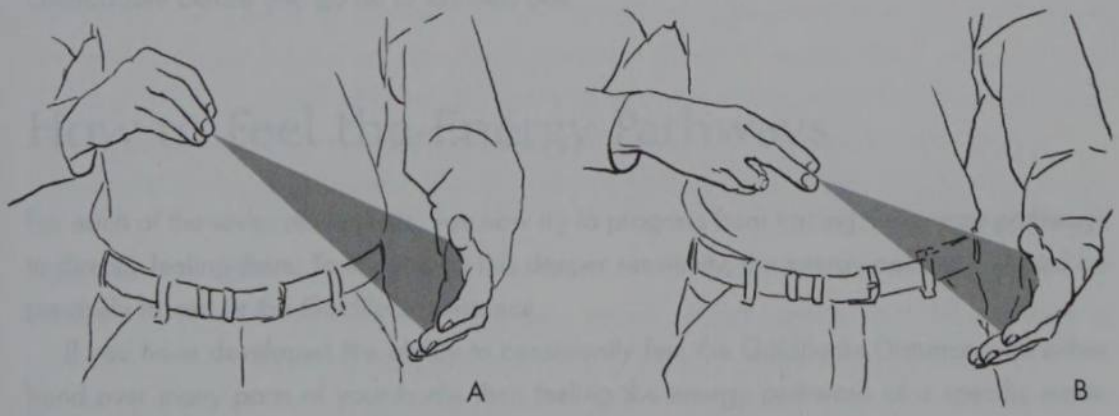
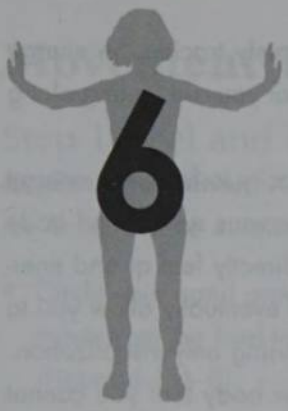


Figure 5-6
Pushing Qi from Your Fingers into Your Palm
A) Pushing qi using a beak hand
B) Pushing qi using sword fingers





Feeling the Energy Pathways within Dragon and Tiger

This chapter teaches you how to incorporate the energy exercises from Chapter 5 into Dragon and Tiger's movements so that you can actively feel the qi in your body as you move your hands along the energy pathways. Practice each movement until it feels smooth and comfortable before you go on to the next one.

How to Feel the Energy Pathways

For each of the seven movements, you now try to progress from tracing the energy pathways to directly feeling them. To encourage this deeper sensitivity, the energy pathways should be precisely traced at the Goldilocks Distance.

If you have developed the ability to consistently feel the Goldilocks Distance with either hand over many parts of your body, then feeling the energy pathways of a specific movement may be relatively straightforward. As you move your hands inch-by-inch across the energy pathways specified at the Goldilocks Distance without any breaks in your awareness, you should feel energy moving inside your body. The progression usually begins with feeling the energy move along the surface of the skin and, as your awareness increases, more deeply inside your body. If you use an open hand, you will keep your palm or fingers on the energy pathways. If you use a beak hand, then trace the pathways with the tips of your five fingers. If you use a sword hand, use the tips or pads of your two extended sword fingers.

If you cannot feel energy moving in your body in coordination with the movement of your hands, you have two options. First, you can continue to practice Dragon and Tiger purely as

a gentle, low-impact physical exercise, primarily focusing on accurately tracing the energy pathways with your hands. Second, you can imagine or visualize that you are feeling along the appropriate energy pathways.

Practicing these options over time will help you develop the capacity to feel your energy moving. Moreover, imagining or visualizing prepares your brain, nervous system and body for ultimately being able to feel. Your long-term goal should be to directly feel qi and energetic sensations in a kinesthetic manner in your body. Doing so will eventually allow you to move much greater amounts of energy through your body than by using only visualization.

Feeling energy moving is a little more complex for areas in your body that you cannot touch with your hands. Here you will have to learn to feel your energy move in your body with your mind's awareness and maintain that awareness as your energy extends beyond your reach. For example, in all of the movements and transitions between the movements—except those related to Movement 3—the energy pathways extend past where your hands will be all the way to the bottoms of your feet, while you remain standing in an upright position. Similarly, in Movements 6 and 7, the energy pathways extend past the top of the head. Many find it difficult to reach far above their head without exceeding their 70 percent rule. Similarly, in Movements 3 and 5 the energy pathways go around the dai mai all the way back to the mingmen, which many people may find hard to reach.

For each of these situations the method for feeling the pathways is the same. Move your hands or fingers as far along the energy pathways as you can comfortably while maintaining the Goldilocks Distance.

Now play with your palm or fingertips and see if you can find a way to comfortably project and feel your energy moving farther along the pathways as if you had physically moved your hands across them. Then try to project your energy to feel past your hand as far along the pathways as is comfortable. With practice and time you will extend your feeling of energy moving along your body all the way to the end of the pathways in your body.

If you cannot feel the energy pathways to the end of your body, then maintain awareness of how far you can feel. In addition, imagine or visualize that you are feeling such a sensation continuing the rest of the way along the energy pathways.

In these movements, your task will now be to learn to move your hands to cause qi to move along your energy pathways. Eventually whenever you move your hands along pathways, you should feel qi moving through them. The two phenomena should become one, so as you move your hands, so moves your qi.

Beginning Position: *As you have previously learned, point the fingers of one hand toward the bottom of the outside of your heel at your Goldilocks Distance.*

1. Circle your hand around from the outside to the inside of your foot and feel the qi move from the heel to the toes and to the bottom of the inside of the sole of your foot *(Figure 6-1 A–B)*.

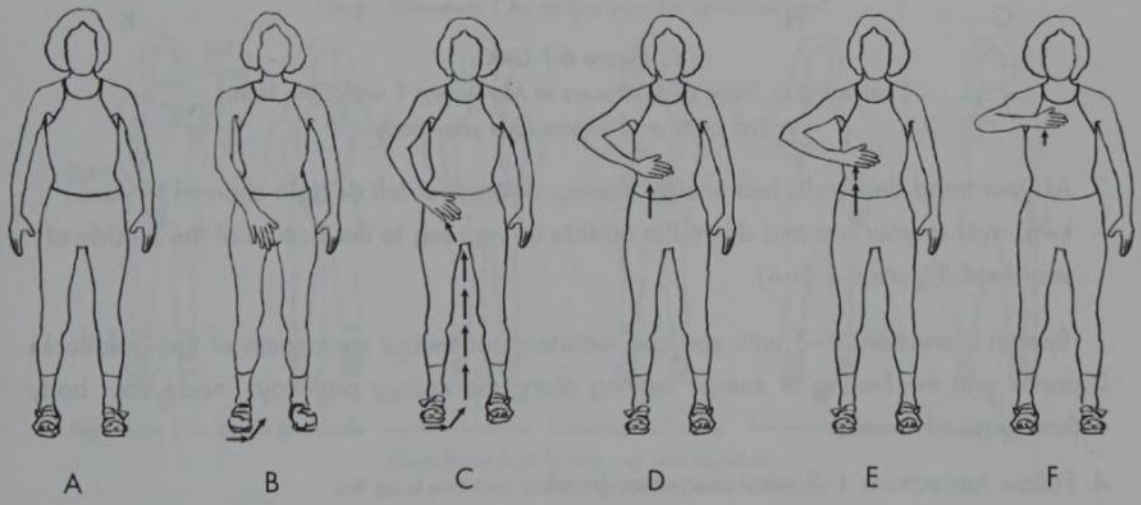


Figure 6-1 A–F
Tracing Qi Pathways in Movement 1 with One Hand
Left palm and fingers face your body.

2. As you move your hand upward, feel the energy pathways you are tracing—up the inside of your foot, ankle and leg to your kwa and up your left or right channel to your shoulder's nest. As you circle your upper hand to turn it over, maintain the sense of the Goldilocks Distance without hesitating or stopping *(Figure 6-1 C–F)*.

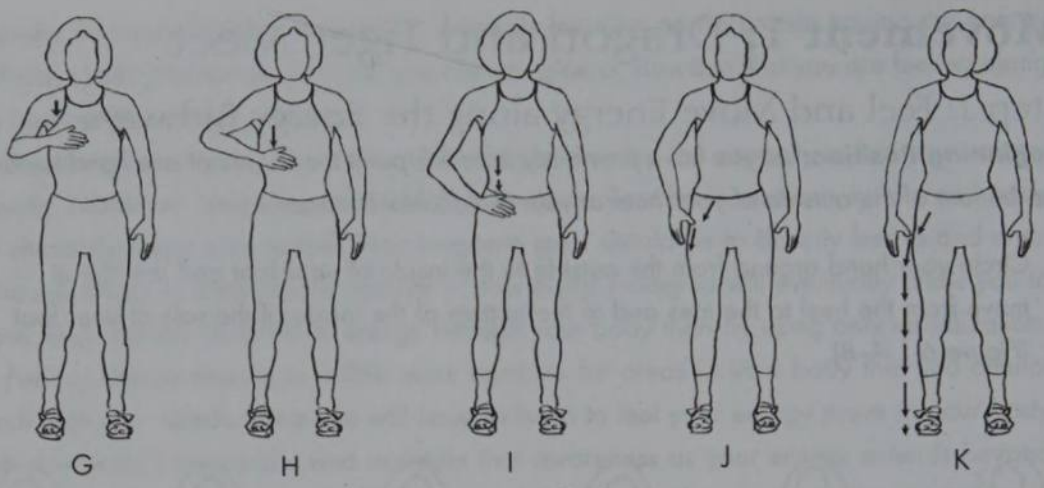


Figure 6-1 G–K
Continuing to Trace Qi Pathways in Movement 1 with One Hand
Left palm and fingers face your body.

3. As your hand descends, feel energy moving down your left or right channel to your kwa, over to your hip and down the outside of your leg to the bottom of the outside of your heel *(Figure 6-1 G–K)*.

Repeat Instructions 1–3 until you can maintain continuous awareness of the Goldilocks Distance and the feeling of energy moving along the energy pathways inside your body without gaps or breaks.

4. Follow Instructions 1–3 with your other hand.

5. Coordinate the movements of both hands, as you move energy up one side of your body and concurrently move qi down the opposite side. Practice until you can maintain continuous awareness of feeling the energy pathways in your body with both hands throughout the whole movement *(Figure 6-2 A–R)*.

Step 2: Coordinate Breathing with the Transition between Movements 1 and 2

After finishing your last repetition of Movement 1, as you move your raised foot down and shift your weight to the center, finish your exhale. Then inhale and feel the energy pathways up your leg and body with your lower hand and out along your arm with your upper hand until you reach the Turn Left or Turn Right Beak Hand landmark position of Movement 2. Complete your inhale as you finish making your beak hand and begin Movement 2.

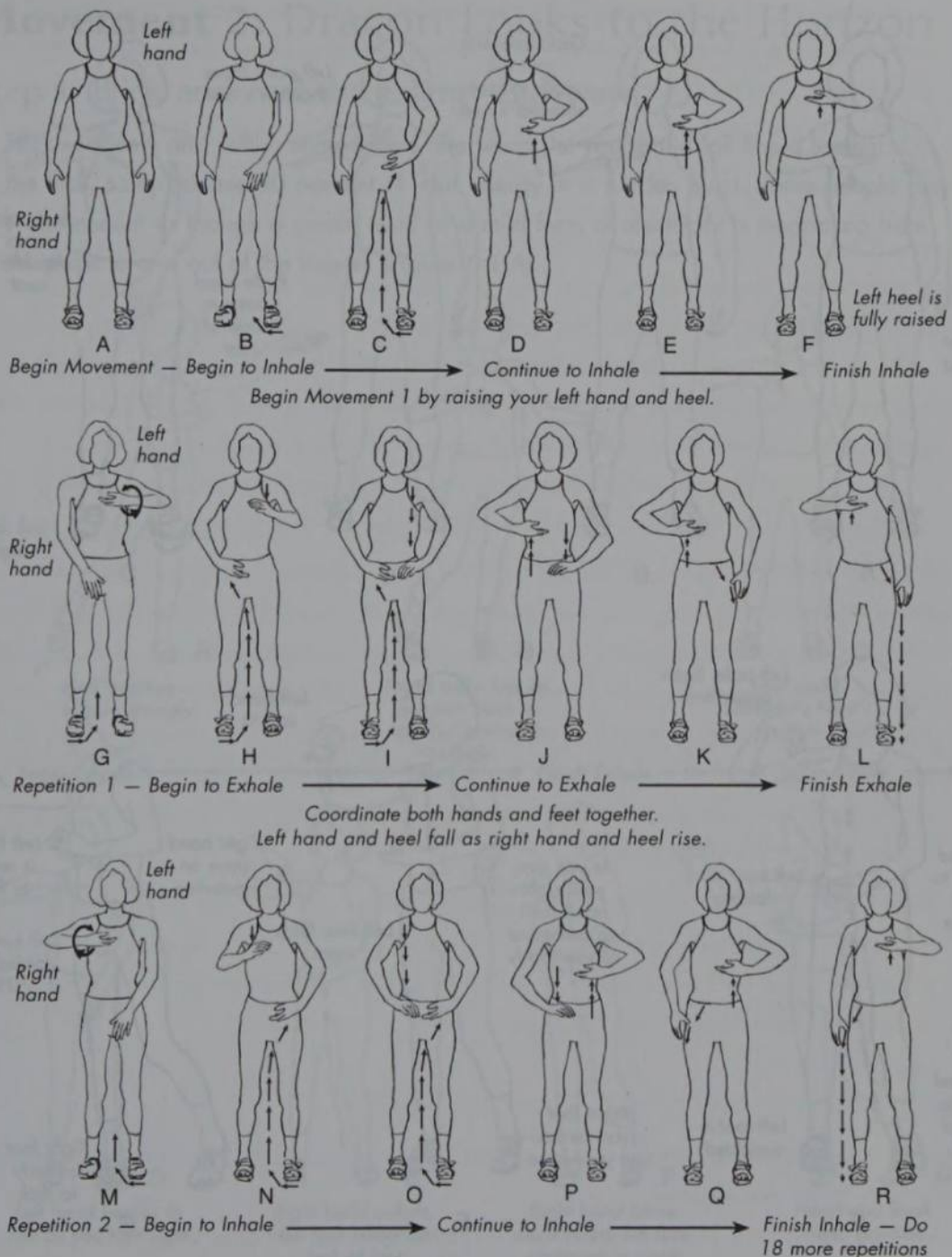


Figure 6-2
Ideal Breathing Pattern for Movement 1

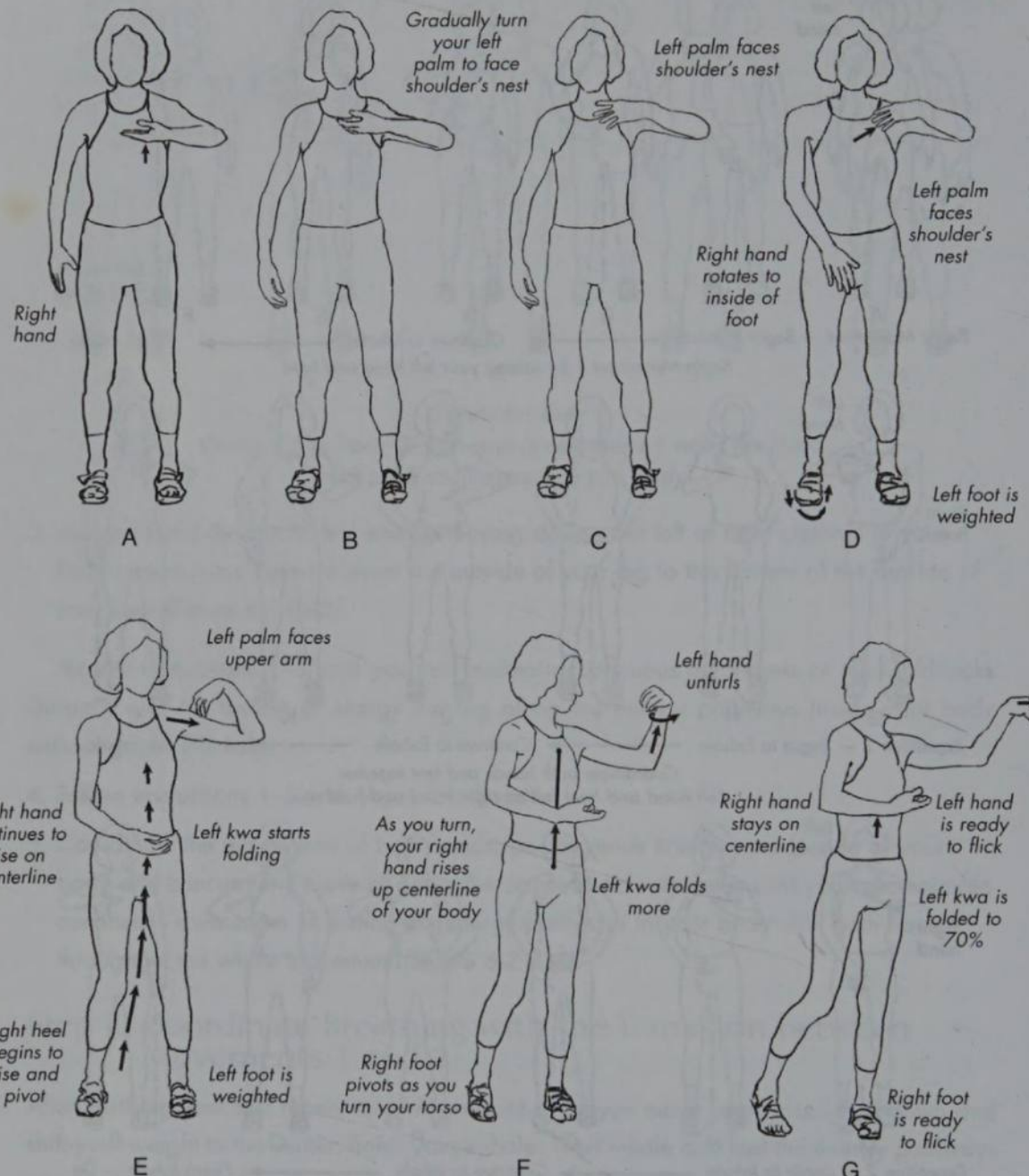


Figure 6-3
Pathways to Trace for Transition between Movements 1 and 2

Movement 2: Dragon Looks to the Horizon

Step 1: Flick and Feel the Energy Pathways

1. Flick suddenly and softly; immediately afterward, let your hand fall like a feather. On the flick, softly release 80 percent of your energy in a sudden burst. Some people may experience it as though a gentle wind or a mild form of electricity is emanating from the palm to and out of the fingers *(Figure 6-4 A)*.

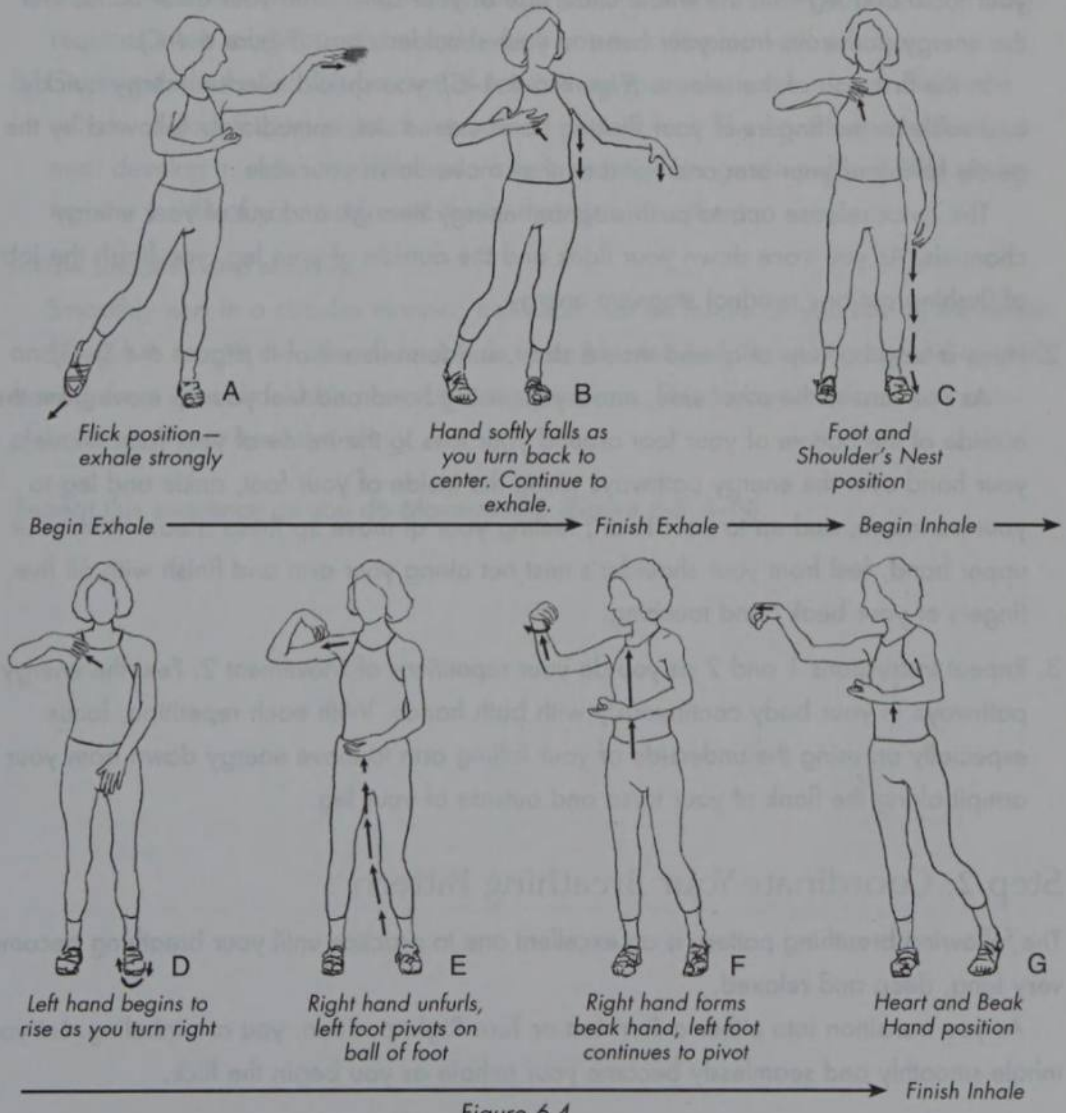


Figure 6-4
Breathing Pattern and Pathways to Trace for Movement 2

Gently release the remaining 20 percent or so of your energy out of your fingers smoothly and evenly as you turn to the front and your arm settles down your side, until your fingers point to the outside of your foot *(Figure 6-4 B)*.

As your arm moves down your side, focus your attention on the underside of this arm to feel your energy dropping along the energy pathways from your armpit down the side (flank) of your body and then down the outside of your leg to the bottom of your heel. When your arm has fully dropped, maintain the Goldilocks Distance from your torso and leg with the whole underside of your arm. With your other hand, feel the energy pathways from your heart to your shoulder's nest *(Figure 6-4 C)*.

In the first part of the release *(Figure 6-4 A–C)*, you should release energy quickly and softly as the fingers of your flicking hand extend out, immediately followed by the gentle falling of your arm and hand as they move down your side.

The quick release acts to push stagnant energy through and out of your energy channels. As you trace down your flank and the outside of your leg, you finish the job of flushing out any residual stagnant energy.

2. Have a long buildup of qi and then a short, sudden release of it *(Figure 6-4 D–G)*.

   As you turn to the other side, move your rising hand and feel your qi move from the outside of the bottom of your foot around your toes to the inside of your foot. Move your hand over the energy pathways along the inside of your foot, ankle and leg to your perineum, and up to your heart, feeling your qi move up these areas. With your upper hand, feel from your shoulder's nest out along your arm and finish with all five fingers of your beak hand touching.

3. Repeat Instructions 1 and 2 as you do your repetitions of Movement 2. Feel the energy pathways in your body continuously with both hands. With each repetition, focus especially on using the underside of your falling arm to move energy down from your armpit along the flank of your torso and outside of your leg.

Step 2: Coordinate Your Breathing Pattern

The following breathing pattern is an excellent one to practice until your breathing becomes very long, deep and relaxed.

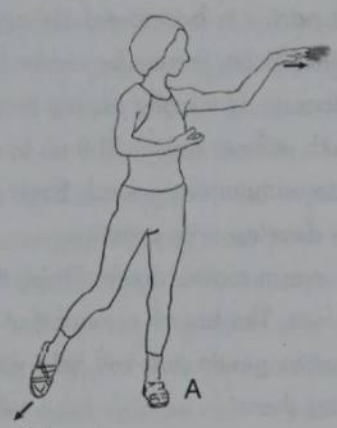
As you transition into either a Turn Left or Turn Right position, you are inhaling. Let your inhale smoothly and seamlessly become your exhale as you begin the flick.

1. Exhale: This is a sudden, silent hurricane, seamlessly followed by a gentle breeze.
   a. Exhale 80 percent of your air during the flick, with as short, forceful, explosive, yet effortless a breath as possible. To do this exhale skillfully and with continuous relaxation will require good breath control on your part. It is best to exhale *quietly* through your nose. However, if you initially find this difficult, it may be easier for you to accomplish this by following a four-stage process: 1) Initially exhale through your mouth with noise; 2) progress to out your mouth without noise; 3) then to out your nose with noise; and 4) finally to out your nose without any sound. Each stage requires more subtle breath control, which you can develop with practice.
   b. Gently exhale the last 20 percent of your air as your arm moves down. Finish the exhale as your fingers point at the outside of your foot. The breath control that you must develop in order to skillfully do a long, continuous gentle puff will help you to feel the inside of your body and the qi that circulates there.

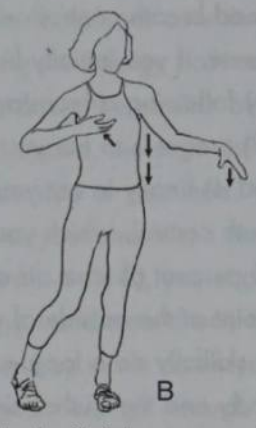
2. Inhale smoothly and steadily.

   Smoothly and in a circular manner, transition into an inhale as you turn to the center and begin to turn to the other side. Inhale smoothly and feel the energy ascending and moving from your shoulder's nest out along your arm. Finish your inhale as you complete forming your beak hand.

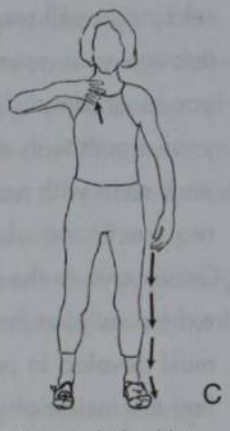
Repeat this sequence as you do Movement 2 *(Figure 6-5 A–N)*.



Flick position—exhale strongly

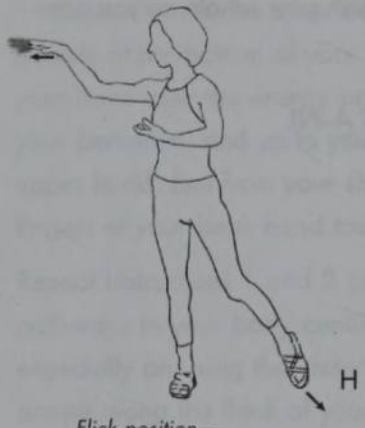


Hand softly falls as you turn back to center. Continue to exhale.

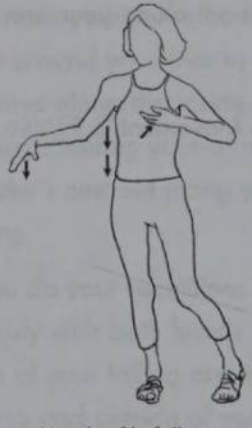


Foot and Shoulder's Nest position

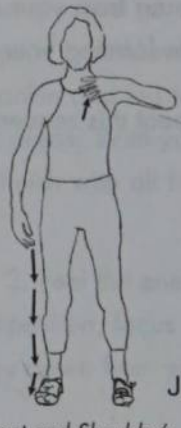
Begin Exhale → *Finish Exhale* → *Begin Inhale* →



Flick position—exhale strongly



Hand softly falls as you turn back to center. Continue to exhale.



Foot and Shoulder's Nest position

Begin Exhale → *Finish Exhale* → *Begin Inhale* →

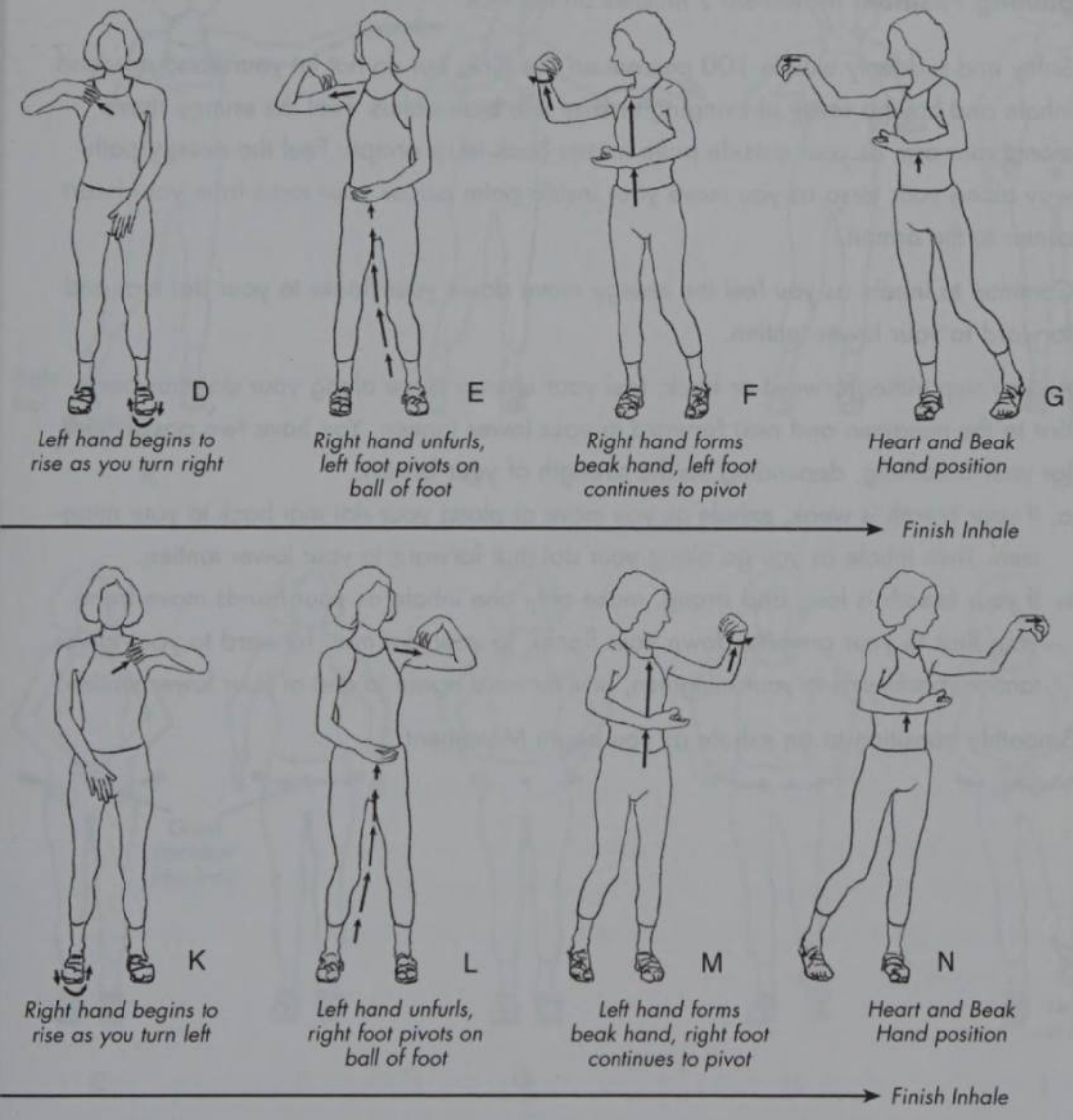


Figure 6-5
Optimum Breathing Pattern for Movement 2

Step 3: Coordinate Breathing in the Transition between Movements 2 and 3

Beginning Position: *Movement 2 finishes on the flick.*

1. Softly and suddenly exhale 100 percent on this flick, but do not let your hand descend.
2. Inhale and have a sense of bringing energy into both palms. Feel the energy move along your arm as your outside palm moves back to its armpit. Feel the energy pathway along your torso as you move your inside palm across your torso from your heart center to the armpit.
3. Continue to inhale as you feel the energy move down your flanks to your dai mai and forward to your lower tantien.
4. As you step either forward or back, feel your energy move along your dai mai back first to the mingmen and next forward to your lower tantien. You have two possibilities for your breathing, depending on the strength of your breath.
   a. If your breath is weak, exhale as you move qi along your dai mai back to your mingmen. Then inhale as you go along your dai mai forward to your lower tantien.
   b. If your breath is long and strong, make only one inhale as your hands move from your flick to your armpits, down your flanks, to your dai mai, forward to your lower tantien, backward to your mingmen, and forward again to end at your lower tantien.
5. Smoothly transition to an exhale as you begin Movement 3.

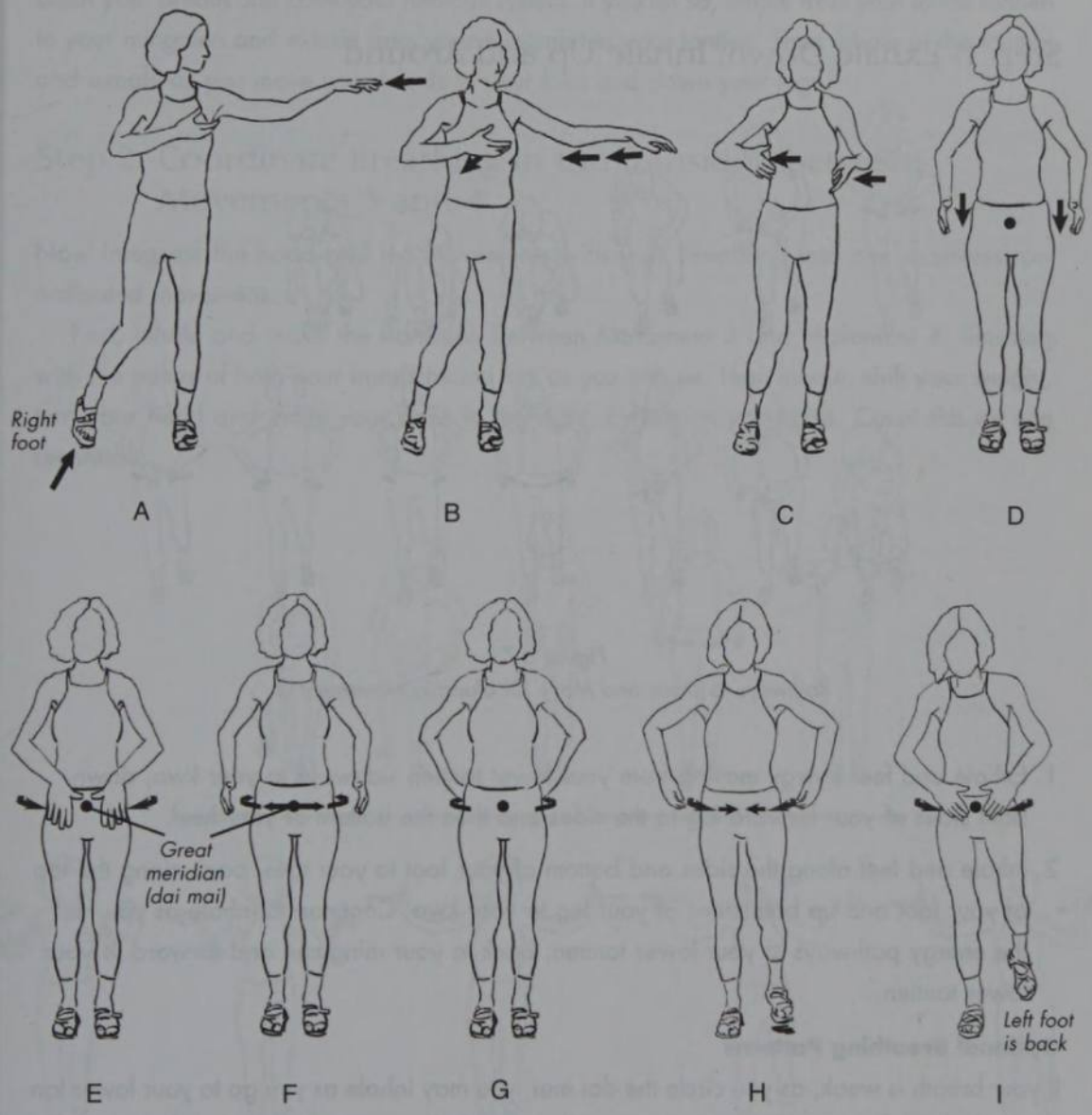


Figure 6-6
Transition from Movement 2 to Movement 3

Movement 3: Tiger Crouches

Step 1: Exhale Down, Inhale Up and Around

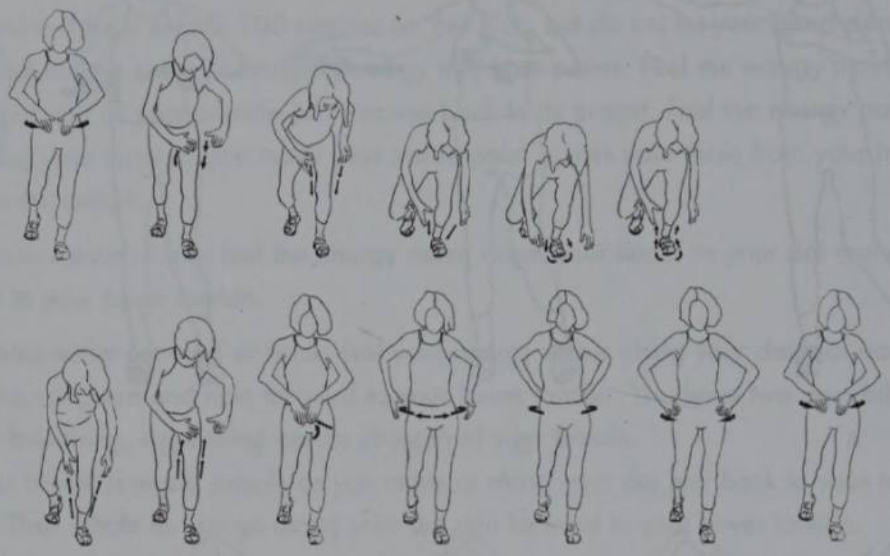


Figure 6-7
Pathways to Trace and Move Qi along in Movement 3

1. Exhale and feel energy moving from your lower tantien sideways to your kwa, down both sides of your forward leg to the sides and then the bottom of your heel.
2. Inhale and feel along the sides and bottom of your foot to your toes, back along the top of your foot and up both sides of your leg to your kwa. Continue to inhale as you feel the energy pathways to your lower tantien, back to your mingmen and forward to your lower tantien.

Optional Breathing Patterns

If your breath is weak, as you circle the dai mai, you may inhale as you go to your lower tantien, exhale as you go to your mingmen and again inhale as you move to your lower tantien.

If you find it difficult to inhale all the way up from the feet and around the dai mai from the lower tantien to the mingmen and back to the tantien, exhale at your lower tantien and then inhale as you trace the energy pathways around your dai mai, then exhale as you go to your kwa and down your leg to your foot.

Another option is to circle your dai mai several times when you reach your tantien to catch your breath and calm your nervous system. If you do so, inhale from your lower tantien to your mingmen and exhale from your mingmen to your tantien. Then inhale at the tantien and exhale as you move your hands to your kwa and down your legs.

Step 2: Coordinate Breathing in the Transition between Movements 3 and 4

Now integrate the hand and leg movements with your breathing into one seamless, coordinated movement.

First, inhale and make the transition between Movement 3 and Movement 4, finishing with the palms of both your hands facing out as you exhale. Then inhale, shift your weight, turn your head and move your arms to the right. Exhale as you finish. Count this as one repetition.

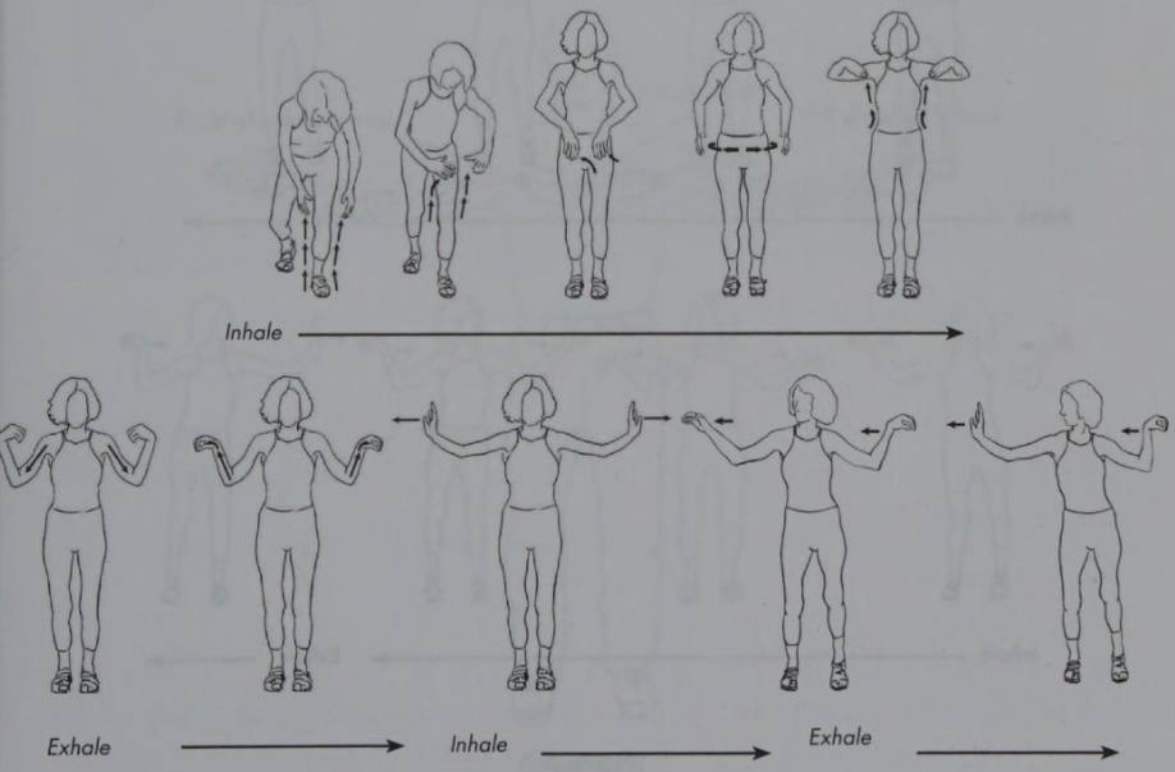


Figure 6-8
Breathing Pattern for Transition between Movements 3 and 4

Movement 4: Tiger Separates Her Cubs

Step 1: Feel along the Energy Pathways from One Hand to the Other

Keep in mind that because the movement is done in both directions, you may begin with either your left hand and finish it with your right or vice versa.

As you bend at the elbow and draw one hand into a beak, feel the energy move from that hand along its arm to that shoulder's nest and then across your chest to the opposite shoulder's nest and out along the inside of the opposite arm to your extending palm.

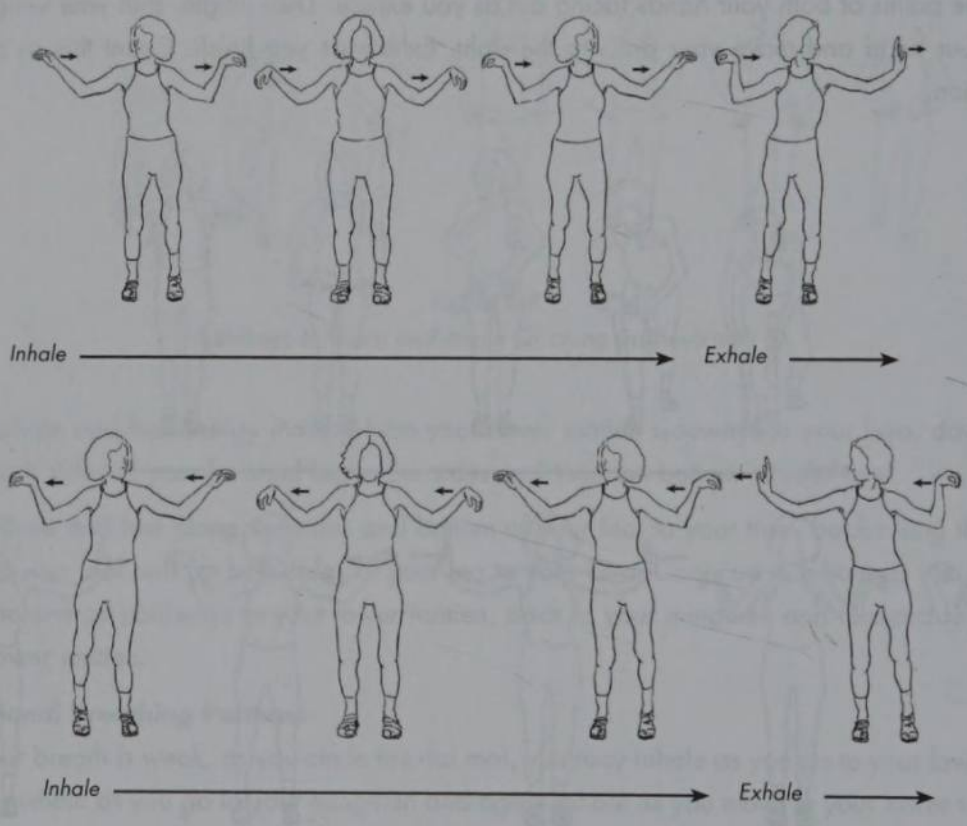


Figure 6-9
Breathing Pattern and Energy Flows of Movement 4

Supplementary Energy Exercise

Of the seven movements, this is the most difficult in which to feel the energy pathways, since you do not move your hands in any way directly over those pathways. To become more aware of feeling the energy pathways in this movement, practice the following as a separate exercise and then incorporate it into the movement.

1. Reach across your body with your left hand to feel the energy at your right shoulder's nest. With your left palm at the Goldilocks Distance, use your awareness to feel along the energy pathways from your right shoulder's nest to your right fingertips, back to your right shoulder's nest and then from your right shoulder's nest across your sternum to your left shoulder's nest.
2. Switch hands and repeat Instruction 1. Use your right palm to feel energy at your left shoulder's nest.

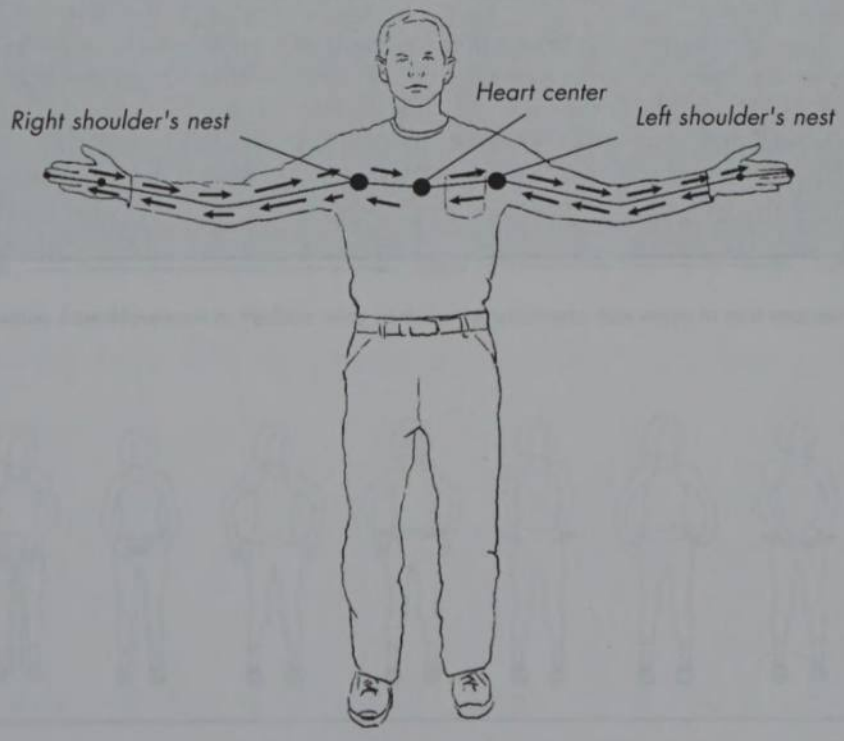


Figure 6-10
Energy Flow Pattern within Movement 4
As it moves between left and right hand, qi flows through heart center and shoulders' nests.

3. If you repeat this process enough, it is likely that you will begin to feel the energy pathways using only your intent and awareness.

Step 2: Exhale and Make a Sustained Release

Beginning Position: *Moving to your left or right.*

Exhale and release energy from your opening and extending palm slowly and steadily. Take three or four seconds to do so, before you begin to inhale and draw your hand back. In addition, softly look toward the direction to which you are releasing energy. As your hand draws back, let energy come gently into your eyes until you release energy out of your other hand in the same manner.

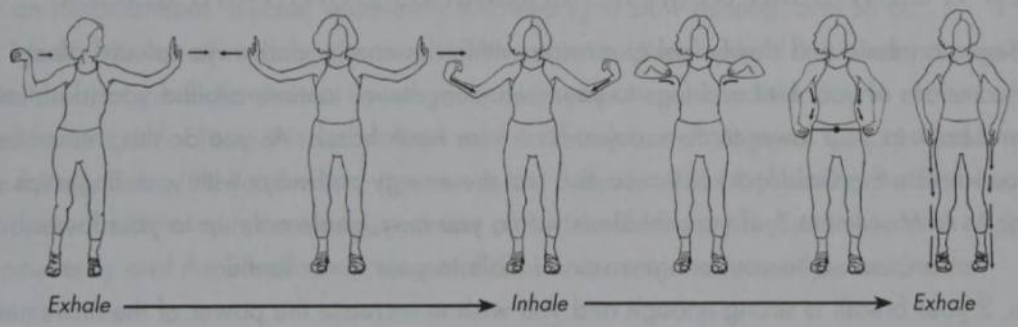
Relaxing the Eyes

Relaxing the eyes helps energy flow in and out of the eyes. Any tension stress or tension in the eyes will impede that flow. A common error is to try to release energy with bulging, fierce eyes.

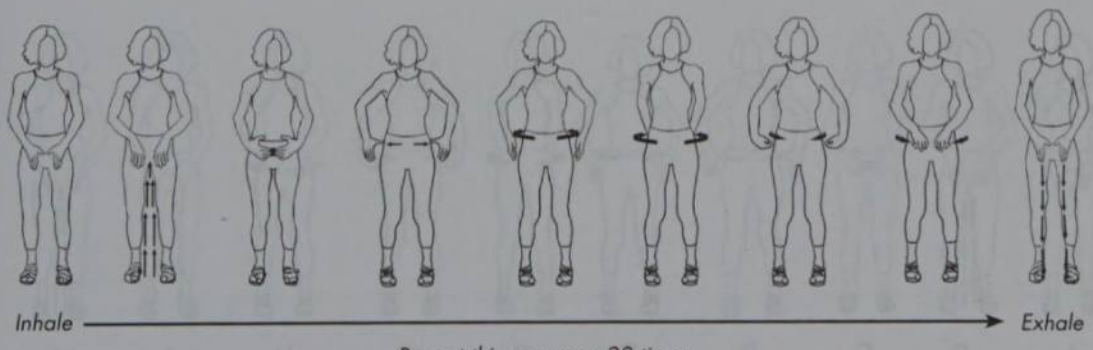
Over time, Dragon and Tiger will enable you to pull and push qi gently out of your eyes in coordination with projecting and absorbing qi out of your hands and feet.

Step 3: Coordinate Breathing in the Transition between Movements 4 and 5

1. As you finish your final repetition of Movement 4, slowly begin to exhale and release energy from the center of your extending palm.
2. Continue to exhale and release energy out of the extending palm as you shift your weight back to the center and turn your head to face the front. Simultaneously during the weight shift, slowly extend your opposite arm to the side as you open your palm and your fingertips point up. Feel the energy pathways from your previously extended hand to this one, connect and move energy through them and begin to release energy from the second palm. At the end of the movement, you simultaneously release energy from both palms with equal strength.



Transition from Movement 4. Perform once to make transition and then move to next sequence.



Repeat this sequence 20 times.

Figure 6-11
Breathing for Transition between Movements 4 and 5

3. Smoothly transition into an inhale as you turn your hands to feel along your arms to your armpits, forming beak hands as you do so.
4. Continue to inhale as you feel with your beak hand fingertips down along your flanks to your dai mai.
5. Exhale, and as you open your beak hands, feel down the outside of your legs to the bottoms of your heels and then feel around your toes to the bottoms of the insides of your feet.

You are now ready to begin Movement 5.

Movement 5: Tiger Pounces

Step 1: Slow Build to an Instantaneous Downward Release

1. Begin to inhale and slowly feel qi moving within the energy pathways upward along the insides of your feet and legs to your perineum, lower tantien, around your dai mai and back to your lower tantien as you form your beak hands. As you do this, remember to maintain the Goldilocks Distance and feel the energy pathways with your fingertips.
   a. As in Movement 3, if your inhale is weak, you may inhale only up to your lower tantien, exhale to your mingmen and inhale to your lower tantien.
   b. If your breath is strong enough and you wish to increase the power of the movement or release even more stagnant energy with your flick, you can extend your inhale and go around your dai mai a second time while still inhaling before flicking.

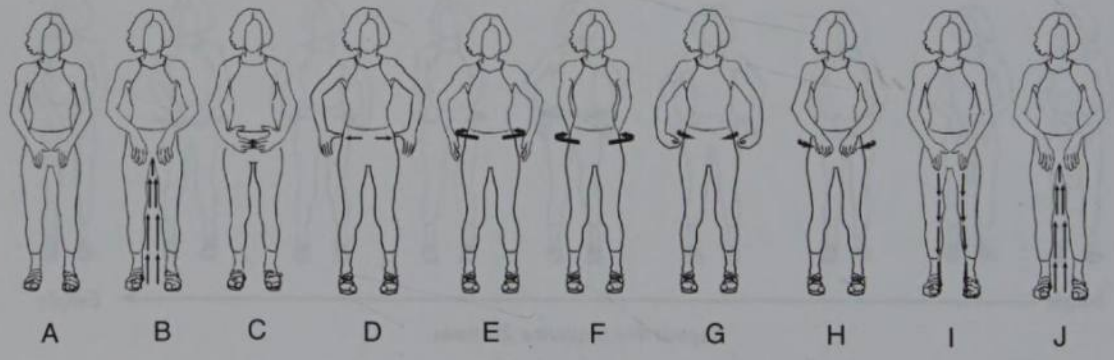


Figure 6-12
Energy Flows of Movement 5

2. When you flick, instantaneously exhale and simultaneously release all the stagnant energy you can from your upper body, armpits and arms through your fingers straight toward the ground and from your torso and lower tantien down through your legs. You should exhale comfortably and quietly through your nose. If you find this to be difficult, follow the developmental breathing stages described earlier in this chapter for the exhale of Movement 2.

   When you flick, gently look toward the ground. As you move your hands up your legs and around your dai mai, let energy gently come into your eyes.

3. Once you have flicked, let your hands drop and feel the energy pathways at the soles and the insides of your feet. Smoothly transition into an inhale and begin to feel qi moving upward again as described at the beginning of this step.

Each time, you should have a clear sense of a *slow* buildup of energy, seamlessly followed by an instantaneous release, seamlessly followed by a *slow* buildup, and so on.

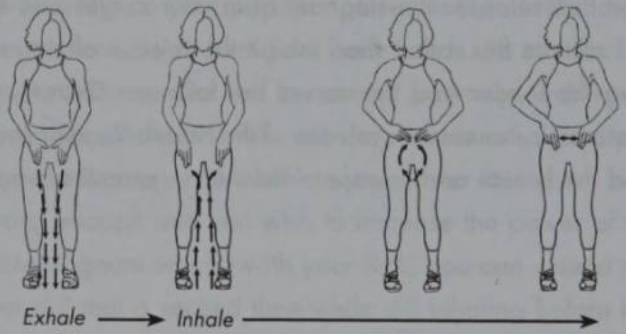
Ideally, the breath and the downward flick occur simultaneously. If this is not yet possible, consider that the flick releases the stagnant qi in your nerves and the power of the breath explosion is to facilitate this rather than inhibit the release of stagnant qi. Experiment with the breath being the leader and the nerves the follower. Then try having the flick be the leader to facilitate an instantaneous release of the breath. Experiment until they both happen concurrently and the breath and release of the nerves seamlessly catalyze each other.

Step 2: Coordinate Breathing in the Transition between Movements 5 and 6

Beginning Position: *You have finished the downward flick and exhale of Movement 5.*

1. The fingers of both hands point at the ground. Now begin to inhale, form two sword hands and with your sword hand fingers, feel the energy pathways upward along the insides of your feet, legs and perineum to your lower tantien.

2. Continue to inhale and feel sideways along your dai mai to your left and right channels. If your inhale is weak, slow your hand movements as you feel sideways, then exhale and inhale again resuming your previous speed. You may need to do this more than once for a limited time. For example, you could inhale and exhale two to three times at different points along the circumference of the dai mai before continuing on to Movement 6.



A. Perform once to make transition and move to next sequence.

Movement 6: Dragon and Tiger Pierce Heaven and Earth

Step 1: Pierce in Two Stages; Then Feel the Energy Pathways from One End to the Other

1. To begin Movement 6, inhale and feel the energy pathways in your body with your sword fingers at your Goldilocks Distance. Simultaneously feel and move energy in the appropriate pathways as one hand goes down toward the outside of your foot and the other goes up to the top of your head.
2. When you pierce, release energy out of your sword hand fingers, one hand up to above your head and one down to below your feet.

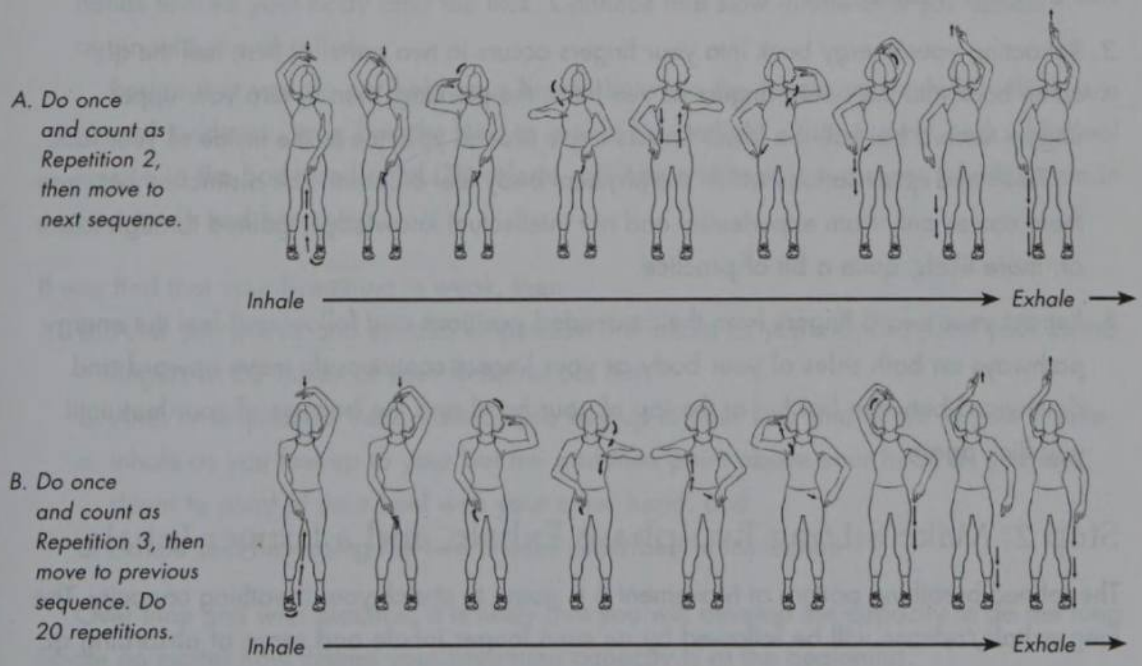


Figure 6-14
Breathing Pattern and Energy Flows of Movement 6

Pierce in two clear stages:

a. Suddenly and explosively release 60 percent of your energy.

b. In a slow, strong, and very long projected stream, release the final 40 percent.

There should be no gap between these two stages—let one seamlessly move into the other. If you can comfortably do so, feel your energy release to five or six feet above your head and below your feet.

You are now moving into the world of qi when the goal is to feel within the etheric body and its boundary or energetic skin. Although to some this may at first be difficult or even impossible, take the attitude of "not yet" rather than no way. There is a way to learn this skill. This is the meaning of qigong: *Qi* means the energy of the body, and *gong* is skill accumulated over time through hard work and perseverance.

During this movement's pierce, to more fully release energy away from the body, create a micro-movement and maintain a strong physical sense of expansion and release in the crooks of your elbows and backs of your knees. Do not fully straighten your elbows or knees into a locked position.

3. Retracting your energy back into your fingers occurs in two parts: a) first, feel the qi come back into the sword fingers as you finish the piercing; then b) turn your upper fingers toward bai hui; the lower fingers circle around your toe to the inside of your foot.

   Flesh and qi sensations within the physical body feel different. The distinction between them comes only from experiential and not intellectual knowledge, gained through talent or, more likely, quite a bit of practice.

4. Retract your sword fingers from their extended positions and follow and feel the energy pathways on both sides of your body as your fingers continuously move upward and downward between bai hui at the top of your head and the bottoms of your feet until you flick again.

Step 2: Make a Long Two-phase Exhale, and a Longer Inhale

The refined breathing pattern of Movement 6 is going to stretch your breathing capacity. The long exhale/release will be followed by an even longer inhale and sense of absorbing qi.

1. Exhale in two phases: In unison with the piercing action, first suddenly and explosively release 60 percent of your breath, and then in a slow, strong projected stream release the final 40 percent.

   When performed well, this two-stage exhale powerfully expels excess carbon dioxide from your system. It also lays the groundwork for you to develop an exceptionally long inhale. Maximum benefit will be gained if you can deliberately slow your inhale and thereby take the largest breath you have done during the seven movements of Dragon and Tiger so far. If you practice Dragon and Tiger's movements and pay particular attention to your breathing as described in this chapter, you will naturally increase your breathing capacity.[1]

   Qi moves the breath. As your ability to absorb (during the inhale) and project (during the exhale) qi increases, so will the deepness and power of your breath.

   Ideally, you should exhale comfortably and quietly through your nose.

2. Seamlessly transition from your exhale to a very slow inhale as you bring back your hands toward your body after the flick. Continue that slow inhale until you exhale again with the next flick.

   Ensure that you do not hold your breath between the inhale and exhale, which is a natural tendency. Long breaths tend to create or spotlight existing overt and subliminal tension in the body and mind. Therefore, cultivate and maintain a sense of relaxation in your body and breathing.

If you find that your breathing is weak, then

   a. After you pierce and exhale, emphasize the inhale as you move to point your sword fingers at the inside of your foot and bai hui
   b. And/or emphasize the exhale as you feel up to your kwa and down to your nipple
   c. Inhale as you feel up to your bai hui and then point above your head as you feel down to point at your heel with your other hand, and
   d. Exhale and flick using the two phases described in Instruction 1.

Over time and with practice, it is likely that you will develop the capacity to do the long inhale no matter how limited your breathing capacity is at the beginning.

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[1] For more information on how to increase your breathing capacity, see the DVD *Longevity Breathing* by Bruce Frantzis.

Step 3: Coordinate Breathing in the Transition between Movements 6 and 7

Beginning Position: *You have pierced and exhaled.*

1. Smoothly transition to an inhale and feel down and up the Movement 6 pathways until both sword hands point at your dai mai.
2. As you move your fingers sideways toward the center of your torso, continue to inhale as you feel the energy pathways along your dai mai and finish with the extended sword fingers of both hands directly pointing toward your lower tantien.

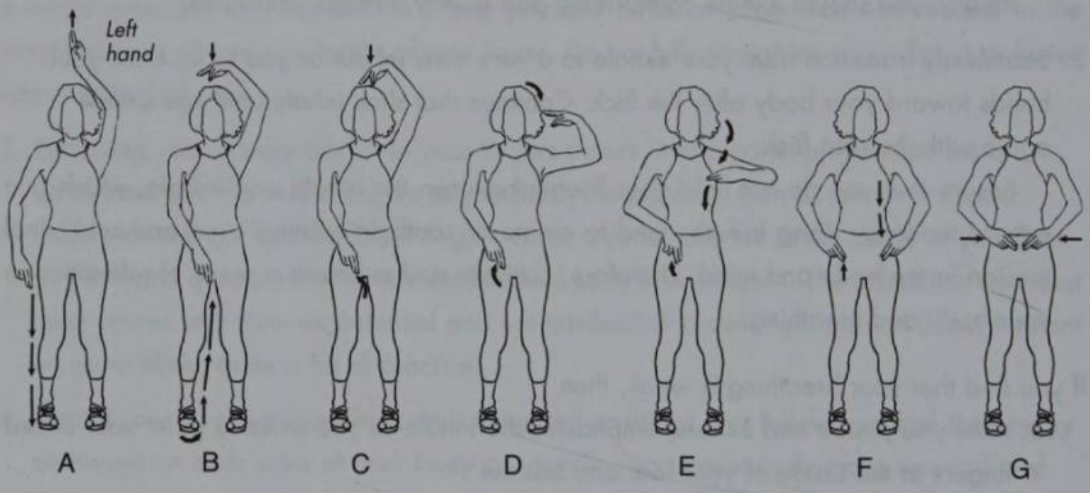


Figure 6-15
Transition between Movements 6 and 7

Movement 7: Dragon Soars to Heaven and Brings Back the Pearl

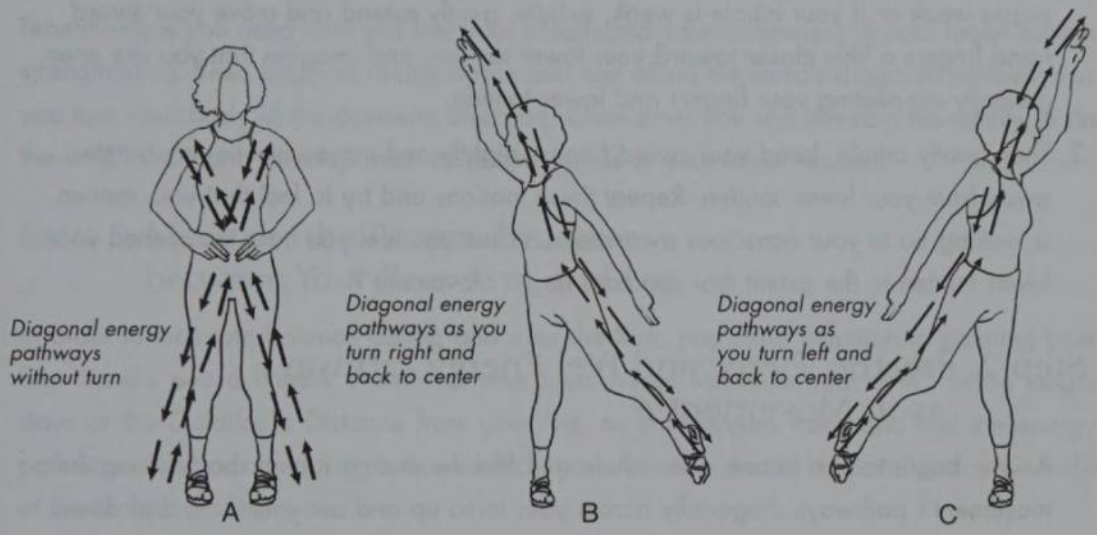


Figure 6-16
Diagonal Energy Pathways of Movement 7
Through lower tantien, Movement 7 connects major energies of left and right and top and bottom of body.

This movement completes and integrates all the previous energy flows developed in the first six movements of Dragon and Tiger by fully connecting the energies of your right hand to the left foot and your left hand to your right foot in a smooth way without breaks.

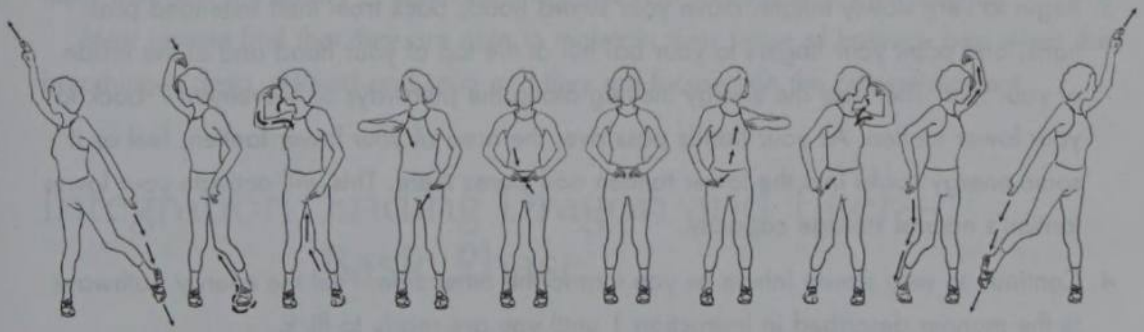


Figure 6-17
Two Repetitions of Movement 7, One on Each Side

Step 1: Awaken Awareness of Your Lower Tantien

1. As you transition to the beginning position of Movement 7, you should have a clear sense of your Goldilocks Distance and feel energy in your lower tantien. If the feeling seems weak or if your inhale is weak, exhale, gently extend and move your sword hand fingers a little closer toward your lower tantien, and imagine that you are energetically connecting your fingers and lower tantien.
2. Then gently inhale, bend your sword fingers slightly and move your fingers a little away from your lower tantien. Repeat these motions and try to feel that your tantien is waking up to your conscious awareness. When you feel you have awakened your lower tantien to the extent that you can, begin Movement 7.

Step 2: Breathe, Pierce and Feel Energy Pathways as in Movement 6

1. As you begin to turn to one side, inhale and feel the energy in your body along the movement's pathways diagonally across your torso up and out your arm, and down and out your leg, to the position where you are ready to begin your piercing action.
2. When you pierce, use the same two-phase method explained previously in this chapter for Movement 6. First, in unison with the pierce, exhale and explosively release 60 percent of your breath and energy with one hand up and out, and with the other hand and foot down and back. Second, in a slow, strong stream release the remaining 40 percent. Feel your energy release out five or six feet past the tips of your sword fingers. You should exhale comfortably and quietly through your nose.
3. Begin to very slowly inhale, move your sword hands back from their extended positions, and point your fingers to your bai hui at the top of your head and at the inside of your foot. Then feel the energy moving along the pathways of Movement 7 back to your lower tantien. As your hands pass over the area of your lower tantien, feel as if some energy soaks into the lower tantien and stores there. This will activate your lower tantien's natural storage capacity.
4. Continue to very slowly inhale as you turn to the other side. Feel the energy pathways in the manner described in Instruction 1 until you are ready to flick.

This movement's very long inhale presents all the challenges previously discussed for the long inhale of Movement 6. If your breathing or awareness of your lower tantien is weak, then when your sword fingers point at your lower tantien, very briefly exhale and inhale as you move your fingertips toward and away from your lower tantien. Do this for as many repetitions as you need until you feel your breath and your awareness of your lower tantien strengthening. Then begin to inhale again and feel along the torso's diagonal pathways as you turn your body in the opposite direction. Over time, you will develop the ability to do the long inhale and develop even more awareness of your lower tantien.

Step 3: Maintain the Proper Distance between Your Rear Arm and Leg

In order to maintain balance during and after the flick, pay close attention to pointing your rear hand's sword fingers directly at your toes. Make sure your rear arm's entire length stays at the Goldilocks Distance from your leg, as your fingers trace and feel the energy pathways either up or down it. As you flick, your forearm should be parallel to your thigh at the Goldilocks Distance.

If your hand or arm comes too close or veers off the proper pathway to be traced, you will severely limit your ability to maintain physical balance during the transition when your foot moves to the floor after the flick. More importantly, you will inhibit your ability to awaken awareness of your lower tantien, which is the primary purpose of this movement.

Step 4: Feel the Relationship between Breath, Focus and Balance

In terms of physical balance, Movement 7 is the most difficult. Pay attention to and experiment with how the quality of your breathing and your focus affects your balance.

Most people find that they are able to maintain their sense of balance best when their breathing is deep, relaxed and calm and they are focused on the present moment.

Integration: Ending Dragon and Tiger—Basic Phase

A more complete version of this important aspect of Dragon and Tiger comes at the end of the book in Chapter 20.

Finish your last repetition of Movement 7 by pointing your sword fingers at your lower tantien. Now inhale and move your fingers a little toward your lower tantien and then exhale and move your fingers slightly away *(Figure 6-18)*. Repeat this movement as many times as you like.

Feel all of the energy in your body flow into your lower tantien, then gently soothe it. Let your mind and body become very calm and quiet.

Now cross your palms one over the other on your lower belly in front of your lower tantien *(Figure 6-19)*. Gently breathe in and out using your belly. Stand like this for as long as you like until your mind and body become settled. You should feel comfortable and calm without any internal pressure to immediately re-excite your nerves. Then slowly bring your arms to your sides to conclude. Now you can walk away more energized and balanced to continue the rest of your day.

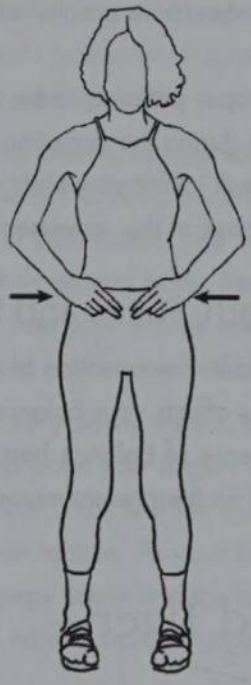


Figure 6-18
Bringing Energy into Lower Tantien after Finishing Movement 7

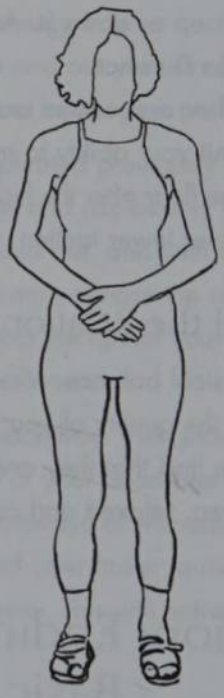
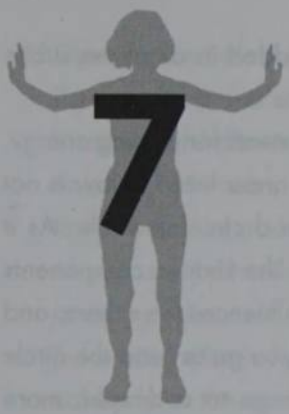


Figure 6-19
Ending Dragon and Tiger Practice
Both palms are in front of the lower tantien to allow your nerves to settle down.



7 Intermediate Energy Principles

Chapter 6 provided instruction on how to feel the energy pathways while practicing each of Dragon and Tiger's seven movements. The next chapters have a different goal. They are designed to teach you how to pull and push qi within and along energy pathways in your body. These skills are developed progressively and are an integral part of learning the energy mechanics of this qigong set.

The methods included in this section are part of the required work for a Dragon and Tiger Qigong Level 2 certification in the Energy Arts System.

Important Point to Remember

Before progressing to the intermediate energy exercises in Chapter 8, it is recommended that you make sure you have developed competence in how to feel the energy pathways of each movement continuously from beginning to end, including to the ends of your fingers and toes, and to the top of your head, where required.

The Sixteen Components of Neigong

Neigong is the Taoist art and science of how to move qi through the body. This phrase can be translated into English as "internal development" or "internal power." Neigong is an art, because how you learn the energy components is infinitely varied. It is a science, because this knowledge has been studied and codified for thousands of years into a complete

energetic map. Neigong is the language of qi that becomes embedded in all of the subtle physical movements of Dragon and Tiger.

The full range of internal energy work is made up of sixteen components for moving energy. Each is interrelated with and organically connected to the rest. The order listed below is not fixed and linear, only descriptive. Together, these components form a circular whole. As it is impossible to delineate the precise beginning or end of a circle, the sixteen components also have neither beginnings nor end points. Each catalyzes and influences the others, and in a sense they flow in and out of each other. As such, every time you go around the circle of sixteen, learning more about each one, it becomes possible to go to a deeper, more fulfilling, beneficial level with each of them.

The energy work in these last chapters begins the process of learning neigong within Dragon and Tiger, especially Components 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and the very initial stages of Components 10 and 14.

The sixteen neigong components are listed below. This neigong list appears in many of the author's other books. Here, however, the specific components used in intermediate-level Dragon and Tiger Qigong as described in this volume are shown in bold type.

1. **Breathing methods,** from the simple to the complex. The ultimate goal is to coordinate expansions and contractions of your belly with every anatomical part and energetic function within both your physical and your etheric bodies.
2. Feeling, moving and, most importantly, transforming qi along the ascending, descending and connecting energy channels of the body.
3. **Incorporating precise body alignments** that prevent the flow of qi from being either blocked or dissipated.
4. Dissolving, releasing and resolving all blockages within the physical, emotional and spiritual levels of your being.
5. **Specific ways to move qi through the main and secondary meridians,** including the acupuncture meridians, points, energy gates, macro- and microcosmic orbits, as well as the multitude of tiny interconnecting channels that cause specific functions to occur.
6. **Bending and stretching the body's soft tissues** both in the directions from the inside out and the outside in and along the yin and yang acupuncture channels to activate, strengthen and balance them.

7. Opening and closing methods (pulsing). Opening means to expand, grow larger or flow outward and emanate like a sun. Closing means to condense and get smaller in an inward direction, like the gravity flow of a black hole. Closing carries no connotation of tension, contraction or force in the movement, only continuous inward flow toward a point of origination. Opening and closing actions can occur within any of your soft or hard tissues, as well as anywhere within your body's subtle energy anatomy (channels, points, aura, and so on). Dragon and Tiger includes techniques to pulse your etheric field, but it does not deal with opening and closing within the physical body or the energy anatomy inside it.
8. **Working with the energies of the external aura** to connect your physical body with your etheric field and attendant emotional and mental states. A more advanced stage is to connect the energies of your body and aura to the rest of the psychic and spiritual energies that exist within the universe.
9. **Making circles and spirals of energy inside the body.** This includes becoming aware of and controlling the circular and spiraling energy currents inside the body, amplifying those that may be weak.
10. **Learning to consciously move qi to any part of your body at will,** especially to the internal organs, glands and within your brain and spinal cord. This includes absorbing or projecting qi from all body parts at will.
11. Awakening and controlling all the energies of the spine and what they connect to. This includes the vertebrae, cerebrospinal fluid, spinal cord, brain and all the nerves within the body.
12. Awakening and using both the physical and psychic left and right energy channels.
13. Awakening and using the central energy channel, which controls all the others.
14. **Developing the capacities and all the uses of your lower tantien,** the main energetic center that directly affects all physical functions, your sense of fear, insecurity and death and your sense of being physically and psychologically stable and grounded.
15. Developing the capacities and all the uses of your middle and upper tantien and spiritual centers. The middle tantien (heart center) governs all relationships. It is intimately tied to all our most subtle emotions and intuitions and is considered the source of

consciousness within the body. The upper tantien, located in the brain, is critical to longevity because of its ability to activate the pituitary and pineal glands (master glands). It is also responsible for well-functioning thought processes and psychic capacities.

16. Integrating and connecting each of the previous fifteen components into one unified energy. Permanent integration is different from a temporary buzz or having a lot of energy that generates strong experiences but ultimately goes nowhere. If you lack this component, it is difficult to absorb and integrate the good qualities of the other fifteen in a stable and comfortable manner that allows you to use them effortlessly to the best effect.

Each of the sixteen neigong components are interrelated with and organically connected to the rest. Together they form a circular whole. As a person learns and integrates more and more neigong, the ability to work with qi often increases exponentially. The human energetic system is continuously getting upgraded as each new piece comes online. Each neigong component comprises a methodology of qi, not merely a technique. Thus one component may have hundreds of potential techniques scattered throughout the many sects and schools of Taoism.

Practicing in Healthy Environments

When you practice projecting and pulling energy into and back from the environment, you should pay special attention to feeling the quality of that energy. You should practice in healthy places where the energy is abundant, stable and freely flowing. Excellent places to practice are attractive natural settings, near the ocean, by beautiful large trees or in the mountains. Examples of unhealthy places to practice are polluted environments, dank basements or rooms where there are sick or depressed people. You should practice only in places where you feel very comfortable.

For those who live in urban environments where the air may be heavily polluted, it is still good to practice. Under these conditions, look for the better places among the bad. These are to be found in parks, on roofs, on wood floors and dry places with good airflow. Try to find views you like, and bear in mind that cityscapes have their own kind of beauty.

Also, when practicing near other living beings, be careful not to push your negative energy into them or to pull energy from them. One exception is that it is acceptable to practice near

very large trees; you cannot even slightly affect them negatively, unless you are an energetic powerhouse beyond belief.

Using Your Qi to Heal People

For millennia, throughout the world, people have used their energy for healing purposes. In China, the common qi therapies are qigong tui na and acupuncture. Many of the supplementary exercises presented in Chapters 8–13 can be used as techniques toward such ends. However, it is strongly recommended that you **do not** try to do so until you are extremely familiar with how these practices feel on your own body. Experiment on yourself before you experiment on others.

If you decide to try these exercises to affect others, follow your own and the other person's 70 percent rule. Make sure you avoid exceeding your comfort zone. Do not strain or stress either the other person or you.

When you practice energetic healing, if you feel a strain within your own body or energy to push or pull qi through the other person's skin or etheric field, you could easily be doing too much for your own good. Constantly check how he or she is feeling. Err on the side of doing less, and then see whether the results are positive, in the other person's view. Sometimes the effects can be felt immediately; other effects will not be observed for a day or so.

In addition, it is not recommended that you use these techniques if you are in physical contact with the other person. Until you are specifically trained in how to do so, the potential for your taking in that person's—or he or she taking in your—blocked energy is much greater with physical touch. With physical touch you can much more deeply positively and negatively affect another person's qi. The human energy system is very complex. Moving energy in one area of a person's body can strongly affect energies in many other parts of their body, as well as strongly influence his or her emotions, mind and psychic capacities. It is easy to unblock energy in one part of their system and have that released energy damage other parts. Without proper training in such complexities, you can hurt someone—or yourself—as easily as you can help them.

Above all, follow three very familiar principles: "do no harm" (the motto of physicians), "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" and the converse, "do not do to

others what you would not want to be done to you." If someone has serious medical or psychological issues, you should have them see a qualified healthcare provider and not try to take care of the problem yourself.

Pulling and Pushing Qi in Acupuncture

My Dragon and Tiger teacher Zhang Jia Hua explained how she taught acupuncturists who worked in her clinic to make their treatments more effective by using qi pushing and pulling techniques. These are most easily learned in Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong.

Most acupuncture treatments are based upon using the needles to either tonify or sedate the qi and bring it into balance. Tonification modifies a deficiency of qi and makes it stronger. Sedation modifies an excess of qi and makes it weaker.

Acupuncturists are taught to first move their palms or fingers in both directions over the wei qi of their patients. This helps acupuncturists activate the qi so that it becomes more accessible and helps them identify whether the qi is excessive or deficient.

Patients are calmed and soothed by these movements, thereby helping them become more receptive to treatment. Thus, when the needles are inserted, there are greater and more lasting effects.

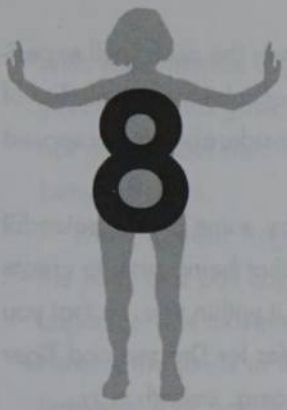
Before the needles are inserted, the palms or fingers of the acupuncturists hover above the insertion point to connect their qi with the wei qi of their patients and more strongly activate it. A common acupuncture technique as each needle is inserted is to slightly twist it clockwise or counterclockwise, at which time the practitioner could pull qi up or push it down the needle, to further amplify the tonifying or sedating effects of the treatment. The acupuncturist would pull qi to sedate an excess or push qi to correct a deficiency. Acupuncturists might also move their palms or fingers up and down the qi pathways to make the use of the needles even more effective. Some acupuncturists return at regular intervals to re-jiggle the needles.

As the patients gain confidence and sensitivity, they very often can palpably feel qi running along the pathways that are activated and can provide feedback that will help their acupuncturists make minor adjustments.

Balancing Your Right and Left Sides

As you learn and practice the exercises of Chapters 8–13, always engage one side of your body and then the other, for example, using one hand and then the other. Qi naturally seeks a balanced state, with even amounts of energy up and down, forward and back, and right and left in your body. You can become balanced by always practicing in a balanced way, engaging both arms and both legs in any practice session. You can unbalance yourself by not doing so.

When doing these exercises, if you find that one side is less capable than the other—for instance, one hand or leg may be weaker, injured, stiffer or clumsier—then do more repetitions with the weaker side in order to improve its capacities. For example, you might do ten repetitions with the less capable side and five repetitions with the stronger side. The exact method for how you achieve balance in any practice or learning situation is up to you: learn to trust your judgment. Always involve both sides in some manner, with more emphasis (and therefore more qi) given to the less capable side until both hands balance and you return to doing equal repetitions on each side. Remember that ideally each repetition is done twenty times.



Pulling and Pushing Qi with Your Hands

The exercises presented here can help you to progressively develop more refined sensations of energy within your hands and fingers, along the surface of other parts of your body from your skin into your wei qi and within and to the boundaries of your etheric body.

You should become comfortable doing each stage of each exercise and integrating its goals and capacities within yourself without noticeable strain, before moving on to the next. If you do not take the time to do so, you run the risk of building weaknesses into your physical and energetic systems. Your energy will not flow smoothly at many places in your system and you will not be balanced. In addition, you will limit how far you will be able to grow. A skyscraper cannot be built on a weak foundation.

It is important to remember that if you do not strengthen areas where your physical body or energy field is weakest, the areas you make strong will pull and drain energy from those weak areas and make them even weaker.

Your goal is to learn to push and pull energy smoothly and easily through and along all the surfaces of your body and out to and back from the boundaries of your etheric body. This takes practice.

When you pull qi, you should have the experience of something coming into you. You may recognize that some kind of energy is flowing into you. When you push qi, you should have the experience of something going away from you. Pulling a physical object will not give you the same experience as pushing it. Similarly, pulling qi will feel somewhat different from pushing it. Exactly how this process feels will vary greatly from one person to the next. The feeling of qi going in and going out can be a bodily experience or one that you get in your mind.

It becomes even more difficult to say exactly what you will feel when the push/pull experiences become more subtle and more powerful. At different degrees of subtlety, the quality of what it feels like to bring energy in and out of you can fluctuate considerably. Be prepared to take some months to learn how to do each exercise with skill.

When learning internal energy work, it is easy to be seduced by some of the powerful feelings of energy that you may experience. It is useful to recognize that being able to create a temporary energetic state is different from stabilizing or integrating it within you, so that you can call it into being at will. You must achieve such integration in order for Dragon and Tiger or any other qigong set to give you its maximum potential in an ongoing, smooth way.

Pulling and Pushing Energy with Your Palm, Fingers, Beak Hand and Sword Hand

In this chapter you begin by pushing and pulling with your hands and fingers and then progress to the use of beak hands and finish with the use of sword hands. The reasons for this are as follows:

1. It is relatively easy to push and pull with your palms. So to start learning to push or pull, you begin with the palm. Even a small cupping movement of the palm naturally draws energy into the lao gong point, the primary energy center of the hand located in the center of the palm. Cupping your hand pulls energy. Opening your hand and palm releases energy.
2. Moving energy through your fingers is more difficult, but if you push and pull with your fingers and palm, you increase the total amount of energy that you move, as well as your ability to direct that energy. Different acupuncture meridians flow through different fingers, so by moving energy in and out of your fingers you stimulate all of these meridians and the internal organs associated with them. Also, when you move your fingers you stretch the soft tissues and flex the joints and bones of your fingers and hands. This reduces physical resistance to energy movement.
3. Pushing and pulling with a beak hand allows you to generate even more power and precision, yet is much more difficult, because it involves more physical and energetic coordination. You are pulling energy through more tissue, subliminally connecting

with your internal organs. Each of your five fingers energetically connects to one of your internal organs. Touching all five fingers together not only stimulates your internal organs but also increases and balances the energy that continuously circulates between them.

Moving your fingers and hand into and out of a beak position naturally activates the push and pull capacity of the lao gong point very strongly, especially its absorbing capacity. This movement strongly flexes your hand and fully stretches all of its soft tissues. Flexing the joints in this way deeply releases physical resistance to energy movement between your hands and internal organs. You also stimulate energy movement in the acupuncture meridians and in numerous tiny energy channels throughout your hand and fingers. Touching all your fingertips to the tip of your thumb creates a circular shape that naturally stimulates energy to flow through all parts of your hand. This joins together the meridian lines and balances energy flow among them and throughout your whole system.

4. Use of the sword hand further increases your precision and power and is even more challenging to do. When you extend the two active fingers and hold the others still, it deeply stretches the soft tissues of your hand, especially the tendons, as well as tissues farther up your arm. Concentrating the push and pull of energy primarily in your two more active fingers creates a nozzle-like effect. It allows you to push energy farther and more accurately and pull it back more strongly. My experience to date—and that of my instructors—indicates that use of the sword hand can be very helpful in relieving carpal tunnel syndrome, as well as preventing it from happening in the first place.

5. In the progression of the Dragon and Tiger set, you first use your palm and fingers in Movement 1, alternate between your palm and fingers and beak hand in Movements 2, 3, 4, and 5 and then use the sword hand in Movements 6 and 7. The next time that you do the set, you start all over. You constantly alternate between and loop through the methods. This takes advantage of their interconnected nature. The palm exercises prepare you for the finger exercises, which prepare you for the beak hand, which prepares you for the sword hand. But the loop goes the other way as well; the more and better you do the sword hand, the more powerful will be your beak hand, which will make your finger action stronger, which will increase the energetic power of your palm. Each method feeds the others, so practicing all of them in different ways in the Dragon and Tiger movements naturally allows your system to grow in a linked, progressive way.

discharge of qi in Taoist qigong and tai chi. In Buddhist qigong it is known by the Chinese phrase *tun tu,* translated as "sucking in and spitting out." The Chinese method of energy bodywork called qigong tui na also uses this same concept in its name. *Tui* means to push. *Na* means to grab or pull or absorb. This skill is a component of many energy-based arts.

In Taoist qigong, practitioners refine this ability to absorb and discharge qi until they can do it from any point or combination of points from their skin to their deepest internal structures, including bones. These abilities have uses in promoting personal health, healing others, high-performance sports, stress management and meditation.[1]

The exercises below are for pulling and pushing qi with your fingers and palms. Success depends on the flexibility of your fingers as well as having worked with the relaxation exercises in Chapter 2. As you learned in that chapter, the center of the palm is the most easily accessible powerful energetic point in the body for pulling and pushing energy.

The stages are sequential. Do each stage until it is easy and comfortable. Remember that the more you practice, the better you get, as long as you follow the 70 percent rule.

Step 1: Transfer Energy between Your Hands

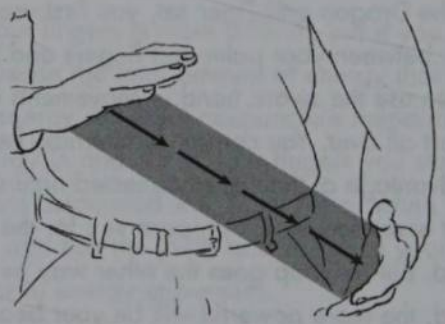


Figure 8-1
Right Hand Pushes Energy into Left

[1] In the Taoist Energy Arts System described in the Appendix, each of the qigong sets you learn progressively refines and enhances your abilities to absorb and discharge energy.

1. Form an energy ball between your hands (see Chapter 5). Push your palms together and pull them apart until you find the distance where your sensation of the ball of qi energy is the strongest (the Goldilocks Distance). Keep the hands relaxed and slightly cupped.
2. Cup one hand more than the other and try to pull energy into it from your other hand. Try to feel energy transfer between your hands. Play with this action a few times, and then reverse the roles of the hands.
3. Go back and forth until your ability to feel and play with the energy ball becomes comfortable and easy.
4. Now pull energy with one hand from the other palm and then open it and push and return the energy back toward your opposite hand *(Figure 8-1)*.
5. Next, pull energy with that hand and then push it back toward the other. Repeat this pulling and pushing between your hands many times. The palms stay at the Goldilocks Distance during the energy transfer. They do not come closer together or farther apart. Practice until you can do this comfortably and easily.
6. Gradually widen the space between your hands to increase the size of your pull and push energy ball. Transfer the energy between your hands by pulling and pushing. Vary the size of your energy ball from the tiniest to the largest you can feel, while directing and feeling the sensations of your energetic transfers.

Step 2: Pull and Push Energy In and Out of Your Fingers from and to Your Other Palm

1. Point the fingers and thumb of one hand (your active hand) at your opposite palm. Find the Goldilocks Distance where the movements of your fingers and thumb in your etheric field create the greatest sensation on your palm. Move your fingers and thumb around to change the sensations.
2. Cup your fingers, thumb and hand and try to pull energy from your opposite palm into your fingertips and the joints of your fingers. As you open your fingers, send energy from the joints of your fingers back out your fingertips into the other palm.
3. Gradually increase the distance until you can push and pull from your fingertips at arm's length.

Step 3: Pull and Push Energy with Your Palm Center

1. Have your palms facing each other. Find the Goldilocks Distance where movement of your active palm creates the greatest sensation on your other hand. Move one palm around, varying its angle to the opposite receiving palm to change the sensations you feel in your other hand. Now, push energy from the center of one palm into your other hand. Then pull it back.
2. Gradually increase the distance between your active and passive palms until you can push and pull at arm's length.

Step 4: Pull Energy through Your Fingers to Your Palms and Wrists

First find the Goldilocks Distance between your hands.

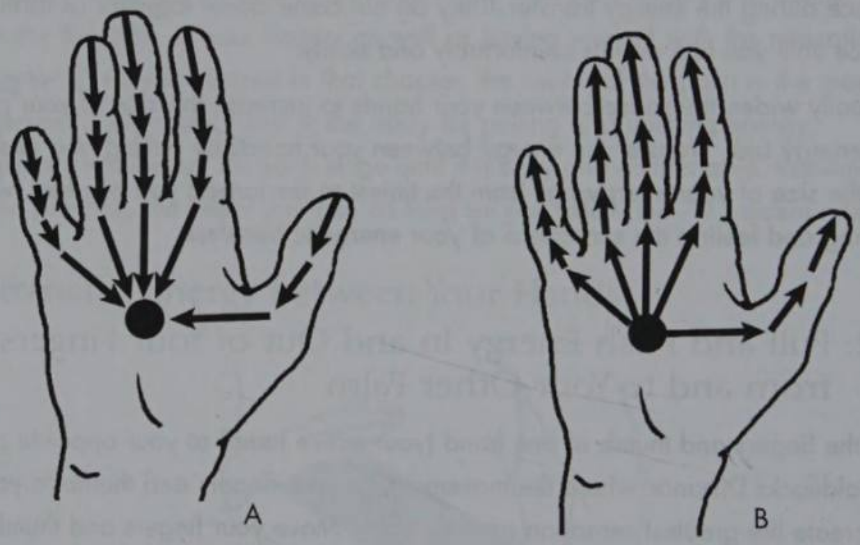


Figure 8-2
Transferring Qi between Center of Palm and Fingertips
A) Pulling qi from fingertips into lao gong
B) Pushing qi from lao gong to fingertips

Part A

1. Pull energy from one hand into and through the fingertips, finger joints, metacarpal bones and palm of the other hand to its lao gong point *(Figure 8-2 A)*.
2. Push and return the energy from the center of that palm, through the metacarpals, finger joints and fingertips *(Figure 8-2 B)* back to the other hand.
3. Develop the sense of your hands continuously being fully connected when either pushing or pulling energy from either palm center.
4. Gradually increase the distance between your hands until you can push and pull at arm's length.

Part B

When you are able to comfortably pull and push energy in and out of your palms, then:

1. Pull energy from one hand into and through the fingertips, finger joints, metacarpals, palms, palm center and wrist of your other hand.
2. In the reverse direction, push and return the energy from your wrist through your palm center, palm, metacarpals, finger joints and fingertips to the other hand.
3. Develop the sense of your hands continuously being fully connected when either pushing or pulling energy from either wrist.
4. Gradually increase the distance between your active hand and your receiving hand until you can push and pull at arm's length.

Step 5: Pulling and Pushing Variations

Next, continuously moving the bones of your hands, practice until you can do either of the following actions at will, first pushing and pulling from the center of your palms and then from the backs of your hands:

For a more linear energetic effect, when you energetically close the center of your passive palm, capture and hold the energy there for a few seconds before you release and push it back to your opposite hand. Practice of this variation will help you learn to better control the flows of qi in your body.

For a circular energetic effect, pull and push qi out of the center of your palms until the transitions between the close/pull and the open/push are seamless. Practice until there is no clear demarcation between one finishing and the other beginning. This will create a wonderful and very relaxing experience of pulsing.

Exercise 2: Pull and Push Energy with a Beak Hand

Step 1: Close into a Beak Hand and Open

1. Close one hand until your fingertips touch the thumb to form a beak hand *(Figure 8-3 A)*. Then open it into an open palm *(Figure 8-3 B)*.

   Try to have the impetus for closing and opening your hand come from the center of your palm both as it transmits qi to your fingers as it opens and from the fingers to the palm as it closes *(Figure 8-4 A–B)*.

   After practicing this with one hand, do so with the other.

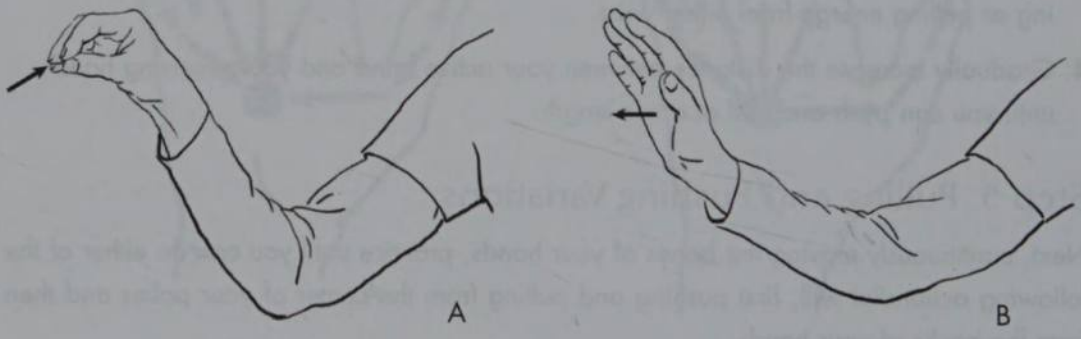


Figure 8-3
Pulling and Pushing Energy with a Beak Hand
A) Beak hand
B) Open palm

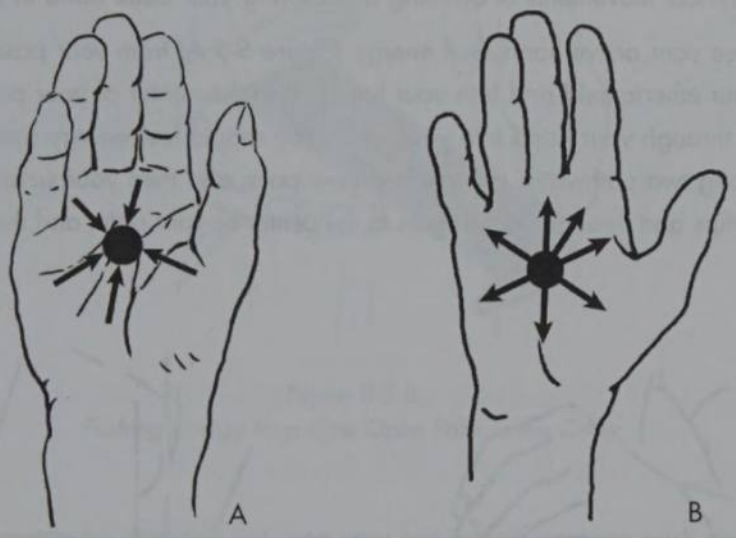


Figure 8-4
Pulling and Pushing Qi from Lao Gong
A) Cupping hand and pulling qi into lao gong
B) Opening hand and pushing energy outward from lao gong

2. Repeat the previous step but now point the fingertips of your right hand toward the center of your left palm; your left elbow should point down and your right elbow should point to the right.
   a. Make a beak with your right hand. As you do so, bend your wrist so your beak fingers finish pointed downward. Gently close all the spaces between your metacarpal bones, including those surrounding your wrist joint.
   b. As you open your beak hand, push your palm and fingers to point toward your left palm. Keep your hand soft, relaxed and pliable, and do not fully straighten your fingers *(Figure 8-3 B)*.
   c. Repeat Instructions a and b with your left hand.

Step 2: Pull and Push Energy with Your Beak Hand

Repeat the physical movements of opening and closing your beak hand in these exercises.

1. As you close your active hand, pull energy *(Figure 8-5 A)* from your passive hand through your etheric field and into your fingers and the center of your palm and from there through your hand into your wrist. You should feel energy simultaneously moving along two pathways: directly into your palm and then your wrist; and into your fingertips and through your fingers to the center of your palm and then your wrist.

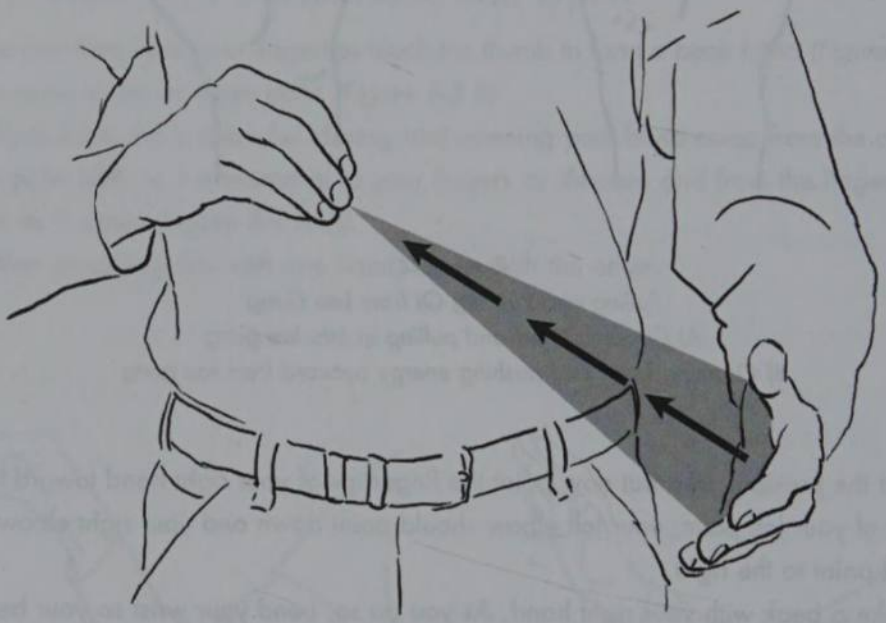


Figure 8-5 A
Pulling Energy with Beak Hand from Opposite Palm

2. When you open your active hand, reverse the flow, pushing energy from your wrist to and out your palm and fingertips to your other hand *(Figure 8-5 B)*.

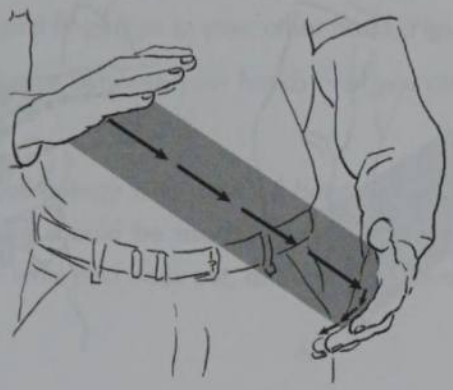


Figure 8-5 B
Pushing Energy from One Open Palm to the Other

3. Gradually increase the distance between your hands until you can push and pull at arm's length.

   Whenever you push and pull energy with a beak hand in the Dragon and Tiger movements, the method of this stage should be used. Move energy simultaneously along the two pathways, directly into your palm to your wrist and back out and into your fingers to your palm and then wrist and back out.

Exercise 3: Pull and Push Energy with a Sword Hand

Step 1: Close and Open Your Sword Hand

1. Form a sword hand with one hand. Bend your wrist, and curl your sword fingers (index and middle) down so they finish pointed down. Close all the spaces between your bones, including inside your wrist joint.
2. Open the bones of your hand and fingers and push your sword fingers to point to your other palm. Keep your hand soft, relaxed and pliable, and never fully straighten your fingers.

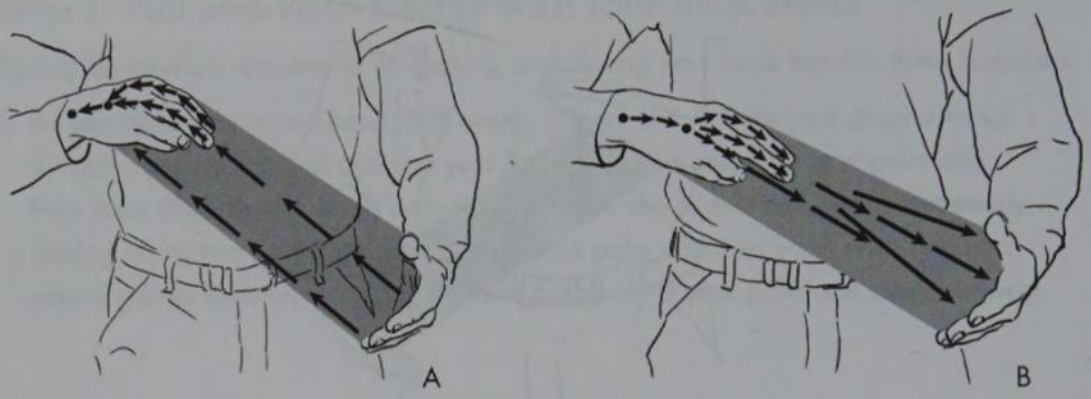


Figure 8-6
Pulling and Pushing Energy with Sword Fingers
A) Pulling qi
B) Pushing qi

Step 2: Pull and Push Energy with Your Sword Hand

Begin with your sword fingers facing your passive palm.

1. Pull energy from your other hand into your sword fingers, the center of your palm, and through your hand into your wrist *(Figure 8-6 A)*. You should feel energy moving concurrently along two pathways: directly into your palm and then wrist; and into your sword fingertips through those fingers to the center of your palm and then wrist.

   Your focus should be on moving energy into and out of your sword fingers. When this is done well, the qi in the other three fingers will naturally fully circulate to positive effect.

Sword Fingers Are Used to Focus Qi

In martial arts, sword fingers are used as a strike to cause injury, paralysis or death. When the qi is drawn up through the legs to the fingers, qi is powerfully concentrated in the two fingers. A strike can be like a little piece of steel.

In healing work, opening and closing the sword fingers exercises the tendons and results in incredible gripping power and the concentration of qi into a point.

In self-healing, using sword fingers activates the liver and the kidneys, making them healthier and stronger.

2. When you open your hand, reverse the flow and push energy from your wrist to and out your palm and your sword fingertips to your other hand *(Figure 8-6 B)*.
3. Gradually increase the distance between your hands until you can push and pull at arm's length.

Whenever you push and pull energy with a sword hand in the Dragon and Tiger movements, the method of this stage should be used. Move energy along the two pathways, directly into your palm to your wrist and back out, and into your sword fingers to your palm and then wrist and back out.

Exercise 4: Pull and Push Energy Up and Down Your Yin and Yang Body Surfaces

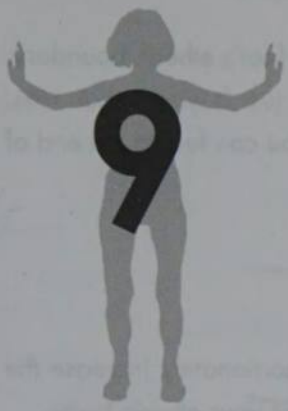
This exercise will teach you how to push and pull energy along the yin and yang surfaces of your body. You must be able to do this in order to do the intermediate energy practices of Dragon and Tiger's seven movements.

During the movements of Dragon and Tiger, you will pull and push qi in specific directions along the yin and yang surfaces of your body. Most, but not all, of the time you will pull upward and push downward. However, from the qigong point of view, energy can and does move both up and down the same acupuncture meridian line. Energy blockages can affect either or both of the up and down flows in a meridian. In addition, some blockages respond better to pushing energy through them, while others respond better to pulling, whether you use your palms, beak hands or sword fingers.

In this exercise, you should practice pushing and pulling energy up and down around a blocked area until you get the feel of whether it will be released better by pushing or pulling qi up or down on a given practice day. The best pushing or pulling pattern for you, which is specific to your personal condition, may change from push to pull or up to down from one practice session to another or last as long as a week, month or season.

If a body area is in exceptional balance, its energetic flow will be equally smooth in both directions, and it will respond equally to pushing or pulling in either direction. Often,

if there is a physical problem, say a bump, a headache or pain, you may find an energetic blockage manifests itself in the inability to move qi in either direction with either pushing or pulling. Therefore, to clear it you would want to try all possible combinations.



Pulling and Pushing Qi with Your Feet

The exercise in this chapter consists of seven progressive stages of learning. To efficiently maximize your efforts long-term, learn each stage thoroughly before progressing to the next.

Review the exercises described in Chapter 2 for making your feet more relaxed and flexible. It will be helpful to feel comfortable with these practices before doing the exercises in this chapter.

Exercise: Pull and Push Energy with Your Feet

The body has five energy points at its extremities that are completely interlinked. They are the bubbling well points of both feet, the lao gong points of both palms and bai hui at the center of the top of the head. The bubbling well, lao gong and bai hui points are also directly linked to the body's three main energy centers: the lower tantien, the middle tantien or heart center and the upper tantien or third-eye psychic center.

It will be easier to push and pull energy with your toes and feet if you have softened your feet and made them more pliable with the physical refinement exercises in Chapter 2.

Step 1: Pull and Push Energy with Your Toes

Focus on bringing energy from the boundary of your etheric body, through the air into the joints of your toes, as you close your foot. As you extend your toes, send energy from your

toe joints, back out the tips of your toes and through the air to your foot's etheric boundary.

Start by pulling and pushing energy from and to a distance just beyond your toes. Gradually and comfortably extend your pushing and pulling until you can feel to the end of your etheric body.

Step 2: Bend and Extend Your Foot More and Move the Bones of Your Foot

As the physical mobility of your foot progressively increases, proportionately increase the amount of energy you move between your toes and the boundary of your etheric body.

1. Gently increase your movements, in stages of increasing percentages of your movement capacity. With each phase, have your five toes move slightly closer toward your bubbling well point, as you simultaneously gently arch your foot and try to slightly move the heel of your foot toward your toes. Increase the relaxation of your foot with each bending and straightening of the foot.
2. Focus on moving the bones in the arch of your foot in phases of greater and greater movement. When you bend your toes, focus on bringing these bones closer to each other. When you extend your toes to their original position, focus on enlarging the spaces between those bones. By doing this, your feet will become progressively softer and more pliable. This exceptional toe flexibility exercise is excellent for preventing and treating foot arthritis and bunions. It can also mitigate the pain caused by uncomfortable shoes. Feel how your joints and ligaments can move comfortably and come under your conscious control, or at least try to get a sense of the possibility of this happening.

Step 3: Pull and Push Energy with the Feet, Especially through Your Bubbling Well Points

The bubbling well point in the center of the ball of your foot is the most easily accessible powerful energetic point in the legs for pulling and pushing energy. Bend your foot and pull energy from the boundary of your etheric body generally from the whole bottom of your foot and especially into the bubbling well point *(Figure 9-1 A)*.

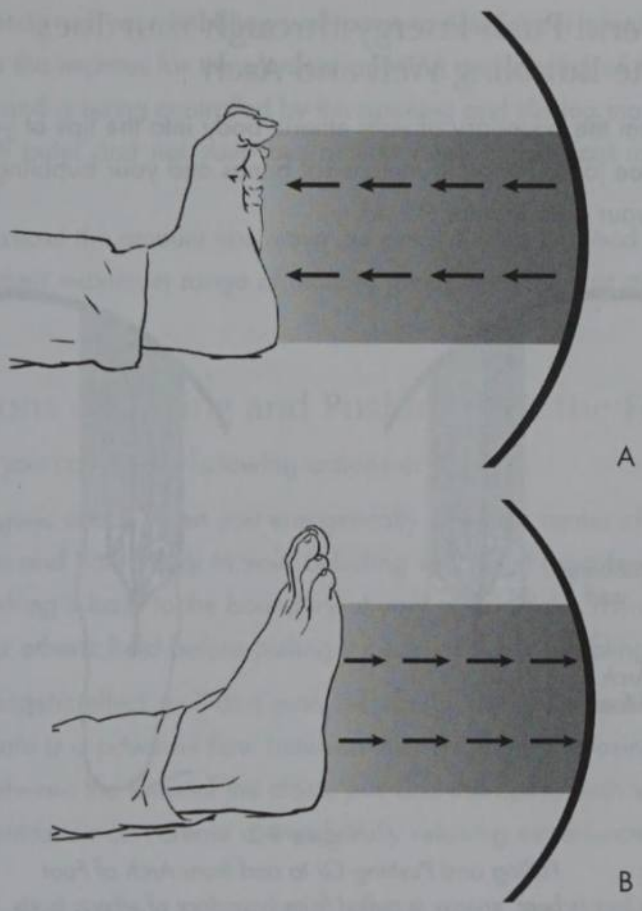


Figure 9-1
Pulling and Pushing Qi with Feet
A) Bending foot to pull energy from boundary of etheric body back into sole of foot
B) Flexing foot to push energy from entire sole of foot back to boundary of etheric body

Then as you extend your foot, push energy generally from the whole bottom of your foot and especially from the bubbling well point to the boundary of your etheric body *(Figure 9-1 B)*.

Start by pulling and pushing energy from and to a distance just beyond your foot and the bubbling well. Gradually and comfortably extend your pushing and pulling until you can feel to the end of your etheric body.

Step 4: Pull and Push Energy through Your Toes to the Bubbling Well and Arch

1. Pull energy from the boundary of your etheric body into the tips of your toes and through your toe joints into your metatarsal bones and your bubbling well, and then from there to your arch *(Figure 9-2 A)*.

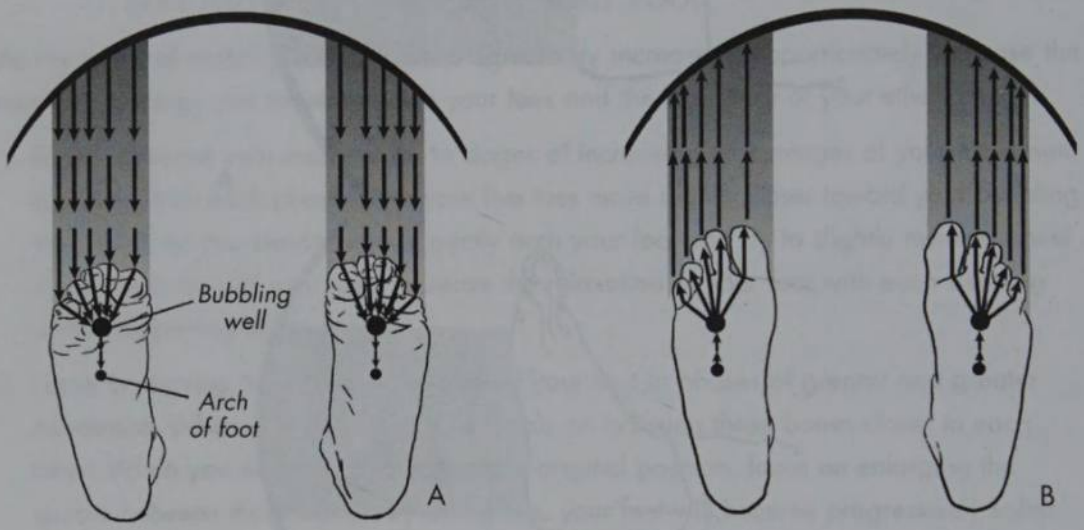


Figure 9-2
Pulling and Pushing Qi to and from Arch of Foot
A) As foot is bent, energy is pulled from boundary of etheric body, into toes, bubbling well and arch of foot.
B) As foot is extended, energy is projected to boundary of etheric body from arch, bubbling well and toes.

2. Push energy from the center of your arch and bubbling well, through your metatarsals, toe joints, toe tips and air to the boundary of your etheric body *(Figure 9-2 B)*.
3. Develop the sense, when you pull and push energy from your foot, of being continuously and fully connected energetically from your bubbling well along two pathways: directly to the boundary of your etheric body below your foot, and through your toes to the boundary of your etheric body in front of your toes.

Previously, you focused on opening and closing the bones of your feet, so you could stimulate qi and help it flow through them. Now move beyond this and use the movement

of energy in your body via your bubbling well point to cause your physical movement to follow it. Make sure the impetus for the physical opening and closing of the bones of your feet originates from and is being controlled by the opening and closing movement of energy in the bubbling well point and not your toes or metatarsals. Your foot movements should follow your qi.

Incrementally increase the amount you move the parts of your foot and toes in this stage from 20 percent to their maximum range of motion, given that you must still keep to the 70 percent rule.

Step 5: Variations of Pulling and Pushing with the Feet

Next, practice until you can do the following actions at will:

1. For a linear energetic effect, when you energetically close the center of the ball of your foot, capture and hold the qi in your bubbling well point for a few seconds before releasing and pushing it back to the boundary of your etheric field. Then, hold the energy at the end of your etheric field before pulling it back into your bubbling well point.
2. For a circular energetic effect, pull and push the energy out of the center of the ball of your foot so there is a powerful flow between the opening and closing of your foot. The transitions between the ends of the close/pull and the open/push should merge seamlessly. This pulsation can create a wonderfully relaxing experience.

Step 6: Flex and Extend Your Toes, Feet and Ankles

Bend and flex the arch of your foot in both the opening and closing actions. The impetus for closing and opening your foot should come from the energy of the bubbling well point in the center of the ball of your foot.

1. Close your foot until the tips of all five toes and your heel come as close to the ball of your foot as your 70 percent comfort range will allow. Close all the spaces between your bones, including your ankle joint. As you close your foot and bend your ankle backward, the top of your foot moves toward your shin; your toes move toward your heel; your heel moves forward and you allow the arch of your foot to bend sufficiently to accommodate the movements.
2. Next, open and flex your ankle, heel, foot and toes forward. As you do so, straighten and extend your toes and arch forward away from your shin; open all the spaces

between your bones, including your ankle joint; extend the top of your foot forward away from your shin; and move and extend your heel slightly backward.

Step 7: Pull and Push Energy between and through Your Ankles and the Boundary of Your Etheric Body

1. As you close your foot, pull energy from the boundary of your etheric body into your toes, into your bubbling well and through the arch of your foot to your heel and finally simultaneously from the center of the arch through your ankle. Stabilize each physical and energetic stage before moving forward. You should feel energy moving along two pathways:
   - From your etheric body below your foot directly into the bubbling well point of your foot and then to the center of your arch and to your ankle.
   - From your etheric body through the tips of your toes to the ball of your foot and along the centerline of your foot to the center of your arch and concurrently to the center of your heel and ankle joint.
2. When you open your foot, reverse the flow and push energy from your ankle, to your heel, to the bubbling well, out to the end of your etheric body, and to your bubbling well and out the tips of your toes to the boundaries of your etheric body.



10 Grabbing Your Wei Qi

Grabbing qi is significantly more difficult to do than feeling and moving qi along pathways on the surface of your skin, as you were taught in previous chapters and in *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1.*

In Exercise 1 of Chapter 8, you learned to use one hand to push and pull qi to and from the surface of your opposite hand through your etheric field. Now you must learn to perform a subtler version of this technique as you pass your hand over different body surfaces. Normally, directly grabbing and moving energy within your wei qi should create a much stronger and unambiguous sensation than doing so only along your skin.

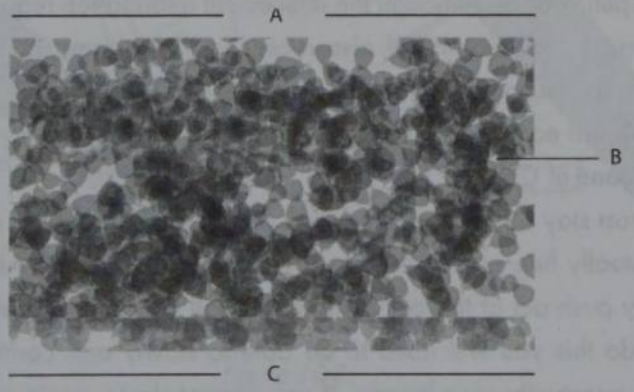


Figure 10-1
Wei Qi
A) Skin B) Subcutaneous fat tissue and wei qi C) Muscle
Wei qi is located in the subcutaneous tissue between the skin and the muscle.

Wei qi is the layer of energy between a person's skin and muscle that protects against disease entering the body from the external environment. It is also the contact point for most easily accessing the body's acupuncture channels.

You "grab the qi" in a part of your body when from your hand you project energy toward that part through your skin and connect with your wei qi there *(see Figure 10-2 A–B)*.

If you have truly connected with (i.e., "grabbed"), the energy at a place, you will feel a distinct sensation of something moving beneath your skin, and you will be able to pull and push this "something" (i.e., energy), along your wei qi in any direction from that place.

The ability to continuously grab and move your qi within your wei qi during Dragon and Tiger's seven movements, rather than move qi only along your skin's surface, is a primary dividing line between a Level 2 and a Level 1 Dragon and Tiger instructor in the Energy Arts Certification System.[1]

Grabbing and Moving Energy within the Wei Qi

In the following exercises, to continuously pull along the wei qi, you will need to slowly and continuously pull energy from the wei qi of the passive palm through your etheric field into your active hand, ideally into and through your fingers and palm. Use only your active palm to either push or pull your qi. Although the intellectual information required to do this method is presented here, the importance of also receiving this information from a living teacher who can embody the technique cannot be overstated.

Remember to learn each exercise thoroughly before progressing to the next one. Keep in mind the precautions of Chapter 5.

Your hands must stay soft and relaxed. You will need to be able to slowly curl/close your palm—and eventually fingers and thumb. The same holds true for the pushing action; you must continuously push out of the active hand through your etheric field to the wei qi of the resting arm. To do this you will need to be able to slowly and continuously extend/open your palm—and eventually your fingers. If you cannot do so, review the preliminary hand softening techniques taught in Chapter 2, Exercise 3.

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[1] See Appendix for more information on the author's Energy Arts Certification System.

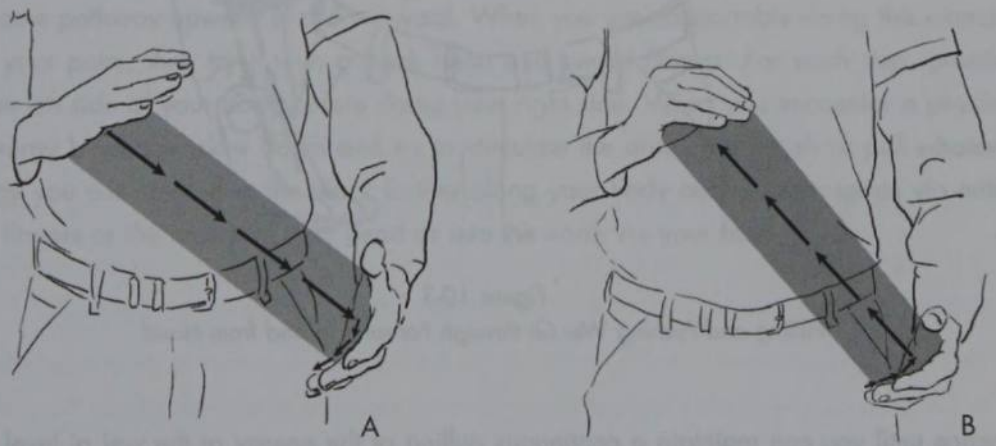
Exercise 1: Grab Your Qi

1. Begin by sitting, and comfortably rest your left or right arm on your leg with your palm up. Position your other hand (the active hand) above your resting palm at the Goldilocks Distance where you feel the strongest effect of your active hand on the skin of your resting passive palm.

2. Push and pull qi in and out of your active hand to and from the surface of your resting palm.

   As you do so, slightly vary the distance between your hands. Try to find a position where you can feel that you can push energy from the active hand through the skin of the resting palm and connect to the wei qi layer under the skin. Then keep the connection as you pull it back.

3. Now, push energy from your active hand directly into the wei qi of your resting palm and along the wei qi of your resting fingers to your fingertips *(Figure 10-2 A)*. Then pull that energy from your fingertips back along the wei qi of your fingers to the wei qi of your palm and back to your active hand *(Figure 10-2 B)*. Repeat this several times.



4. Next, push along the resting palm's wei qi to your resting fingertips, and this time pull back along the wei qi of your fingers to your palm and farther up your arm along the wei qi of your wrist and forearm. To do this, you may need to move your active hand in space up along your forearm while you maintain the Goldilocks Distance where you feel the maximum pull of energy through the wei qi of your arm.
5. Now, push your qi down from your forearm along the wei qi to your fingertips *(Figure 10-3)* and pull up again.

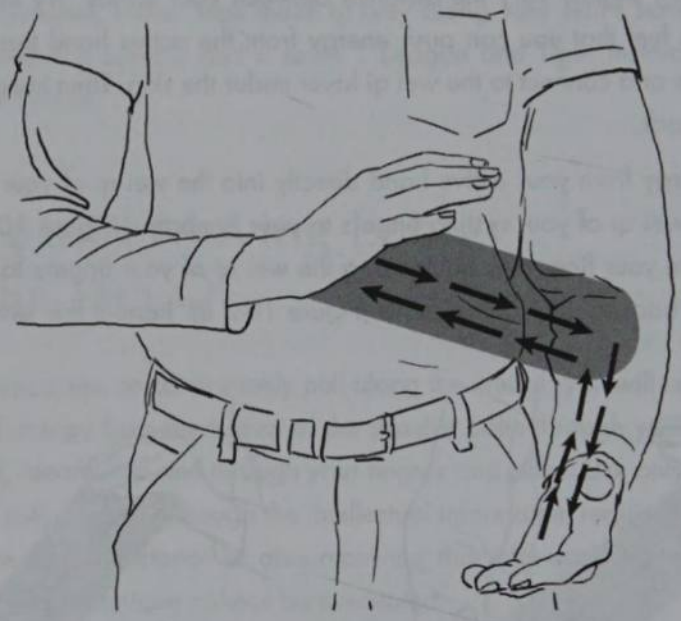


Figure 10-3
Pulling and Pushing Wei Qi through Forearm to and from Hand

Practice until you can maintain a continuous pulling of the energy at the wei qi level from your fingertips to your elbow and back without distinction. If your connection seems like it is beginning to weaken, slow down your hand movement and pull and push qi on the weakest spot, until your feeling of the wei qi returns to its full strength. Then continue pushing or pulling your wei qi in the direction you were previously moving.

6. Repeat Instructions 1–5 but switch the positions of your active and passive hands.

When you are able to pull and push qi continuously along the wei qi of the arm, then you have learned to grab your qi. This is the method by which you push and pull qi along the energy pathways of Dragon and Tiger's seven movements. When you can do it, there should be no question in your mind that you are doing it; you will feel the energy movement clearly.

If you are not able to do this, you will need to develop your capacities until you can. It will take time for you to develop more energetic sensitivity, strength and control. Until you can grab your qi and push and pull energy at the wei qi level, you are not performing the intermediate energy work of Dragon and Tiger.

Exercise 2: Grab, Pull and Push Your Qi along Various Surfaces of Your Body

In each of the following steps, first use your palm to grab, pull and then push energy along the same pathway upward and downward. When you are comfortable doing this exercise with your palm, then try it with a beak hand and sword fingers. For each step, practice on the left side of your body before doing your right side. When you encounter a physical or energy blockage, slow down and try to stimulate the area. Then push or pull whatever energy you can release at the block farther along your body and out into space via either your fingers or the crown of your head or into the earth via your feet.

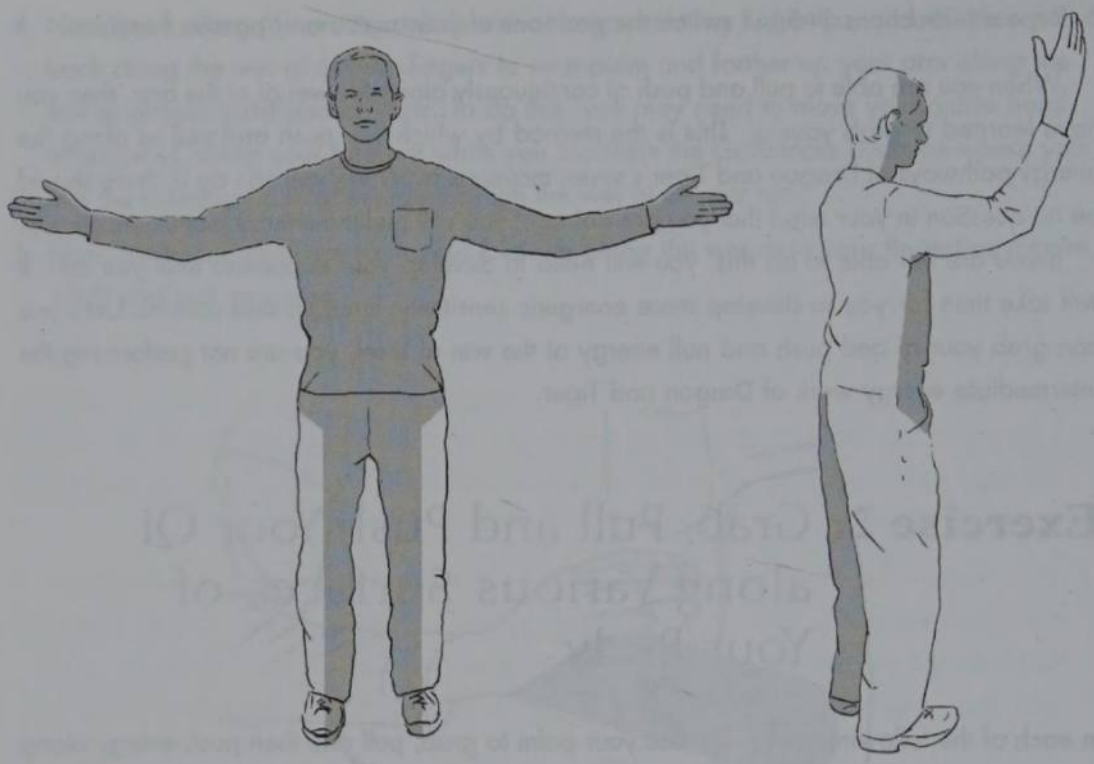


Figure 10-4
Yin and Yang Surfaces of the Body
Dark areas are yin, light areas are yang.

For maximum benefit, it is best to follow the order of surfaces as specified below:

1. The inner yin surfaces of each arm from the end of your fingertips to your inner forearm to your elbow to your armpit and shoulder, then return in the reverse direction.
2. The outer yang surfaces of each arm from the end of your fingertips to your outer forearm to the back of your elbow to your upper arm and outside of your shoulder, then return in the reverse direction.
3. On the inner yin surfaces of your legs: Upward from your foot to your knee, next to your inner thigh to your kwa and perineum, then downward on the inner surface of your opposite leg from your kwa to your foot. Then go back again in the reverse direction. These are the same pathways that your upward hand activates as you move qi up your legs in Movements 1 and 2.

4. On the outer yang surface of each leg: From the outside of your foot to the outside of your knee and hip socket and to the front of your kwa. Then return in the reverse direction. These are the same pathways that your downward hand activates as you move qi down your legs in Movements 1 and 2.
5. Up the inner yin surfaces from your kwa to your shoulder's nest and down in the reverse direction as in Movement 1 *(Figure 10-5)*.

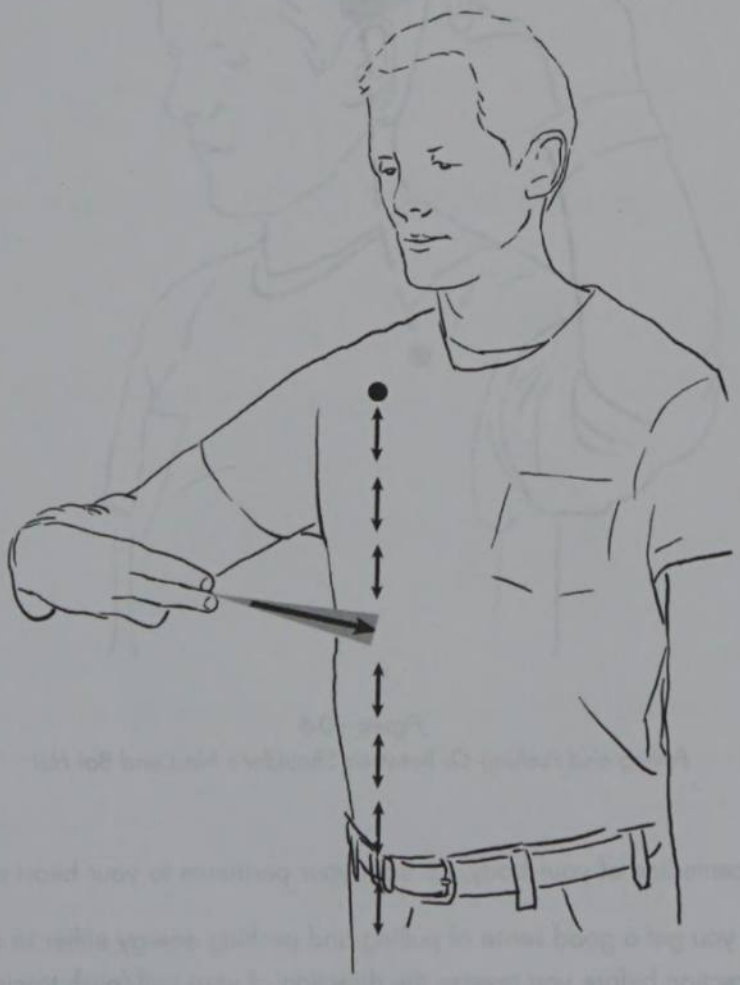


Figure 10-5
Pulling and Pushing Qi between Kwa and Shoulder's Nest with Sword Fingers

6. From your shoulder's nest along the side of your neck and head to your crown, the bai hui point, both up and down, as traced in Movement 6 *(Figure 10-6)*.



Figure 10-6
Pulling and Pushing Qi between Shoulder's Nest and Bai Hui

7. Along the centerline of your body, up from your perineum to your heart and then down.

Make sure you get a good sense of pulling and pushing energy either in an upward or a downward direction before you reverse the direction of your pull/push tracing of any given energy line. Remember, energy travels equally in both directions. In acupuncture, where someone else is affecting you, the flow established by the treatment is generally in only one direction. However, when you internally motivate and influence your own qi, the flow goes

both ways. Whichever direction that you feel your push or pull of energy flows the least is the one you need to work on more.

The energy field that surrounds you is called your etheric body or aura. Although your palms, beak hands and sword fingers trace the pathways of the acupuncture meridians, you now need to feel the boundaries of your etheric body.





11 Working with the Qi of Your Etheric Body

The Boundary of the Etheric Body

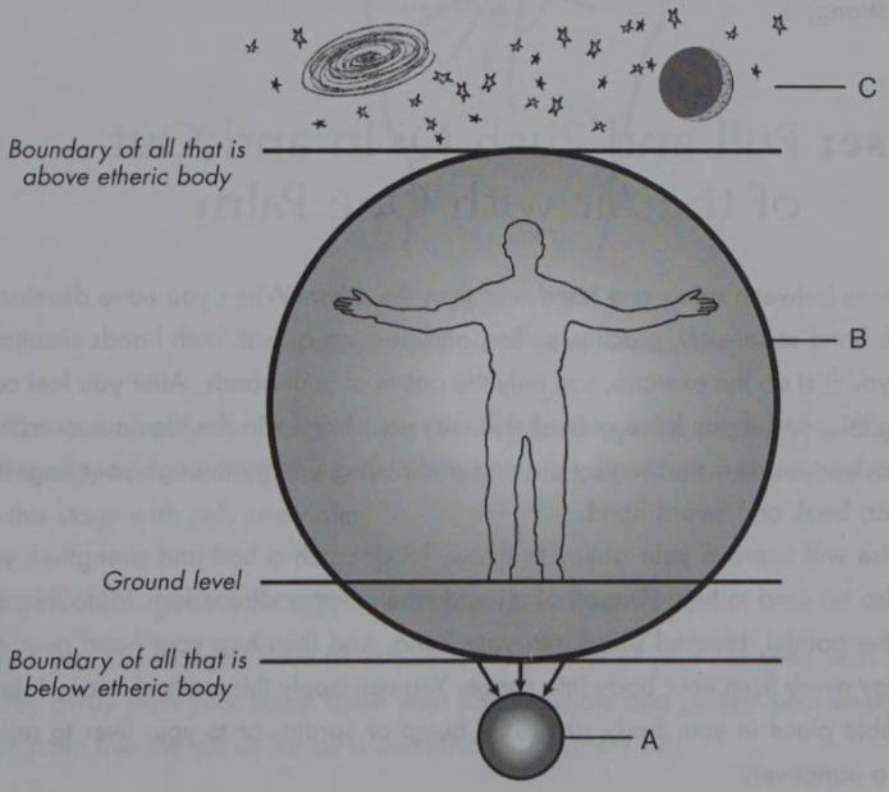


Figure 11-1
Boundary of Etheric Body Connects to Qi of Heaven and of Earth's Core
A) Energy of core of earth B) Boundary of etheric body C) Energy of heaven

The end points of the physical body are your hands, feet and top of your head. The end points of your energetic/etheric body can fluctuate in distance above your head, below your feet and beyond your hands *(Figure 11-1)*.

If your energy is strong, your etheric body may be as big as ten feet or more past your physical body in all directions. If your energy is weak, your etheric body may shrink to less than a foot beyond your physical body. Most people's etheric bodies vary between one and three feet beyond their physical bodies.

The etheric body area above your head is where you connect with the energy of the heavens. Typically, a person's first awareness of this occurs at a distance of one or two feet above their head. The etheric body area below your feet is where you connect with the *living* energy of the earth. Typically, a person's first awareness of this occurs at a distance of a foot or two below your feet. This holds true whether your feet are touching the earth or you are thirty thousand feet above the earth in an airplane. The energetic field of the earth is immensely strong.

Exercise: Pull and Push Qi In and Out of the Air with One Palm

Initially, alternate between using one hand and then the other. When you have developed skill with each hand separately, practice pulling and pushing qi with both hands simultaneously. When you first do the exercise, use only the palms of your hands. After you feel comfortable doing this, and if you have gained skill with your fingers in the previous exercises, then repeat each separate instruction by pushing and pulling energy through your fingertips using a regular, beak and sword hand.

This exercise will improve your ability to throw, hit or catch a ball and strengthen your grip. It can also be used to heal yourself of a headache or other discomfort. To do this, pull energy from the painful, blocked place into your hand, and then turn your hand over and push the energy away from your body into space. You can apply this method to any injured or uncomfortable place in your body such as a bump or sprain, or to your liver to relieve the effects of a hangover.

Step 1: Absorb Energy from the Air

Choose one hand to be primary. Place that hand in front and a little to the right of your chest with the palm out. Inhale and by cupping your hand slightly, absorb energy from the air into your palm *(Figure 11-2)*.



Figure 11-2
Cupping Hand to Pull Qi of Air into Palm

You can amplify the feeling in the primary hand by also putting your other palm up to pull energy from the air if that helps you get started. But when you feel you are "getting it," do this stage with only one palm.

Step 2: Project Energy Away from Your Palm

When you feel that you have absorbed to 70 percent of your capacity, with your palm still facing away from your body, open your hand, exhale and project your energy away from your palm into the air as far as is comfortable *(Figure 11-3)*.

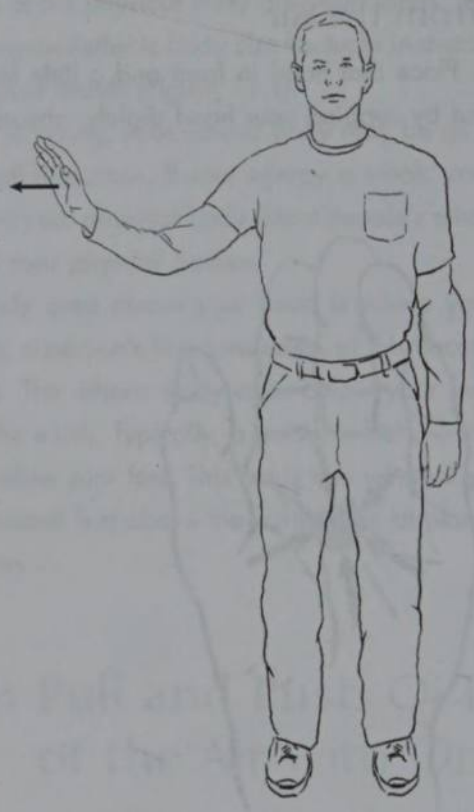


Figure 11-3
Projecting Qi Away from Palm into Air

Step 3: Move Energy between Your Palm and Chest

Repeat Steps 1 and 2, only now have your palm first face your chest as you pull energy from it and then turn your palm outward when you project your qi.

When you place your palm toward your chest, find your Goldilocks Distance in relation to the wei qi of your chest and feel the connection there. If the energetic connection between your palm and body feels weak, push energy into your chest and pull it back to your palm a few times to strengthen the connection.

Step 4: Pull and Push Energy to and from Your Shoulders

Repeat Steps 1, 2 and 3 above except start with your palms facing sideways, away from your shoulders.

Pulling and Pushing Qi to Heal

Being able to push and pull qi with your palms at specific points of your body, or that of someone else, can be a powerful healing aid. If you have a heart beating from too much anxiety, you would pull qi into your heart with the palms of your hands facing the heart, next pull qi out of your heart into your palms and then face the palms out to release the bound energy.

You can use the same technique for breast soreness that may arise from PMS, precancerous situations, cancer operations and so on. Here, using the palms to push and pull qi helps regulate blood and lymph flow around the breasts.

This method is also useful to help pull out the qi of a headache or to aid in the healing of injuries, yours or someone else's. You might even use the technique to soothe a crying or colicky baby.

All the energy techniques that are taught in this book, as well as their many variations, are basic to all Taoist internal martial arts, qigong healing techniques, meditation, qigong tui na and hundreds of types of non-Taoist qigong.

Step 5: Pull and Push Energy from and to the Air Upward at Chest Height

Repeat Steps 1, 2 and 3 except that your palms and fingers face vertically upward at chest height as you pull and push energy from and into the air.

Step 6: Pull and Push Energy from and to the Air Downward at Chest Height

Repeat Steps 1, 2 and 3 except that your palms face downward at the height of your chest as you pull and push energy from and into the air.

Step 7: Pull and Push Energy from All Angles

Repeat Steps 1, 2 and 3 except that now you will use your hands in all possible positions and angles to pull energy from and push it back into any part of your body and pull and push your energy out into and back from the air either from your front, back or side and anywhere you choose in your upper or lower body.

Step 8: Practice Pulling and Pushing with Beak Hand and Sword Fingers

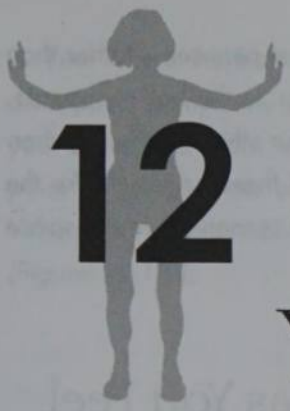
Practice Steps 1 through 7 using a beak hand and palm, then finally sword fingers as used in Movements 6 and 7.

Step 9: Practice Pulling and Pushing with Different Hand Positions along Yin and Yang Surfaces

Practice using your fingers and palm, beak hand and palm, then finally sword fingers to push and pull energy along your physical body to and from the boundary of your etheric body on all your yin and yang surfaces.

Important Points to Remember

- Develop a rhythm of a smooth, continuous flow between the pull and push of energy, without jerky stops or starts.
- Coordinate your breathing with your movements until it becomes smooth, relaxed and circular and in exact sync with the in (inhale) and out (exhale) movements of your hands. Circular breathing is when inhales and exhales merge seamlessly without any holding or suspension of your breathing.



12 Feeling the Boundaries of Your Etheric Body

This chapter teaches you how to continuously and strongly control the movement of qi between the boundaries of your etheric and physical body during Dragon and Tiger's seven movements. The last chapter dealt with moving energy outward from your hand. Now your attention turns to becoming aware of the ends of your etheric body as you pull and push energy out of and into the air and ground with your hands.

Gaining this skill is another major dividing line between a Level 2 and a Level 1 Dragon and Tiger instructor in the Energy Arts Certification System.

Exercise 1: Become Sensitive to Your Etheric Body

Build an energy ball between your hands as described in Chapter 5, Exercise 2. Play with shrinking the ball and then extending it as large as you can and still feel as though you are tangibly holding the qi of this ball.

Begin to notice what the space *between* your hands feels like. The energy in the space between your hands is part of your etheric body. In fact, the connection you feel is created when your etheric body from and around one hand connects with your etheric body from and around your other hand.

Feel what happens in that etheric space as you bring your hands closer together and farther apart; for example, find out if it feels denser or lighter. Now take your hands so far apart that you feel the connection break and the ball disappears.

When this happens, notice what sensations you feel *in the space between*—rather than inside—each palm. Now hold your hands just a little closer together so the ball reappears, however weakly. You have just touched the edges of two parts of your etheric body together. Feel energy from each hand through its etheric body to try to feel these edges. Make the connection, let it go, make the connection and let it go. Notice the sensations in the space between your palms.

Exercise 2: Pull and Push Energy as You Feel for the Edge of Your Etheric Body

Now use just one hand and turn your palm away from your chest. Begin to very gently push energy out of and pull energy into either your palm or beak hand to and from the air. Each time you push out, feel from your hand out through the wave of energy you are pushing to the front edge of that wave *(Figure 12-1 A)*.

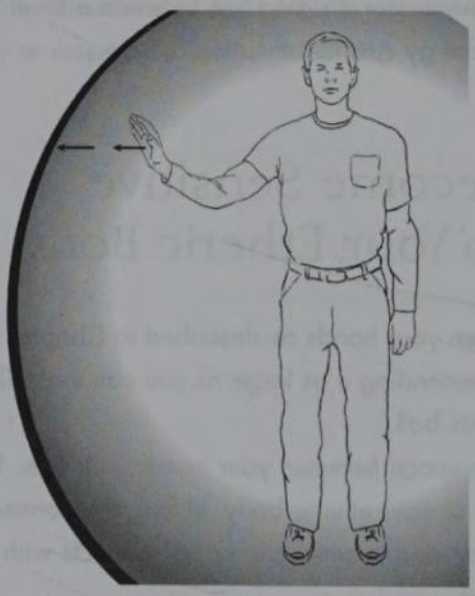


Figure 12-1 A
Projecting Qi from Palm to Find Edge of Etheric Body

Feel where the front edge feels strong and then feel farther out to where it is weaker, disappears completely or at the point you begin to feel any strain or stress in any part of your system. As a functional starting point in developing your sensitivity, consider the farthest point away from your body at which it feels strong to be on the edge of your etheric body. When you have established where that point is, pull back into your hand from that point *(Figure 12-1 B)*.

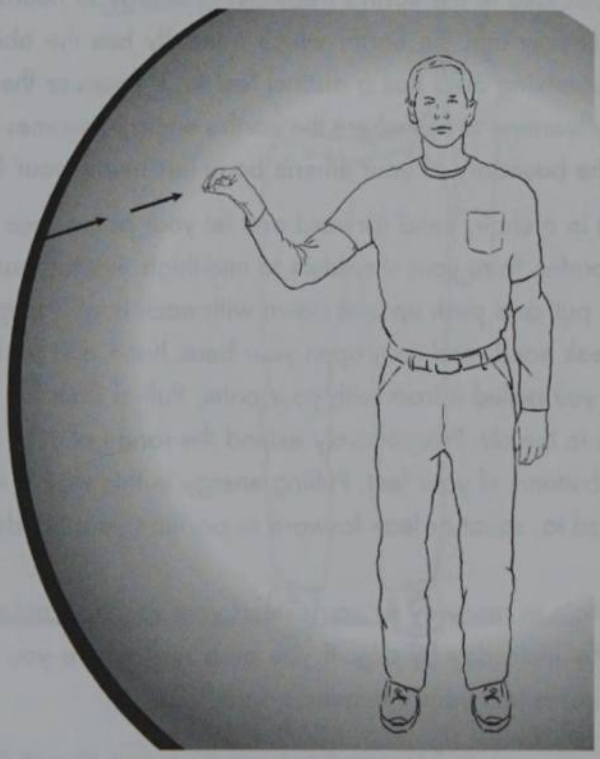


Figure 12-1 B
Pulling Qi from Edge of Etheric Body into Beak Hand

Repeat your push and pull until you get a clear sense of pushing to and pulling back from your etheric body edge. Then try this with your other hand.

Learning to directly feel the energy within and at the edge of your etheric body is difficult. Do not worry if you cannot feel it immediately. It will take time and practice. Try the next exercise. Afterward, return and try to do these first two exercises again.

Exercise 3: Feel through Your Etheric Body to Its Boundary below Your Feet

Toward the bottom boundary of your etheric body, there is a mixing area where your etheric body connects with the energy of the earth. In that space, your body naturally exchanges energy with the earth.

Here, you can take in the earth's free-flowing energy to nourish your body and release your stagnant energy into the earth, which naturally has the ability to absorb and purify it. The qi in that mixing area has a distinct feel to it, because the energy of the earth is so strong there. By learning to feel where the earth's energy becomes strong, you will also learn to feel where the boundary of your etheric body lies below your feet.

1. Stand, or sit in a chair, bend forward and let your palms face the ground, at any height you prefer, from your shoulders to mid-thigh. Rather than pulling energy between your hands, pull and push up and down with each hand independently. Pull energy up with your beak hand, and then open your beak hand and push the energy back to the same place you pulled it from with your palm. Pull qi from the air into your palms, and push it back to the air. Progressively extend the range of your energy projections to the level of the bottoms of your feet. Pulling energy in this way is shown in Figure 12-2.

   If you need to, squat or lean forward to position your hands lower toward the bottom of your feet.

   Do not strain in any way as you extend your range. If necessary, slowly extend your range inch by inch, day by day. If you push past where you are comfortable, you will build weaknesses into your energetic system.

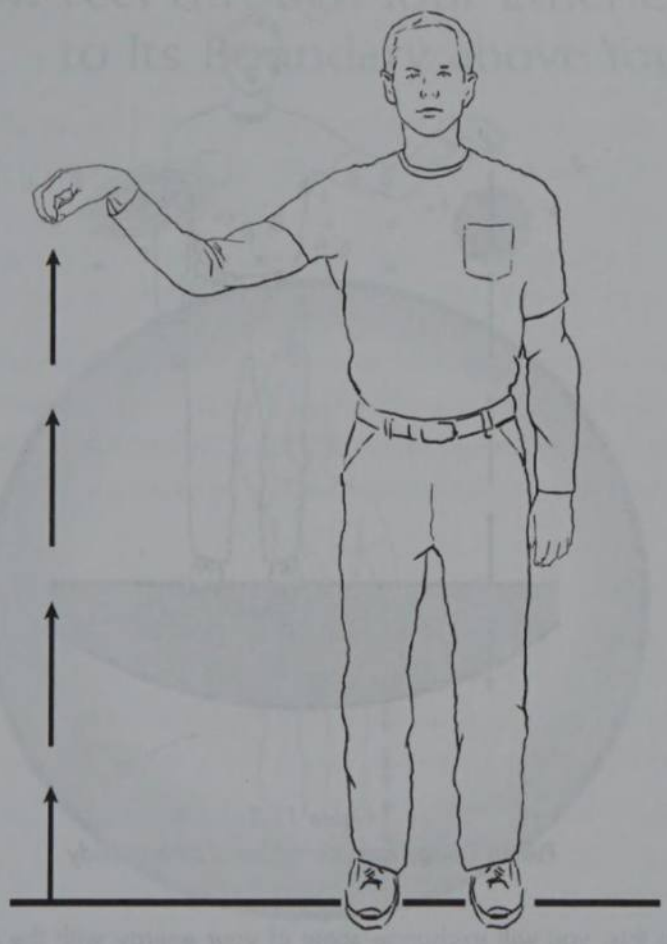


Figure 12-2
Pulling Qi from the Ground at Bottom of Feet

2. After you stabilize and become confident in your ability to clearly feel your hands pushing and pulling energy to and from your feet or the ground, then extend your pulling and pushing from any height below your head to below your feet, until your sensations contact and connect with the energy of the earth at the boundary of your etheric body *(Figure 12-3)*.

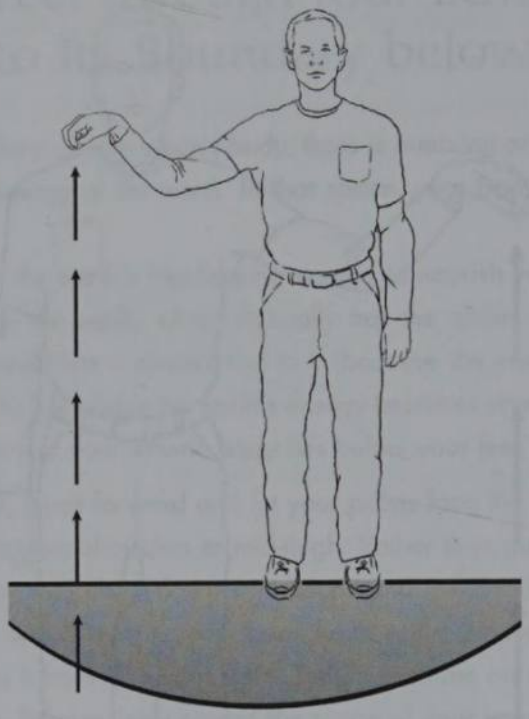


Figure 12-3
Pulling Energy from Boundary of Etheric Body

As you do this, you will exchange some of your energy with the earth and energetically form a circuit between your palm and the energy of the earth.

The sensation of your energy connecting with that of the earth should be quite tangible. Different people feel it in different ways. Some people feel as if they are "pulling taffy" with the earth, for example. Whenever and however you feel it, the feeling will be distinct and very real; you will not have to wonder whether you are actually doing it. If you have doubts, you are not.

Continue to practice until you feel you can comfortably pull energy up from below the ground and project energy to below the ground. Then raise your hands to higher and higher positions until you can comfortably move the energy while standing with your hands at the height of your lower tantien, your shoulders and above your head.

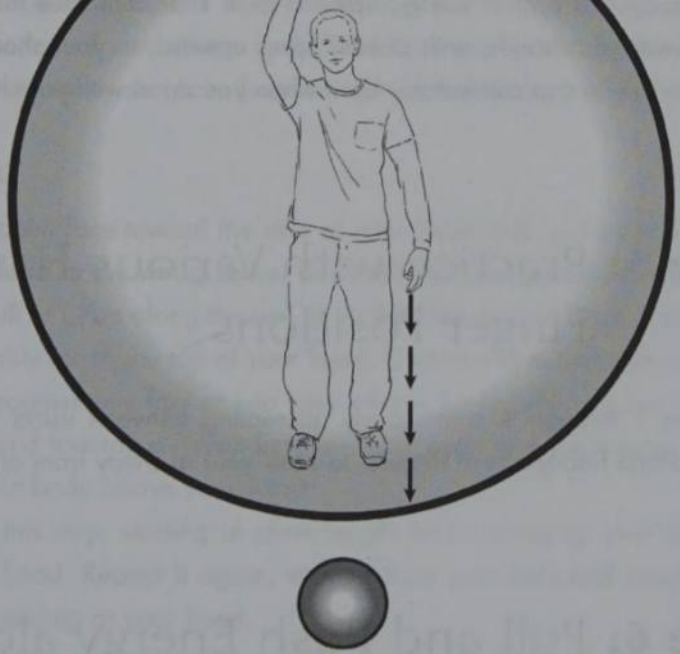


Figure 12-4
Boundary of Etheric Body Connects Physical Body with Energy of Heaven and Earth

Toward the upper boundary of your etheric body above your head there is a mixing area where your etheric body connects with the energy of heaven. In that space, your body naturally exchanges energy with heaven. Here, you take in its free-flowing energy to nourish your body. The energy in that mixing area has a distinct feel to it, dramatically lighter than the earth's energy.

1. Stand, or sit in a chair, and let your palms face upward at the height of your head. Begin to pull and push qi from the air into your palms and back to the air. Progressively extend the range of your energetic projections to the top of your head.
2. Now extend your pulling and pushing until you either feel the end of your etheric body or you feel and connect with the energy of the heavens at the outer boundary of your etheric body. When you feel either, you will form a circuit with the energy of the heavens as you push out your energy and pull in energy from the heavens. As you do this, you will exchange some of your personal energy with heaven's energy.

Continue to practice until you feel you can comfortably pull energy down from the top of your etheric body and project energy upward to it. Then, continue the same energetic technique and lower your hands, with palms facing upward, to your shoulders, chest and finally your hips until you can comfortably do it when you stand with your hands at the sides of your thighs.

Exercise 5: Practice with Various Hand and Finger Positions

Practice Exercises 1 through 4 continuously alternating between using your fingers and palm, beak hand and finally sword fingers, to push your qi away from or pull qi back into your body.

Exercise 6: Pull and Push Energy along Your Body from and to the End Points of Your Etheric Body

In the steps that follow, first practice with one hand, then the other, and then both together, using your palms, fingers, beak hand and sword fingers.

Step 1: Mid-Thigh to Feet

Let your palm face the outside surface of your body at your mid-thigh. Find your Goldilocks Distance where you can grab your wei qi at that height and begin to pull and push qi from the wei qi through the air into your palm and back. Progressively, steadily and without strain, extend the range of your energetic projection inch by inch down along your wei qi to your knees, ankles, feet and then below. Continue until you clearly feel that you contact and connect with the boundary of your etheric body and form a circuit with the earth's energy.

Step 2: Hip to Feet

Continue to practice until you can very comfortably pull and push energy along your leg from and to the bottom of your etheric body. Then have your palm face toward your hip and repeat Step 1. Then have your palm face toward the lowest rib and repeat Step 1.

Step 3: Head

Now have your palm face toward the side of your head. Pull and push qi from your palm and fingers from and to the wei qi there. Gradually and progressively extend the range of your push and pull of qi up along the wei qi up the side of your head and back down until you can comfortably reach the top of your head. Continue to extend the range of push and pull movement progressively farther into your etheric body until you can feel that you are connecting with and forming a circuit between your palm and the energy of heaven at the end of your etheric body above your head.

Now repeat this step, starting at chest height and moving up your chest toward and finishing at your head. Repeat it again, starting from your hips and moving up from your hips toward and ending at your head.

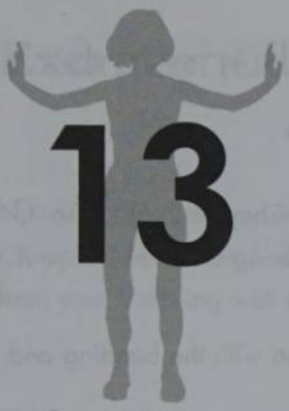
Step 4. Practice Steps 1 through 3 with Different Hand Positions

Practice Steps 1 through 3 with each hand using your fingers and palm, beak hand and finally sword fingers.

Step 5. Chest

Push energy from the wei qi of your chest out to the boundary of your etheric body and back in.

Expand these pushing and pulling qi exercises to extend past the specified physical body extremity (hand, foot or head) to the boundary of your etheric body or beyond if it is possible and does not create strain in any way.



13 Moving Energy to and from Your Etheric Boundary

After you can physically and energetically open/push and close/pull your hands and feet separately, it becomes time to push and pull energy simultaneously with all of them at once in various combinations. This is the new goal for all of the exercises in Dragon and Tiger.

Before you move ahead, make sure you can comfortably and easily do all of the exercises in Chapter 12.

As you practice these next stages, try to move your hands and feet in unison. Practice with one hand and one foot at a time. Explore the four combinations: right hand/right foot, left hand/left foot, right hand/left foot, and left hand/right foot. Then practice using both hands and feet at the same time.

During each stage, pull with your hands and feet at the same time and push at the same time. When you push and pull energy out of and into your hands and feet, simultaneously push to and pull from the ends of your etheric body.

You can practice standing up or sitting. You can sit on a chair, or on the floor with your legs extended straight in front of you or crossed. These exercises, done at regular intervals during the day, can mitigate and prevent repetitive stress syndrome. Such practice can also relax and release stress from your nerves before it accumulates in your nervous system.

You can also practice while lying down to de-stress yourself after a particularly tiring day. These exercises can be done while lying on a sofa or sunbathing at the pool or beach.

Exercise 1: Close and Open the Bones of Your Hands and Feet

1. Cup and open your hands, moving the bones of the hands (see Chapter 2, Exercise 3, Step 4). Combine this with bending and extending your feet, moving the bones of your feet (see the exercise in Chapter 9, Step 2).
2. Next, close into beak hands and open into palms in coordination with the bending and unbending of your feet.
3. Coordinate using your sword fingers with the bending and unbending of your feet.

Exercise 2: Simultaneously Pull and Push Energy with Fingers and Toes from and to Your Etheric Body

Practice all stages of the exercise in Chapter 11 using your fingers and toes along with your hands and feet to pull and push energy to the boundary of your etheric body.

Exercise 3: Pull and Push Energy with Lao Gong and Bubbling Well Points Together to and from Your Etheric Boundary

Combine pushing and pulling qi to the edge of your aura with your palms (see Chapter 8, Exercise 1, Step 3) with doing so using your bubbling well points (see the exercise in Chapter 9, Step 3).

Exercise 4: Move Qi to and from Wrists and Ankles

Now combine moving energy through your fingers to and from your palms and wrists (see Chapter 8, Exercise 1, Step 4) with pulling and pushing energy through your toes to and from your bubbling well and arch (see the exercise in Chapter 9, Step 4) and also the ankle.

Exercise 5: Move Qi Using Beak Hand to and from Wrists and Ankles

Now pull and push qi with your beak hand (see Chapter 8, Exercise 2, Step 2) and combine this with moving energy between and through your ankles and the boundary of your etheric body (see the exercise in Chapter 9, Step 7).

Exercise 6: Move Qi Using Sword Hand to and from Wrists and Ankles

Now practice the previous exercise using a sword hand instead of the beak hand (see Chapter 8, Exercise 3, Step 2). Before you do so, review the preparatory exercises for closing and opening your sword hand (see Chapter 8, Exercise 3, Step 1).

Exercise 7: Pulling and Pushing Variations

Combine the pushing and pulling variations described in Chapter 8, Exercise 1, Step 5, with Exercise 2 of this chapter, using all the different hand positions—the palm, fingers, beak hand and sword fingers.

Using Dragon and Tiger Techniques in Healing, Martial Arts and Other Taoist Energy Practices

This book teaches many techniques for moving energy along the energy channels of your body, pushing and pulling energy through the wei qi, and moving qi between your physical body and the boundary of your etheric body.

These are some of the underlying energy building blocks within Taoist neigong that help advance your abilities to feel, move and strengthen your qi. Learning this material is similar to learning the letters of the alphabet before being able to read. Before you can advance, you must absorb the neigong fundamentals.

Once learned, all these techniques can be applied to various Taoist arts.

In many Taoist health and healing arts, such as other forms of qigong, tai chi, qigong tui na and acupuncture, the ability to move energy through the wei qi helps release stagnant qi and balance it.

Moving energy along your meridian lines in traditional Taoist yoga enables you to stretch and gently release your body, resulting in an increase in the flow of energy in your body, rather than just moving and stretching your body in the hope you will increase energy. Taoist yoga energy techniques help you direct the flow of qi to enable your body to become more flexible and relaxed. The author has developed the Taoist Neigong Yoga® method to teach this tradition. The focus is on meditative softness, relaxation and cultivating qi, rather than on extreme stretches as seen in Indian hatha yoga.

Projecting qi outward from your etheric body is fundamental to the internal martial arts of tai chi, hsing-i, and bagua and some other martial arts such as shaolin kung fu. The technique of fa jin, commonly learned in tai chi, teaches you to move your energy from your physical body into your etheric body as you strike. In tai chi push hands, fa jin is a powerful discharge technique to send your opponent flying. This is achieved partly by aiming your energy at some place in the opponent's etheric body, so that when the energy moves there, his or her physical body follows it.

Many of Dragon and Tiger's techniques for strongly releasing qi—such as the flicks of Movements 2 and 5, and the piercings of Movements 6 and 7—can enhance the performance of any type of martial art.

Feeling and gaining control of what happens energetically within your etheric body can enable you to recognize the qi of your opponent's etheric body. For example, the intent of someone to hit you can pervade the boundary of your etheric body before he or she actually strikes, thus giving you time to counterattack.

Knowing how to dissolve and release blocked energies in your etheric field is a very specific technique of Taoist meditation. Being able to consciously contact the boundary of your etheric body, which is where the energy of the universe comes into you and where your own personal energy goes out, is an important aspect of the Inner Dissolving process.

In advanced Taoist sexual meditation, sexual partners use qi techniques that enable them to go beyond their physical and etheric bodies, merge with each other's consciousness, and clear the energies of both partners that block them from becoming one with the universe.[1]

[1] See the author's book *Taoist Sexual Meditation* (Berkley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2012), Chapters 17 and 18.

Important Points to Remember

- When you begin to pull in or push out energy, hold the energy at the end point for a few seconds before moving it in the opposite direction. After you become comfortable doing this, make the pulling in and the pushing out circular, so the very end of one movement and the beginning of the next blend and their boundaries disappear. Your long-term goal is to create one continuous circle of flowing energy, with currents flowing continuously in both directions.
- To move energy through an area of your body, move your feeling awareness and intention through the physical structures in that place. You will know you can do this stage of practice well when you can feel energy soak continuously from one end of an area to the other through all of your skin, muscles, joints and any internal organs in there. If you can feel the energy penetrate through other body parts, such as ligaments, tendons or bones, so much the better. Remember, you should never force but only gently encourage energy to flow through an area you feel to be energetically blocked.
- At first you may find you cannot pull energy all the way to your desired end point in your body. If so, simply pull the energy to and push it from as close to your goal as you can, and from that same place in your body to and from the boundary of your aura.



14 Applying Energy Exercises to Dragon and Tiger Movement 1

In this chapter, you will be incorporating into Movement 1 of Dragon and Tiger the intermediate energy work for pulling and pushing energy that you learned in Chapters 8–13. Chapters 15–19 teach you to apply these techniques to the other movements.

In these chapters, you may find that information is presented in a repetitious fashion. This is done intentionally. If these exercises were only an intellectual treatise on qigong, such repetition would not be needed. However, since this is also a how-to manual, some instructions are restated so that you do not inadvertently forget them. This is essential to gain the qigong skill you seek.

Two major refinements that should be incorporated into every movement are

- Grabbing your qi at the wei qi level and pushing and pulling along the energy pathways of each movement
- Coordinating breathing with the pushing and pulling of qi.

These chapters provide instructions to do this. In addition, other refinements are offered for some movements.

Before proceeding to learn the material of this chapter, it is very important that you are able to do every step in the previous chapters thoroughly and comfortably.

You should be extremely clear in your understanding of, and ability to perform, the basic physical and energetic patterns of each movement, as presented in the previous chapters.

You must be able to breathe easily and comfortably using the preferred breathing patterns for each movement as presented in Chapter 6. If you cannot do so, you should devote

your time to learning the material within Taoist Longevity Breathing® instead of more Dragon and Tiger.[1]

Once you have accomplished these prerequisites, you will have the energetic stability to proceed. You will also have the confidence and awareness of knowing, based on experiences of feeling inside and around your body, that you are comfortable pushing and pulling qi to the boundary of your etheric body. This chapter's instructions are based on this foundation.

Seek Seamlessness

Throughout these refinements, you should seek to coordinate pulling and pushing of your qi with relaxed breathing. Do them together in a circular, seamless fashion. Keep your jaw relaxed and your tongue touching the roof of your mouth. Focus on having both the ends and beginnings of your pulls and pushes and of your inhales and exhales merge into each other without demarcations. It takes awareness and practice to notice if you are subtly holding your breath or stopping your pull before you begin your push or vice versa.

As your breathing and pushing and pulling become deeper and more powerful, use your intent to try to make them become softer and softer.

If you find that your pulling along an energy pathway becomes weak, slow down and push out a little, then resume pulling. If you find your pushing out becomes weak, slow down and pull in a little, then resume. This will allow you to maintain continuous pulling and pushing throughout the movements.

A Recommended Approach

The refinements presented here direct you to push and pull energy to and from the boundary of your etheric body. The best way to learn to do this is to adopt a two-stage approach:

1. Go through all the refinements, making sure that you can easily and comfortably push and pull at the wei qi level to and from the ends of your physical body. This will create a strong foundation for the second stage and make it easier to achieve.

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[1] For more information on Longevity Breathing methods, refer to the following teaching materials by the author: "Focus on Practice" breathing boxes in the book *Relaxing into Your Being*, the CD *Taoist Breathing for Tai Chi and Meditation*, the DVD *Longevity Breathing* and the book *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*, revised edition, Chapter 5.

2. Go through all the refinements again and gradually extend your pushing and pulling until you can easily and comfortably push and pull to and from the boundary of your etheric body.

In general, the pulling of energy sets the stage for pushing energy. The more you can pull and store, the more you can ultimately push and release. Therefore, focus on separately pulling or pushing energy in all seven movements for some time before you try both pulling and pushing. In some Dragon and Tiger movements, your hands and feet will either pull or push qi together. In others, one hand or foot will pull qi while another hand or foot will push qi at the exact same time during the movement.

Stirring Qi

A new energy technique called stirring qi is now the starting point for the first movement of Dragon and Tiger. One of its functions is to activate your spiraling energy pathways and your horizontal collateral acupuncture meridians, of which the dai mai is the most important. These meridians connect your main vertical acupuncture meridians to each other and transfer energy between them.

Stirring qi enables you to access and use the energy of the earth. For example, this is how the first movement of Chen style tai chi is done. This was taught to the author by the late Feng Zi Qiang. He was a direct disciple of Chen Fake, who brought the original Chen style from the Chen Village into Beijing. The Chen style's first movement is used to initialize the physical coiling of the body and its spiraling qi pathways.

However, unlike Dragon and Tiger Movement 1, it is done only in a clockwise direction.

Step 1: Preparatory Exercise—Stir between Your Hands

Beginning Position: *Feet parallel, arms at your sides.*

Alternate pointing either the fingers or the center of the palm of your right hand toward your left palm. Push energy from your right palm or fingertips into the palm of your left hand *(Figure 14-1)*.

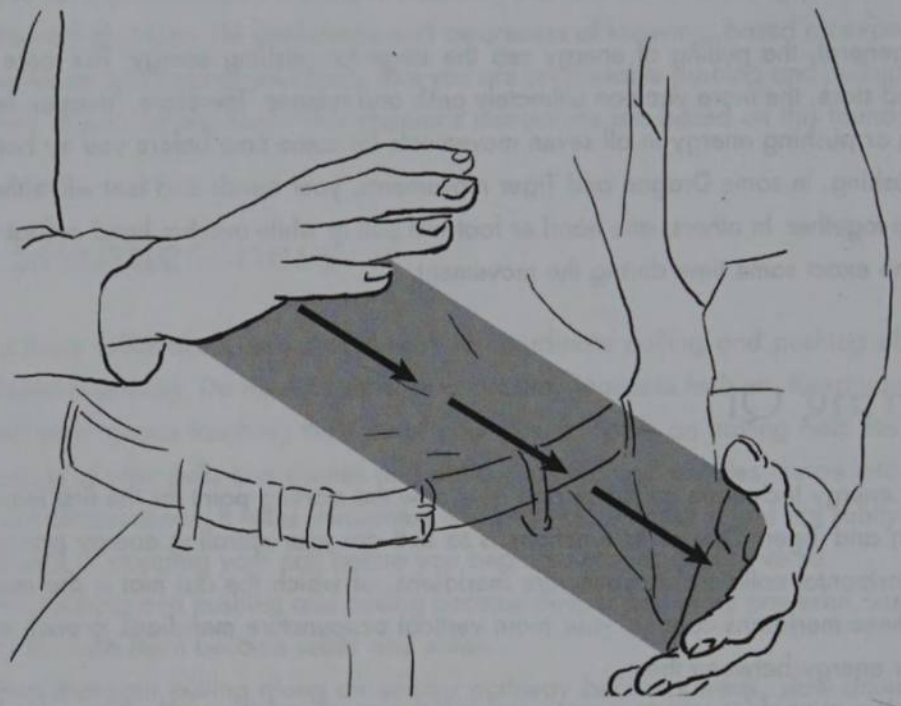


Figure 14-1
Pushing Energy from Right Palm into Left

1. After you can clearly feel the energetic connection from your right to your left palm:
   a. Maintain it.
   b. Let your right wrist and arm go loose. Then twirl your right arm, wrist and fingers counterclockwise to circle energy between your hands. Everything is twirling as a unit. Do this until you can feel the circular movement of your moving palm or fingers exactly traced in the wei qi of your other palm.
   c. Now try Instructions a and b, twirling your right hand in a clockwise direction.
2. Repeat the procedure of Instruction 1 with your left arm.
3. As you continue to practice, move your hands farther and farther apart until you can feel the circular movement of energy at arm's length.

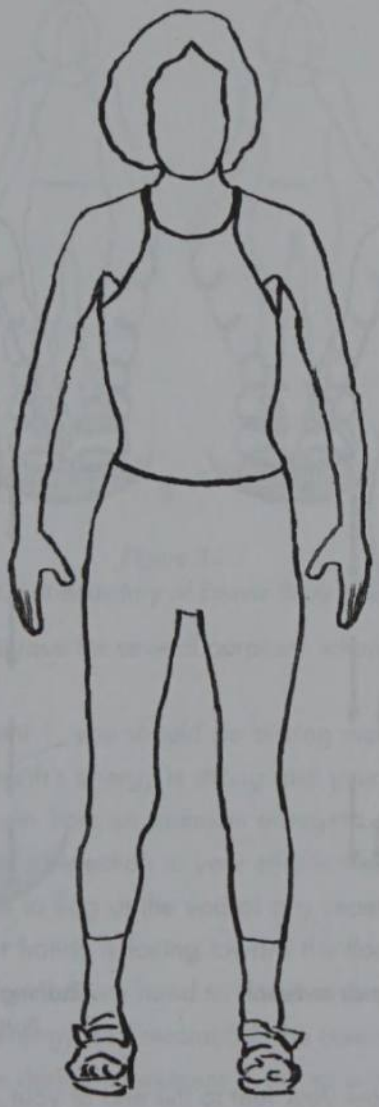


Figure 14-2
Starting Position for Stirring Qi between Palms and Earth

Step 2: Stir between Your Palms and the Earth

1. Have your arms at your sides, fingers facing the floor *(Figure 14-2)*.
2. Push energy from your palms and fingers down along the wei qi of the outside of your legs to your feet *(Figure 14-3)*.

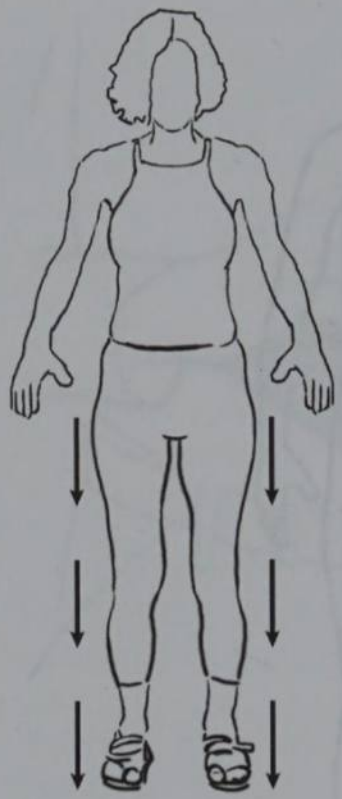


Figure 14-3
Pushing Energy from Hands to Feet

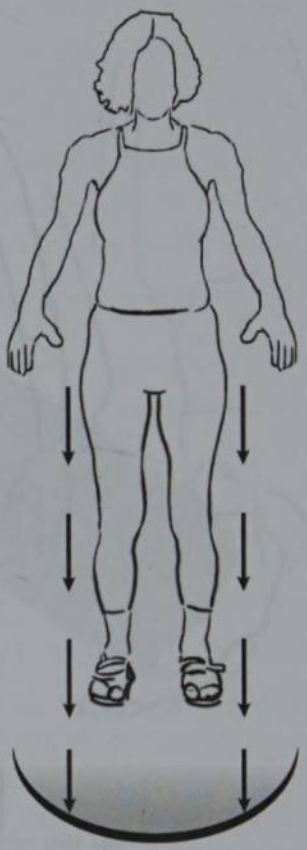


Figure 14-4
Pushing Energy from Hands to Bottom of Etheric Body

3. Next, push the energy below your feet to the end of your etheric body *(Figure 14-4)*. Feel where your energy begins to connect to the energy of the earth.

4. Twirl your hands clockwise and counterclockwise until you get a clear sense of stirring your energy and the earth's energy at your aura's boundary *(Figure 14-5 A)*. First maintain a distance where it is easy for you to feel the energy, and then let your hands move farther apart from your body *(Figure 14-5 B—D)*.

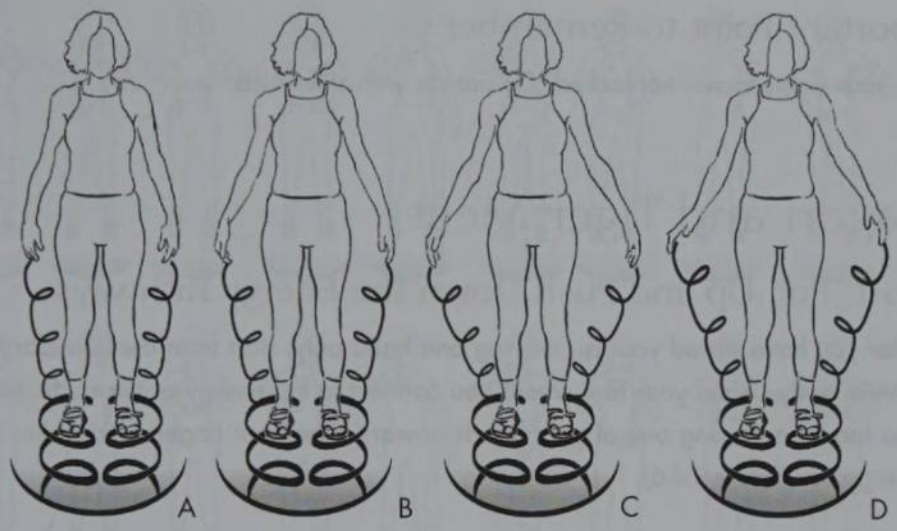


Figure 14-5
Stirring Qi at Boundary of Etheric Body below Feet

You can use this stirring qi technique for several purposes when practicing Dragon and Tiger Qigong:

- Before you start Movement 1, you should do stirring movements until you feel that your connection to the earth's energy is strong and your qi is vibrant and moving. This ensures that you begin from an optimum energetic starting point.
- If your energy or sense of connection to your etheric field below your feet or to the earth's energy begins to flag at the end of any repetitions of Movement 1 and you find that one of your hands is facing toward the floor, stop moving your hands up and down and use your bottom hand to do several qi stirring movements to recharge your sense of energy and reestablish the connection to your etheric body.
- If your energy diminishes during Movement 2, stir qi with the fingers of your bottom hand as it points to the ground.
- In Movement 5, you can stir qi with both hands after the downward flick before you pull qi upward to your feet and legs.

For any of these applications, do as many stirrings either clockwise or counterclockwise as necessary to reestablish a strong sense of energy inside your body and a strong sense of connection to your etheric body and the earth's qi field.

Important Point to Remember

Keep your wrists loose, not locked. Do not stir with stiff wrists.

Dragon and Tiger Meet

Step 1: Pull Up and Push Down the Energy Pathways

1. After you have stirred your qi, moving one hand only, start from the boundary of your etheric body below your foot where you connect to the energy of the earth. Inhale as you focus on moving one of your hands upward. Use your fingers and palms to pull energy up *(Figure 14-6)*.

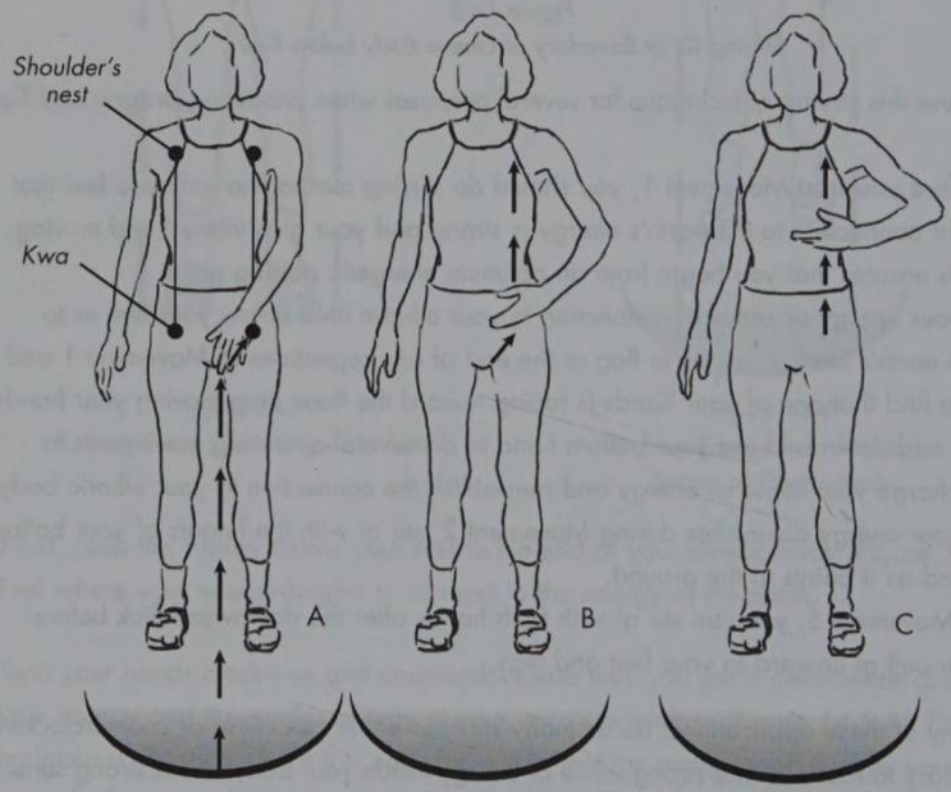


Figure 14-6
Pulling Up Qi at Start of Movement 1

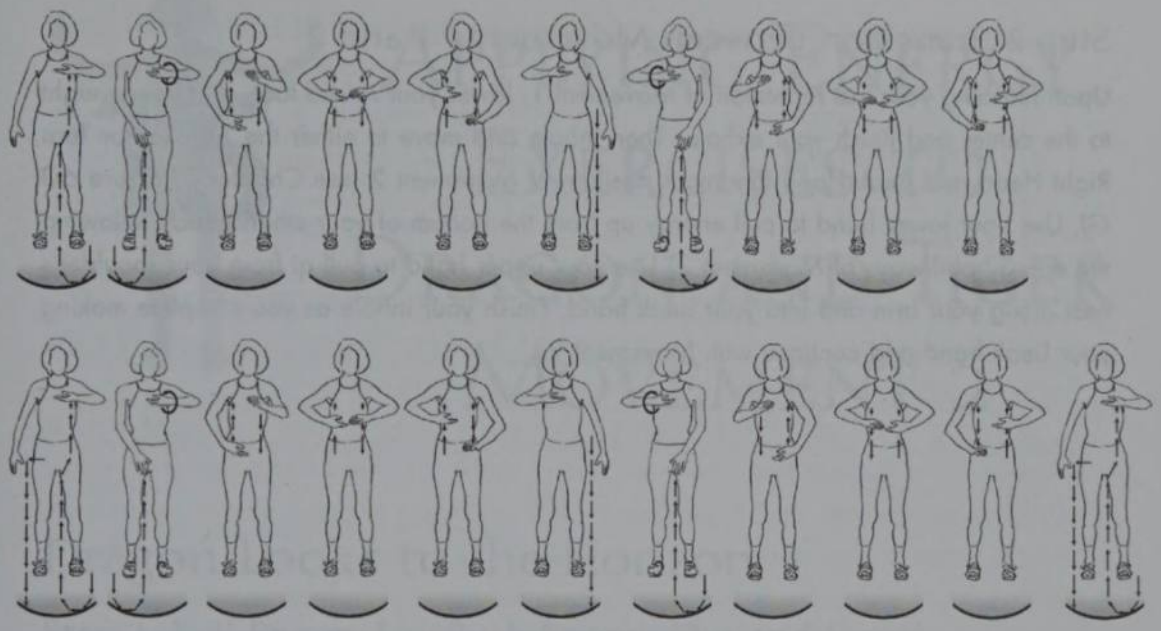


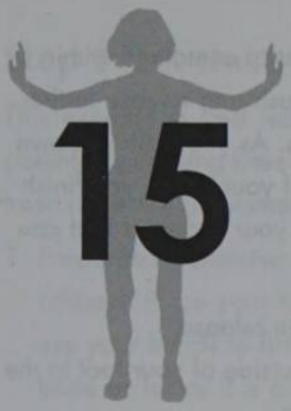
Figure 14-7
Pulling and Pushing Qi to and from Bottom of Etheric Body in Movement 1

Focus on pulling the energy up along the wei qi of the inside of your legs with your fingers as they move to your kwa. Above the kwa, use the center of your palm to continue the upward energetic pull.

2. As you circle your hand over at the top of your upward hand movement, smoothly and seamlessly transition from inhaling to exhaling and from pulling to pushing without hesitating. Continue the sequence as shown in Figure 14-7.
3. As your hand descends, exhale and push energy down to your heel, then continue to the boundary of your etheric body below your foot.
4. Continue to exhale and push energy down to the edge of your etheric body. Circle your hand around your toes toward the inside of your foot and smoothly transition from exhaling to inhaling and pushing to pulling as you repeat Movement 1.
5. Coordinate the pulling and pushing of your hands so that one hand smoothly transitions from push to pull at the same time as the other hand is smoothly transitioning from pull to push. Choose one hand with which to coordinate your breathing.

Step 2: Transition between Movements 1 and 2

Upon finishing your last repetition of Movement 1, lower your raised foot, shift your weight to the center and finish your exhale. Then inhale and move to either the Turn Left or Turn Right Heart and Beak Hand landmark position of Movement 2 (see Chapter 6, *Figure 6-3 G*). Use your lower hand to pull energy up from the bottom of your etheric body following the energy pathways of Movement 2. Use your upper hand to pull qi from your shoulder's nest along your arm and into your beak hand. Finish your inhale as you complete making your beak hand and continue with Movement 2.



15 Applying Energy Exercises to Dragon and Tiger Movement 2

Dragon Looks to the Horizon

Step 1: Pull Energy Up, Push Energy Out and Down

1. As you flick:
   a. Suddenly and softly release and push 80 percent of your energy in a sudden explosion to the boundary of your etheric field. This may seem like a paradox: the word "explosive" is the speed and power with which you release the energy, and the word "softly" is the quality of the nervous system that you need to maintain as you do this. You should push energy out in an explosive laser-like blast but maintain a soft and peaceful quality within your nervous system as you simultaneously release 80 percent of your breath and qi.
   b. In as relaxed a way as possible, use your eyes to help increase the intensity of your qi projection to the end of your etheric field. It is challenging to project strongly from your eyes without creating tension in your muscles, nerves or emotions, but with practice you will learn to use your intent to do so.
   c. Gently exhale the rest of your breath, and push the rest of your energy out of your fingers smoothly and evenly as your arm settles down your side. This phase of the movement finishes when your fingers point to the outside of your foot and your energy from them reaches the bottom of your etheric field. Also use the underside of your dropping arm to push energy from your armpit down the outside flank of your torso and leg to your heel and finally to the bottom of your etheric body.

d. One purpose of the flick is to powerfully release any stagnant qi contained within the channels you have just pulled energy up. The powerful push and release further pulls stagnant energy along with it and out of those channels. As you push qi down your flank and the outside of your leg and further push out of your hand, you finish the job of flushing out any stagnant energy still remaining in your channels that can be released.

2. Inhale and pull the energy up—a long buildup to a short, sudden release.

As you circle the hand that just completed the flick from the outside of your foot to the inside, smoothly transition from push to pull and exhale to inhale.

Inhale slowly. As your hand begins to rise, pull energy up from the bottom of your etheric body to the bubbling well point and up along your leg to your perineum. Focus on pulling energy with your fingers. Next, shift your focus and pull qi with your fingers and the center of your palm up your centerline to your heart. Simultaneously, with your upper palm and fingers pull energy from your shoulder's nest out along your whip arm. Finish with the fingers of your beak hand touching, and thereby concentrate your energy there as you complete the long buildup.

3. Coordinate your hands' pushing and pulling of energy.
   a. As you move from the Turn to Center position to the Turn Left or Turn Right position, smoothly transition your bottom hand from push to pull—and your breath from exhale to inhale—as that hand circles to the inside of your foot and moves up to finish at your heart. Your upper hand then pulls energy along its whip arm to your fingers.
   b. Exhale and flick your outer hand, while continuing to pull energy into your inside hand, which is at your heart. This is the ideal option. If you find this to be difficult, let the hand at your heart temporarily stop pulling while the other hand flicks, then begin to pull again as your flick arm begins to move down.
   c. Continue to exhale and push energy out of the downward-moving hand—and use the underside of that arm to push energy down your side as you continue to pull in with the hand that is moving to your shoulder's nest. Do this until you arrive at the Turn to Center position, then you can do another repetition, beginning again with Instruction a.

Step 2: Let the Muscles of Your Legs Turn as Your Body Turns

This exercise is best learned with a qualified instructor to avoid doing it incorrectly and potentially causing knee problems.[1] Great care should be taken to treat the knee gently. This exercise is not recommended for those with serious knee injuries.

1. Preparatory exercise: Sit on a chair or on the floor so your leg muscles are completely relaxed. Place your hands on your left thigh with your thumbs facing each other, and use your hands to firmly grab and turn the muscles of your leg to the left around the bone as far as it is comfortable. Keep the bones of your leg and foot still. Next, turn them back to the right as far as is comfortable. Keep doing this until you know the feeling of your muscles turning around the bone both toward and away from your body's centerline.

   Do the same with your right thigh.

2. You can do this exercise by yourself or with a partner. It incorporates some of the lower body motions within Movement 2. Slowly shift your weight and turn your hips to the left. Keep your left knee and foot still. Relax, let go and feel the muscles of your weighted left leg's thigh turn to the left around your thighbone counterclockwise *(Figure 15-1)*. This practice achieves the following:
   - Stimulates and heals the internal organs
   - Protects the knees
   - Naturally activates the spiraling energy in your legs
   - Makes turning dramatically smoother

[1] If you have any joint issues affecting your lower body, before doing the twisting exercise, it is advisable to check with your healthcare provider to make sure it is suitable for you. The author's multimedia training courses *Bagua Mastery Program* and *Tai Chi Mastery Program* cover in detail how twisting the legs should be done.

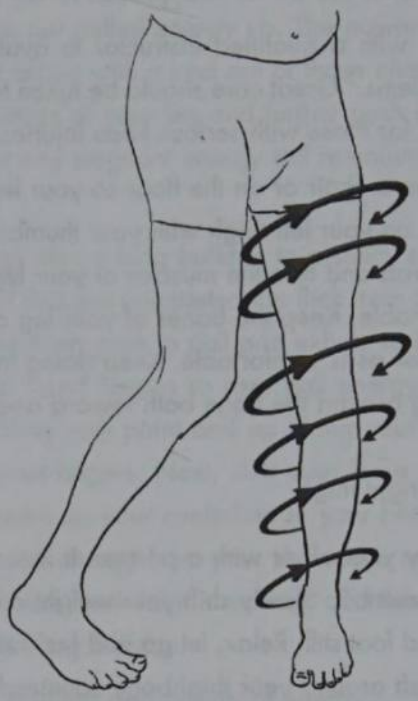


Figure 15-1
Muscles of Leg Turn Outward as Hip and Torso Turn Outward

Because they have your body's weight on them, your thigh muscles may be much tighter than when you are sitting down. Turn only as far as your thigh muscles can remain relaxed and comfortable. Turn your hips back to the front, and let go and feel your thigh muscles turn back toward the front. Next, turn to your right and notice how far you can feel your right thigh muscles turn outward.

Once you can feel your weighted leg's thigh muscles turn, see if you can feel your weighted buttock, side of hip and calf muscles as they turn. Eventually you will feel the tendons and ligaments around your knees and ankles turn as well, so that you feel turning occurring all the way from your lower back to your foot *(Figure 15-2 A–B)*.

A partner can help you turn your kwa, torso and leg muscles outward by placing the edges of his or her hands on your kwa and raising it *(Figure 15-2 A)*. To help you turn inward toward the center, your partner places the edges of the hands on your kwa and moves it downward to help you turn and rotate your leg muscles inward *(Figure 15-2 B)*.

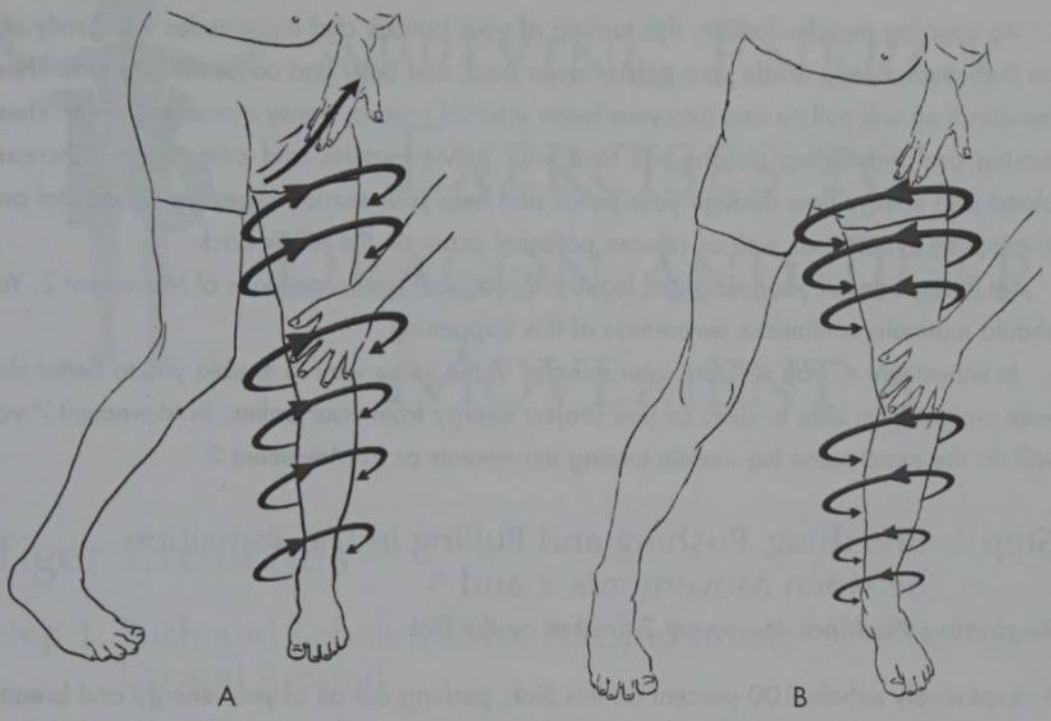


Figure 15-2
Practicing with a Partner to Turn Hip and Leg Outward and Inward
A) Turning outward
B) Turning inward and back to center

You should not feel any turning in the sides or front of your knee or ankle joints. The turning should be in the soft tissues along the backs of your knees and ankles. **Twisting the kneecap itself is potentially dangerous and should be avoided.** Adjust the position of your knee and foot until any turning you feel is only in those soft tissues.[2]

In order not to cause pressure on the knees, the essential alignments of the body must be maintained, especially while turning, including the ankles, knees and thighs of both legs. The turn is initiated from the inguinal cut (kwa).

The thigh and calf muscles should twist in the same direction as the waist, which not only helps protect the knee and the lower back, but also spirals the tissue of the leg.

Initially, you may feel only a little turning in your muscles as you move. However, with time, practice and adherence to the 70 percent rule, the turning movements will relax your muscles and the amount of your turning will naturally increase.

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[2] For more information on knee alignments, see the author's book *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*, revised edition, pp. 160–62, 258.

As your leg muscles loosen, this turning of your buttock and hip muscles will gently pull on the muscles deep inside your pelvis, lower back and belly and cause them to turn. These muscles then will pull on and turn your lower internal organs, gently massaging them. These turning and massaging actions will tone your pelvic muscles and other tissues, increase blood and energy flow through your pelvis and help your sexual, digestive, urogenital and elimination systems, as well as release potential strain on the lower back.

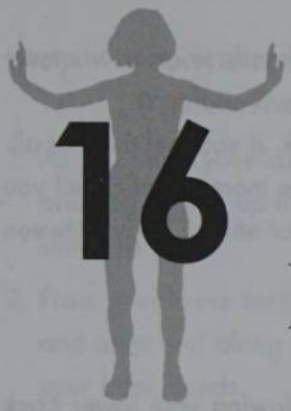
Let the muscles of your weighted leg turn throughout your repetitions of Movement 2. You should maintain continuous awareness of this happening.

In Movement 4, you will turn your muscles in the same way to enable you to better shift your weight from side to side, as you project energy from your palms. In Movement 7 you will do the exact same leg muscle turning movements as in Movement 2.

Step 3: Breathing, Pushing and Pulling in the Transition between Movements 2 and 3

Beginning Position: *Movement 2 finishes on the flick.*

1. Explosively exhale 100 percent on this flick, pushing out all of your energy and breath. Do not let your hand descend.
2. Inhale. With your outer hand, pull energy from your etheric field in along that arm to its armpit. Do the same with your inner hand, across your chest, to its armpit.
3. Continue to inhale and pull energy down your flanks to your dai mai and forward to your lower tantien.
4. As you step either forward or back, make a circuit of your dai mai back to your ming-men and return forward to your lower tantien. Take the time to find which speed, hand placement and intent create the strongest felt sensation of pushing and pulling qi through your dai mai energy channel.
5. Smoothly transition into an exhale and begin to push qi out of your hands as you start Movement 3.



16 Applying Energy Exercises to Dragon and Tiger Movement 3

Tiger Crouches

Step 1: Push and Exhale Down, Pull and Inhale Up and Around

1. Exhale and push energy along your wei qi from your lower tantien sideways to your kwa, then down both sides of your forward leg to your foot and the bottom of your etheric field.
2. Inhale and pull energy inside your wei qi upward from the boundary of your etheric field to the bottom of your foot, up both sides of your leg to your kwa and lower tantien, back to your mingmen, and forward to your lower tantien.

Step 2: Energetically Penetrate Your Legs with Your Palms

Move your hands from your lower tantien sideways to your kwa and down until your palms are facing each other on opposite sides of your leg. Maintain your Goldilocks Distance on both sides as you focus your attention on pushing energy out of either of your palms to penetrate through your leg to the other palm. You should feel a clear sensation of energy coming into each palm from its opposite palm as your qi fully penetrates your legs.

Maintain this feeling of qi penetrating your leg between your hands as you move your hands down and up your leg.

You will use the energy field that you generate between your hands to clear whatever blockages you contact inside your leg as you move your hands down and up it.

In the beginning, the sensations through your leg may feel weak, if you feel them at all. However, with time and practice the sensations are likely to become more specific until you can feel energetic nuances within your legs and in the space of your etheric body between your hands and legs.

Step 3: Breathe Into Your Kidneys

As you do Movement 3 initially, put some of your attention on allowing your lower back muscles to expand and go back to their original position with each seamless inhale and exhale. After you can do this comfortably, shift your focus to feeling your kidneys move ever so slightly physically and/or energetically with each inhale and exhale. Be extremely gentle as you try this because your kidneys are very delicate. To give an extreme example, kidney blows have been banned in boxing as hitting them with too much force is a sure way to cause serious damage or even death.

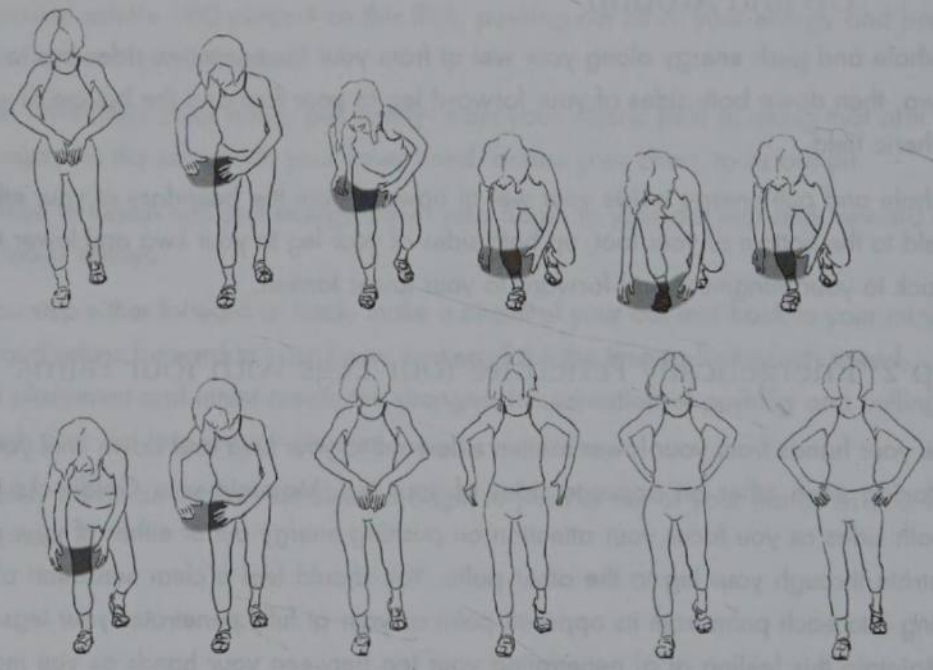


Figure 16-1
Energetically Penetrating Legs with Palms in Movement 3

Step 4: Coordinate Breathing while Pulling and Pushing Energy in the Transition between Movements 3 and 4

1. As you finish your last repetition of Movement 3 (both hands are at your feet), inhale and pull energy up from the bottom of your etheric body to your lower tantien as you stand up.
2. From your lower tantien, continue to inhale and pull energy to and along your flanks and arms and along the unfurling of both whip arms outward from your armpits into your beak hands.
3. As you open and extend your beak hands sideways, exhale and push energy equally out of each palm to the boundaries of your etheric body.

The alternative breathing options mentioned in the Movement 3 section of Chapter 6 can be used if you have trouble inhaling or pulling for that much time. You may briefly exhale and push energy into your lower tantien, then inhale and pull energy up as described above. If you need to catch your breath or calm your nervous system, circle your dai mai several times, inhale and pull from your tantien to your mingmen and exhale and push from your mingmen to your tantien. Then inhale and pull qi along your dai mai to and up your flanks and arms to your beak hands.

17 Applying Energy Exercises to Dragon and Tiger Movement 4

Tiger Separates Her Cubs

Step 1: Inhale and Pull Energy through Your Body; Exhale and Push Out

In this step you will learn to pull energy from the boundary of your etheric body through your palms, arms and chest; and then continue to push that energy out to the boundary of the opposite side of your etheric field. You will do this both right to left and left to right.

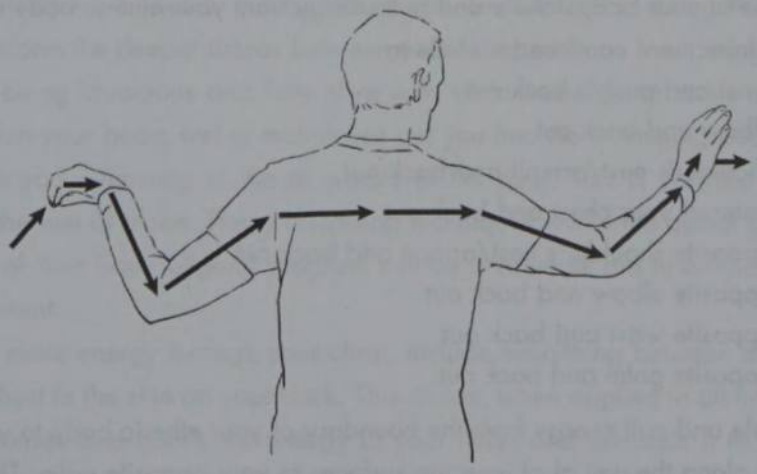


Figure 17-1
Pulling Energy In while Inhaling and Pushing It Out on the Exhale in Movement 4

There are two methods for pushing and pulling qi. Using Method 1, you will move energy from one side of your body to the other along the wei qi of the yin surfaces of your hands, arms and chest. Using Method 2, you will move energy directly through the interior of your arms, chest and back.

Practice each instruction until you can clearly feel your energy moving. Then go on to the next instruction. This strategy allows your body to absorb and apply the information, producing the best results.

Method 1: Pulling and Pushing Energy along the Wei Qi of Your Yin Surfaces

As you move toward one side, inhale and pull energy from the boundary of your etheric body into the fingers and palm of your beak hand, which should form gradually and smoothly. Then use your feeling awareness and intent to grab and pull that energy along the wei qi of the yin surface of that arm (and where necessary, your chest and other arm) to the area specified in Instruction 1 that follows.

As you shift toward the other side, exhale and push the energy from the specific place mentioned in the instruction back along the wei qi of your yin surfaces to your original palm and beyond it out to the boundary of your etheric field.

When you can pull into and push out of a place comfortably and easily, proceed to the next instruction. Inhale when you pull and exhale when you push.

1. Pick a side of your body, inhale and pull energy from your etheric body to that palm and then from there continue to inhale to
   a. Your wrist and push it back out
   b. Your elbow and back out
   c. Your shoulder's nest/armpit and back out
   d. The center of your chest and back out
   e. Your opposite shoulder's nest/armpit and back out
   f. Your opposite elbow and back out
   g. Your opposite wrist and back out
   h. Your opposite palm and back out.
2. Now inhale and pull energy from the boundary of your etheric body to your original palm and along the wei qi of your yin surfaces to your opposite palm. Then exhale and push all the energy in that palm out to the boundary of your etheric field that is on the opposite side of your body.

3. Repeat Instructions 1 and 2 starting from the other side of your body.

As you become comfortable doing each instruction of how to move energy to discrete parts of your body, incorporate that instruction into each repetition of Movement 4 when you do a whole Dragon and Tiger set.

Method 2: Pulling and Pushing Qi through Your Arms and Chest

After you feel comfortable and competent doing Method 1, repeat the same procedures in the same order using Method 2.

For each instruction, as you move your body and arms toward one side, inhale and pull energy from the boundary of your etheric body into the fingers and palm of your forming beak hand. Then use your mind to continue to pull that energy through the whole inside of that arm (and your torso and other arm as appropriate) to the area specified in the instruction. Then push that energy through your physical or etheric body to the place specified in the instruction.

To move energy through an area inside your body, move your mind—your feeling awareness and intention—through the physical structures in that place. You will know that you can do this practice stage competently when you can feel energy soak/penetrate continuously from one end of the area to the other through all the skin, muscles and any internal organs there. It is even better if you can feel the energy move through any other body parts, such as ligaments, tendons, bones or joints. When you are successful, doing this inside your body will transform the deeper tissues between your skin and bone from being unconscious and numb to being conscious and fully alive with vibrant energy. In terms of consciously moving qi within your body, wei qi techniques get you into the swimming pool. These later techniques get you swimming in the qi waters of the pool. This is the next step beyond working with the wei qi alone. The qi-dissolving techniques within the author's Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body Qigong program can be a valuable aid in arriving at this level of accomplishment.

When you move energy through your chest, include everything between the skin on the front of your chest to the skin on your back. This action, when applied in all the instructions, thoroughly cleanses and opens the energy of your heart and connects it to your left and right channels.

Energizing the Heart and Reducing Anxiety

In Movement 4, energy transfers back and forth from the left side of your body to the right, then right to left. On the way, the energy passes through the heart. On a physical level, as you shift weight and energy from one side of your body to the other, blood is also being transferred. The energy transfer is right through the heart, helping all its functions, including the oxygenation of the blood. This movement can boost the energy of the heart itself, as well as everything around it, such as the pericardium and the arteries, which can impact the ability of the heart to function smoothly.

The energy you pass through the heart can have two opposite qualities, yin and yang. The heart is the seat of joy and peacefulness; it helps you enjoy life moment by moment, even in challenging times. Movement 4 helps boost that quality.

The opposite emotion to joy is anxiety, the big disease of our age. At its root, anxiety is about the fear of what is going to happen next. You may try to mask it with positive thoughts, but the chatter still goes on in your head. Instead of peace and joy, you have stress.

Tension and stress can constrict the physical body and send blood rushing to the head. Blood pressure may spike as the heart, and the muscles and blood vessels surrounding it, constrict, causing the heart to work much harder to compensate.

Thus, making your heart calm and balanced, even from the most ordinary anatomical perspective, is a way to calm anxiety.

The energy of the heart makes a big difference to whether you feel that your cup is always half full or always half empty. When you have anxiety, your cup is always half empty. You may even believe it doesn't have much in it at all. The more your heart moves toward joy, the more your cup becomes full. The more anxiety you can take out of that cup, the more room it has to become fuller.

In Taoist and Buddhist practices, the heart is considered to be very important because the seat of a person's consciousness lives there. If people become enlightened, it doesn't come from the head. They get enlightened from the heart.

On the most pragmatic level, people scheduled for various kinds of surgery, especially heart surgery, may find it very helpful to practice twenty repetitions of Movement 4 and then a complete set of Dragon and Tiger. This can make the surgery go more smoothly and help speed up recovery.

What you would *not* do is only this movement. You need to follow it with the whole sequence of Dragon and Tiger. What each move does is set up a cycle of reinforcement, where the movements before actually help the next one do its work—in this case energize the heart. Of course, if someone with heart problems had to learn just one single movement, then this one would be the most useful. However, it's the seven movements done together in sequence that causes an energetic flow where the whole is genuinely greater than the sum of the parts. The sequence is in no way accidental.

Step 2: Make a Sustained Push and Exhale with Soft Eyes

As you are doing Step 1, when you exhale and push energy from one of your palms, push slowly and steadily, carefully feeling through your etheric body as you move that energy to your etheric boundary. Take three or four seconds to do so before you begin to pull back in. In addition, softly and gently project energy from your eyes in the direction you are pushing qi. During the entire time you are pulling qi in, let energy come back softly and gently into your eyes.

Step 3: Pull and Push Energy in the Transition between Movements 4 and 5

1. As you finish your final repetition of Movement 4, slowly exhale and push energy from the center of your extending palm to the end of your etheric body, as you shift your weight to the center and turn your head to the front.
2. Simultaneously during the weight shift, slowly extend your opposite arm to the side as you open your palm, point your fingers upward and push energy from this hand to the end of your etheric body.
3. Smoothly transition into an inhale, pull energy into your fingers and palms from the ends of your etheric body and begin to form beak hands. Continue to inhale and gradually form beak hands as you pull qi along the insides of your arms to your armpits.
4. Continue to inhale and pull energy into your hands, especially your palms, down your flanks to your dai mai.
5. Exhale, and as you open your beak hands, push energy from your palms and then your fingers, down the outside of your legs to your heels and the bottom of your etheric body and circle your fingers around your toes toward the inside of your feet.

Now you are ready to begin Movement 5.



18 Applying Energy Exercises to Dragon and Tiger Movement 5

Tiger Pounces

The technique described below is considered a separate qigong exercise in its own right and is practiced all over China by young and old alike.

Step 1: Energize the Lower Tantien

The lower tantien is the most important qi center in the body. It is the only point through which every major and minor energy channel that affects your physical health passes. Chinese qigong practices consider a person's ability to store qi in and generate qi from the lower tantien to be critical to achieving the benefits of qigong.

Stand with your feet parallel, no wider than shoulder's-width apart. Have the centers of both your palms face your lower tantien during the whole exercise. Inhale, shift your weight to the balls of your feet, and pull energy from the wei qi in front of your tantien through the air into your palms. When you exhale, shift your weight backward to your heels and push qi from your palm, through the air into the wei qi in front of your lower tantien *(Figure 18-1 A–E)*.

Repeat this pushing and pulling many times. With practice, you will gently push and pull your qi deeper and deeper into your body until one day you will be able to push and pull qi directly into and from your lower tantien.

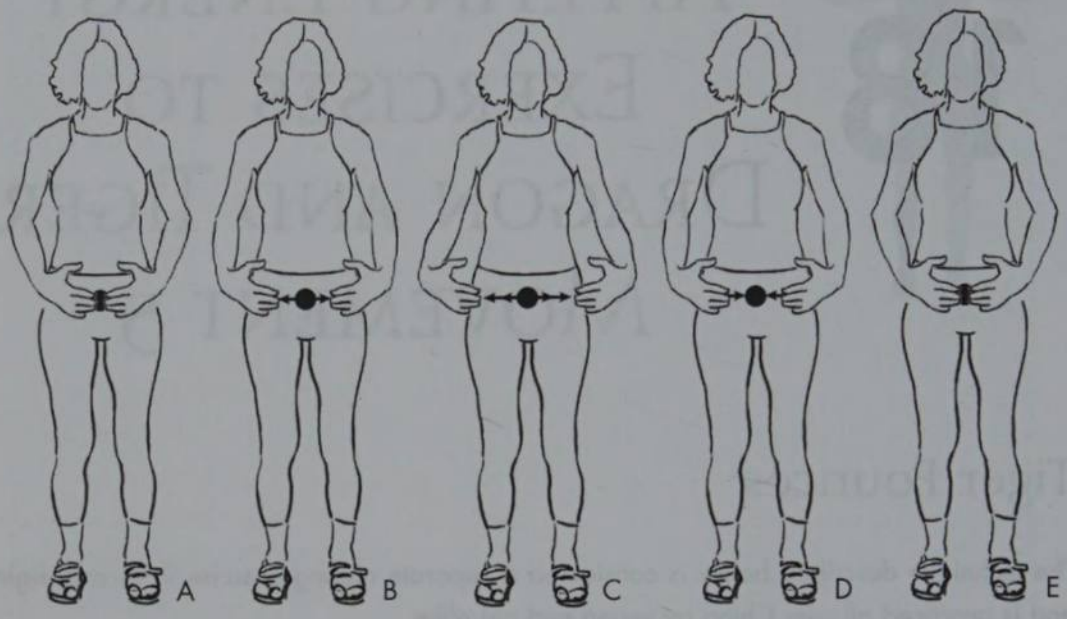


Figure 18-1
Energizing the Lower Tantien
Qi is pushed into and pulled out of lower tantien from and into palms.

Step 2: Slow Buildup to an Instantaneous Downward Release

Movement 5 consists of only two parts:

1. When you flick, instantaneously exhale and push/release all the energy from your hands into the ground and from your whole body down the outside of your legs into the ground with the conscious intention of penetrating the ground to the boundary of your etheric field below.
2. Immediately after this short exhale, begin to inhale and slowly pull energy from the bottom of your etheric body to the bubbling well points on your feet, along the wei qi of the insides of your legs to your perineum and along your body's centerline and lower tantien, around your dai mai and back to your lower tantien as you form your beak hands and then release and flick. Pull primarily with your fingers until you reach your perineum, and then primarily with your palms.

You should have a clear sense of a strong buildup, seamlessly followed by an instantaneous release, seamlessly followed by a strong buildup, and so on.

If your breath is strong enough and you wish to increase the power of the movement or release more stagnant energy, you can continue to inhale and trace the dai mai a second time before flicking again. However, do not do this unless you can continuously inhale in a very relaxed manner without strain until you flick and exhale.

When you flick, gently project energy from your eyes toward the ground; and as you pull, let energy gently come back into your eyes.

Step 3: Silent Explosion of the Breath

During the flick, exhale through your nose and release your air in one great, silent explosion. A silent explosion may seem like a paradox. In order for it to happen, you must learn to generate the force of the breath's explosion in an extremely relaxed way from your belly and kidneys, and release almost all of the air in your lungs through your nose, without making any audible noise.

To create a silent explosion, your inhale should be soft, silent and very slow. You should feel as though you are creating a great bellows inside your belly and lower back. Your kidneys should feel as if they are very gently filling up with an exceptional amount of qi. Your breathing should be smooth, seamless and circular. Work on eliminating any hesitation between your inhales and exhales.

Step 4: Transition between Movements 5 and 6

Beginning Position: *You have finished the downward flick and exhale of Movement 5. The fingers of both hands are pointing to the ground.*

1. Begin to inhale, form two sword hands and slowly pull energy from the bottom of your etheric body up the wei qi of the inside of your legs to your lower tantien using your fingers and palms.
2. Continue to inhale and pull energy with your sword fingers and palms sideways along the dai mai to your left and right channels. If your inhale or pulling capacity is weak, slow your movement, exhale and push, then inhale as you resume your normal speed.
3. Continue to inhale as you pull qi with your sword fingers and palms, one hand going up to over your head and the other hand down to facing your feet.

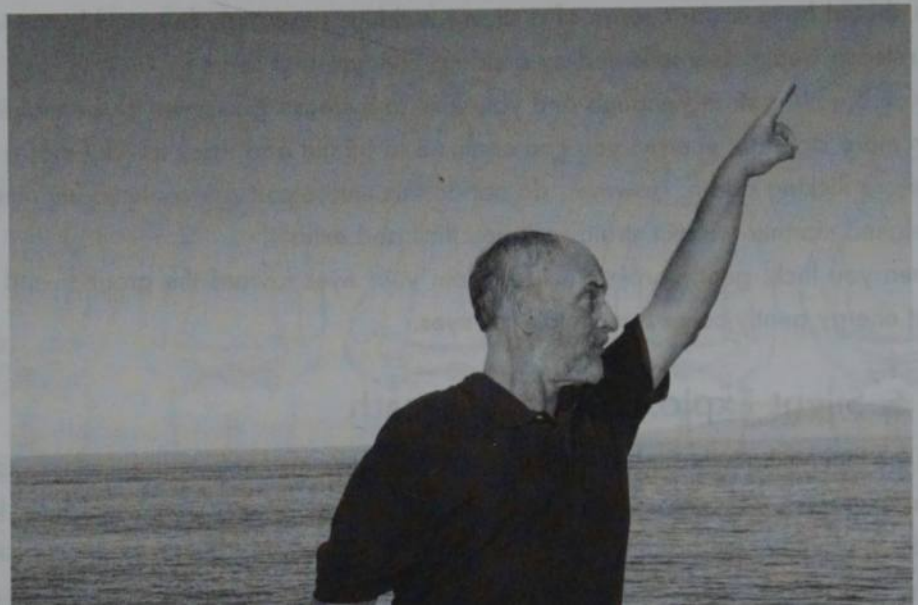
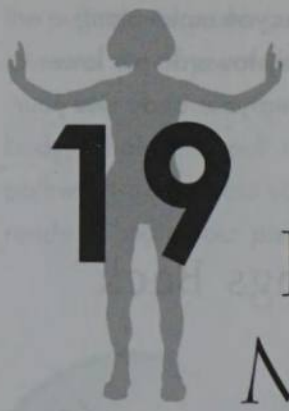




Photo by Richard Marks

The author performs Dragon and Tiger Movement 7.



19 Applying Energy Exercises to Dragon and Tiger Movements 6 and 7

Dragon and Tiger Pierce Heaven and Earth

Step 1: Pierce in Two Stages, Then Pull from One End to the Other

1. When you exhale and pierce in the two-phase manner described in Chapter 6, Movement 6, Step 2, push your energy out of your sword hands to the ends of your etheric body. Your goal is for your strong piercing action to cause your etheric body over time to extend a greater distance in both directions. You may feel as if the boundary of your qi body expands to several feet above your head and below your feet.
2. As you begin to move your sword hands back from their extended positions, begin your long inhale and pull energy from the top and bottom of your etheric body. Continue to inhale and pull energy up to the bubbling well on your foot and down to bai hui at the top of your head and then along the energy pathways of the exercise until you exhale, push and pierce again.

Step 2: Transition between Movements 6 and 7

Beginning Position: *You have pierced and exhaled.*

1. Smoothly transition to an inhale and pull energy with your sword hand fingers, one hand pulling from the top of your etheric body down the Movement 6 pathways, and the other hand pulling from the bottom of your etheric body upward, until the sword fingers of both hands point at your dai mai.

2. Continue to inhale and pull energy inward toward your center as you move along your dai mai until the extended fingers of both hands point directly toward your lower tantien. You have now pulled energy from heaven and earth along your body into your lower tantien.

Dragon Soars to Heaven and Brings Back the Pearl

Step 1: Awaken Your Lower Tantien

1. As you transition to the beginning position of Movement 7, you should have a clear sense of your sword fingers pulling energy from both sides of your body into the wei qi of your lower belly in front of your lower tantien. Ideally, you will feel energy being pulled both directly into the wei qi spot in front of your lower tantien and into your lower tantien energy center itself, which lies deeper in the middle of your body toward the spine.
2. If you do not feel such sensations in your lower tantien clearly, or if either feeling seems weak, exhale and gently push energy from your gently extending sword hand fingers into the general area of your lower tantien. Gently inhale and pull energy from your lower tantien into your sword fingers.
3. Repeat pushing/exhaling and pulling/inhaling until to the best of your ability you feel your tantien is awakened.

Step 2: Use Your Mind to Pull and Push Energy

Place your feeling awareness and intention into your lower tantien and, using only your mind, from the wei qi pull energy from the front of your belly into your tantien as you push energy toward it with your fingers. Then push energy out of your tantien through your wei qi as you pull energy from your belly with your fingers. With practice, you eventually should feel as if you are pulling and pushing qi directly between your fingers and your lower tantien.

You will be pulling from one end of the energy flow and pushing at the other. As you switch the direction of the flow back and forth, you can play with which side of the flow you put more of your awareness into. You can coordinate your inhales and exhales with either

the pulling and pushing of your fingers or that of your tantien. Using your mind to pull energy into and out of your lower tantien is called "pulsing the lower tantien."

When you have awakened your lower tantien, begin Movement 7. As you turn your body, inhale and pull energy into your sword hand fingers diagonally along the torso's pathways up and out your arm and down and out your leg, to the position where you are ready to begin your piercing action.

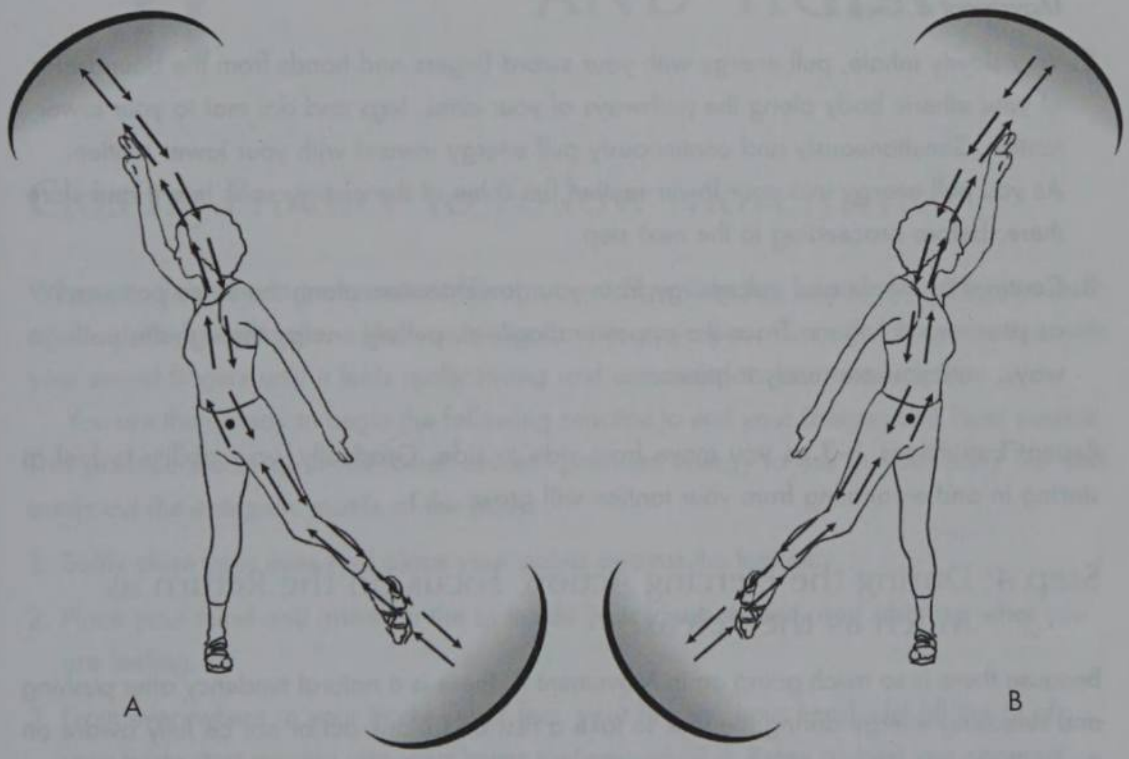


Figure 19-1
Pushing and Pulling Qi in Movement 7

Step 3: Store into and Release Energy from Your Lower Tantien as You Pull and Push

Consciously move energy into and out of your lower tantien in conjunction with the movements.

1. When you make your two-phase exhale and pierce, push energy past your hands and piercing foot to the ends of your etheric body *(Figure 19-1)*. Simultaneously, gently pulse energy out of your lower tantien, using the same two-phase 60:40 ratio for releasing your breath and qi previously explained for Movement 6 in Chapter 6, Movement 6, Step 2.
2. Very slowly inhale, pull energy with your sword fingers and hands from the boundaries of your etheric body along the pathways of your arms, legs and dai mai to your lower tantien. Simultaneously and continuously pull energy inward with your lower tantien. As you pull energy into your lower tantien, let some of the energy soak into it and store there, before proceeding to the next step.
3. Continue to inhale and pull energy from your lower tantien along the same pathways as your sword fingers. Trace the opposite diagonal, pulling energy through the pathways, until you are ready to pierce.

Repeat Instructions 1–3 as you move from side to side. Gradually, your ability to feel qi storing in and emanating from your tantien will grow.

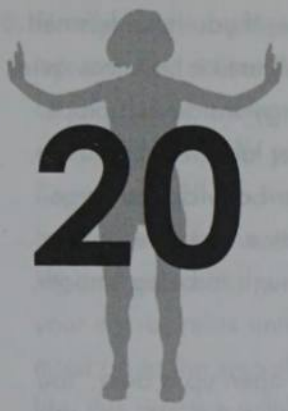
Step 4: During the Piercing Action, Focus on the Return as Much as the Release

Because there is so much going on in Movement 7, there is a natural tendency after pushing and releasing energy during the flick to take a rest and blank out or not be fully aware on the pullback of qi to your lower tantien. This is a mistake.

Put effort into not losing your focus. Maintain awareness in the transition between the end of your flick and the beginning of your pullback. Once you have practiced this principle for a while, apply it in the flicks of Movements 2, 5 and 6 also.

Step 5: Let the Muscles of Your Legs Turn as Your Body Turns

Incorporate the turning of your muscles in your weighted leg into all phases of this movement as shown for Movement 2 in Chapter 15.



20 Integration—Ending Dragon and Tiger

Closing Practice to Follow Movement 7

When you finish the last movement of Dragon and Tiger Qigong, let your sword fingers meet again at the lower tantien. Make sure the armpits stay open. Pump the lower tantien with your sword fingers until it feels really strong and connected to your whole body.

You are then ready to begin the following practice to end your Dragon and Tiger session. This practice stores qi in the lower tantien, provides energy to use in your daily life and evens out the energetic matrix of the body.

1. Softly close your eyes and place your palms against the tantien.
2. Place your mind and intent on the qi inside your lower tantien, and stabilize what you are feeling.
3. From everywhere in your body—your feet, your fingers, your head—let all the qi of your body start moving into your lower tantien and fill it. Relax as best you can and just let the energy begin flowing in. Let the qi fill your lower tantien as much as possible.
4. Have your intent/mind encapsulate that qi inside a force field, as though it were a ball. Use your intent to encircle it, so that the lower tantien is at the center and there is some kind of spherical barrier around it. The aim is to feel as though the energy in your tantien is inside something.
5. A common experience when you do this is that the inside of the lower tantien may be firing and discharging, with energy moving all over the place, because it is trying to

integrate itself and this agitation means it cannot yet do so. Now, if you have learned the Taoist Dissolving process,[1] dissolve everything inside that ball until it becomes quiet.

If you do not know how to dissolve, then try to make the energy inside that place become very calm, very quiet, very still, very smooth, like a quiet lake. Wait until the agitation calms down. As that occurs, just let every nerve in your body do the same.

When you first begin, it may not be that easy to do this practice. However, over time, you will find it easier to make the energy go from being rough to being smooth, quiet and calm.

6. Focus your mind right in the very center of that energy ball and open up a door. You simply allow it to open. That is, you let all the energy that's inside that ball go inside you. You let it go in and you let it go in and you let it go in. This is the process of storing qi inside the lower tantien, just like storing money in a bank account.

   If you can dissolve the qi that is going in, that's best. At least try to stay very relaxed and calm. If you store energy that is agitated, it can continue to agitate inside your system and you may be creating a stress bomb inside yourself. So do what you can to make the qi very smooth and quiet as it goes in.

7. There will be a certain point where it will feel as though you are full and you cannot take in any more qi. It might even feel like what happens when you've eaten too much, or that you have just had enough.

   At this point you close the door. The door is a pinpoint. It is not physical but rather a pinpoint inside your energetic anatomy. Again, whatever is inside you, just try to calm it down. Bear in mind that now you cannot dissolve it any further. The door is closed, and there is no more access. You just let it calm down as best you can.

   Even so, you may still have something left inside your lower tantien to be dissolved. Dissolve this until it becomes smooth, so that every place you can feel that is inducing some shaking or agitation inside you is released and you feel calm.

   Let your mind settle on your lower tantien. Do this until the sense of your lower tantien being settled and the energy inside that ball being settled become not different, so that you feel they have something in common even if they are not exactly the same.

   If you do not know how to dissolve, try to become calm and relaxed to the best of your abilities. Eventually, you will arrive at a point where you will feel as still and integrated as you can.

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[1] The Outer Dissolving process is explained in the author's book *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*, revised edition, Chapter 7.

8. Finally, let the barrier go. Let the door that you have closed simply open of its own accord. You do not do anything to make it happen. You simply let the energy move out of your lower tantien. Do this slowly and gradually in all directions equally until the qi spreads and fills your entire body, all the way down to your feet, through to your fingers and all the way to the top of your head, and if you are able, all the way to the boundaries of your entire etheric body. While this is happening, you just keep on relaxing and releasing to allow the qi energy to spread. Wherever that energy moves, let your nerves relax until they have a sense of being smooth rather than jangled. Let your mind go to the smoothness, and not toward tension or roughness. In all parts of your life, this practice will help prevent you from being overloaded by stress.

   You have been spreading out the energy you're going to use for that day, like the gas in your tank to drive your car. Left inside the lower tantien is what you are storing for the future.

9. When you feel the energy has gone out and done as much as it can do, and the inside of your body feels integrated into one whole, open your eyes slowly enough to where you get no shock, so that there is a continuum and no dissonance between what is inside and what is outside you. You want to feel that what is outside does not shock your insides and what is inside does not shock what you see out in the world. Open your eyes slowly enough so that everything still feels smooth.

   If you open your eyes too fast, then the outside world can seem quite different and might seem a bit of a shock, like going from a dark movie theater and walking into bright sunlight. If you open your eyes too fast or start moving too fast, you can activate the habit of stress and tension and lose the smoothness you felt.

   So do yourself a favor. Open your eyes slowly, for a few minutes move slowly, and encourage the habit of relaxation.

   Then you do the next thing that is in your life, whatever that may be.

Advanced Energy Practices

Advanced energy practices are not a part of this book. First you must become very comfortable and proficient with the techniques in this volume. The capacities you develop through the material in this book form the foundation upon which the advanced energy work must be

built. It is important to remember that in the long run you are likely to impede your progress and cause yourself problems rather than helping yourself if you move on to the advanced energy work too soon.

Appendix
Taoism—A Living Tradition

Many traditions based on ancient philosophies and religions have vibrantly continued into modern times. Because they manifest in our lives today, they are called "living traditions." These include Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, yoga and Taoism. The latter three have clear practices that concentrate on physical exercises and energy work.

Taoism is the least known of the living traditions. Although its main literary works—the *I Ching*, the writings of Zhuangzi (also transliterated as Chuang Tse or Chuang Tzu), and the *Tao Te Ching* by Laozi (also known as Lao Tse or Lao Tzu)—are well known and available in many translations, the practical methods and techniques of implementing Taoist philosophy in daily life are little documented in the West.

The Taoist lineages that Bruce Frantzis holds and teaches today are in the Water tradition of Taoism, which has received minimal exposure in the West. Part of his lineage empowers and directs him to bring practices based on that tradition to Westerners. He learned the Chinese language and became immersed in the traditions of China during his training there, which spanned more than a decade.

While Frantzis studied with his main teacher, Grandmaster Liu Hung Chieh, texts were presented as: "This is what they say; this is what they mean; this is how to do them." Frantzis offers an unprecedented bridge to this pragmatic approach to spirituality; in fact, we are not aware of any other English or European language source for this style of teaching. It means that spirituality is not just an aspiration for which people strive in the dark—"in a mirror, darkly," to quote St. Paul—but it can become a genuine, accomplishable reality.

Frantzis Energy Arts System

Bruce Frantzis, drawing on more than a decade of Taoist training in China and more than forty years of training instructors, has developed the Frantzis Energy Arts® System, a practical, comprehensive series of programs that can enable people of all ages and fitness levels to increase their core energy and attain vibrant health. He is the founder of Energy Arts, Inc., which offers a continually expanding list of books, DVDs, CDs, online training programs and

events in North America and Europe. Find out the latest details and sign up for the Energy Arts email list to receive free product downloads at *EnergyArts.com*.

Taoist methods for developing qi—energy arts—fall into the following broad categories, and all are included in the Frantzis Energy Arts System:

- Tai chi, bagua and hsing-i
- Qigong/neigong
- Taoist Neigong Yoga™
- Healing others with qigong tui na
- Taoist meditation
- Taoist sexual practices

Tai Chi, Bagua and Hsing-i

Historically in China, the three primary internal martial arts of tai chi chuan, bagua zhang and hsing-i chuan have been practiced for health, for martial power and as moving meditation. In addition to teaching these practices at instructor trainings and other courses worldwide, lineage holder Bruce Frantzis has created three separate mastery programs for home and online study: the *Tai Chi Mastery Program*, the *Bagua Mastery Program*, and the *Hsing-i Mastery Program*. These programs contain some of the most comprehensive material ever recorded on the internal workings of these arts.

Tai Chi Chuan

Most Westerners learn tai chi purely as a health exercise, although it was traditionally learned as a martial art. Tai chi relaxes and regulates the central nervous system, releases physical and emotional stress and promotes mental and emotional well-being. Tai chi's gentle, non-jarring movements are ideal for people of any age and body type and can cultivate a high degree of relaxation, balance and physical coordination in the practitioner.

Tai chi is commonly referred to as a form of moving meditation. Tai chi's slow, graceful movements provide relaxed focus, quiet down your internal dialogue and engender a deep sense of relaxation that helps release inner tensions. Frantzis trained extensively in the traditional Wu, Yang and Chen styles of tai chi chuan, including short and long forms, push hands, self-defense techniques and traditional weapons such as sticks and swords.

Related Products:

- *Tai Chi Mastery Program* [Fifty-plus DVDs, written and online material]
- *Tai Chi for Beginners* and *Tai Chi Circling Hands* [Online courses]

- *The Power of Internal Martial Arts and Chi: Combat and Energy Secrets of Ba Gua, Tai Chi and Hsing-i* [Book]
- *Bagua and Tai Chi* [Book]
- *Tai Chi: Health for Life* [Book]

Bagua Zhang

Even more ancient than tai chi, bagua circle walking was developed more than four thousand years ago in Taoist monasteries as a health and meditation art. The aim of its techniques is to develop the potential of the mind and achieve stillness and clarity; to generate a strong, healthy, disease-free body; and, perhaps most importantly, to maintain internal balance while one's external or inner world rapidly changes.

Bagua is first and foremost a qi art embodying the eight primal energies that are encompassed by the eight trigrams of the *I Ching*. Its basic internal power training consists of learning eight palm changes and combining them with walking, spiraling and twisting arm movements and constant changes of direction.

Bagua was designed to fight up to eight opponents at once. Virtually no other martial art system or style, internal or external, has combined and seamlessly integrated the whole pantheon of martial arts fighting techniques into one package as effectively as bagua.

Internal martial arts such as bagua and tai chi teach you to use relaxation, qi, and stillness of mind to accomplish the pragmatic goal of winning in a violent confrontation, rather than using muscular tension, strength or anger to gain or project power.

Related Products:

- *Bagua Mastery Program* [Forty-five-plus DVD/CDs, one-thousand-page training manual and online material]
- *Bagua and Tai Chi* [Book]
- *The Power of Internal Martial Arts and Chi: Combat and Energy Secrets of Ba Gua, Tai Chi and Hsing-i* [Book]

Hsing-i Chuan

Hsing-i (also transliterated as xingyi) emphasizes all aspects of the mind to create its forms and fighting movements. This art is an equally potent healing practice because it makes people healthy and then very strong. The five primal elements or phases of energy—Metal, Water, Wood, Fire and Earth—upon which Chinese medicine is based and from which all manifested phenomena are created—govern hsing-i's five basic movements. Hsing-i's

training is based on a linear, militaristic approach: marching in straight lines, with a powerful emphasis at the end of every technique on mentally or physically taking an enemy down.

Related Products:

- *Hsing-i Chuan Mastery Program* [Thirty-plus DVDs]
- *I Chuan Standing Postures* [Four-DVD set]
- *The Power of Internal Martial Arts and Chi: Combat and Energy Secrets of Ba Gua, Tai Chi and Hsing-i* [Book]

Qigong/Neigong Practices

The Frantzis Energy Arts System includes six primary qigong courses that, together with the Taoist Longevity Breathing® program, progressively and safely incorporate all aspects of neigong—the original qi cultivation (qigong) system in China that originated from the Taoists. Although the qigong techniques are very old, Bruce Frantzis' system of teaching them is unique and is specifically tailored to Westerners and the needs of modern life.

The core practices consist of:

- Taoist Longevity Breathing
- Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong
- Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body™ Qigong
- The Marriage of Heaven and Earth™ Qigong
- Bend the Bow™ Spinal Qigong
- Spiraling Energy Body™ Qigong
- Gods Playing in the Clouds™ Qigong

These core qigong programs were deliberately chosen because they are among the most effective and treasured of Taoist energy practices. They are ideal for clearly and progressively learning the sixteen components of neigong.

Taoist Longevity Breathing

Frantzis has developed the method of Taoist Longevity Breathing to teach authentic Taoist breathing in systematic stages. Whole-body breathing has been used for millennia to enhance the ability to dissolve and release energy blockages in the mind/body, enhancing well-being and spiritual awareness. Incorporating these breathing techniques into any other Taoist energy practice will help bring out its full potential.

Related Products:

- *Taoist Breathing for Tai Chi and Meditation* [Two-CD Set]
- *Longevity Breathing* [DVD]

Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong

Dragon and Tiger is one of the most direct and accessible low-impact qigong healing methods that China has produced. This fifteen-hundred-year-old form of medical qigong affects the human body in a manner similar to acupuncture. Its seven simple movements can be done by virtually anyone, whatever their age or state of health.

Related Products:

- *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 1: Health and Energy in Seven Simple Movements* [Book]
- *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong, Volume 2: Qi Cultivation Principles and Exercises* [Book]
- *Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong* Online Training Program [Ten weeks of instruction in more than seventy separate videos]
- *Chi Revolution,* which describes how chi or qi is the power behind spirituality, meditation, sexual vitality, acupuncture, internal martial arts and the divination methods of the *I Ching,* and includes a mini qi workout [Book]

Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body Qigong

This program introduces three-thousand-year-old qigong techniques that are fundamental to advancing any energy arts practice. This form covers basic body alignments, developing and increasing internal awareness of qi in the body and Outer Dissolving to release blocked energy.

Related Products:

- *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body* [Book]
- *Qigong for Lifelong Health* [Two-CD Set]
- *Five Keys Of Taoist Energy Arts Online Program* [Ten weeks of instruction in more than eighty separate videos]

The Marriage of Heaven and Earth Qigong

This qigong set incorporates techniques widely used in China to help heal back, neck, spine and joint problems. It is especially effective for helping to mitigate repetitive stress injury

and carpal tunnel problems. This program teaches some important neigong components, including opening and closing (pulsing), more complex breathing techniques and how to move qi through the energy channels of the body.

Bend the Bow Spinal Qigong

Bend the Bow Spinal Qigong continues the work of strengthening and regenerating the spine that is introduced in Marriage of Heaven and Earth Qigong. This program incorporates neigong components for awakening and controlling the energies of the spine.

Spiraling Energy Body Qigong

This advanced program dramatically raises one's energy level and allows the practitioner to master how qi moves in circles and spirals throughout the body. It incorporates neigong components for: directing the upward flow of energy; projecting qi along the body's spiraling pathways; delivering or projecting energy at will to or from any part of the body; and activating the body's left, right and central channels, as well as the microcosmic orbit.

Gods Playing in the Clouds Qigong

This qigong set incorporates some of the oldest and most powerful Taoist rejuvenation techniques. This program amplifies all the physical, breathing and energetic components learned in all the earlier qigong programs and completes the process of integrating all the components of neigong. It is also the final stage of learning to strengthen and balance the energies of the three tantiens, the central energy channel and the spine. Gods Playing in the Clouds Qigong serves as a spiritual bridge from qigong to Taoist meditation.

Shengong

Where qigong/neigong and meditation meet is *shengong* or spiritual qigong. The beginning stage of qigong focuses mostly on the first two energy bodies (the physical and etheric). Shengong goes further and works with the higher energy bodies—emotional, mental, psychic and karmic energy bodies up to the level of a person's essence. Over the years, Frantzis has been progressively incorporating more shengong within the qi practices that he teaches.

Taoist Neigong Yoga

Taoist Yoga is ancient China's soft yet powerful alternative to what is popularly known today as hatha yoga. Frantzis learned this during his Taoist priesthood training. The system he has developed to teach this is called Taoist Neigong Yoga™. Its primary emphasis is to stimulate

the flow of qi and free up any blocked energy. Neigong Yoga combines gentle postures with neigong components and Longevity Breathing techniques to systematically open the body's energy channels, thereby activating and stimulating qi flow. Postures are held from two to five minutes and require virtually no muscular effort, enabling you to easily focus on what is internal so you can feel where the qi is blocked and gently free it up.

Related Product:

Taoist Neigong Yoga [Kindle Ebook]

Healing Others with Qigong Tui Na

Part of Frantzis' Taoist training in China was to become a doctor of Chinese medicine, using primarily the qigong healing techniques known as *qigong tui na*. During this training period, he worked with more than ten thousand patients. Frantzis no longer works as a qigong doctor, either privately or in clinics, but occasionally offers trainings in therapeutic healing techniques.

Qigong tui na is a special branch of Chinese medicine that is designed to unblock, free and balance qi in others. You learn to project energy from your hands, voice and eyes to facilitate healing using two hundred different hand techniques. You also learn how to avoid burnout from your therapeutic practice. To heal others, you must first learn to unblock and free your own qi and to control the specific pathways through which it flows.

Taoist Meditation

Frantzis is a lineage holder in the gentle Water method of Taoist meditation passed down from the teachings of Laozi over more than twenty-five-hundred years ago. Taoist meditation enables you to use qi to help you release anxieties, expectations, and negative emotions—referred to as blockages—that prevent you from feeling truly alive and joyful. Taoist meditation uses two primary methods, Outer and Inner Dissolving, to release blockages within a person's eight energy bodies.

There are three primary goals in practicing Taoist meditation. The first goal is to address spiritual responsibility for yourself, helping you become a relaxed, spontaneous, fully mature and open human being. A second goal is awakening the great human potential inside you, fostering compassion and balance. The third is reaching inner stillness—a place deep inside you that is absolutely permanent and stable. As your practice deepens, the sixteen-part neigong system is brought into play to accelerate the evolutionary spiritual process.

Related Products:

- *Taoist Meditation Circle* is an online program and group that includes various techniques and guided practice sessions. It teaches core meditation skills such as concentration, focus and awareness training. This is a foundation program and leads to the more advanced Taoist meditation practices such as Inner Dissolving. Taoist Meditation Circle members are given a step-by-step meditation program, monthly meditation practices and access to a private online meditation community to ask questions and share experiences. [Online Program]
- *Tao Te Ching: A Practitioners Guide* presents the *Tao Te Ching* experientially, from an insider's view, for those who both want to read the text and are ready to apply the practices from Taoism to their life. The *Tao Te Ching* was written by Laozi in approximately 600 BCE and contains eighty-one chapters in total. Each month members receive an adapted translation plus an audio commentary and practice session on one or more chapters of the *Tao Te Ching*, the text that is the philosophical and religious underpinning for Taoism. [Online Program]
- *Relaxing into Your Being: Breathing, Dissolving and Qi* [Book]
- *The Great Stillness: Body Awareness, Moving Meditation and Sex Qigong* [Book]
- *Tao of Letting Go: Meditation for Modern Living* reveals how the Inner Dissolving method of Taoist meditation can help you let go of tension, fear, anger and pain. [Six-CD Set]
- *Tao of Letting Go: Meditation for Modern Living* [Book]
- *Ancient Songs of the Tao*, a collection of never-before-recorded chants in ancient Chinese that balance and transform the energetic frequencies within a human being [Three-CD Set]
- *Strings of the Tao*, in which Frantzis chants powerful liturgies accompanied by former Kitaro violinist Steve Kindler [CD]

Taoist Sexual Practices

Taoist sexual practices can add a whole new dimension to lovemaking, making it much more satisfying and fulfilling than normally possible. The Taoists have an extensive repertoire of techniques for

- Improving ordinary sex
- Incorporating qigong into lovemaking
- Sexual meditation as a vehicle for spiritual awakening.

Sexual qigong involves the sixteen neigong components, beginning with Taoist Outer Dissolving, opening and closing (pulsing) and working with the etheric body, all of which are best learned as solo practices before being incorporated into sexual activity.

Inner Dissolving is a key component of both Taoist sitting meditation and sexual meditation. The ultimate goal of sexual meditation is to achieve a true merging with one's partner, and then together merge with Universal Consciousness itself.

Interactive practices with a partner can accelerate the progress of development in both sexual qigong and sexual meditation, allowing each partner to gain up to four times more energy than he or she would have access to in solo practices.

Related Products:

- *Taoist Sexual Meditation: Connecting Love, Energy and Spirit* [Book]
- *Chi Revolution,* which describes how chi or qi is the power behind, for example, spirituality and sexual vitality. The Chi Rev Workout included covers basic qigong that is used in sexual qigong, such as Longevity Breathing, beginning Outer Dissolving, working with the heart center and tracing the etheric body. [Book]

Training Opportunities and Events

Bruce Frantzis is the founder of Energy Arts, Inc. Energy Arts offers instructor certification programs, retreats, corporate and public workshops, and lectures worldwide. Frantzis teaches Energy Arts courses in qigong; Longevity Breathing; the internal martial arts of bagua, tai chi and hsing-i; Neigong Yoga; the healing techniques of qigong tui na; and the Water method of Taoist meditation.

Comprehensive multimedia training courses may also be available from time to time. Topics may include meditation, bagua, tai chi and qigong. See *EnergyArts.com* for current programs.

Instructor Certification

Prior training in Frantzis Energy Arts programs is a requirement for most instructor courses. The certification process is rigorous to ensure that instructors teach the authentic traditions inherent in these arts.

Train with a Frantzis Energy Arts Certified Instructor

The Energy Arts website, EnergyArts.com, contains a directory of all the certified instructors worldwide. Since Bruce Frantzis no longer offers regular ongoing classes, he recommends locating an instructor in your area for regular training and for building on or preparing for his teachings.

Join the Energy Arts Email List

Please visit EnergyArts.com to

- Join our list to get free articles and audio material by Bruce Frantzis
- Receive the latest details on events and training materials
- See video clips of qigong and martial arts forms
- Find a Certified Energy Arts Instructor near you or learn how to become one
- Inquire about hosting a workshop or speaking engagement
- Request media appearances, interviews and articles.

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struction man ons in energy techniques for self-healing, martial arts, and spiritua clude pulling and pushing qi, g with the protective energy *(wei qi)* in both the physical body and the etheric body or aura. an teach you how to feel and work with qi in a very precise and sophisticated way, even with s qigong experience. If you already know the Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong form, detailed in Volume 1 of this series, Volume 2 will help you to advance your practice to a whole new level.

You can use the qi techniques in this book to

- Feel and clear your acupuncture meridians
- Improve performance in athletics and martial arts
- Add an exciting new dimension to lovemaking
- Deepen and reinvigorate your healing work if you are a healthcare practitioner or bodyworker.

Praise from accomplished healers:

"Dragon and Tiger Medical Qigong gives people a powerful way to take charge of their health and well-being."

— **Kenneth Lossing, DO,** President of the American Academy of Osteopathy

"In this book, Bruce Frantzis maps out vital self-healing practices, showing you how to boost your immune system and cultivate your body's capacity to heal."

— **Michael Reed Gach, PhD,** founder of the Acupressure Institute and author of *Acupressure's Potent Points*

"Because Dragon and Tiger is a simple and effective qigong practice, it is taught to students at the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine. Tracing the meridian lines helps our students to become more sensitive to both their own and their patients' qi, and enables them to become better acupuncturists."

— **John and Angela Hicks,** Joint Principals, College of Integrated Chinese Medicine, Reading, England, and co-authors of *Five Element Constitutional Acupuncture*



Bruce Frantzis, PhD, is a Taoist Lineage Master with more than forty years of experience in Eastern healing systems. He is the first known Westerner to hold authetic lineages in qigong, tai chi, bagua, hsing-i and Taoist meditation. He has taught Taoist energy arts to more than 15,000 students. Frantzis trained for over a decade in China and also has extensive experience in Zen, Tibetan Buddhism, yoga, Kundalini, energy healing therapies and Taoist Fire and Water traditions.

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