

## 5. THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF THE ADDITION OF A PROGRAM OF TQ SUITABLE FOR AUSTRALIAN ENVIRONMENT

There are many ways to be active in life that will fulfil the body's needs for its ALFF. There are many ways to deal with stress and there are many types of meditation practice aimed at calm clarity of mind. Usually a program deals with one or the other of fitness, stress management or meditation. TQ addresses these three things in an integrated way, which is simple, easy, natural and very enjoyable. A program of TQ can enrich many aspects of one's life.

### TAIJI QIGONG HAS THREE AIMS:

1. To optimise and maintain mental and physical well-being;
2. To prevent illness; and
3. To recover from or manage specific illnesses or injuries.

The efficient functioning of a person is dependent upon their state of mental and physical health. TQ aids in optimising the functions of both the body and the mind. By optimising it is meant that practitioners make the best use of what Nature has endowed them with and what fate has allowed them to retain. The aim of TQ is to be able to use what one has to the best of one's natural ability and as such make life richer for oneself and perhaps for those around one. TQ is gentle and relaxing. There is no stress, strain, or pain involved. It is found to be exceptionally enjoyable by most practitioners.

TQ is an holistic health program that does not require large amounts of money, time, space or the purchase of equipment or special clothing. TQ can be applied indoors or outdoors. It is efficient and effective. When used to deal with stress or tension, the effects are immediate. In regards to health optimisation, it takes approximately two weeks, a minimum of eight application sessions, to achieve noticeable results. Unfortunately it takes about the same time to begin losing the physical condition achieved. The best benefits are gained through regular application.

TQ teaching is designed to encourage a lifetime of application, through the methods used for training in class and self-application. The benefits of the application of TQ to the tasks of daily life will encourage a person to continue. Practitioners notice they rapidly learn the sets of TQ *forms*. From the techniques taught in the first lesson the student has learnt a very effective method for dealing with the negative effects of stressors. TQ deals not only with the physical, it can be used to calm and clear the mind and focus it in preparation to perform some arduous or mentally demanding task. Being able to practically apply TQ techniques to every-day activities in life is what makes it an holistic living skill.

### 5.1 THE BENEFITS OF TAIJI QIGONG

TQ is directly applicable to *stressors* and hence can be put to use by people on their own to deal with demanding situations. Practitioners of TQ report that they have effectively applied the techniques for themselves. Some use it to prepare mentally and physically for the workday ahead, while others use it to wind down at the end of the day before sleep. Yet others use TQ to prepare for an immediate situation such as a meeting or a task which is unpleasant or mentally demanding. Some say a few minutes of TQ practice greatly raises their mental and physical efficiency when confronted with an arduous task. While TQ may not be all things to all people, when self-implemented to deal with specific situations a few minutes practice is of directly applicable benefit in a variety of ways for many people.

TQ contains low impact moderate-intensity aerobic activity suitable for all ages and most people's physical condition. In China special *forms* of *Qigong* are used to treat the chronically ill. People without chronic disease do not need a health check before learning TQ. This is a vast saving of time and money for the novice practitioner, the public health system and the corporate sector. This is not so with VIE, ‘...men over 40 and women over 50...should first consult their doctor in order to determine a safe, effective program for their particular circumstance.’<sup>1</sup>

For those who may be somewhat concerned about their body shape, the recommended clothing for TQ is comfortable and loose fitting. While footwear needs only to be flat heeled and comfortable. Being able to go to class in what clothing one already has is a great saving on the wallet.

For children TQ is effective as a weight bearing exercise that strengthens bones, as well as enhancing gross motor skills. Being a weight-bearing activity, it strengthens bone as people grow and as they age, it combats the depletion of calcium from the bones. It is an excellent *adjuvant* treatment for osteoporosis, which effects 60% of women and 30% of men over the age of sixty.<sup>2</sup>

For the sedentary or those recovering from illness or surgery, TQ is excellent way to get back into activity. Class is not a daunting physical endeavour, but is a gentle, relaxing, stamina building and gross motor skills enhancing practice. For the elderly TQ most importantly aids in mobility. Lack of mobility is possibly the greatest health concern for the aged as it means a severe curtailing of their lifestyles.

For those with an existing health program TQ is an inexpensive alternative that needs no extra equipment or apparel. TQ is mentally stimulating and enjoyable for the majority of its practitioners. TQ is easily learnt and as such the self-progress the practitioners notice in learning the exercises is a boost for self-esteem through self-accomplishment.

For the fit person who enjoys sports such as tennis or golf, TQ will optimise that person's gross motor skills and stamina, helping them reach a higher level in their sport and be able to maintain that level for longer. It will also maintain their level of fitness when unable to play due to time or weather constraints.

A TQ exercise session usually ends with a cup of tea in the relaxed atmosphere engendered by the practice session. This situation facilitates the benefits of social support from groups of the like interested. Going to a class of something many enjoy with friendly people is very beneficial for a person's social support and mental well being. If the class aims to harmonise body and mind while promoting health, the outcome is even more beneficial. No serious practitioner of TQ believes it is the only way to be active, but believe it enhances all other physical activities.

The benefits which accrue from TQ practice, in association with the pragmatic and often humorous philosophy of the *Daojia*, make it an interesting and practical addition to life. The few minutes of one's time it takes to learn these techniques to be able to apply them to everyday life, will be repaid in the ongoing enrichment and enjoyment one's life will receive.

### 5.2 TAKE CARE

Participants in VIE should be clear that it is only good for entertainment and enjoyment not for health. Although vigorous activity may improve fitness to a certain extent it should be understood that regular prolonged VIE does nothing to improve a person's health and in many instances can be detrimental to mental and physical well-being. If the body is likened to a machine, the longer and harder it is used, the sooner it will wear out. Unlike a machine, however, the body has parts which cannot be replaced and also unlike a machine the body feels pain. Injuries can come back to haunt us in the future.

Injury is one of the main and frequent dangers VIE proponents face and encounter.<sup>3</sup> The type of injury depends on the vigorous activity. Contact sports will cause injury but also continuous non-contact vigorous activity will cause damage. There is only so much wear and tear the body can cope with before it begins to break down. The best advice for those who like vigorous activity is listen to one's body and at the first sign of pain stop.

Pheidippides, the first marathon runner, in 490 B.C. ran from Marathon to Athens (about 26 miles) to carry the news of the Greek victory over the Persians. After he delivered the message, he dropped dead from a heart attack. Cardiac catastrophe is at least as common amongst marathon runners as amongst non-VIE.<sup>4</sup> However in the heat of the moment the warning signs can be ignored or accepted as part of the activity.

One question that should be considered by those involved in vigorous activity is: 'Who is making financial profit from the activity?' Is the vigorous exerciser the victim of an advertising misinformation campaign? Mark Brown, the NSW chief executive of the Physiotherapy Association, states 'People don't realise the long-term damage they are doing to themselves when they over do it in the gym.'<sup>5</sup> In the same article Mark Brown goes on to state the top five injuries caused by excessive workouts are:

1. Tendon injuries around the shoulders;
2. Knee injuries, normally in the knee cap;
3. Muscle strains;
4. Lower back problems, the most common injury, caused by doing incorrect sit-ups or squats; and
5. Neck problems.

Why would people pay hard earned money to put themselves at risk of injury and possibly death? Many cardiac catastrophes occur during or shortly after vigorous exercise.<sup>6</sup> People have been wrongly led to believe, through media advertising, that vigorous exercise is good for their hearts often prompting them to work physically harder than is necessary. This benefit is simply not true. Marathon runners have no more healthier hearts than ordinary moderate intensity exercisers do.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps people wish to loose weight and so they take up vigorous exercise as a means to this end. This is also a false premise:

It is well known that brisk walks are the best way to lose weight. You burn more fat with low to moderate exercise so working yourself into a sweat on a treadmill for an hour will not achieve results.<sup>8</sup>

How can this be? When the body is physically stressed it does not know how long this stress will last. The mind may know when the exercise session will end but the body does not. So some fat is kept in reserve to be later used as the “fight or flight syndrome” continues.

Other problems which the vigorous exerciser risks apart from injury and cardiac catastrophe are orthopaedic. The skeleton can only take so much wear and tear. Orthopaedic damage is common in those who run. Walk don’t run. It is better for the body in every way. This is particularly so for women whose bodies are especially vulnerable to the forces exerted through vigorous exercise. Dr Dennis J. Sullivan, an orthopaedic surgeon at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York city, found that five out of six stress fractures in the pelvis were in exercising women over the age of thirty.<sup>9</sup> It should also be noted that a disastrous consequence of vigorous exercise in women can be amenorrhoea, (loss of menstrual periods). The consequence of this is significant loss of bone mass. That is osteopenia (commonly called osteoporosis).<sup>10</sup> The bones can prematurely age and become susceptible to breakage.

It should be remembered that the body loses “condition” very quickly so if a VIE program causes injury the time taken to recover is normally long enough to negate the dubious benefits achieved. In hot weather the vigorous exerciser’s body can overheat. This is called *hyperthermia*, which can cause cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke and in extreme cases death. Confusion or delirium can result and so the person does not know when to stop. This is why vigorous exercise should never be performed alone.<sup>11</sup>

On the other end of the spectrum is low body temperature *hypothermia*, which can be caused by exercising in cold weather. When the body sweats, the wind chill factor can lower the body’s temperature to the point where a person becomes irrational, loses coordination and if

severe, respiratory insufficiency, cardiac rhythm irregularities and dangerously low blood pressure occur.<sup>12</sup>

Although there are many more dangers which vigorous exercise poses, there is only one more which it is necessary to mention *myocarditis*. This is a viral infection of the heart which has cold and flu like symptoms. VIE can cause this virus to multiply and cause acute damage to the heart and ultimately induce a cardiac catastrophe.<sup>13</sup> The dangerous myth that one can work off the symptoms of the flu is has caused heart damage and death to many people. If one does not feel well then one should not start.

To sum up, continuous VIE programs will do the body no good whatsoever and will damage muscles and the skeleton, cause hormone imbalances, mood swings, depression and in many instances cardiac catastrophe end in death. Perhaps these risks are worthwhile for a professional athlete on six figure salaries. They will certainly be able to afford the best medical care when eventually this is needed. The average person however can achieve all the necessary fitness and health benefits from an activity program which is far less demanding. They don't even need to work up a sweat.

### 5.3 A CHOICE FOR THE WORKPLACE

TQ is a practical choice for workplace Occupational Health and Safety programs. In that it embodies clear centredness of mind and efficiency of thought in conjunction with physical relaxation and coordination. These are ideal qualities to foster in the workforce for a calm, safe, healthy and efficient workplace. Evidence indicates that TQ is a most effective tool for dealing with work-related stress, both mental and physical and the problems of tension.<sup>14</sup>

It may be simplistic, yet none the less true to say that the efficiency of an organisation is dependent upon the people in that organisation and the efficiency of the people in an organisation is dependent upon their state of mind and body. TQ optimises the function of

both the body and the mind. The attractiveness of using TQ as an holistic health program for an organisation is that it is simple and inexpensive to implement while being efficient and effective.

Importantly, in these politically correct sensitive times, the ideology of TQ courses can be adapted to the social, cultural and religious traditions of most people. Alternatively the philosophy can be left out all together as it is the physical actions not the philosophy which is of primary importance. TQ's philosophy does not normally conflict with religious or philosophical beliefs that may be held by the employees of an organisation or members of any particular social strata.

How people react to mental *stressors* may vary considerably between individuals. A mental stressor which elicits a major dysfunctional state in one person may have little effect on another. However there is likely to be a mental or physical *stressor* in a person's life, either at work or at home, that does produce stress. TQ is effective in dealing with all types of stress.

While some people can deal with mental stressors without need for help, all people are affected by the physical situation of their workplace. For example keyboard operators, no matter how ergonomically designed their workstations, sitting and typing for long periods are in a physical situation deleterious to their health. Tiredness and lack of concentration will eventually occur and hence efficiency will drop for the individual and consequently for the organisation to which they belong. To say nothing of the long term physical ailments which may occur, people's bodies are not designed to sit at desks for long periods of time. This type of situation is a physical *stressor* from which none can escape except by physical action.

Today both employers and employees wish to minimise the negative effects of their work environment on both physical and mental levels. Happy workers are better workers. TQ, through its gentle physical exercise component provides a program for dealing with physical

stressors, in a way which tea breaks or mental relaxation techniques without physically active components do not.

The implementation of a TQ program does not require large amounts of money, time, space or the purchase of equipment or special clothing. As well TQ is mentally stimulating and enjoyable for the majority of its practitioners. TQ is easily learnt and directly applicable to stressors and hence can be put to use by employees on their own to deal with demanding situations. TQ can also be practised by an individual outside of office hours for health benefits. TQ is flexible in its application in that it can be used as a gentle stress reducing and health optimising workout by employees at work or applied to specific tasks.

### 5.3.1 WORK-RELATED STRESS

In the USA, work-related stress disorders constitute the fastest-growing category of medical problem. The cost of work related stress in the USA has been estimated to be as high as \$150 billion a year.<sup>15</sup>

According to one well-researched report, half of all British workers claim they feel stressed and exhausted by the end of a normal working day. Well over half of all workers now believe their job is the principal cause of stress in their life.<sup>16</sup> The International Labour Organization [sic] estimates that work-related stress costs 1% of the British Gross National Product.<sup>17</sup> The figures for Australia, were unavailable, but it is reasonably valid to assume, due to the similarities of work and lifestyle, similar problems exist here.

Work-related stress raises the spectre of litigation. In the USA one in seven compensation claims relates to stress. What should be of particular concern to employers is that the average amount awarded in such claims is about double that for physical injuries.<sup>18</sup> While not all employees are exposed to physical hazards such as machinery, it would seem all are potential victims of stress, even if only on a psychological level.

### 5.3.2 THE BENEFITS OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

On a positive note it is estimated that in Britain companies save five times what they spend on stress-management programs, less absenteeism and improved productivity are two areas where savings are made.<sup>19</sup> The bottom line is that programs such as TQ will produce a happier, healthier and more productive organisation and as such raise the profits and efficiency of the organisation. No matter how mundane the occupation or repetitive the task is, some measures can be taken to increase health, safety and to manage stress to produce a more productive workforce. Employers are their own employees and so they can benefit as well.

The implementation of a TQ program in the workplace could potentially save the employer money. An organisation which used such a program could become more efficient and productive and hence a better place to work for all concerned.

### 5.4 MEDITATION & MIA AND THEIR BENEFITS FOR HEALTH

Not addressing the mental and physical responses engendered by stress can quickly lead to a state of chronic stress. Backache or stiffness from working at a desk or keyboard for too long is a situation of chronic physiological stress. Eyestrain is another form of physiological stress. Having to meet a deadline can be a physiological stress (in terms of typing or writing), but it can also be a psychological stress.

Dealing with the stress from these types of situations, one can perform more effectively and more efficiently than if one does not deal with the stress. By doing these simple TQ *forms* for only a few minutes the body can relax and help the mind made clear and ready to focus on the task at hand. The process by which TQ achieves its effects is physiological and as such works well for many people. TQ is a method of integrated MIA and meditation particularly useful for stress-management. It is presented as an interesting and effective alternative to other methods.

#### 5.4.1 WHAT IS STRESS?

Psychological stress is the condition occurring when a person thinks or feels that the pressures they are experiencing are about to be, or actually are beyond their ability to deal with and so threaten their well-being.<sup>20</sup> Psychologically disturbing and/or potentially or actually physiologically damaging events in the world are called *stressors*, the mental and physical reactions caused by *stressors* are known as the *stress response*, commonly known as *stress*, tension of the body or anxiety of the mind.

Stressors can be physiological: heat, cold, wind, illness, injury, and undernourishment are well known *stressors*. In developed nations, with today's high standard of living, many *stressors* people experience are psychological. They are potentially no less harmful than physical *stressors*. For example today for many people there is potential physiological stress and tension from spending long periods of time on a computer and the psychological stress of meeting deadlines with what comes out of the computer or printer. The opposite of stress is eustress, humour, laughter, having fun are opposites of stress. Seeing the funny side to a situation can prevent it from being excessively stressful.

The primary biological reason for the *stress response* to a physical *stressor* is to make us deal quickly and effectively with physically dangerous situations.<sup>21</sup> Our body prepares us for the "fight or flight" response. As a means of surviving an immediately physically threatening situation, the response is invaluable. It is normal, natural and beneficial for our bodies to respond this way to physical threats. In fact short periods of stress can boost our immune systems, presumably to aid in the repair of any physical damage caused by the *stressor*. What is not beneficial is to be subject to repetitive or continual situations of stress. In more primitive times there were only so many predators to fight with or flight from in one day. Our bodies however also respond in a similar way to psychological stressors, which can be much longer in duration and potentially just as harmful as continued exposure to physical *stressors*. Repetitive or continual situations of physiological or psychological stress can be extremely

damaging to mind and body.

PHYSIOLOGICAL STRESSORS:

Sitting at computers for long periods of time

Taking notes in lectures

Writing exams

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESSORS:

Assignment deadlines,

Pressures of study; and

Pressures of exams .

NEGATIVE THINGS STRESS CAN DO TO US:

- Lower our immunity;
- Make our bodies consume more vitamins and minerals and so we become under nourished;
- Create anxiety;
- Create depression, physical and mental;
- Induce Panic Disorder ;
- Negatively influence the severity of post-traumatic stress;
- Increase the rate of deposition of free fatty acids and cholesterol into the blood and subsequently the harmful deposits on artery walls, leading to coronary heart disease;
- Adversely alter levels of hormones; and
- Raise blood pressure.

Controllable *stressors* or gaining some control over *stressors* can make people happier and healthier as their self-image improves, while they gain a sense of control and self-accomplishment from overcoming the *stressor*. Short and mild stress can help our bodies learn to deal better with future stress. For example animals when exposed to mild stress when young are more able to deal with stress when older. This would seem to apply to humans as well.

#### 5.4.2. WE ALL REACT DIFFERENTLY

The degree of the negative effect of a stressor, whether it is mental or physical, of short or

long duration, is governed by the perception of it by the person experiencing it. Whether it is mental or physical, stress can cause depression and have adverse physical effects. The NSW Mental Health Information Service stated this about stress :

We are all familiar with stress. Stress is a normal response to our lifestyle, our work and day to day living. A certain level of stress is necessary to not only function, but to reach our full potential. When the stress is continual however, we can become [chronically] stressed. It is at this point that stress becomes a health hazard.<sup>22</sup>

There is growing evidence that the minor stresses and hassles of today's Western lifestyles can have a number of adverse effects on the immune function in otherwise healthy people.<sup>23</sup> It logically follows that these negative effects of stress are heightened in those who are sedentary, unhealthy or have additional causes of stress. The NSW Mental Health Information Service has this to say about activity in relation to stress, 'Physical exercise is invaluable in releasing tension and assists in the processing of vitamins and minerals.'<sup>24</sup>

Irrespective of the causes, stress is an increasing part of life. Ignoring it will not make it go away. Once stress overload is recognised, there are skills one can acquire to address the problem.<sup>25</sup>

**How well people handle stress is a major determinate for longevity.**<sup>26</sup> Adverse reactions to stress affect all areas of health. There are a number of actions recommended by the NSW Mental Health Information Service which combine to help a person manage stress: nutrition, exercise, relaxation, meditation, realistic thinking, organising one's time, talking to someone.<sup>27</sup> TQ aims to promote these factors.

#### 5.4.3 SELF-PERCEPTIONS

People react differently to the same stressors something which adversely effects one person may be found to be exhilarating and enjoyable to another. People's reactions to stressors vary because of genetics, life experience, physical well-being, level of social interaction, personality and education. These things effect our ability to cope with and control a situation.

Our ability to deal with a situation determines how stressful that situation will be for each of us.

For example, a sports professional may be seen double faulting at tennis or hitting a golf ball into the trees or lake. What separates these people's reaction from the amateurs to this potentially stressful situation is how they deal with it. Particularly with golf, where tension will certainly ruin a shot. The professional relies not only on their own experience but also the knowledge that 'no matter how good you are it happens to all competitors at some time' to give them confidence when facing the next shot.

We humans are optimistic in general. When given tools and experience to deal with a situation we will have some degree of confidence in a successful outcome. From learning that, it is possible to control perceptions of and physical reactions to stressors, it is only a short step to putting it into practice. There are specific psychological and physiological methods of dealing with stress. TQ is one of these.

#### 5.4.4 DEPRESSION

The World Health Organisation states that the single largest health problem facing the world in the next fifty years is likely to be mental illness, particularly depression.<sup>28</sup> One cause of depression is chronic stress, continual stressors which a person feels unable to deal with. Another cause of depression in 'normal' populations is a consistently low level of physical activity. MIA appears to alleviate the symptoms associated with mild to moderate depression.<sup>29</sup> In an article in the *Independent*, Mr John Rooth, Chairperson of the Northern Sector Mental Health Community Consultative Committee (NSW) states that 'good mental health is linked to good physical health.' but also states this is not a new idea.<sup>30</sup> Mr John Rooth goes on to say that: in the days when people walked to work they generally had more activity in life. This implies that today's more sedentary life style may be a significant contributing factor to mental health issues. In NSW government departments and health

bodies, prevention of and early intervention in mental health issues is accepted as essential<sup>31</sup>.

[Moderate-intensity] Exercise is obviously a low-cost strategy which is empowering to an individual and has physical as well as mental benefits. Mr Jack [Manager, Mental Health Services, Northern Sector, NSW, 1998] said "It's not always Prozac, it may be acute care or treatment needed through a specialist or GP, but also [through moderate activity and meditation] people can take some responsibility of looking after themselves, rather than rely completely on medication or medical solutions only..."<sup>32</sup>

Stress and depression also affect children, so it is important for parents and care givers to ensure children's lives are balanced and thus should include a component of activity.<sup>33</sup> The regular practice of weight bearing and healthy weight gaining and maintaining activities such as TQ by children, adolescents and young adults are of vital importance in building bone strength and attaining optimal lumbar peak bone mass later in adulthood.<sup>34</sup>

How effective is MIA for treating depression? In 1987 a review of nine studies of clinically depressed patients reported "...aerobic exercise was as effective as group or individual psychotherapy, relaxation or meditation [not TQ meditation]."<sup>35</sup> In Germany a study of patients with moderate to severe panic disorder, found that aerobic exercise led to a significant decrease in symptoms according to all main efficacy measures.<sup>36</sup> The US Surgeon General reported in 1996 in the publication *Physical Activity and Health* that:

...the literature here supports a beneficial effect of physical activity on relieving symptoms of depression and anxiety and on improving mood. There is some evidence that physical activity may protect against the development of depression...<sup>37</sup>

#### 5.4.5 RECOGNISING STRESS

We all have some idea of what stress is. It is a normal response to our lifestyle, work and everyday living. A certain level of stress of particular types is necessary for us to function and reach our potential. The types of stress which are good for us are ones where a positive result can be seen at the end of the stress. Continual stress is harmful, and unless dealt becomes a health hazard. Chronic stress does not happen overnight, before reaching this condition there are warning signs to take note of. The following is a list of symptoms of stress is provided by

the NSW Mental Health Information Service.<sup>38</sup>

Please note that: People may experience one or number of the following symptoms depending on the amount of stress they are experiencing. However these symptoms may also be indicative of ailments or illness **not** related to stress or tension. If the ailment is severe or continuous **do not** assume it is caused by stress. Please consult a medical practitioner.

#### SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

##### PHYSICAL:

- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Heart palpitations
- Nausea
- Muscle aches, pains and twitches
- Fatigue
- Clenched jaw and fists
- Increased sweating
- Disturbed sleep
- Increased urination
- Constipation or diarrhoea

##### MENTAL:

- Impaired judgment
- Negative thoughts
- Loss of concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Indecisiveness
- Bad dreams or nightmares
- Poor memory
- Negative thoughts

##### EMOTIONAL:

- Demotivated
- Tense
- Depressed
- Anxious
- Lack of enthusiasm
- Loss of confidence
- Decreased pleasure in life

##### BEHAVIOURAL:

- Loss or increase of appetite
- Decline in productivity
- Family/relationship discord
- Social isolation
- Inability to unwind
- Eating and drinking faster
- Walking faster
- Accident proneness
- Poor time management
- Increased caffeine and nicotine use

#### 5.4.6 POSITIVE STEPS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS

Negative reactions to stressors can at least make life unpleasant and at worst can lead to

severe states of mental and physical distress. Here are some steps based on the NSW Mental Health Information Service recommendations for dealing with stress:<sup>39</sup>

#### MANAGEMENT

Recognise stress and take steps to deal with it. Everyone can go through periods of stress.

Many people learn techniques to manage stress. It is good for the mind and body to relax.

#### NUTRITION

Stress makes our bodies consume large amounts of vitamins and minerals, especially C and B complex vitamins, calcium, magnesium, phosphorous and zinc. This can make us tired, irritable and hence less able to deal with stress. A diet rich in vegetables, fruit, dairy products, nuts, yeast, brown rice, fish, liver, eggs and kelp, will help replace the vitamins and address this imbalance. Good fresh food is by far the best thing for the body to consume and the delight of a good meal whether home cooked or restaurant made is relaxing in itself. Foods to avoid when stressed are tea, coffee, cakes, biscuits, soft drinks, chocolate and white bread.

#### ACTIVITY

MIA releases tension and aids in promoting the absorption of vitamins and minerals. MIA should not be boring, but it must be regular and varied. Walking, swimming, gardening, tennis, golf are excellent, and highly recommend as activities to be used in conjunction with TQ.

#### RELAXATION

Progressive muscle relaxation is a useful tool for dealing with stress (see *form 5 Chapter 6*). But people should also take time to relax each day e.g. listen to music, read, play with the kids, pat the pet, have a nap or sit in the garden and daydream. Put aside time each day to spend relaxing, very soon tension is reduced through enjoyment in simple ways.

#### MEDITATION

Learning to meditate gives one specific tools for dealing with stress and tension. TQ provides secular techniques of meditation.

**THINK REALISTICALLY**

Do not over estimate the effects of a situation. This only makes it unnecessarily more stressful. One should try the following:<sup>40</sup>

1. Think about what is making one feel that way;
2. Question how likely it is that this will happen;
3. Ask what is the worst possible outcome of this situation; and
4. Consider this outcome in the scheme of things.

**TIME MANAGEMENT**

If a stressor is predictable its effect is lessened. One can reduce the experience of stress by using time and energy efficiently. Make a realistic list of what can easily be accomplished. One can only do so much in any one day. Making priorities and slowing down are important for lowering levels of stress.

**TALK TO SOMEONE**

Talking things over with a friend can often put a much more positive light on a situation. Some people prefer talking to psychiatrists, social workers or psychologists as helpful alternatives to talking with friends. Phoning the professional staff in the local Community Health Centre is also an helpful alternative.

By adopting these measures, a person begins to gain control of the situation. Remember that control over one's immediate surroundings is most important for survival. By dealing with the *stressors*, one can control and trying not to worry about those one cannot will do a great deal in lowering the overall level of stress. No matter how stressed one feels, something can be done to alleviate the situation. It will most likely be easier and simpler than one would have thought, the first step can be the hardest.

**5.4.7 THE TQ APPROACH TO DEALING WITH STRESS**

Recognise the inherent qualities of the object, person, place or event that is causing the stress and react accordingly. If one treats something with the method that the thing's inherent

qualities demand, then no more stress will be produced than is normal and is reasonable to deal with. Dealing with problems when they are small means one rarely has to deal with big problems.

### 5.5 MIA: THE FUNCTIONAL PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Regular physical activity preserves the optimum function and structure of muscles, joints, the heart and blood vessels, physical balance and mental ability. For older people this means experiencing a better quality of life, protecting against accidental falls, reducing the fear of falling as well as maintaining independence. Falls are a common cause of injury to older people and a major public health problem for New South Wales...They [falls] result in significant levels of mortality, long term disability, loss of confidence and institutionalisation.<sup>41</sup>

Being active physically and socially is good for well-being. It helps people to get the most from life. The stresses which all encounter are more easily dealt with when the body is in an optimised condition.

#### IMMUNE SYSTEM

MIA can temporarily improve or optimise the functions of the immune system. The effects of the MIA application are more pronounced in the elderly.<sup>42</sup> The benefits are short lived, so MIA needs to be practised regularly.

#### CORONARY HEART DISEASE (CHD)

Moderate-intensity physical activities such as TQ reduce the risk of CHD. Through regular practice of MIA beneficial modifications in blood lipid profile, risk of acute thrombosis, insulin resistance and hypertension occur. The likelihood of death occurring after a heart attack has been halved in people regularly practising MIA.<sup>43</sup>

#### STROKE

Regular, moderate, rhythmic, physical activity such as walking and swimming has been shown to reduce blood pressure in those with hypertension and may also prevent hypertension from developing.<sup>44</sup> In China programs of Medical and Health Care Qigong have

been shown to be effective in managing and slowing the effects of hypertension.<sup>45</sup> These forms are the ones used in this program of TQ.

#### CHOLESTEROL

One cause of coronary heart disease is a result of the arteries supplying the heart muscle narrowing because of the deposition of atheromatous plaques (fatty deposits). These deposits consist largely of the bad cholesterol, which is primarily carried by low density lipoproteins (LDL).<sup>46</sup> A high ratio of LDL to high density lipoproteins (HDL) is associated with an increased risk of CHD mortality.<sup>47</sup> An Australian study has shown a significant relationship between physical activity and HDL and total cholesterol, while other studies indicate that physical activity appears to raise HDL cholesterol but does not change LDL cholesterol levels, but if the activity ceases HDL levels rapidly revert to pre-training levels.<sup>48</sup>

#### WEIGHT REGULATION

Regular physical activity is important for reaching and maintaining a healthy weight, an unhealthy weight is associated with raised blood pressure and raised blood cholesterol.<sup>49</sup> TQ is a very effective method of attaining a healthy weight. The slow rhythmic nature of TQ practice eliminates fat from the body in the same way as walking.

#### DIABETES

Moderate, rhythmic physical activity appears to reduce the risk of developing diabetes in middle aged people whether or not they are obese. Those who have diabetes can lessen the need for medication because activity improves the sensitivity of muscles to insulin.<sup>50</sup> Harmonious rhythmic movement is one of the foundations on which TQ practice is built.

#### CANCERS

Many studies have shown a relationship between physical activity and cancer mortality and physical activity has been proposed as a possible primary prevention strategy for breast cancer.<sup>51</sup>

**OSTEOPOROSIS**

Physical activity may be an important factor in preventing osteoporosis. MIA has been shown to have a beneficial effect on bone mineral density in pre-menopausal women.<sup>52</sup>

Regular activity, where the legs support the body's weight, can improve bone strength in middle age and continue to give benefit when continued into old age.<sup>53</sup> Healthy body weight and weight bearing activity in childhood and adolescence are important for building strength in the bones and for reaching peak lumbar bone mass in later adult life.<sup>54</sup> TQ fulfils all these requirements. TQ empowers people of all ages and levels of health and fitness to take control and responsibility for their health.

**FALLS**

TQ lessens the risk of falls because it improves the three most important risk factors for falls namely, poor balance, low muscle strength and osteoporosis. MIA is associated with a 40% decrease in the risk of losing mobility in older people.<sup>55</sup> TQ as well as being a weight bearing exercise, promotes physical and mental co-ordination and as such is an extremely beneficial aid in preventing falls.

The TQ is an effective, efficient and enjoyable program. It will encourage people to increase the variety of entertaining activities in their lives. Having fun is good and TQ can be a lot of fun and lead to more satisfaction in the activities already enjoyed.

**5.6 SUMMARY**

The TQ program appears to have great potential for implementation in Australia. Slight modification only was needed to make it applicable to Australian conditions. It is applicable to all ages and levels of fitness. Potentially it could be used to *adjuvantly* address Australia's major health problems in an efficient and inexpensive manner.

Used as an health optimisation/prevention modality to *adjuvantly* treat the problems of stress, anxiety and depression it has great potential to produce psychological benefits. Instituted as

part of an Occupational Health and Safety Program it would be particularly relevant for RSI and MSD. TQ's preventative potential to combat osteoporosis is enormous. Equally so its fall prevention aspect makes it of potential value to many Australians. TQ's produced increase in gross motor skill ability and its usefulness for warming up and cooling down for sport could prevent many sporting injuries.

When used to *adjuvantly* treat those who are already ill it could figure prominently in the treatment of obesity, CHD, hypertension and diabetes. As it is so gentle in application those who need their immune systems boosted may well benefit from such a program. The dual components of meditation and MIA application combined with the positive philosophical outlook of *Daojia* philosophy make TQ potentially a modality which is extremely broad based in its applicability.

Whether used *adjuvantly* or as a primary prevention modality TQ could well prove to be a great boon for the mental and physical well-being of Australians. Being able to easily learn and apply TQ for oneself, while having a sound scientific basis, the author believes makes TQ a unique modality. The potential prevention of human suffering as well as the financial savings possible would indicate that TQ could be of great value not just for Australia but the rest of the world as well.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Chief Health Officer, *Physical Activity and Health A Special Communication from the Chief Health Officer*, NSW Dept. of Health, Sydney, second edition 1996, p.7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ten News* (video recording) Ten Television, 8 August 2000.

<sup>3</sup> H. Solomon, *The Exercise Myth*, Angus & Robertson, no place presumed Sydney, 1985, Ch. 7.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p.112.

<sup>5</sup> *The Sun Herald*, 25/6/00, p.47.

<sup>6</sup> H. Solomon, *op.cit.*,p.116.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p.112.

<sup>8</sup> *The Sun Herald*, *op.cit.* 25/6/00, p.47.

<sup>9</sup> H. Solomon, *op.cit.*,p.104.

<sup>10</sup> L. Rose, *Osteoporosis, The Silent Epidemic*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1994, p.49.

H. Solomon, *op.cit.*,p.105.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*,p.107.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p.107.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.109.

<sup>14</sup> This was indicated by the pilot study at UNE conducted by the author.

<sup>15</sup> P. Martin, *The Sickenning Mind*, Harper Collins, London, 1998, pp. 173-174.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, p.177.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p.118.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p.126.

<sup>22</sup> NSW Mental Health Information Service, *Recognising Stress*, a pamphlet, 1997, p.1.

<sup>23</sup> P. Martin, *op. cit.*, p.91.

<sup>24</sup> NSW Mental Health Information Service, *op. cit.*, p.1.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>26</sup> H. Solomon, *op. cit.*, p.46.

<sup>27</sup> NSW Mental Health Information Service, *op.cit.* pp.1-2.

<sup>28</sup> M. Finn, 'Exercising for Mental Health', *The Coffs Harbour and District Independent News*, 28 August, 1998, p.18. An interview with professionals associated with the Mid North Coast Area Health Service (MNCAHS).

<sup>28</sup> Chief Health Officer, op. cit., p.6.

<sup>29</sup> M. Finn op. cit. p.18.

<sup>30</sup> ibid., p.19.

<sup>31</sup> ibid, p.19.

<sup>32</sup> ibid,p.19.

<sup>33</sup> Chief Health Officer, op. cit., p.6.

<sup>34</sup> Mid North Coast's (Northern Sector) Mental Health Community Consultative Committee, Briefing Note for ABC Radio interview 3/9/98 "Physical Exercise to Mental Health".p.4.

<sup>35</sup> ibid, p.4.

<sup>36</sup> US Surgeon General, *Physical Activity and Health*, 1996, no p. #, quoted in Mid North Coast's (Northern Sector) Mental Health Community Consultative Committee, Briefing Note for ABC Radio interview 3/9/98 "Physical Exercise to Mental Health".p.5.

<sup>37</sup> NSW Mental Health Information Service, op. cit., p.1.

<sup>38</sup> ibid pp.1-2.

<sup>39</sup> ibid, p.2.

<sup>40</sup> Chief Health Officer, op. cit., p.6.

<sup>41</sup> P. Martin, op. cit., p.247.

<sup>42</sup> Chief Health Officer, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>43</sup> ibid., p.4.

<sup>44</sup> C Wang, D. Xu, & Y. Qian, 'Medical and Health Care Qigong', *Journal of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 11 (4),1991, p.296.

<sup>45</sup> Chief Health Officer, op. cit., p.4.

<sup>46</sup> ibid., p.4.

<sup>47</sup> ibid., p.4.

<sup>48</sup> ibid., p.4.

<sup>49</sup> ibid., p.4.

<sup>50</sup> ibid., p.5.

<sup>51</sup> ibid.,p.6.

<sup>52</sup> ibid., p.6.

<sup>53</sup> ibid., p.6.

<sup>54</sup> ibid., p.6.

<sup>55</sup> ibid., p.6.

**6. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter contains the instructions for the application of the *forms* used in the TQ program.

The author, from his training in *Qigong* and *Taijiquan*, is acquainted with the *forms* used in this program. The reason that the author has not cited his teachers as *authorities*, as this is contrary to the evanescent nature of traditional *Qigong Laoshi*. The author has naturally respected their wishes to remain *Cang Long*, Hidden Dragons. They were, however, instrumental in providing information, references, confirming the genuineness and applicability of the *forms* chosen for this thesis.

The *forms* used in the program are regarded as standard applications of *Qigong* and *Taijiquan*, as such references are provided here to substantiate the extensive of use and authenticity in TCM of the author's choice of the *forms* in the program, viz.:

- Wang, et al., 1991, op. cit., pp.296-301, all of the QYG *forms*;
- *Traditional Chinese Fitness Exercises*, op. cit., pp. 11-12 *form 1* and pp. 89-90 *forms 4* and *form 5*, pp.36-81 *Taijiquan*;
- G. Yu, op. cit., pp. 12-13, *form 3* and *form 5*, p. 135 *form 5* and p.147 *form 4*;
- Q. Yang, op., cit., pp. 66, 68, 143 and 146 *form 1*, pp. 87, 133, 144 and 146, *form 5*; and
- *Taijiquan*, op. cit., pp. 5, 12-16, 30-35, *Grasp the Bird's Tail and Cloud Hands*.

This section has been designed so that it can be used as a teaching and learning aid. The author found (from PS3) that giving participants this section, with the diagrams greatly increased the ease of self-practise of the program. Hence there are spaces provided throughout this section for students to make any notes that they may find applicable. Traditionally written and oral instructions for *Qigong* programs are predominantly given in the first person as this is considered to facilitate learning by the participants. As such the author has adopted this method for the presentation of the instructions.

This program, if applied correctly, will cause no physical or mental strain or pain at all. Some

people may experience a *very slight* amount of tiredness produced from the physical application of these techniques until they reach the appropriate level for their purposes. If a practitioner experiences any pain or discomfort during application she or he should check if the *form* is being practised correctly and try again. If the pain or discomfort continues, one should consult a medical practitioner as this may indicate an undiagnosed problem. If there is a feeling of any tightness or pain in the chest, practitioners should immediately seek medical advice as this may indicate an undiagnosed heart condition.

If this program is to be used to treat an injury or illness, intending practitioners **must** ensure that the illness or injury is fully diagnosed by a medical practitioner before beginning the program. As well intending practitioners should show the program to their medical practitioner to ensure they agree it is appropriate for their needs. Practitioners should read these instructions very carefully and at all times proceed slowly and gently. Unless an intending practitioner has a chronic physical illness or ailment she or he does not need to consult a medical practitioner before beginning the program.

TQ is **preventative** for depression and anxiety, specifically to stop stressors becoming a mental and or physical health hazard. It is **not** for people who are on medication for mental illness or chronic depression or are under counselling for mental illness or chronic depression. This program is **not** suitable for those who experience schizophrenia or those at risk of developing schizophrenia. As schizophrenia tends to run in families, people who know of a relative who experiences this malady may also be at risk of developing schizophrenia. If this is the case they **should not** begin this program unless a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist has been consulted. As the nature of society has become increasingly litigious it is common practice to ensure participants in *Qigong* and *Taijiquan* programs sign a disclaimer before beginning. Hence at the beginning of the instructional section of the program a sample disclaimer has been included.

**6.1 THE BENEFITS OF APPLICATION**

The level of application of the *forms* depends on the requirements of each individual. The simplest level of application alleviates physical tension and mental stress while application of the full program provides all the necessary MIA a person would need to achieve the *appropriate functional level of fitness* to optimise health and improve coordination.

**TAIJI QIGONG IS USEFUL TO:**

- Warm up before and cool down after vigorous activity e.g. tennis;
- Reduce the effects of *stressors*;
- Calm and clear the mind to focus on the task at hand, even when its boring;
- Remove physical tension i.e. relax;
- Alleviate anxiety;
- Boost the immune system;
- Reach or maintain a healthy body weight;
- Lower the risk of Coronary Heart Disease and Stroke;
- Lower Cholesterol;
- Prevent or treat osteoporosis;
- Improve gross motor skills: mobility, balance and coordination; and
- Slow down the aging process i.e. increase longevity.

## 6.2 A SAMPLE DISCLAIMER

**DISCLAIMER****YOU ENGAGE IN THESE ACTIVITIES AT YOUR OWN RISK**

This program has been designed to be gentle and relaxing. However the author has no control over how it can be interpreted and applied. Therefore the author will not be held responsible in any way whatsoever for any injury which may arise as a result of the use of this *Taiji Qigong* program.

*Taiji Qigong* is preventative for depression and anxiety, specifically in this instance to stop stressors from becoming a mental and or physical health hazard. *Taiji Qigong* is **not** for people who are on medication for mental illness or chronic depression or are under counselling for mental illness or chronic depression.

This program is **not** suitable for those who experience schizophrenia or those at risk of developing schizophrenia. As there is research that indicates that schizophrenia tends to run in families, if you have a relative who experiences this malady you may be at risk of developing schizophrenia. **Do not** begin this program unless you have consulted a qualified psychologist or psychiatrist to see if you are at risk.

If you experience any pain, immediately stop and check that you are following the instructions correctly and continue. If the pain persists, stop altogether and consult your medical practitioner. If it is chest pain immediately seek medical advice, as undiagnosed heart problems can be present in people of all ages regardless of apparent health and fitness levels.

If you have any chronic health problems consultation with your medical practitioner is advised before beginning this program.

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Date

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Signature of participant

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Signature of teacher

**6.3 APPLICATION OF THE PROGRAM WHILE IN THE LEARNING STAGE**

While still learning the *forms* practitioners should practise them twice a day for at least fifteen minutes. When they can remember the *forms*, they should use them at least every second day in two fifteen minute or two half hour sessions. Many people like to listen to gentle harmonious music while doing the *forms*, others prefer silence.

The best results from application occur when the *forms* are used in solitary application, when a person takes a few minutes to separate from the mundane world and allow the body and its energies to harmonise with the underlying energies of Nature. At these times the serenity and tranquillity experienced can be one of the great treasures of life.

**6.4 - I. YUBEISHI****PRELIMINARIES, STEPS FOR GETTING READY**

The best times to apply TQ are in the morning or evening;

Keep calm and quiet before application;

Wear comfortable loose fitting clothes and low heeled shoes;

Choose a quiet place with no loud noises disturbing the surroundings;

Ensure there is good circulation of air;

Avoid drafts;

Keep warm;

Do not apply the *forms* with a full stomach; and

Listen to what your body tells you.

**6.5 SITTING, LYING, STANDING**

These *forms* are applied in the three positions sitting, lying and standing. To begin, all people, should apply the *forms* sitting and lying down, as this promotes focus on the *Qi* and breathing techniques. These *forms* are used to stimulate and generate the *Qi* and induce *Jing* first and the body second. People who cannot stand, can still gain benefit from application of the *forms*. The *forms* after the *Massage for Well-being* beneficially stimulate and coordinate mind and body and enhance circulation of *Qi*. These *forms* can be replaced with a walk of at least

ten minutes. But it is recommended that walking is used only occasionally in replace of the last *forms*. Motion after stillness is absolutely essential to ensure the correct effects are obtained from the program.

Placing the palms opposite to each other is the oldest *form*. It is as old as the first person to feel the flow of *Qi* between the hands. The second oldest *form* is expanding and condensing the *Qi* between the hands. Both these *forms* are ideally used lying down, sitting and standing. Although it is said there are thousands of *forms*, there are only so many ways to move the human body to perform TQ. The ones given here are representative of the core *forms*, though simple and few, they are effective and efficient.

What actually constitutes a TQ *form* is that it has an identifiable *circuit* created by the position of the hands which at some point, in or for all of the *form* are palm to palm at which point the flow of *Qi* should be most apparent. Alternatively or in conjunction the mental direction of *Qi* is used. Under this definition, used either lying, sitting or standing up, *forms 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5* are TQ *forms*. Also by this definition, the *Simplified Taijiquan form, Grasp the Bird's Tail*, as it focuses *Qi* into a ball, is both a TQ and *Taijiquan form*. These *forms* stimulate the vigour and harmony of the *Qi*.

*Form 4, Sitting in Tranquillity*, is being in the state of *Jing*, (calmness, tranquillity, stillness) in a seated position. *Form 5* is *Jing* in a standing position. *Forms 4 and 5* are the reason for doing the first *forms*. By induction of the *Qi* through movement and inaction, the state of *Jing* is induced.

By the time practitioners have finished *form 4* in the sequence, they should be in the state of *Jing*, or close to it as is possible for them at the time. *Form 5* focuses the *Qi* but also induces *Jing* in a standing position. The eyes are open in *form 5* to extend the state of *Jing* from the introspective state of *form 4* to an exospective state. It is important to give due time to *forms*

4 and 5. The practitioner should take the time to do *form 4* for at least five minutes and *form 5* for five minutes in the total sequence. Five minutes for *form 5* is a long time for many people to stand still, however this *form* is effective when used sitting down. When the body signals it wants to move, go from *form 4* into the standing position for *form 5* and when the body signals it wants to move from this position, progress to *Massage for Well-Being*. It is better to do *form 5* for five minutes sitting down than for one minute standing. What is important is to focus the *Qi* and maintain the *Jing* from *form 4*, not whether to sit or stand for *form 5*.

Sitting in beautiful gardens or Nature's own is considered to be of utmost importance. The appreciation of Nature from the state of *Jing* is said to benefit the whole being. The state of *Jing* from the view of the *Daojia* is one of the wisest actions a person can take. They call this type of action, whether induced from *Rujing* or not, *Wuwei*. It means non-action or not-interfering. The practitioner is being temporarily *just part of the process*. From *Jing* is said to arise clear spontaneous thought and action, *Ziran*.

From *Massage for Well-being* to the end of the program the mind and body are led back to the normal state of mind. The focus in this section is on circulating the *Qi* and bringing back body awareness with heightened coordination, while building stamina.

This is done through *single weighted* movement. Notice that all the TQ *forms* have the weight equally on both feet. This is called a *double weighted* stance or movement. It is important to do *single weighted* movements after doing double weighted movements to ensure good circulation of the *Qi* and full return to wakefulness.

One starts slowly and builds up to a comfortable but brisk pace. It is important not to negate the harmony created from doing the *forms* by going too fast. Use the *Qi* generated from the *forms* to enjoy the walk. Don't abruptly stop the walk, slow down to an amble for the last few

hundred metres to let the body cool down and relax. The finish to the program is *Washing the Qi.*

If there is the luxury of Nature in which to apply the program, practitioners should apply the *forms* up to *Massage for Well-being* in one place and then walk for at least ten minutes through Nature to another place to do the rest of the program. Alternatively a walk to a place, application of the TQ forms and enjoyment of the walk back again can be used. Following are the instructions for the *forms*.

#### 6.5.1 THE SEQUENCE FOR SITTING

PLEASE REFER TO THE DIAGRAMS FOR THE FULL PROGRAM WHEN USING THIS SEQUENCE.

##### FORM 1: TU GU NA XIN (EXPELLING THE STALE AND ABSORBING THE FRESH) SEATED POSITION

With this *form*, whether sitting or standing, the body and mind are prepared to do the other *forms*.

##### BODY

The initial position to adopt is that in *form 4: Sitting in Tranquillity*.

Use a cushion or footstool ensure that the knees are bent at no more than 90%.

Sit upright but with the body and legs relaxed.

When the standing directions say to bend the knees while doing the *form*, instead the soles of the feet are pressed gently into the floor, and likewise when the directions say to take a step, move that foot slightly in that direction even though still seated.

##### MIND

Lightly focus attention on the *Dantian* as an aid to correct breathing.

The *Dantian* is the area one to three finger breadths below the navel. This is the 'pit of the stomach' where one can feel the breath go to when using a proper diaphragm breath.

##### BREATH

To begin you should breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth. This is done until you can perform the *forms 1 to 5* with out reference to the notes. After you are able to do

this, and this should take very little time as these *forms* are very simple to perform and learn, breathe in and out through the nose while placing your tongue so that it touches the hard palate just behind the teeth. Doing this completes a circuit in the *Jingluo* which facilitates the circulation of the *Qi*. Breathing should be slow, calm, gentle and relaxed. Do not breathe too deeply or too shallowly. Maintain breathing in and out of the nose for 27 breaths, about three minutes. This is about two minutes longer than in the standing version.

FORM 5. SANYUANZHAN ("THREE CIRCLE" SEATED POSITION, EXPANDING AND CONDENSING A BALL OF QI)

BODY

Breathe in and raise the arms into the position for *form 5*.

Take a couple of breaths in this position.

Try to feel a flow of *Qi* between the palms which becomes a ball.

Inhale and feel the ball expand pushing your hands apart to twice the size of the ball.

Exhale and squeeze the ball so the palms come closer together.

When the hands are the size of the ball again stop exhaling and inhale once more feel the *Qi* fill the ball.

Exhale and continue squeezing till the palms are a few inches apart.

Inhale to continue.

MIND

Try to focus on your breathing and the *Dantian* while feeling the *Qi* expanding and condensing between the hands.

BREATH

Breathe slowly and deeply for 27 breaths.

Now do *form 3*, then *form 5* with the ball kept the same size, and then continue to the end of the program.

6.5.2 APPLYING THE FORMS LYING DOWN

The following sequence can be applied lying down.

*Form 1*

*Form 5 Expanding and Condensing a Ball.*

*Form 3*

*Form 5* this time keep the ball at the one size.

*Form 6.*

Think of nothing and relax

Then if you are getting up, (some people use this before sleep) take it slowly and sit up for a while before you stand up. A bed is best to lie on it is comfortable and easier to get up from than lying on the floor. Ensure you keep warm when doing the *forms* lying down.

If when sitting, lying down or standing it becomes too tiring to do all the repetitions of a movement, put the arms down and adopt *Form 4: Bi Mu Yangsheng* (Sitting in Tranquillity with the eyes closed) if you were doing the *forms* sitting down and if standing let the arms drop to the sides and relax. Continue with the remaining breaths/time left in the pattern and then go on to the next *form's* repetition at the appropriate time. Stopping and relaxing the arms whenever you feel the need.

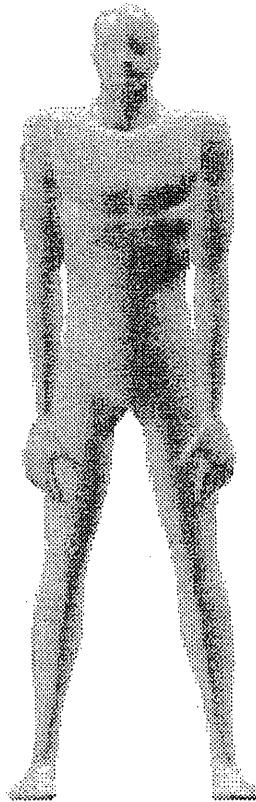
For those who cannot stand up to do the *forms*, doing them seated is a good way to build stamina and strength towards perhaps doing the *forms* standing. While those who can easily stand and do the *forms* by doing them sitting and lying down to focus on the *Qi* rather than on body movement.

If a person is capable of standing for only a few minutes, then to begin with, only a few repetitions of one *form* should be done at any one time, after the *forms* have all been done sitting down. For safety sake anyone who has any doubts about being able to do the *forms* standing should do them seated and only attempt the standing positions with a helper at hand to prevent accidental falls.

Start with the first *form* and use a different one in progression through the *forms* each session

till you have learned to do all of them. Initially aim to build up to doing any one of them in a standing position for at least three minutes. That is you should be able to do a standing *form* for at least three minutes. Following is the full program of the *forms*.

6.5.3 STANDING  
II. DONG ZHONG YUN QI  
DYNAMIC INDUCTION OF QI



**FORM 1: TU GU NA XIN (EXPELLING THE STALE AND ABSORBING THE FRESH)**  
This *form* is preparatory to actual physical movement

BODY

Stand naturally, feet apart about shoulder width.

Make your position as stable as possible.

Distribute weight equally onto both feet.

Toes point forward and feet are parallel.

The knees should be relaxed, neither bent forward or pushed back.

Allow the arms to hang with palms resting on thighs.

Hold head upright.

Partially close your eyes and mouth.

Relax the whole body.

Let the shoulders droop slightly and be slightly forward.

Do not stick out the chest.

## MIND

Lightly focus attention on the *Dantian* as an aid to correct breathing.

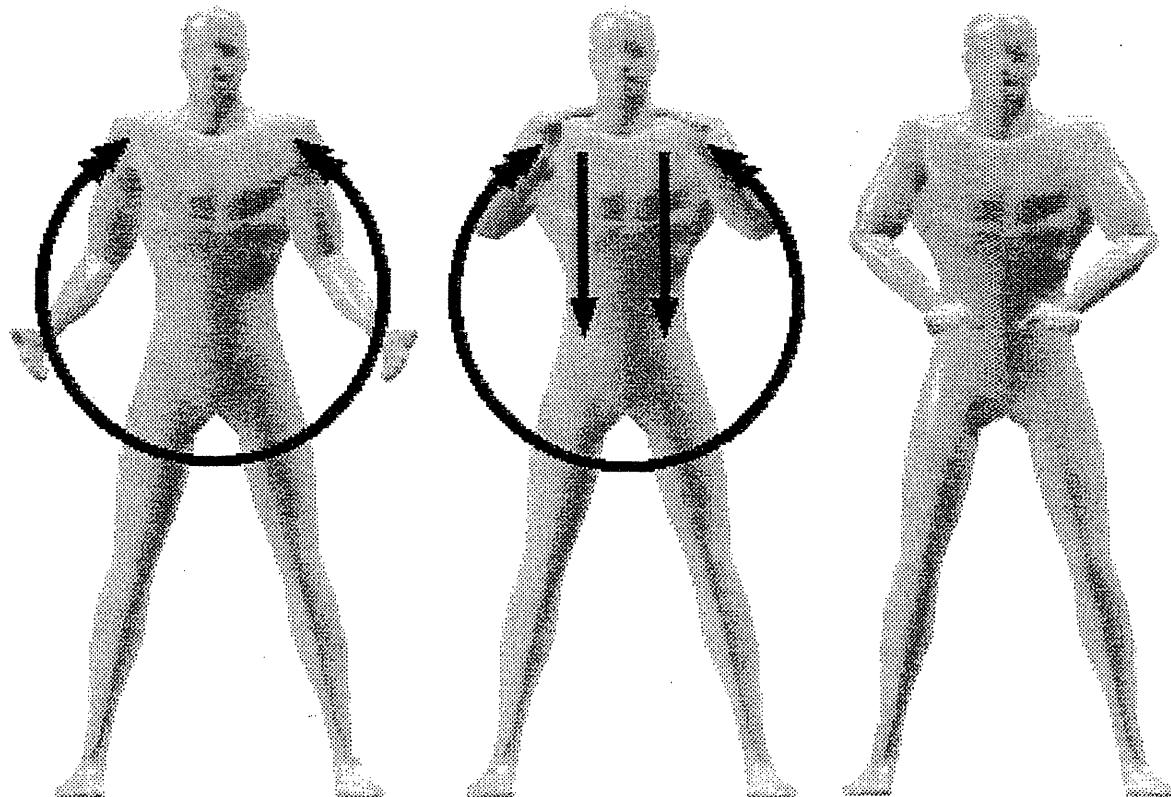
## BREATH

Take three or four breaths slowly and deeply in through the nose and out through the mouth. Then breath in and out through the nose for three or four breaths, with the tongue on the hard palate. Take slow gentle breaths. Initially consciously use the diaphragm to pull the air down into your lungs. When you breathe in, feel your abdomen expand slightly and when you exhale feel it contract in. To begin only do this *form* for a bit less than a minute. It is just as good sitting down.

**WARNING:** For some people standing still for any length of time can induce fainting. This can occur even in extremely fit people, some soldiers pass out when on parade for a length of time. So till you know how you react to standing still approach this *form* with care. If you find standing is a problem, do the *forms* sitting down. As you increase the efficiency of your circulatory system through application of all the *forms* you will most likely be able to do *form* 1 standing. The same advice applies to *form* 5. Remember this is not a competition to see who can perform the *forms* the longest or in the most correct position. TQ is designed so everyone can perform at a level suitable for themselves. You do this for your benefit not to impress anyone else. Progress should be slow and gentle. There is no place for strain or pain in this program.

## NOTES

DONG ZHONG YUN QI  
DYNAMIC INDUCTION OF QI



FORM 2: XIN PING QI HE (BEING OF TRANQUIL MIND AND SERENE ENERGY)

BODY

Open your eyes. Inhale.

Then as you exhale widen your stance to wider than your shoulders by taking a small step sideways with the left foot.

Slightly bend the knees. Do not push the knee past the toes.

Inhale and turn your hands over, palms up.

Still inhaling, slowly stand up while evenly and slowly moving the hands upward and outward along a curved line. The hands each trace a semi-circle as if running around the longitudinal circumference of a ball.

When the hands are half way to the top of the arc the palms are facing each other. In this position try and feel *Qi* flow between the palms as the hands pass this point.

The hands reach the level of the throat at the end of the inhalation.

Exhale as you push your hands down along the front of the body. At the same time slightly bend the knees.

As the hands descend the mind should lead *Qi* to descend to the *Dantian*.

At the end of the exhalation the hands should be at the level of the *Dantian*.

Inhale while turning the hands over and slowly stand up while

Continue to repeat the sequence. This time the circles will be smaller as they begining from the *Dantian* not from the hand position in the beginning position.

**MIND**

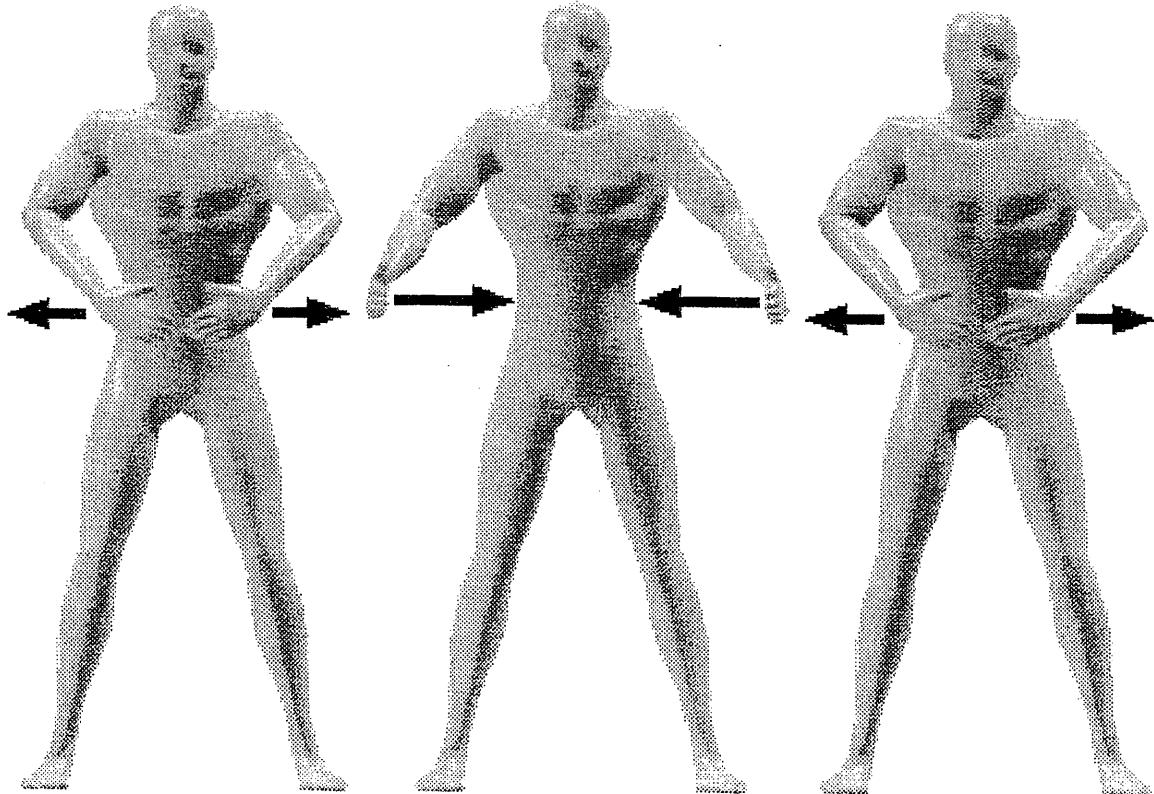
Look into the distance, do not try and focus your eyes on anything in particular.

**BREATH**

As above in and out through the nose. Repeat for 27 breaths, about 3 minutes. The reason for the number of the breaths is to make sure they are slow and deep, but it is the length of time that is important so adjust the number of breaths to suit your own breathing rhythm. Try to keep your breathing rhythm even and do not over inhale as this will make you light headed. The aim is to breathe naturally with full deep relaxing breaths.

**NOTES**

DONG ZHONG YUN QI  
DYNAMIC INDUCTION OF QI



**FORM 3: TAIJI KAI HE (OPENING AND CLOSING TAIJI)  
BODY**

At the end of the last exhalation of *form 2*, let the hands separate and sink down past the *Dantian*.

Inhale while lifting the hands and arms up and forward to a comfortable height.

The elbows are bent as if embracing the trunk of a tree, this posture is called *Taiji*.

The head and trunk are kept upright.

Do not bend or extend the neck. Do not throw-out the chest. Do not bend or extend the back.

Still inhaling slowly stand expanding the arms outwards and to the sides.

At the end of the inhalation the palms should be opposite each other.

Exhale slowly while resuming the starting posture (that is with the hands raised to a comfortable height) for this *form*, remember to bend the knees when exhaling as in *form 2*.

Inhale to repeat.

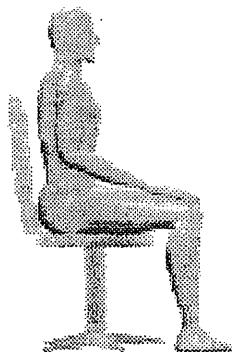
**MIND**

Look into the distance as in *form 2*.

**BREATH**

As above. Repeat for 27 breaths, about three minutes.

**III. JING ZHONG YUN QI**  
**STATIC INDUCTION OF QI**



**FORM 4: BI MU YANGSHENG (SITTING IN TRANQUILLITY)**

**BODY**

Sit straight and naturally on a chair.

Feet separated about shoulders' width, parallel and flat on the floor.

Knees bent at right angles; palms flat on the legs, you may need to sit on a cushion or use a footrest to make sure that your knees are bent at 90 degrees.

Bend the elbows for comfort.

Half close the eyes and mouth.

**MIND**

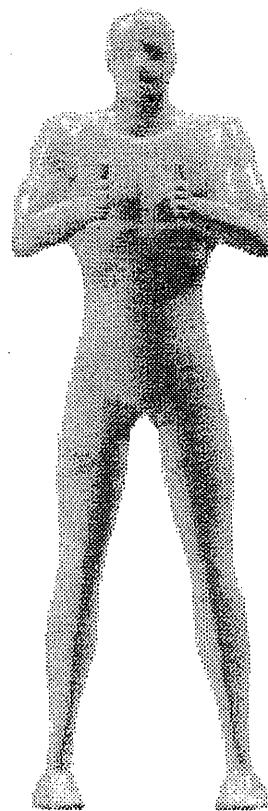
Think of nothing in particular. Sit and forget.

**BREATH**

As above for 27 breaths.

**NOTES**

JING ZHONG YUN QI  
STATIC INDUCTION OF QI



**FORM 5: SANYUANZHAN ("THREE CIRCLE" STANCE)**

This *form* is considered by many teachers to be one of the best *forms* for building strength in the legs as it stimulates muscle and bone growth. This *form* is also considered to be effective in eliminating toxins from the body. So it is important to gradually build up to doing this *form* as if done for too long it can release too much toxin into the blood stream and cause an adverse reaction due to excessive toxin elimination. Never do this *form* past the point of feeling slightly tired. For beginners and those who are ill it may be appropriate to hold the hands lower than in the diagram, they can be positioned as low as the Dantian.

**BODY**

Stand as for *form* 1.

Keep the eyes open.

Turn the toes slightly inward.

Bend the knees slightly in the direction of the toes.

Inhale and lift the hands and arms up to about the height of the sternum (no higher) or as close to this height as is comfortable.

Bend the elbows as if embracing the trunk of a tree.

The palms face each other at slightly less than the width of the shoulders.

The hands slightly folded as if holding a large ball.

This is not adequately shown in the diagram as the fingers could not be manipulated in the software used. To get the curvature of the hands correct it would be helpful to hold an actual ball about the size of a small soccer ball, so you can see and feel the position of the hands needed for this *form*, before you try it.

The head and trunk are kept upright.

Do not bend or extend the neck, throw-out the chest, bend or extend the back.

When you have assumed the correct position begin to relax the body in this order:

head - neck - shoulders - arms - hands - chest - abdomen - thighs - legs - feet.

When the body is relaxed focus attention on the *Dantian*.

#### MIND

Look into the distance and think of nothing to begin. As you progressively relax the body from the head down focus on each part till you have relaxed. When you have relaxed focus your attention on the *Dantian*.

#### BREATH

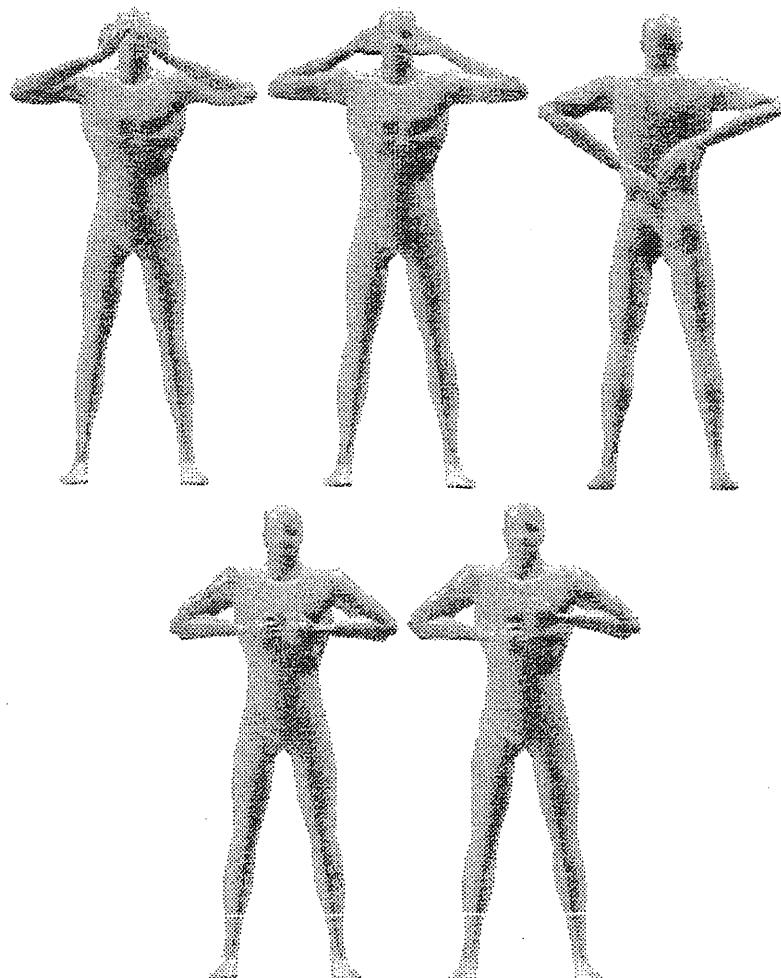
As above. To begin it may be best to do this *form* for only 9 breaths about a minute until you are sure how well you can stand still. Repeat for 27 breaths, about 3 minutes. As you build your strength and stamina you will find that you can easily do this *form* for longer. Ten minutes application is a good length of time for a person who is well practised in the *forms*. Remember if you feel faint sit down and relax until you feel centred again, and do not do it for so long next time.

#### NOTES

## IV. JING ZHONG ANMO QIU YANGSHENG

(MASSAGE TO ENHANCE THE INDUCTION OF QI THROUGH STILLNESS)

Form 5 was the last of the *Qigong forms*. Now you begin to return the body and mind to their wakeful active state. The following steps are to heighten clarity of mind (*Shen*) and reinforce the serenity and tranquillity achieved (*Jing*).



This gentle massage is used to rub away any points or areas of tension which have become noticeable through doing the preceding *forms*. Concentrate on the areas which your body is telling you are in need of attention.

**BODY**

Rest for a minute while focusing on the *Dantian*.

Rub the palms together then massage the hands.

Wash the face.

Run hands over the head and massage the back of the neck.

Massage the back.

Massage the backs of the legs. It is recommended, because of the number of people who have

undiagnosed osteoporosis, that you sit down to massage the backs of the legs rather than bending forward to massage. This is because bending forward **will**, with people who have osteoporosis, cause damage to the skeleton. The damage can be **severe**.

Gently tap the sternum with the knuckles.

Gently rub the sternum with the knuckles.

#### MIND

Focus on any tension or blockages and try to gently rub them away.

#### BREATH

As above.

### V. ZHUJIAN DE CONG QIGONG ZHUANGTAI CHUXIAN

(EMERGING FROM THE QIGONG MEDITATION)

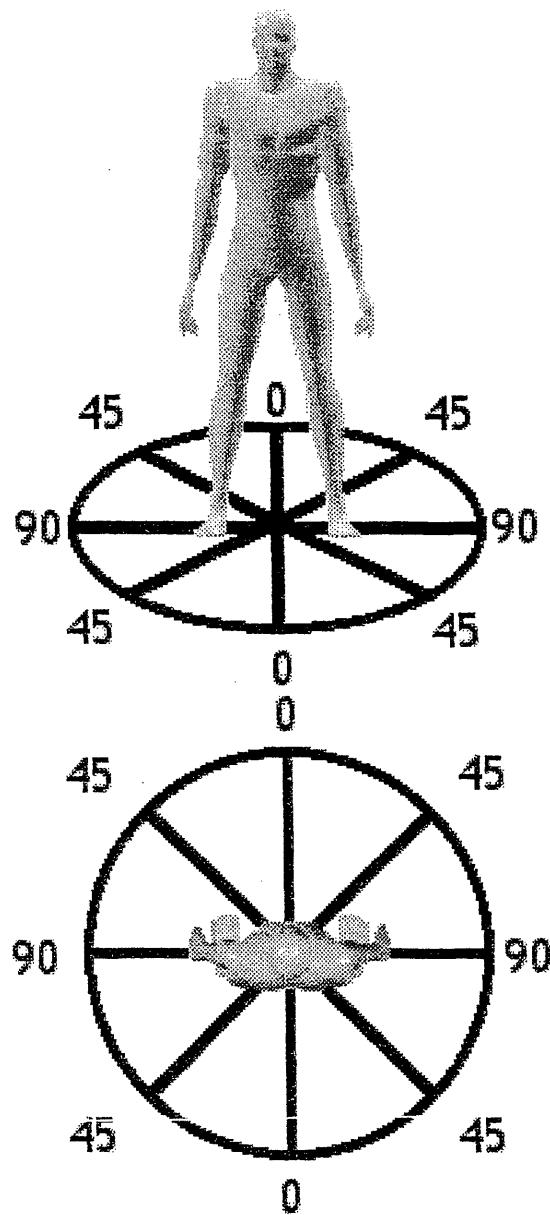
THE FOLLOWING MOVEMENTS ARE DIFFERENT FROM THE PREVIOUS ONES IN THAT THE WEIGHT IS NOT EQUALLY DISTRIBUTED ONTO BOTH FEET BUT MOVES FROM ONE TO THE OTHER. THIS IS CALLED SINGLE WEIGHTING.

PLEASE NOTE: FOLLOW THESE DIAGRAMS AS IF LOOKING IN A MIRROR,  
I.E. THE LEFT LEG IN THE DIAGRAM IS YOUR RIGHT LEG.

The following section is **essential** to return to the state of full wakefulness. These movements are good for flexibility, coordination and balance as well as aerobic fitness. They aid in the circulation of *Qi*. You will begin to think in a new way; as the body moves as a whole you learn a relaxed focus of concentration. Take the learning process easily and take your time as these movements will take time to learn. When you have learned them you will realise that they are not as hard to do as they are to learn.

#### NOTES

**PAI JIAN JI YAO**  
GENTLY STRIKING THE SHOULDER AND WAIST



**BODY**

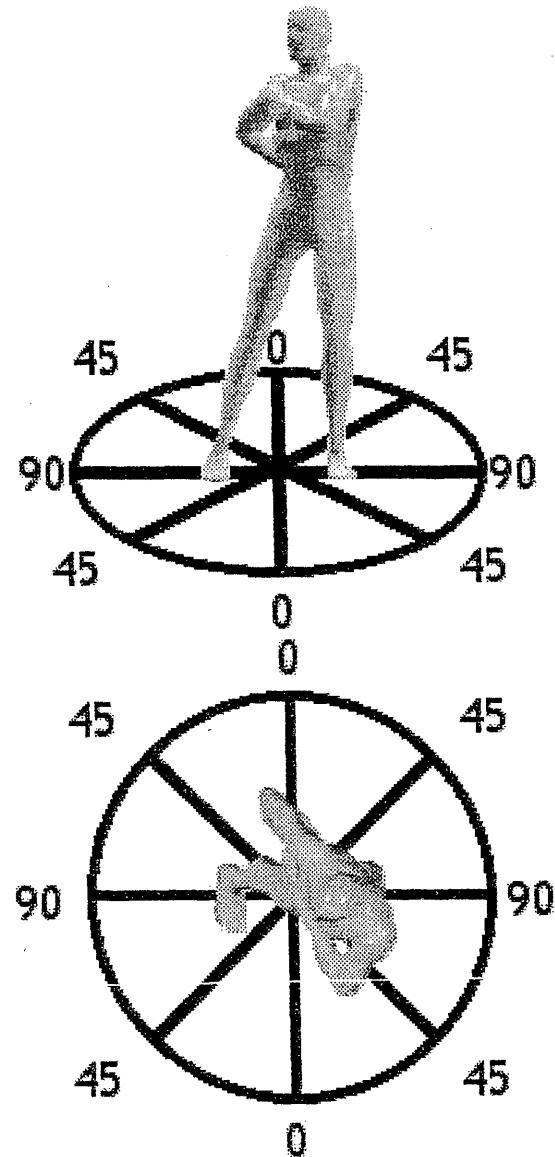
Stand as in *form 1*, but with the arms hanging at the sides, inhale. Refer to the diagrams on the following pages. Inhale, breathing as before. As you exhale begin to shift the body's centre of gravity to your right side while beginning to straighten the left leg and slightly bend the right leg. Most weight ends up on the right leg while the left leg is light, empty. At the same time turn the trunk to the left using the waist as the axis, keep the body from the navel down facing forward. Turn only as far as is comfortable.

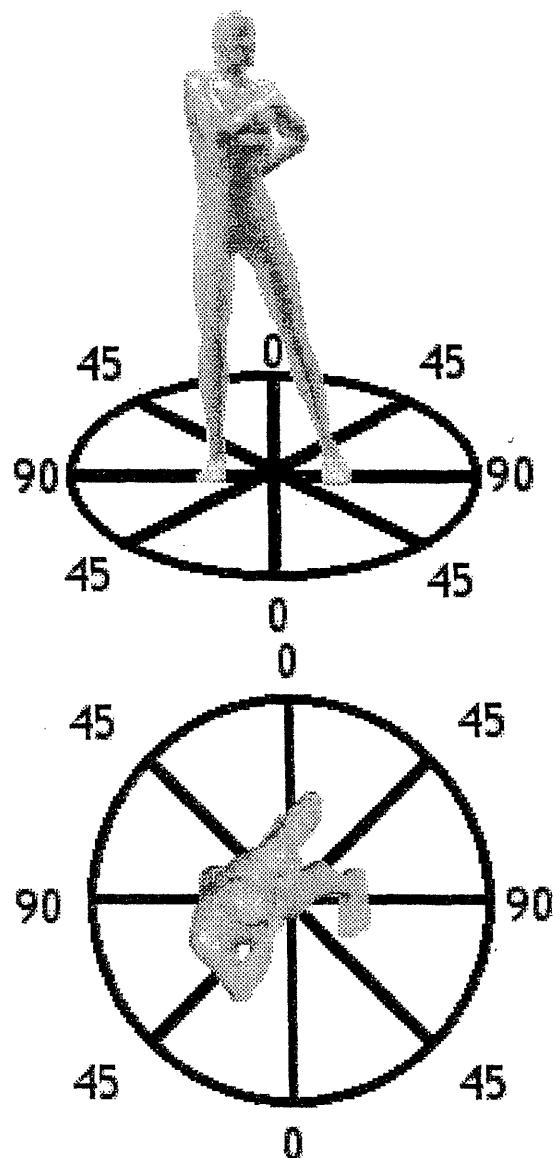
At the same time as you begin to turn, begin to move the hands.

As you reach the end of the turn, which is also the end of the exhalation, the right hand should gently strike the left shoulder and the left hand should gently strike the right hand side

of the waist on the back.

The movement of the hands should be circular. The left leg is also fully straightened at this point.





To complete the movement, inhale as you turn in the opposite direction, when you face the front the weight should be evenly distributed onto both legs. As you turn past this frontal position begin to exhale. Still turning the body and beginning to shift your weight to the left leg, while beginning to straighten the right leg and moving to strike the corresponding waist and shoulder. Two turns, one to each side are the complete movement.

#### MIND

Focus on coordinating the body moving in unity. Try not to concentrate on any one part of the body.

#### BREATH

As above. Repeat for 27 complete movements, about 3 minutes. Finish this movement with the weight on the right leg as this will easily lead into the first *Taijiquan form*.

## VI. TAIJIQUAN-WU SHU QIGONG

(SUPREME ULTIMATE FIST-MARTIAL ART ENERGY SKILLS)

TQ and *Taijiquan* are complementary processes. *Quan* means fist and refers to the martial arts origins of *Taijiquan*. Today the most common types of *Taijiquan* are those done for gentle exercise. TQ stimulates *Qi* through meditation with static positions and dynamic movements in double weighted stances, while *Taijiquan* uses meditation with single weighted, dynamic movements.

*Taijiquan* can be seen as a practical application of the benefits achieved through the application of TQ. *Taijiquan* aims to produce an actuality of being balanced in mind and body during coordinated full body movement. The whole body and mind are kept in continuous harmonious motion. A main purpose of *Taijiquan* is to enhance mobility and coordination.

*Grasp the Bird's Tail* and *Cloud Hands* may seem complex, but they are only a number of simple movements that easily follow one another. If you learn these *forms* with a mirror or use the reflection in a window at night, as is also recommended for the TQ *forms*, then they will be much easier to learn.

When these *Taijiquan forms* are repeated continuously till a state of slight tiredness is reached (there is no need to go past this level) the body has begun the process of increasing its stamina. The idea is to build on this gently, slowly and gradually.

If you play a sport that requires quick balanced movement like tennis or slow balanced movement like bowls, by applying *Cloud Hands* up till the point of tiredness is reached and repeat this twice daily, until you can apply *Cloud Hands* for ten minutes continuously you will improve your game. It will only take two weeks to reach this level, building on the level of fitness you have attained from your sport already.

Include a few minutes of *Cloud Hands* in your warm up before you play and you will be able

to shift your body weight around more quickly and stably. *Cloud Hands* in this case helps your body prepare for what it is going to do. The result will be increased balance from increased strength, agility and stamina. A plus for your game. You will have done this for yourself, at your own pace, at minimal expense and in private.

Like TQ *Taijiquan* uses movement of the diaphragm for breathing and the tongue is placed in the same position as for the TQ forms. You should breathe easily, naturally and fully. This is the type of breathing people learn in singing lessons. To begin with, the attention should be focussed on the *Dantian*. Concentrate in a relaxed way. Practice is the key. If *Grasp the Bird's Tail* seems too difficult, leave it and learn it last, the forms work well enough to begin with without it, as long as you walk for ten minutes at the end.

#### ZHUAZHU NIAO WEIBA

#### GRASP THE BIRD'S TAIL

These instructions are quiet lengthy. It may take some perseverance to learn this form. If you give it extra practice when you have a spare moment, such as when the kettle boils, it will only take a couple of weeks to be able to do this form. It is complex but extremely effective and enjoyable.

Look at the diagrams for this form now, the sequence for breathing is under the diagrams. The first figure has the weight on the left leg holding a ball with the figures left hand on top. This is what your reflection would look like if you adopted the position with the weight on the right leg and held the ball with your right hand on top. You may need to look in a mirror to first understand this.

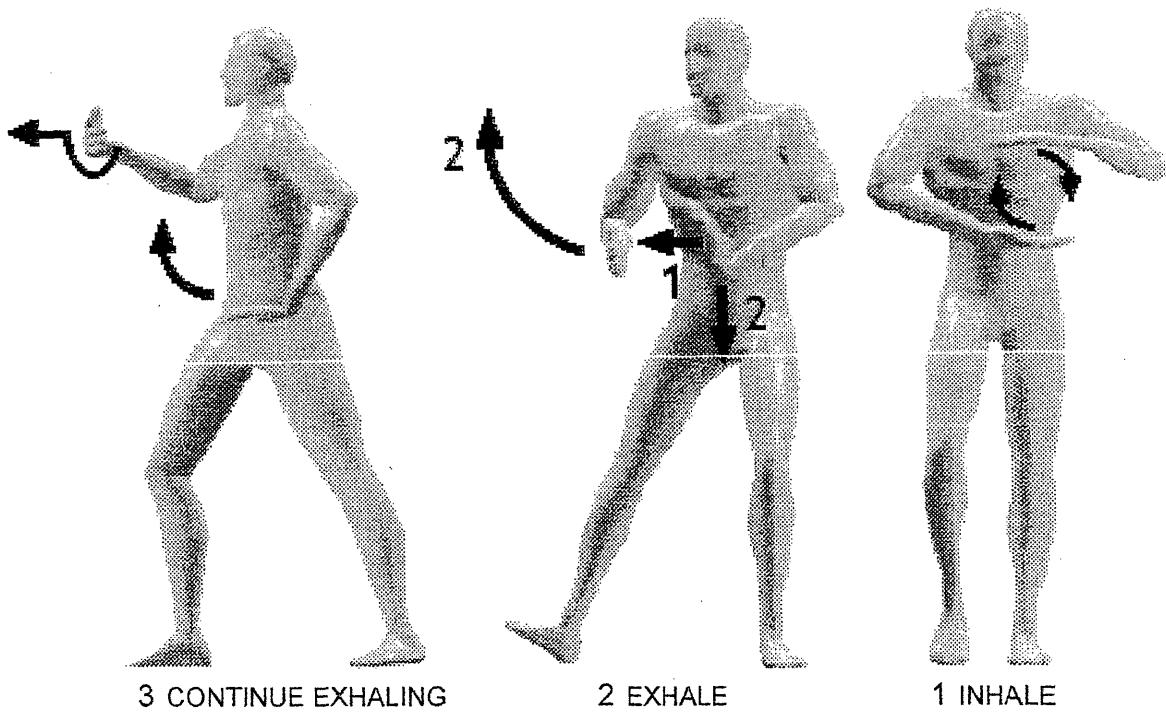
#### ZHUAZHU NIAO WEIBA

#### GRASP THE BIRD'S TAIL LEFT

At the end of the last movement of *Gently Striking the Shoulder and Waist* turn the torso slightly to the right while at the same time moving the hand touching the shoulder (the right hand) down in an arc across in front of the body as you turn. The hand which was patting the

back (the left hand) moves around to the front across the body at a level slightly below the *Dantian*. As you do this, point the fingers of the left hand down and flex the wrist slightly backwards as if dragging the finger tips through water.

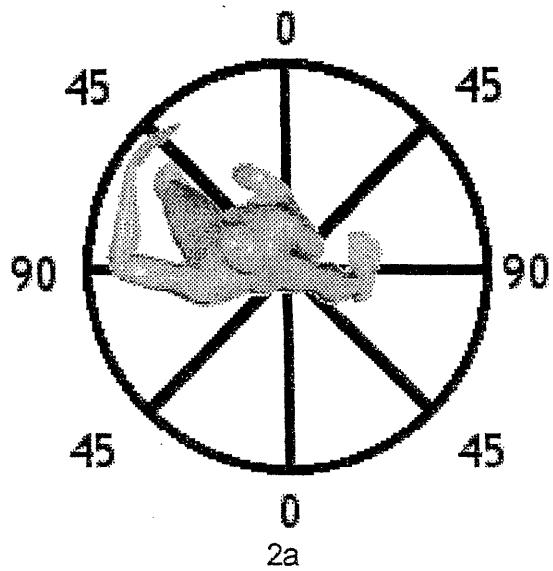
Keep moving the hands with the right hand at the end of the arc, (slightly past the right hip) making a small semi-semi circle upwards and back towards the left side of the body till it is palm down, fingers pointing to the left. At the same time the left hand moves to a position underneath the right hand, palm up, fingers pointing to the right. Thus you bring the hands vertically opposite each other as if holding a ball with the right hand on top. The ball should be held above the hips and below the shoulders. Step in with the left foot and put most of the weight onto the right leg. As you are doing this movement, try to feel as if you are collecting a ball of *Qi*. This is the first diagram below.



Next step slightly forward to the left 45 degrees with your left foot (see diagram 2). Don't put any strain on the knees or ankles. Turn the lower body 45 degrees as you step and the turn torso 20-25 degrees. The left heel touches the ground first and the weight begins to move onto the left leg. Left foot points to the left at an angle of 45 degrees (see diagram 2a below). The right foot pivots on the ball of the foot by moving the heel slightly outwards till the foot

is in a comfortable position. This takes the strain off the foot, ankle and knee.

As you are doing this, roll the ball to the right so the right and left hands are now holding the ball horizontally, the fingers of the right hand are pointing up and those of the left are pointing to the right while still holding the ball.



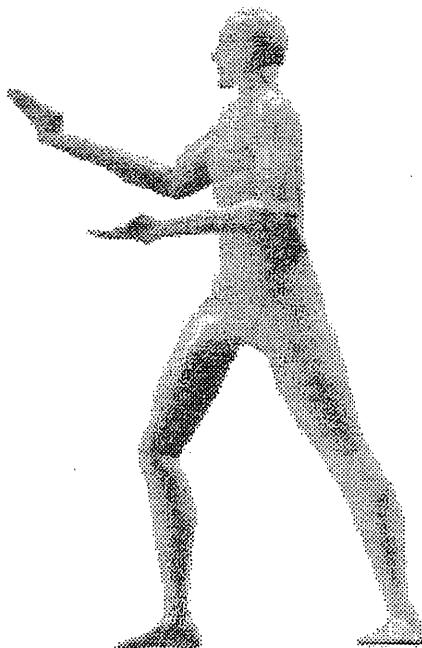
THIS DIAGRAM IS NOT MIRROR IMAGE BUT IS YOUR ACTUAL POSITION AS VIEWED FROM ABOVE

As you continue to shift the weight from right leg to left leg, keep the left hand still and move the right hand slightly forward as if you are compressing the ball. When the majority of your weight is about to transfer from the right leg to the left leg, let the ball expand to push the left hand away from it. Keep the right hand still. The left hand and arm move in unison in a gentle arc up and forward as the most of the body's weight is transferred to the left leg and the torso finishes the turn to the left (see diagram 3). Completing this turn (to the full 45 degrees to the left) faces the torso in the direction the left foot is pointing. Do not bend the knee past the toes.

The left hand ends up in a line just front of the left knee, at the height of the left shoulder. The fingers pointing to the right. The left hand should be completely relaxed. The right hand sinks to just in front of the right hip, palm facing down and fingers pointing forward. There should just be a slight tension in the right wrist. This is produced by bending the hand slightly up

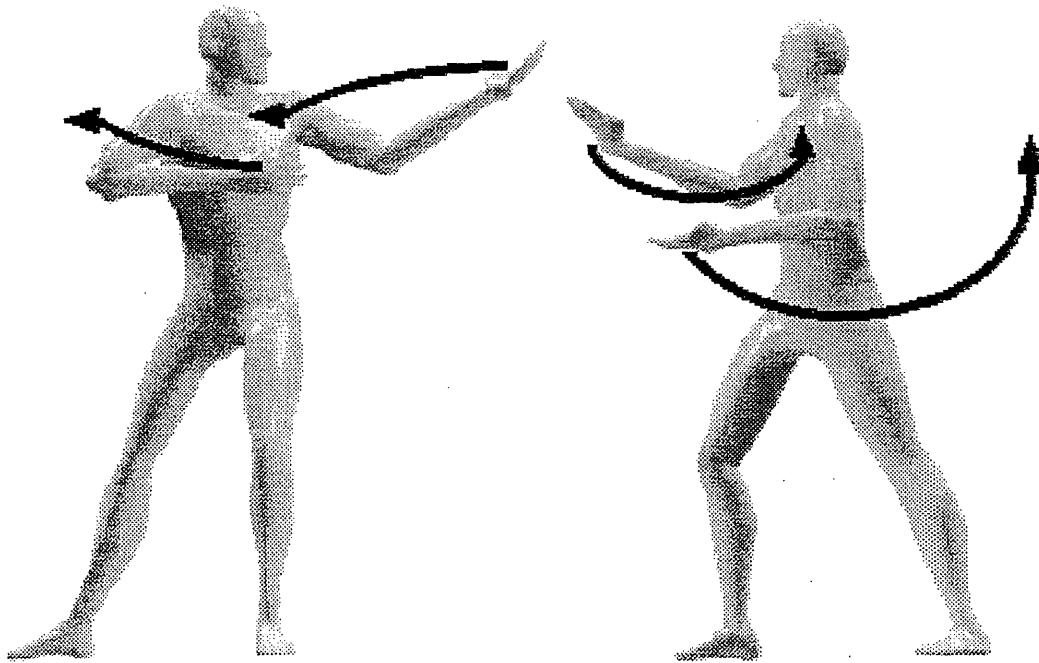
towards the forearm. Look into the distance above the left hand.

Next, turn the torso slightly to the left while extending the left hand forward with the palm turned down, while bringing the right hand upward and turning the palm up past the abdomen until it is below the left elbow (see diagram 4 below).



**4 CONTINUE EXHALING**

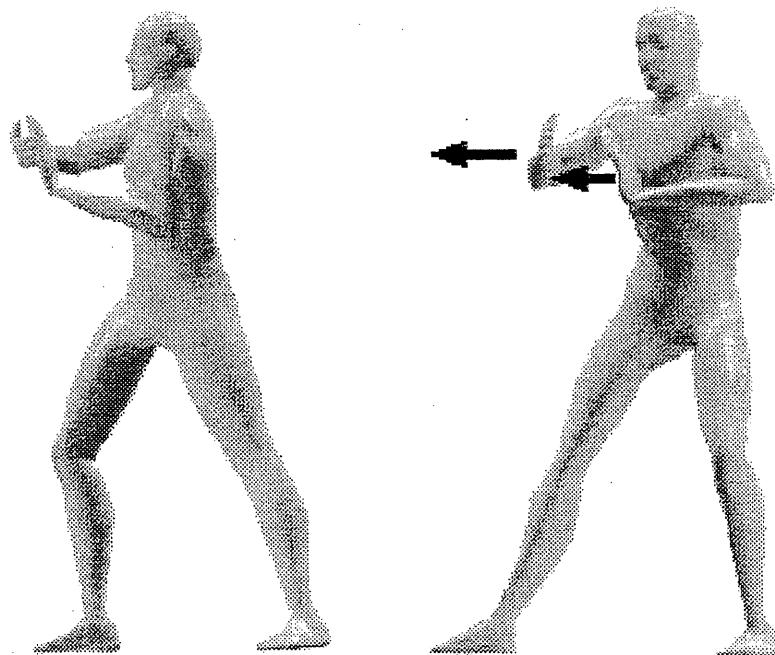
Refer to diagrams 5 and 6 below for this section. Now turn the torso to the right while shifting the weight onto the right leg. Pull both hands down in unison so as to draw an arc across the abdomen. Imagine you are gently but firmly grasping a bird by the tail. End up with the right hand extended sideways at an angle of 45 degrees at shoulder level, palm up, look into the right palm. The left forearm ends up across, but not touching the chest. The palm is turned inwards. While pulling the hands keep the back upright, do not lean forward or let your bottom stick out.



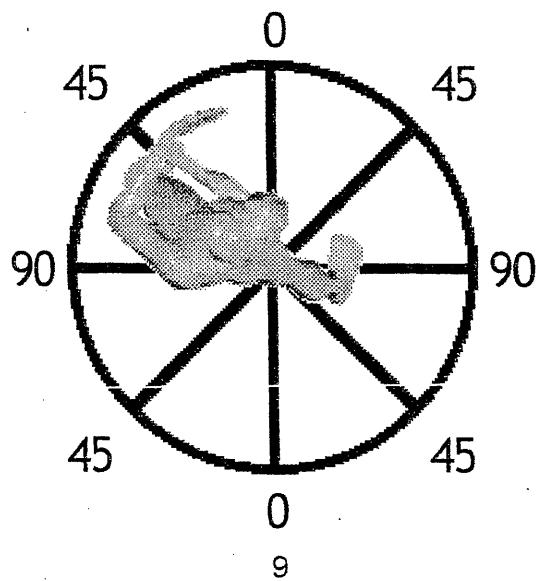
6 CONTINUE INHALING

5 INHALE

Refer to diagrams 7, 8 and 9 below for this section. Without moving the positions of the feet, turn the torso to the front as you bring the right hand forward, fingers pointing upward. Shift the weight onto the left leg. The body's weight moves with the speed of the right hand. The fingers of the right hand should touch the left wrist as the body's weight is fully transferred. Let the left arm move with the torso and come out slightly from the body. Keep the left arm rounded. The fingers of the right hand come to rest on the inside of the left wrist about 5 centimetres along from where the hand joins the wrist. The fingers of the right hand point upwards while those of the left hand point to the right. Look at the left wrist. The body's weight is mostly on the left leg with the right fairly straight but with the knee a little bent. Do not let the left knee go past the toes. Both feet should be flat on the floor.



8 CONTINUE EXHALING      7 EXHALE AS YOU TURN &amp; PRESS



END OF THE EXHALATION AT THIS POINT

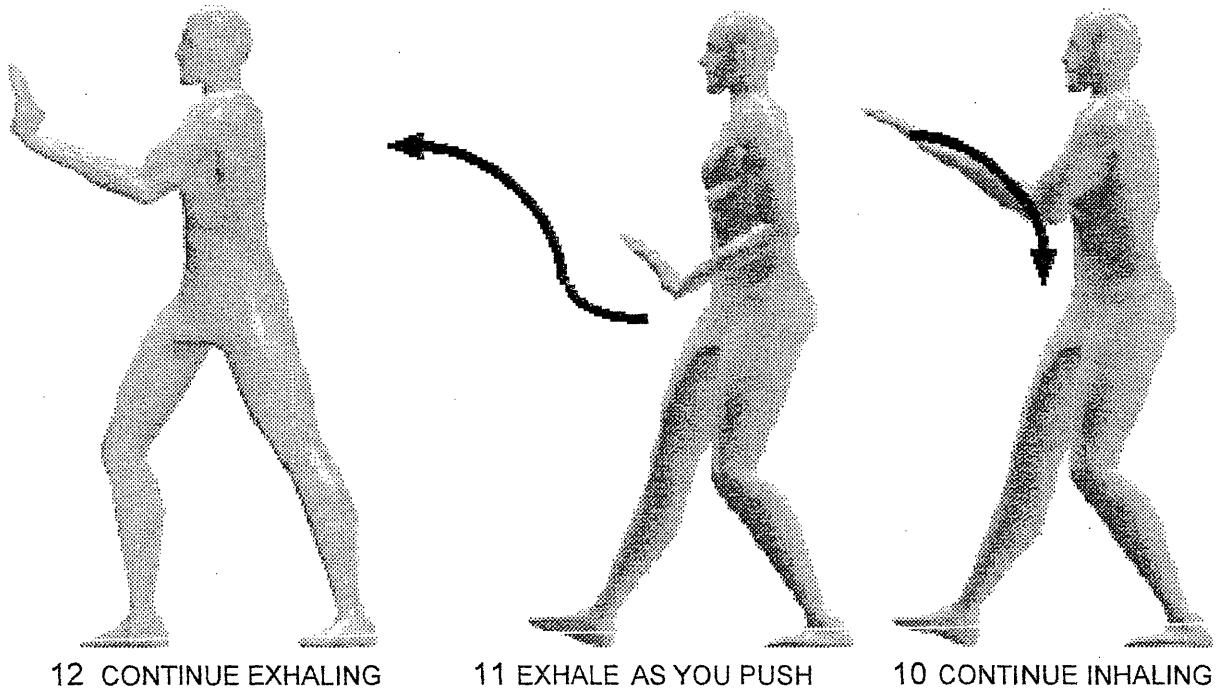
THIS DIAGRAM IS NOT MIRROR IMAGE BUT IS YOUR ACTUAL POSITION AS VIEWED FROM ABOVE

Refer to diagrams 10, 11 and 12 below for this section. Begin inhaling and turn the left palm down and rub the right hand over the top of the left wrist so both palms end up pointing downwards. Move the hands apart sideways to about shoulder width, not wider.

Sit back slowly moving the body's weight back onto the right leg, keep the back straight. Let the toes of the left foot come up off the ground but keep the heel on the ground. As you do this, bring both the hands backwards and down in an arc. When most of the body's weight is

on the right leg, the hands should be at the lowest point of the arc, that is in front of the abdomen and closer together than when at the top of the movement. Look straight ahead. The left leg is almost straight.

Move the body forward transferring the weight onto the left leg again as you push both hands upwards in a steep arc till they are at the line of the left toes. Then finish the weight transfer to the left leg while pushing the hands straight forward, as if shutting a door. The hands end up only little in front of the left toes. You should feel very stable in this position.



#### ZHUAZHU NIAO WEIBA GRASP THE BIRD'S TAIL RIGHT

Turn to the front and inhale. At the same time let the right hand sink down turning the palm upwards while the left hand moves over the top of the right hand to form a ball holding position. Imagine you are collecting a ball of *Qi* as you did in the mirror image of this move at the beginning of *Grasp the Bird's Tail left*. This time the left hand is on top.

At the same time turn the torso to the right.

Turn the left foot inward to the right, pivot on the heel, but don't put any strain on the ankle.

Draw in the right foot so you are in the ball holding stance ready to step to the right.

Continue the moves as described above, but this time remember that they are a mirror image of the first movements. You will end up with the palms facing forward at shoulder height but with the weight on the right leg. Repeat for about five minutes.

### HUI SHOU RU YUN

#### CLOUD HANDS

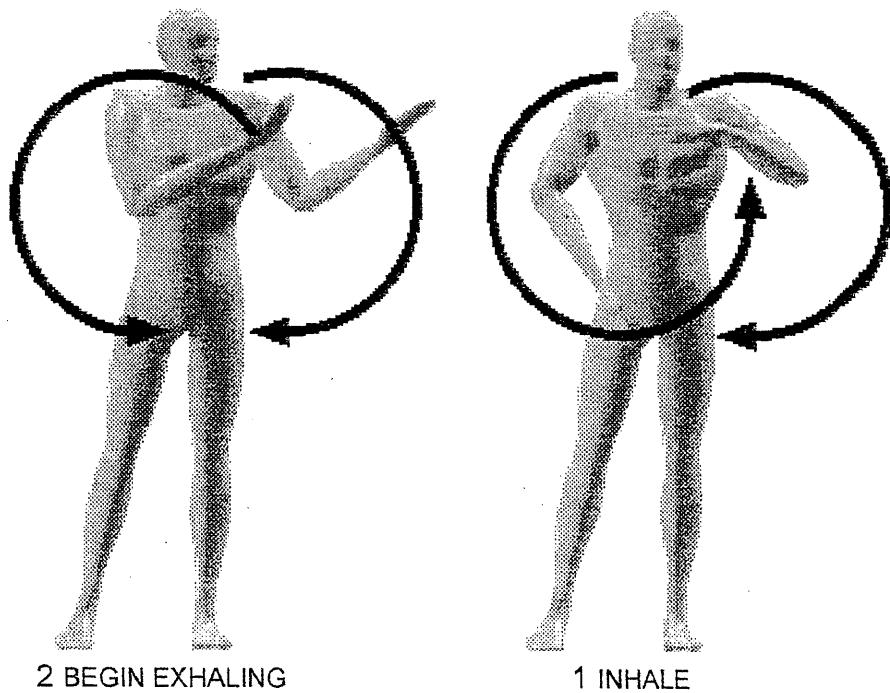
*Cloud Hands* is used in this program for health and mobility. Like *Grasp the Bird's Tail*, *Cloud Hands* will teach you to think in a holistically physical way. It follows on from *Grasp the Birds Tail* in the sequence of *forms* used in *Simplified Taijiquan*. If you enjoy these *forms* it may interest you to visit your local *Taijiquan* school.

#### BODY

From the last position of *Grasp the Bird's Tail* right, turn the right foot to the left 45 degrees pivot on the heel. When the right foot has finished turning, turn the left foot to the left till it is pointing in the same direction as the right, pivot it on the ball of the foot. The feet should end up being parallel and slightly wider than the shoulders, but remember if this is too much for you, put them at a comfortable distance. This is easy to do if you haven't taken too big a step from the ball holding position to the right. With some practice, it will be possible to turn both feet simultaneously. At the same time as turning the feet, feel the right hand become heavy and let it sink down, move it in an arc across the front of the body, flex the wrist slightly backwards and feel as if the fingers, which are pointing down, are dragging across water. While the left hand becomes light and floats (like a cloud) across in front of the mouth.

When the left hand is in front of the mouth, the right hand should be below it and the body's weight is momentarily equally on both feet (see diagram 1).

The hands now begin to make two circles. The upper hand moving outwards and down, feel it becoming heavy as it sinks. While the lower hand becomes light like a cloud and floats upwards and inwards (see diagram 2).

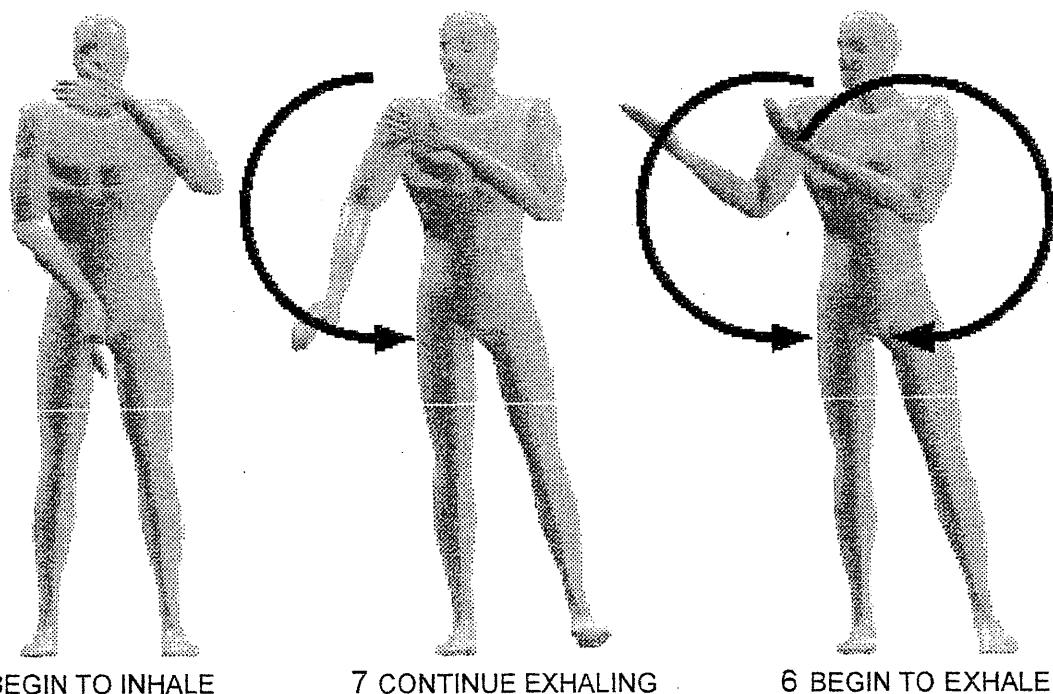
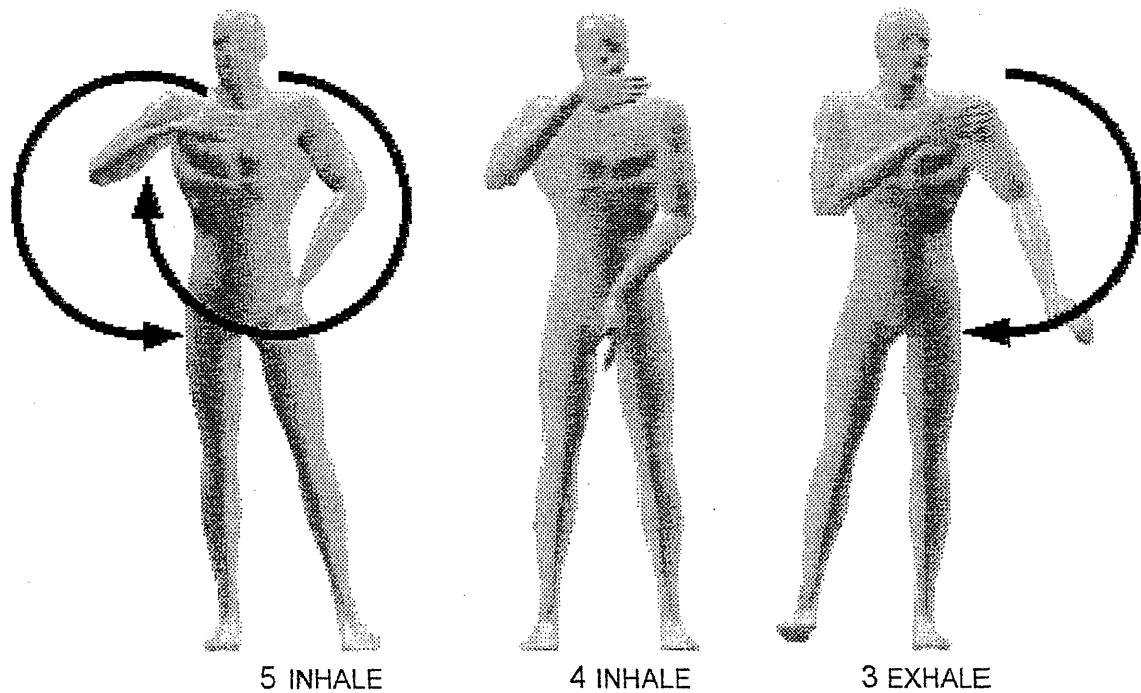


While you are doing this, shift the body's weight to the left leg (see diagrams 3, 4 & 5). As you push off lightly with the toes of the right leg.

Inhale as you push off with the toes and exhale when you put the heel down. Continue to exhale till you push off with the toes again.

When the hands cross, put the heel down of the weightless leg and begin to transfer the weight across to the other leg, still moving the hands in circles.

One circle (one inhalation and one exhalation), on each side is a complete movement.

**MIND**

Focus on coordinating the body moving in unity. Try not to concentrate on any one part of the body.

**BREATH**

As above. Repeat the movement for about 5 minutes.

**MUYU QI****WASHING THE QI**

The *washing* is done to ensure a final even distribution and balance of the *Qi*. It is very similar to the *Massage for Well-Being*, but the body is *stroked* rather than rubbed and you do not stop to concentrate on any particular area. It should be done very gently and at an even tempo. It is most important to touch the ground at the end of the movement as this is thought to *earth off* any excess *Qi* which has been generated. We only need enough *Qi* to suit our purposes. Excess *Qi* is akin to taking too much of a good thing, unnecessary and counterproductive. If you are not physically capable of touching the ground, touch a wall instead.

**BODY**

Rub the palms together.

Run the hands up over the face and continue up over the head to the neck.

Then over the shoulders over the ribs and round to the back and give it a rub.

Bend down and rub the back of the legs. Run the hands round to the front and rub your shins.

Exhale and touch the ground.

Inhale and slowly stand and be still for a moment.

**MIND**

Think of nothing in particular.

**BREATH**

Gentle deep diaphragm breathing.

**6.6 SOME SPECIFIC USES FOR THE FORMS**

This section gives specific *forms* to use for different applications. Not all *forms* are needed for each purpose.

**6.6.1 TO RELAX THE BODY AND MIND TO RELIEVE STRESS AND TENSION**

These forms can be done standing, sitting or lying down. It is up to you to decide which position suits you best. The advice on stress management from Chapter 5 should be heeded to gain more than temporary relief from the symptoms. You can use these *forms* before a

stressful activity, as a break away from a stressful activity or after a stressful activity. This set of *forms* should take about ten minutes for you to feel the effects. They can be done anytime you feel stressed or are about to do something which is stressful.

Start with *form 1* for one minute, nine to ten slow breaths;

Then *form 2* for one minute;

Next *form 3* for one minute;

Follow this with *Massage for Well-being*;

Now do *Gently Striking the Shoulder and Waist* for one minute;

Follow this with a few minutes of *Grasp the Bird's Tail* or *Cloud Hands*;

Finish with a few minutes of *form 4*. When doing this *form* for stress management, consciously relax the body from the head down to the toes in this order.

Head, Neck, Shoulders, Arms, Hands, Chest, Abdomen, Thighs, Legs and Feet.

When you have done this, just sit peacefully while lightly focusing on your breath and try to feel the *Qi* storing/settling in the *Dantian*.

If you are using these *forms* to prepare for a stressful event or to take a break away from a stressful event, use *Washing the Qi* at the end to focus the mind and body back to a fully wakeful state. Then walk slowly and calmly to whatever you have to do next.

#### 6.6.2 ENHANCING MOBILITY

In practice by concentrating on *Gently Striking the Shoulder and Waist*, *Grasp the Bird's Tail* and *Cloud Hands*, either together or individually you will optimise mobility. These *forms* can be used separately from the rest of the program to enhance mobility and coordination or more time can be spent on this section of the program, e.g. double the recommended time for these movements in a normal session. These are excellent *forms* to practise while waiting for the kettle to boil etc. If mobility/coordination is a problem, the *forms* are best applied soon after rising in the morning, to warm-up for the events of the day ahead. You can even begin the day with the lying down version in bed before you get up.

To further enhance mobility when you have reached a level where you know all the *forms* and can do every one of them without needing to look at the diagrams, try and do the sequence of the *forms* sequentially in one fluid sequence of movements. This is an aid to developing relaxed mental focus and physical coordination. Do this sequence first in the seated position and then standing up. When sitting as with standing for the fluid sequence of the *forms*, *form 4* and *Massage for Well-being* are left out.

The seated sequence is:

*Form 1.*

*Form 5 Expanding and Condensing a Ball,*

*Form 3*, leave out *form 4*.

*Form 5* with the ball kept the same size.

Continue to the end of the program.

#### 6.6.3 STANDING SEQUENCE FOR THE FLUID MOVEMENT THROUGH THE FORMS

##### FORM 1. EXPELLING THE STALE AND ABSORBING THE FRESH

Take a couple of breaths in and out through the mouth and nose.

Take one breath in and out through the nose.

Inhale again.

##### FORM 2. BEING OF TRANQUIL MIND AND SERENE ENERGY

Exhale, step to the left with the left foot and do *form 2* for one inhalation and exhalation.

##### FORM 3. OPENING AND CLOSING TAIJI

At the end of the downward motion of the hands in *form 2* inhale and raise the hands into the

*Taiji* position.

Exhale.

Next, expand the arms out on inhalation and bring them back in on exhalation.

(*form 4* has been left out to improve the transition between *forms*)

##### FORM 5. "THREE CIRCLE" STANCE

When the hands come back to the centre in *form 3* the fingers move into the position of *form 5*.

Inhale and feel the *Qi* expand the ball.

Exhale and focus the *Qi* back to the size of the original ball.

Inhale and exhale holding the ball of *Qi* at the same size between the palms.

At the end of the exhalation the palms turn over (downwards) and the hands gently move down and to the sides. Bend the knees slightly.

#### GENTLY STRIKING THE SHOULDER AND WAIST

Next inhale and begin the movement for this *form*.

Do it once to face the left and once to the right and then once more to the left again so as to be ready to collect the ball to the right in the next *form*.

#### GRASP THE BIRD'S TAIL

Turn to the front, inhale and collect the ball. Do this whole *form* once to each side.

#### CLOUD HANDS

After the last movement of *Grasp the Bird's Tail*, let the left hand float like a cloud across in front of the body while the lower hand moves at slightly below the *Dantian* as the body turns to the front.

Do *Cloud Hands* once to the left and once to the right and then once to the left again.

Stand up and relax.

Then, try the same fluid movement standing with the appropriate steps and movement of body weight. Then you can build up to the stamina needed for the repetitions of each movement, as indicated in the instructions. Those who are fit enough to do the *forms* standing need only do them seated for a couple of sessions and follow the seated movement by repeating the *forms* standing. Do them in one continuous movement as described above. Then move on to the instructions for the full number of repetitions while standing.

#### WARMING UP BEFORE ACTIVITY

It is a good idea to spend five to ten minutes warming up before activity, even if the activity is only a brisk walk, to avoid injury produced by sudden movement with cold muscles. Begin

gently and slowly.

Start with *form 2* for one minute;

Move on to *form 3* for one minute;

Then *Gently Striking the Waist and Back* for two minutes;

Next, repeat *Grasping the Bird's Tail* for two minutes;

Follow this with *Cloud Hands* for four minutes; and

Finally, finish with *Massage for Well-being*.

As can be seen from these examples TQ can be adapted for specific purposes. After you have learned the program you may be able to tailor it for your specific needs concentrating on the areas which would be of most benefit for your circumstances.

#### **6.7 PREVENTION OF SIDE EFFECTS**

If you perform the *forms* correctly, you will experience no side effects. With beginners, however, some minor side effects may occur until they are used to doing the program. If you get a stiff back from standing do the *forms* sitting until you build up some stamina.

If you have problems breathing, you are probably breathing too deeply. Take a break and have a walk for a few minutes and then resume. If you experience more than a slight amount of tiredness from applying the *forms*, you were probably too tired to begin with and in need of sleep. When you are refreshed, try them again.

It is usual for beginners to feel sensations they are not used to when in the state of *Jing*. These can include pins and needles, numbness, itching or a sensation of heat on the skin. Focus on the *Dantian* and these should disappear. Sometimes when sitting in *Jing*, you make experience lucid visions. This is because your creativity and imagination have been stimulated. Open your eyes and they will stop.

**6.8 SUMMARY**

This program is based on extensive research and trial and error over millennia. It has been found useful for many people, which is why these *forms* have been in use for so long. They have, in modern times, been the subject of much WM scientific research. This research has validated the TCM premises of their efficacy.

It is possible to learn this program from this chapter. Those who have some experience of *Qigong* or *Taijiquan* will find this very easy. Those who have no experience of these types of TCM modalities will require some small perseverance to reach the level of practical application. The small amount of time it will take to learn the program will be repaid in the enrichment of one's life which application produces.

When teaching oneself the program do not allow the apparent complexity of some of the *forms* lead to discouragement. Please remember that *Grasp the Bird's Tail* and *Cloud Hands* are not the primary focus of the program. They are included for gross motor skill enhancement, particularly in relation to fall prevention. If the reader finds these too difficult to learn they can be replaced with a brisk walk.

The author would, however, recommend that those who wish to make use of this aspect of the program and find them too difficult to learn from this chapter approach their local *Taijiquan* school for instruction. We are fortunate in Australia to have many quality *Taijiquan* schools and one should be within easy reach.