

## **5 FUNDAMENTALS OF QI CIRCULATION**

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Much has been written about the guidelines for the correct practice of Qigong and Taijiquan. This article identifies five of the most important principles that must be contemplated and incorporated into your practice. Regardless of your personal style or method, these basic principles are the core practice of Chinese healing arts and internal martial arts whether practiced for health, self-defence or spiritual growth. As with all training, you must develop these fundamental skills before moving on to advanced training. Too many people attempt to rush their training and as a result find they were not properly prepared for the next step, or made mistakes which have caused injury. Over time, you will see that by observing these basic skills positive changes begin in your body movements, then in your breathing, mental relaxation, and qi flow. Your spirit will be lifted. External strength will become less of a goal as your awareness increases and a deep sense of internal power builds through daily practice. Through regular training these basic skills will help you develop a strong practice that will improve over time, leading to a long, healthy and happy life.

### **JUE - Sensitivity**

The body communicates with the mind through your feelings which are transmitted through the nervous system. The first step in Qi gong and Tai Chi Chuan is connecting your mind and body by developing your internal vision, or listening skills (ting jin). Listening is extremely important in sensing your feelings, which are the yin yang changes in the body and mind, and sending accurate information to the brain. Yin yang can be: insubstantial or substantial; small or big; closing or opening; bending or extending; inhaling or exhaling; rising or falling; soft or hard; internal or external; coming or going; passive or active; retreating or advancing; defensive or offensive; gathering or releasing; etc. Developing your sensitivity skills (jue jin) is extremely important to the success of your practice, requiring a calm mind (yi) with full awareness in the present moment capable of accurate listening.

### **DONG- Intuition**

The length and depth of your training and experience (gong fu) helps you to judge what you are feeling and understand the yin and yang changes in your body and mind so you can avoid excess and deficiency. This allows you to decide on a proper strategy, make appropriate adjustments in the way you train, and how you live your life according to your lifestyle and environment. By developing your understanding skills (dong jin) you can awaken your inner guru and start to rely on intuitive wisdom (yi) instead of the emotional mind (xin), until they become one mind (wu xin). You should always remember that yin and yang are mutually exchangeable. You should always be researching this theory and searching for the applications of yin yang in your practice. If you are able to understand the theory of yin and yang and know their applications, then your practice will become deep and your knowledge profound.

### **SONG - Relaxation**

Relaxation can release energy that is trapped in the body and allows it to sink to the Lower Dantien. To create the optimum structure for smooth and efficient Qi flow, you must reduce all resistance (wu wei) that blocks the energetic system. This requires maintaining correct body alignment (zishi), and body mechanics (chan si) based on optimum structure (peng), which includes relaxation (song and extending (kai), sinking (chen) and uplifting (ding). This means activating the tendons more than the muscles, and using intention of the mind rather than muscular force (li). With stillness meditation you can also learn to relax your mind, and neutralizing the emotional mind (xin) which can cause mental resistance and hinder focused attention. Only then can you open the energy gates of your mind and body and unite your practice with the qi of nature.

### **QI - Energization**

Qi comes from food, air, water and the environment. To energize the body with life force energy you must also understand the Three Treasures (san bao) and how to combine pre-natal Jing (anti-aging hormones) with post-natal Qi (air, food, water) and unite them with Shen your spirit. But it is your breathing that stimulates the Jing and Qi to unite and produce your life force energy. Therefore, integrating correct abdominal breathing into your movements and meditations is essential in the production and storage of energy in the body. This leads to harmonizing your breath (xi) with your spirit (shen). When your spirit seems to be doing the breathing you can control the energy flow more



efficiently. Advanced techniques include reverse abdominal breathing (ni hu xi), and martial grand circulation (da zhou tian) for manifesting Qi power (fajin).

**YI - Intention** - A relaxed mind is a useful mind. Therefore, you need to learn how to be calm and focused with clear intentions. Usually most beginners with an untrained mind are slaves to their emotions, confusing impulsive living for freedom. However, when the emotional mind (xin) is neutralized, and the wisdom mind (yi) is increased, the mind becomes more balanced with harmonious thoughts leading to 'one mind' (wuxin). To maximize the desired effects of your meditation and movements, use your feelings to detect and identify the current situation so your 'one mind' can decide on the proper strategy, which can then direct the Qi with clarity. Your mind is considered the most important component to successful training, and plays an important role in mutually combining your spirit (shen) and energy (qi) which control the water (kan) and fire (li) in your body: the keys to balancing the health of your whole being.

