

Qigong Secrets

Secrets of the Ancient Energy Masters - 22 Week Home Study Course

Week Two

Brief Look At TCM

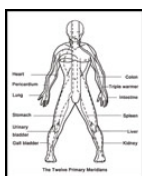
TCM is the philosophy the theory which underpins Qigong. Starting this week we'll be taking a look at a few of the principals that are vital to the working and effectiveness of Qigong.

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The Meridians

The fascinating energy streams inside your body that hold the key to a long, healthy life.

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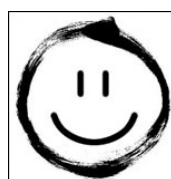


The 3 Treasures of a Human

Every human has them and Qigong is the best way of helping you look after them and increase their functioning power for long term health and happiness.

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Smile From Your Heart



This is an essential skill to acquire if you want to get the most from your Qigong.

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Butterfly Dancing

Level 2 - we add the breathing and help you to practice more like Qigong than just Qigong form!

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Progress Tracker

What can't be measured cannot be managed. Discover the secret tool that will play a major part in your success with Qigong

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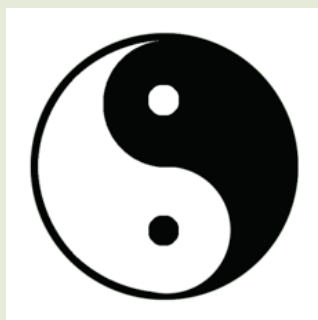


Welcome!



Welcome to week 2 of the home study course.

This week we'll be covering a brief introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The theory and philosophy that underpins the effectiveness of Qigong.



The Tai Chi symbol. Just one of the many mis-understood Traditional Chinese Medicine concepts we'll be exploring in this weeks Qigong Secrets.

I hope to be able to convince you of the validity of TCM as an alternative model to western medicine by pointing out just a few areas where TCM has been well in advance of western medicine often by centuries!

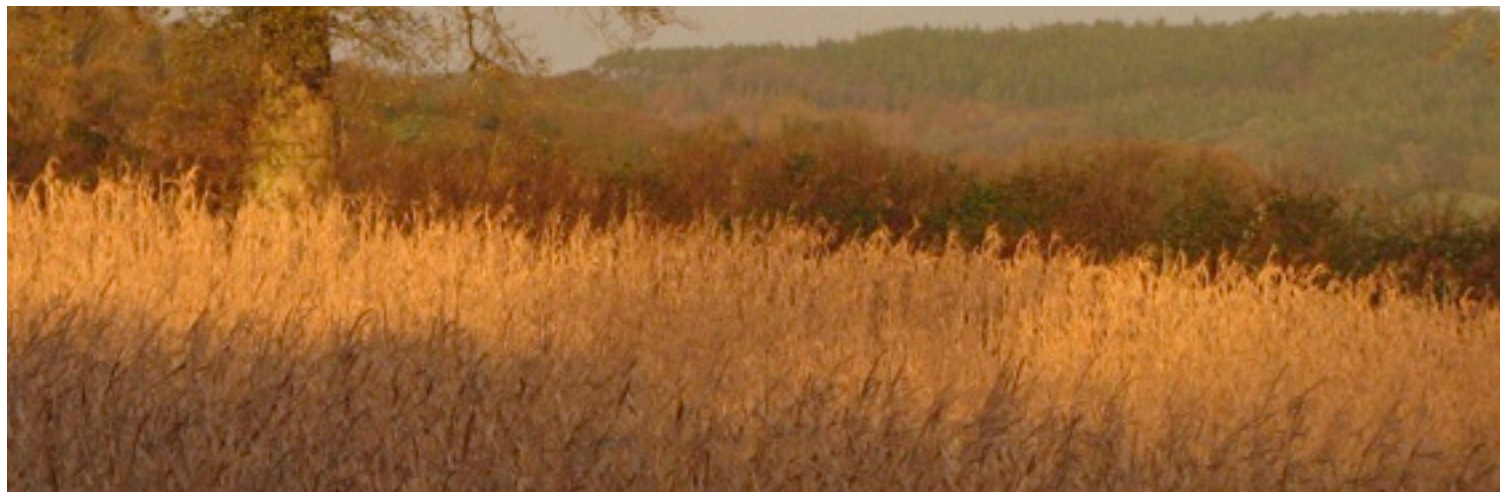
Students of TCM spend many years studying and practicing the

skills and techniques of TCM in order to become proficient in there use.

Therefore it is not possible for me to cover this subject in great depth, but then that's not a problem as this is a Qigong course and not a TCM course!

But I want you to understand enough TCM to know how it works. This knowledge will complement your Qigong practice greatly.

I'll also be introducing you to one of the most powerful secret tools that I use with my students to help them improve their practice and the results of their practice.



Some Amazing Milestones of TCM

Traditional Chinese Medicine is the longest continuous medical system known to man. It has been keeping one of the worlds largest populations healthy and happy. A population that also has one of the longest continual sets of written records and history.

By the end of the Tang Dynasty in the 10th century, 5 centuries before the birth of western medicine, the Chinese had already developed a highly comprehensive body of medical knowledge and methods, many of which were far in advance of the West.

I'd like to share with you a few of those methods and knowledge that demonstrate that TCM is a valid alternative to Western medicine.

For more information on this subject read Grandmaster Wong Kiew Kit's incredible book: "The Complete Book of Chinese Medicine". It is hand on heart the most in depth and clear book on TCM that I have ever read.

- William Harvey is famous for having accurately described how blood circulates around the body. 2500 years before William Harvey the Inner Classic of Medicine (Zhou Dynasty 1027 – 256 BC) described how blood flow in the human body moved in a never ending circle.
- Hua Tuo (208-118BC) – a physician was probably the first person known in the world to apply anaesthesia in surgery, about 2000 years ahead of the West.
- The Chinese were the first to produce a governmental pharmacopeia, commissioned by the Tang government – in 657 – more than 800 years before the Florentine Nuovo Receptaris, which is the first Western pharmacopeia.



Some Amazing Milestones of TCM (cont)

- Surgery reached an exceedingly high level during the Tang dynasty. “Magical Inherited Formulae” by Gong Qing Xuan, despite its supernatural name, provided many rational and effective methods as remedies for gangrene and various skin diseases, stoppage of bleeding and elimination of pain, treatment for shock and detoxification of poisons. It is probably the worlds earliest book that specialises on surgery.

It emphasised the constant movement of joints as precaution against stiffness after treatment, recommended the use of splints for immobilisation *only* if necessary, and insisted on the thorough washing of open wounds before stitching to prevent infection. All these important measures were realised in the West only very much later.

- In ophthalmology, it is awe-inspiring to learn that more than a 1000 years ago, the Chinese already performed successful operations on the eyes to extract excessive fluid!
- The Tang government established the Imperial School of Medicine, which was earlier than the first medical school in the West at Salerno by 200 years.
- The Chinese have always considered preventative medicine as superior to healing. In the Nei Ching it is written: “The inferior physician treats disease, the superior physician teaches the well to remain well”.

In order to easily understand how Chi Kung overcomes pain and illness we first need to look at 2 very important concepts of TCM. Before we begin it is vital to keep in mind that TCM is a very different approach to health and well being than western medical philosophy.



Yin Yang Theory



I'm sure you recognise this symbol, it's commonly referred to as the Tai Chi symbol and I'm certain you have heard of Yin and Yang.

Yin and Yang are perhaps two of the most misunderstood concepts in the whole of TCM. Let me clarify:

Yin and Yang are symbols and as such can refer to different things in different circumstances. But no matter what they refer to they are **opposite**, yet **complimentary**.

So, you cannot go to the shops and buy a bag of Yin or a kilo of Yang. They are just symbols and it is important to know right from the start that nothing is completely Yin or completely Yang.

Yin Yang theory is a theory of relativity. At its simplest something is either Yin or Yang when in relationship to

something else. For example in a relationship between a boy and a girl, the boy is more Yang (male) compared with the girl who more is Yin (female).

But if we take a different relationship say between a boy and a man the boy is more Yin compared with the man who is more Yang. Yin and Yang can be used in all relationships. For example: Front/back, night/day, slow/fast, chronic/acute etc. So remember:

Yin and Yang are symbols and something is only Yin or Yang in relationship to something else

In TCM, we use Yin and Yang to describe contrasting characteristics that are relative to each other.

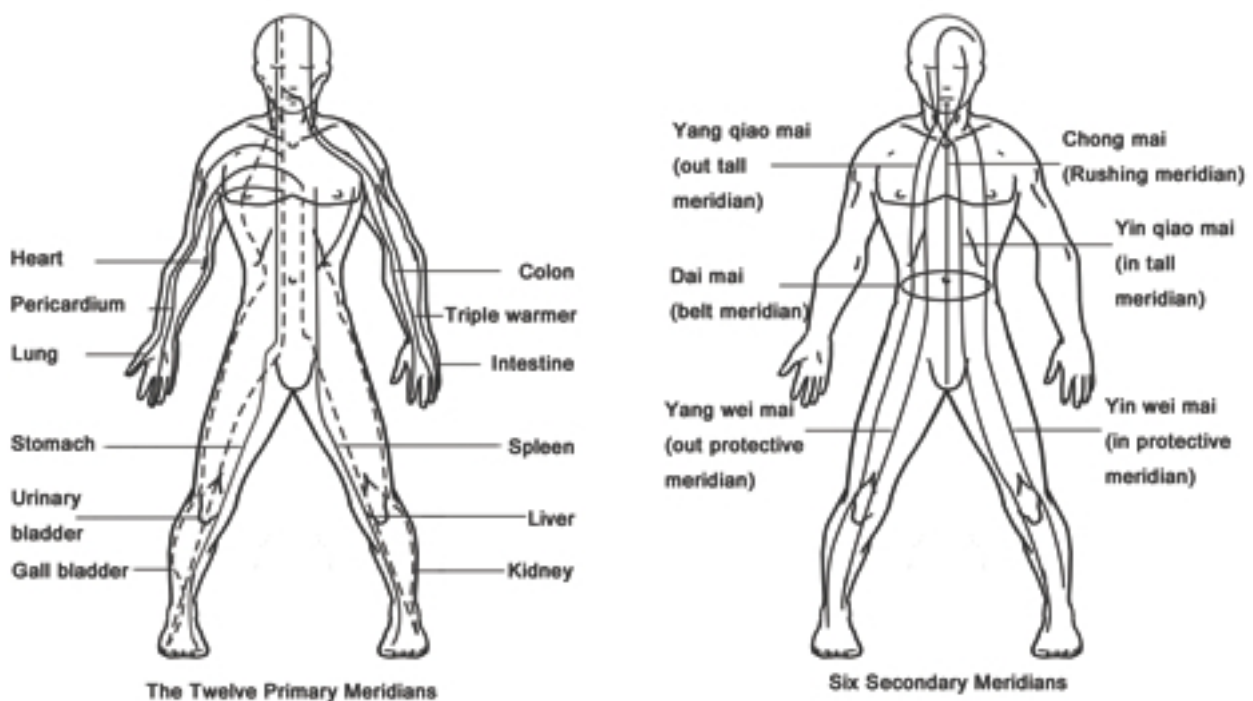
When we look at health we use Yin to represent our body's **natural** ability to respond to our constantly changing environment and Yang to represent all the factors that may cause illness.

We will look at the importance of the above sentence in greater detail next week when we look at the only illness there is.



The Meridians

Qi or energy flows through the body along streams known as **meridians**. The meridians connect all parts of the body and distribute Qi to regulate the functions of the body. They also protect the body against external pathogens (infectious organisms).

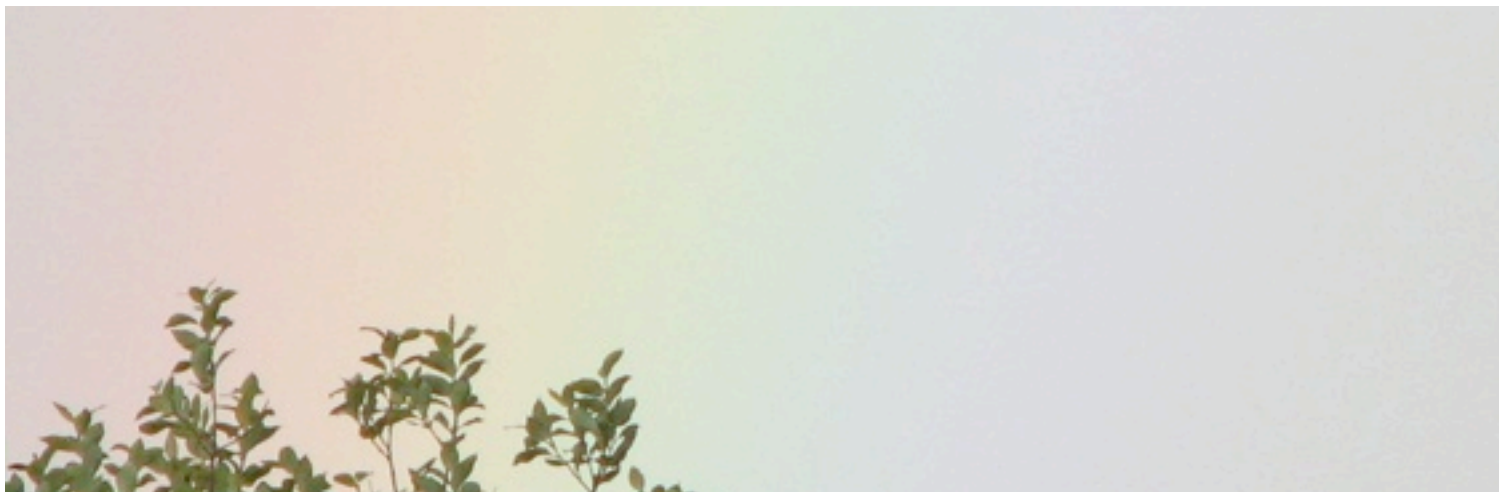


There are 12 primary meridians, called primary because they travel through internal organs and there are 8 secondary meridians, called secondary because they don't pass through the internal organs.

You'll note there are only 6 on my diagram above and I'll explain more about that in a minute.

When Qi flows harmoniously through the meridians of the body we have good health. When it is blocked the result is pain, illness or disease. If the blockage is severe enough to completely stop the flow of Qi, death quickly follows.

So the good news is that if you are reading this, your Qi is flowing and with the practice of Qigong you can remove those blockages, improve energy flow and have good health.



The Meridians (cont)

Blockages to energy flow can occur in 4 different ways:

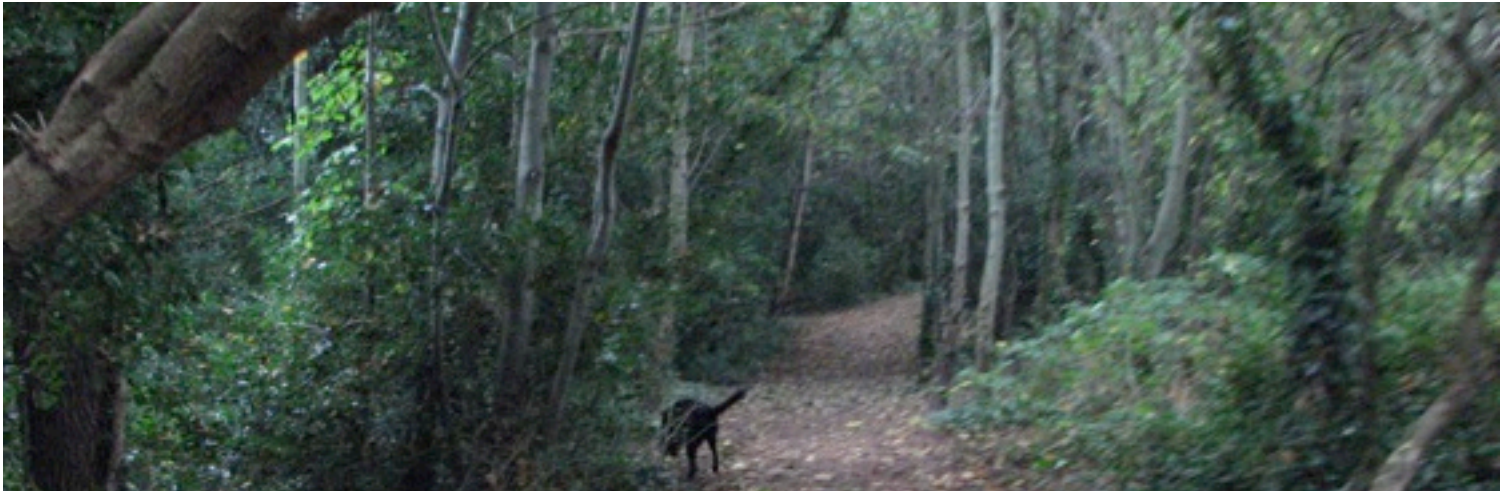
- 1) **Physical** – if you accidentally cut yourself or fall over this may cause a physical blockage to the flow of energy around your body. Neither of these examples will be too severe, unlike a car crash that may cause severe physical blockage to the flow of energy through the meridians.
- 2) **Emotional** – if you have been suffering from a lot of stress over a sustained period of time this will cause emotional blockages, other emotional factors to consider include regular and prolonged exposure to fear, anxiety and worry.
- 3) **Mental** – I remember when I first learnt this one. I simply couldn't believe it, but from my own experience I have discovered it to be true. The number one cause of mental blockages is: Thinking too much! That's right; thinking too much is bad for your health.
- 4) **Spiritual** – the most obvious example of a spiritual blockage is depression. Depression crushes the human spirit and affects you physically, emotionally and mentally.

In practice, blockages do not occur in isolation. I.e. an event occurs and causes an emotional blockage only. More common is that an event will affect you in a number of different ways and have an effect on one or more of the four aspects listed above. This happens because they are all interdependent.

The four definitions are given in isolation to aid our understanding of how Qigong works.

Acupuncturists and Tui Na practitioners have to know exactly the routes of these meridians through the human body and many of the important points on each of the meridians. These practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine stimulate the flow of energy either with a needle or with their hands. For example the acupuncture point Large Intestine 4 (Hegu) is located just before the apex of the V formed when you stretch your thumb away from your index finger.

Stimulation of this point is known to have a powerful calming action, brings relief from headache and is good for problems with the stomach and constipation. It stops pain and treats all problems on the head and face.



The Meridians (cont)

Not bad for one point. There are well over 100 of these points which when expertly stimulated by needle, or massage can bring relief from pain and overcome a whole host of illnesses.

As Qigong practitioners we are in the enviable position that we only need to have a general understanding of the meridians. The aim of our practise is to promote the flow of energy / Qi through the meridians and allow the Qi to remove blockages. This promotes harmonious energy flow which will give us good health as a result.

In addition to the 12 pairs of Primary meridians there are eight Secondary meridians, secondary so-called because they do not pass through internal organs. They are like energy grids and protect the body. They also act as reservoirs where the body can store reserves of energy.

Please note that on the diagram above I have only outlined six of the eight secondary or “wondrous” meridians. There are two more meridians of great importance. They are the Ren meridian and the Du meridian. The Ren meridian runs from just below your bottom lip to your anus and the Du meridian runs from the perineum up your back, over the top of your head and ends just under your nose.

When these two meridians have a continuous, harmonious flow of energy circulating through them, it is referred to as the “Small Universal Flow”. There is a saying that when a person achieves the breakthrough of the small universe they will be free from illness and full of vitality.



The 3 Treasures Of A Human

In the West we tend to talk of the Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual aspects of total health within a person. In TCM there are three aspects: Jing, Qi and Shen. Qigong reflects these same three aspects: Form (Jing), Energy (Qi) and Mind (Shen). These aspects are also referred to as the “3 Treasures” of a Human, in that every human has a form, energy and a mind or Jing, Qi and Shen.

Jing This refers to the subatomic particles that make up the human body. Jing is inherited from our parents and after birth we acquire Jing from “Air” and food. Jing produces marrow (stored in the bones) and creates blood. Jing is vital for growth, successful reproduction and to live a long and healthy life.

Qi Vital energy that works the body, it is what makes things happen. Qi warms the body, enables it to be nourished, defends it from external pathogenic invasion, and maintains the correct position of organs and blood.

Qi promotes movement (keeps us alive, keeps cells dividing, keeps our brain functioning), transports essential items and blood around the body and promotes the functions of all organs meridians and tissues. So you can see why a harmonious strong flow of Qi is so vital to good health. You get Qi from food, drink and air and inherit Yuan Qi (original energy) from your parents. Qigong is perhaps the best way to make sure you get the most from your Qi.

Shen In the West we would call this Spirit, Mind, Soul or Consciousness and you can see it in a person’s eyes. Strong Shen equals peace of mind and is produced by Jing and Qi and nourished by blood and body fluids. If Shen is weak, Jing and Qi will be weak and need nourishing. Shen helps you to articulate your thoughts, be creative, remember things and is vital for intelligence. As already mentioned excessive thinking or worrying can weaken your Shen, leading to mental problems, insomnia, lack of vitality, depression and a lack of “Spirit”.

If you suffer from any of these symptoms the practice of Qigong can help you to overcome them.

Qigong is not just cultivation of energy. It is also cultivation of Jing and Shen. In other words when you practice Qigong not only do you cultivate energy but you also cultivate your physical body and your mind. When we say, “Internally we train Jing, Qi and Shen” we mean we improve the body, increase vital energy and promote our Spirit.



Thematic Vs Holistic

Now it's important you realise that I'm not against Western Medicine. TCM and Western medicine simply look at health using a different model. Remember a model is just a way of looking at the same things and events. It is not a set of facts.

Using the Western medical model to look at a person with high blood pressure, we view him as having too much cholesterol choking his blood vessels. Using the TCM model and looking at exactly the same person in exactly the same situation, we view him as having a blockage in the meridians resulting in Yin Yang disharmony.

The question of which paradigm is correct is not very useful, because both are correct in their own way. A better question is which paradigm helps to overcome the immediate problems?

There are many different ways to cure illness. Western medicine and Qigong healing are only two of these many ways. Western medicine is usually **thematic** whereas Qigong healing can be **thematic** and **holistic**. Taking medical drugs to manage depression is a **thematic** approach. It is **thematic** because it does not improve the health of the patient as a whole person, it addresses his particular problem. If he has a stomach problem later, he would need a different treatment. In Qigong healing, the approach can be **thematic** or **holistic**.

By performing a specific Qigong exercises, he can overcome depression. But he will need a different exercise to overcome a stomach problem. In such cases, this approach is **thematic**. This approach is used when the healer wants to emphasize a particular purpose in the healing.

But Qigong healing can also be **holistic** in that it doesn't just treat the presenting problem, it treats the root cause. In fact Qigong healing is usually holistic. An excellent example of holistic healing is self-manifested chi flow (a wonderful exercise for curing illness). It does not matter what the illness is, the chi flow will eventually overcome the illness as well as other illnesses the healer and the patient may not even be aware of.

It is interesting to note that in China the Western paradigm and the TCM paradigm are used together. It is not unusual for a person who has undergone an operation to receive acupuncture, be given herbs or Qigong exercises to help them to recover quickly and heal completely.



Smiling From Your Heart

First things first. Smiling from the heart is really, really simple. What that means is that you're probably going to find it really, really difficult. It has been my experience that simple does not mean easy!

Smiling from the heart is one of those aspects of Qigong that is best learned directly from a Master or a competent instructor. It is very difficult to learn from reading about it, or watching it.

If I was here with you now, sat beside you as you read this it would be easy for me to help you really 'get' what a Smile from the heart was. Why? Because I'd be able to watch you and pay attention to you as you tried it out. Based on my feedback I would know what to say to you, how to say it to you and what to do next to really make sure you got it.

But I'm not, so in the absence of that we're going to have to go for next best.

Some students put a massive cheesy grin on their faces. Other students imagine a beautiful sunrise or flower blossoming inside them, still others picture the face of their child or a loved one. Smiling from the heart is all of these and none of these.

My best explanation is that when you do it right, you feel it throughout the whole of your body, it's an expansive, big feeling, like your body is being flooded with joy and peace. Smiling from the heart - done properly - on its own can be enough to bring great healing to some people.

But you're going to have to practice and practice and practice. To find what works for you. The best advice I ever heard about Smiling from the heart was this: Don't think about it, just do it: Smile from your heart!

Practice Smiling from your heart as often as you remember. This is a skill that you don't want to keep just for your Qigong practice. Remember:

Don't think about it, just do it:

Smile from your heart!

Butterfly Dancing In Front Of Flowers (Level 2)

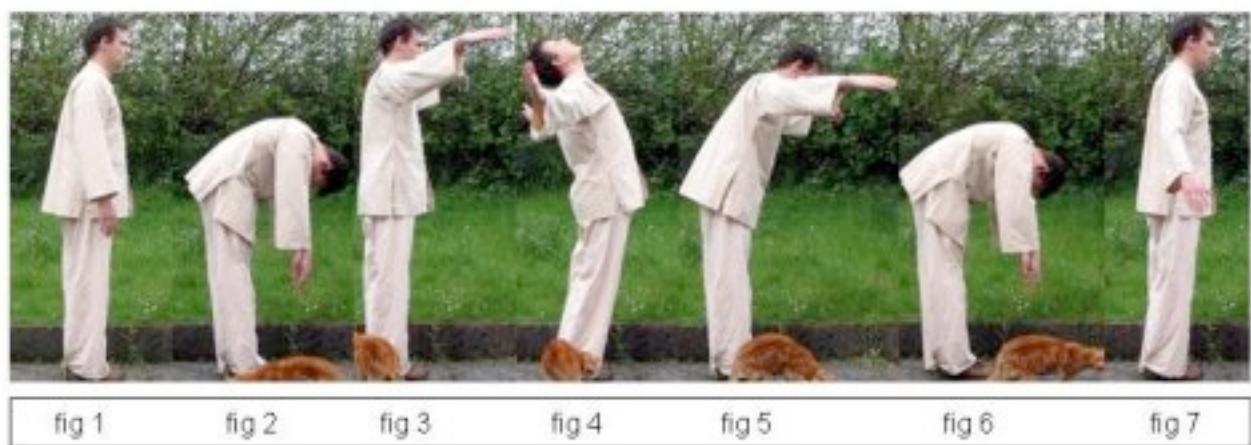
Hopefully you completed last weeks homework and you are very familiar with the FORM part of this pattern. If not then please go back to last weeks instructions and work through them.

This week we're going to add the breathing to this pattern so you can really start to get the most benefit from it. Lets go...

BUTTERFLY DANCING IN FRONT OF FLOWERS – FRONT VIEW



BUTTERFLY DANCING IN FRONT OF FLOWERS – SIDE VIEW



FORM + Breathing

1. Stand in an upright, balanced posture (wuji stance). Relax your body, let go of any emotions and clear your mind of all thoughts (fig 1).
2. Smile from your Heart
3. Breathe IN as you bend forwards, tucking your chin into your chest, arms relaxed, palms about knee level (fig 2).
4. As you straighten your body upwards, opening your arms exhale through the mouth making a gentle, but audible HAAAAA sound. (fig 3).
5. Continue bending your upper body backwards, opening your arms as wide as is comfortable and leaning your head backwards, still making the HAAAA sound (fig 4).



6. Not too fast, not too slow, mindfully begin bending your upper body forwards again and begin to breathe IN through your nose (fig 5).
7. Continue moving forwards, lowering your arms and tuck your chin into your chest (fig 6).
8. Repeat steps 4 to 7 for about 10 - 15 repetitions.
9. Let go, do nothing and enjoy your Chi/Qi/Energy flow for a few minutes.
10. Gently bring your attention to just below your navel and allow any movements to come to a slow, graceful and gradual stop. Make sure you are standing upright and balanced (wuji stance and fig 7).
11. Stand for a minute or so, mind clear of all thoughts and enjoy the stillness.
12. Gently bring your attention back to the point just below your navel. Rub your hands together vigorously to make sure they are nice and warm and then dab your palms gently against your eyes. Next gently massage your face, head and neck with your hands. When you've finished, walk around briskly to complete the exercise.

BREATHING

Let your breathing be natural and relaxed. **The important point** is to make an audible, gentle "HAAAA" sound every time you straighten up, open your arms and bend backwards (see figs 3 and 4).

I've received a lot of questions asking me to clarify the breathing. Because you are making an audible "HAAAAAA" sound as you lean backwards (in effect breathing out as you straighten up and lean back) you will want to breathe in when you bend forwards, I hope that clarifies the breathing for you. If not let me know and I'll keep trying =)

IMPORTANT POINTS:

- Always remember to work within your bodies current limitations. Pain and discomfort is a sign you are trying too hard. If you can only lean forwards slightly, or backwards slightly - that's fine for you.
- Enjoy yourself.
- For best results practice Butterfly Dancing once in the morning and once in the evening. Next best is to practice once a day. **Do not practice more than 2 times a day.**



Progress Tracker

There is a saying that:

“What can’t be measured, can’t be managed”

And I agree whole heartedly. The practice of Qigong is not something you do and then have faith that it’s going to work. Qigong practiced properly does work, but the improvements and changes are often gradual.

For example, every time my son goes to visit his Nottingham relatives, they always comment on how much he’s grown since the last time they saw him. Now my wife and I don’t notice this change because we see him every day.

And it’s the same with Qigong. I recall years ago when I first started my practice of Qigong thinking that nothing was happening. And then my wife just happened to mention one meal time:

“Marcus, I don’t know what it is, but you’re just so much nicer to be around these days. Calmer, less angry and volatile...”

This is where the progress chart earns its weight in gold. I was so impressed with this tool the first time I saw it that I immediately gave it to (and continue to) all of my students.

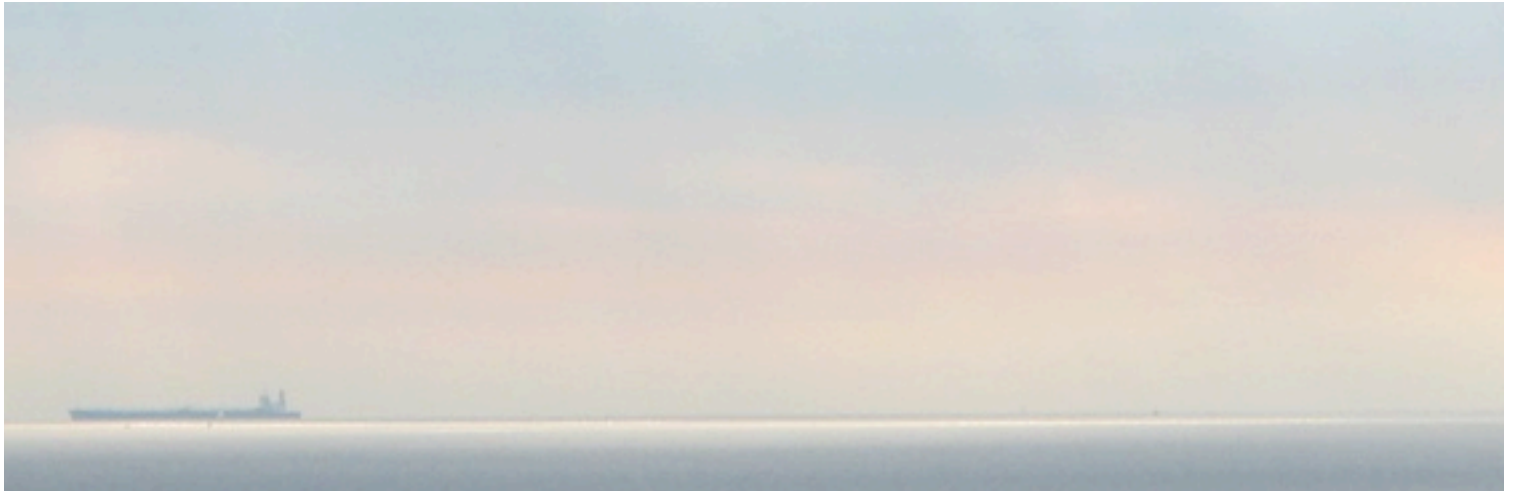
Plotting your progress on this chart you will begin to see improvements. Improvements which if you weren’t tracking them, you could easily overlook.

So make sure you get into the habit of filling it in each and every week. If you do, something wonderful starts to happen. As you see the progress you are making you get more excited about your practice. And the more excited about your practice you become the more progress you’ll make. It’s a lovely upward spiral.

But only if you do it!

I’ve added a list of areas that students usually want to track, but there is space at the bottom of the ‘ailments’ column for you to add your own specific areas you want to track.

[YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A COPY OF THE PROGRESS TRACKER HERE](#)



Summary of Lesson Two

This lesson we looked at:

An introduction to Traditional Chinese Medicine concepts

- Yin and Yang Theory
- The Meridians

The 3 Treasures of a human

- Jing - Form
- Qi - Energy
- Shen - Mind/Spirit

Thematic Vs Holistic

- Thematic - addressing a specific problem
- Holistic - addressing the root cause

Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers - Level Two

The Progress Tracker - an invaluable tool for charting your progress with you practice.



Homework

1. Explain Yin Yang theory to a friend so that they understand it. Note you can only do this if you understand it yourself!
2. Name the 12 primary and 8 secondary meridians of the body.
3. Why are the primary meridians called 'Primary'?
4. What flows through the meridians?
5. What are the 4 types of blockage in the meridians?
6. What are the 3 treasures of a human?
7. What is the difference between *thematic* and *holistic* healing?
8. Download, print off and complete week 1 of your progress tracker.
9. Practice Smiling from your heart as often as you can during each day.
10. Practice Butterfly dancing for 5-10 minutes twice a day with correct form and correct breathing.

Coming Up Next Week...

Discover the only illness there is and how Qigong helps you to overcome it and protect you from experiencing it ever again. You'll discover why good health is your birth right.

I'll also give you a brief history of the Shaolin 18 Lohan Hands style of Qigong we'll begin learning in week 5 of this course.

Disturbances can be a real hinderance to your practice. I'll teach you how to minimize them and how to deal with them correctly if they occur. We'll also be learning a very simple and powerful technique to help you increase your resistance to stress.

Bye for now...