

DRAGON AND TIGER MEDICAL QIGONG

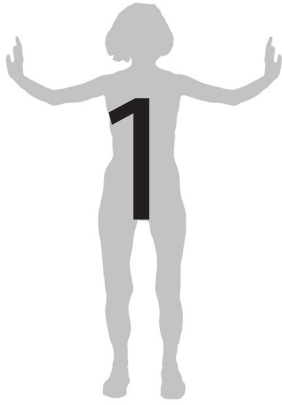
Volume 1



Health and Energy in Seven Simple Movements

BRUCE FRANTZIS

AUTHOR OF OPENING THE ENERGY GATES OF YOUR BODY



DRAGON AND TIGER QIGONG

A Miracle Health System

Dragon and Tiger Qigong is a fifteen-hundred-year-old self-healing exercise that strengthens the immune system, mitigates the effects of chronic illness and reduces stress. Over the centuries it has proven to be an extremely effective health maintenance program that has withstood the test of time. This medical form of qigong (also transliterated as chi gung, ch'i kung or chi kung) is grounded in the ancient spiritual traditions of Buddhism and Taoism.

Today, Dragon and Tiger is practiced by millions of people in China to maintain a vigorous level of health, relaxation and vitality. It is also known for its powerful ability to help prevent and heal cancer and to mitigate the effects of radiation and chemotherapy.

I studied energetic healing systems for eleven years in China, during which time I also worked as a qigong tui na doctor. Dragon and Tiger was the most effective medical qigong system I found that was not only easy to learn but also provided all the main health benefits generally associated with qigong as well as many specific ones that will be discussed in Chapter 15.

Because Dragon and Tiger is a low-impact exercise that is easy on the joints and knees, almost anyone can do it, regardless of age, weight, body type or fitness level.

One of its great strengths is that even if the movements are done inaccurately or within a small range of motion, it is still extremely effective.

Dragon and Tiger: Using Chi to Heal

Dragon and Tiger is especially renowned for simultaneously accomplishing three major changes in the body necessary for healing:

- Helps the body get rid of stagnant chi that cannot move freely. Stagnant chi can be

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located anywhere there is a physical, emotional or psychic blockage of energy.

- Increases the speed, strength and evenness of the circulation of chi, blood and other fluids. This balances the body's energy.
- Quickly raises the energy levels of the body to boost its natural healing capacities.

Tools for Healthy Aging

Qigong such as Dragon and Tiger is a longevity exercise that can help restore the functionality, vitality, stamina and flexibility of youth. Many people start qigong when they begin to feel the effects of aging, have reduced sexual vitality or suffer from a severe illness or injury.

Qigong provides the self-healing tools that can keep people balanced, relaxed and healthy until well into old age. It delays or eliminates many of the diseases of aging and the resultant stress and misery that accompany them.

Dragon and Tiger Qigong can change your internal environment so that life becomes a joy to live and not a burden to drag into old age. It can allow your body to let go of the past and your mind to slow down and cease churning. These practices encourage your internal focus to shift toward cherishing and remembering all that is wonderful in your life. They predispose you to look for ways to make life better. By helping your mind, body and spirit to relax, qigong helps older people lessen the stress and fear that surrounds the subject of death and dying in the West.

Reducing Stress

Dragon and Tiger is an effective method to reduce stress and tension, and promote physical, emotional and spiritual relaxation. The link between stress and disease has long been established by both Eastern and Western health studies.

For many Westerners, tension is the norm. Jangled nerves are the roots of anxiety and they can affect everyone, from babies to the elderly.

The ability to let go and relax—physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually—is at the heart of qigong energy practices. These techniques directly train the central nervous

system—the intermediary between the body and the mind—to relax. This increases stamina and intellectual performance as well as promoting good health.

Improving the Performance of Athletes, Dancers and Martial Artists

In China from the seventeenth century onwards, internal energy techniques were adapted and developed as extremely effective internal martial arts known as tai chi, bagua and hsing-i. Practitioners developed the skills to move faster with more strength and less effort. Warriors on the battlefield would need these high-performance abilities to be able to fight with a calm heart and mind and eliminate the rush of adrenalin that accompanies anger, aggression and other agitated emotional states.

Nowadays this kind of hand-to-hand combat ability is less necessary, but the same skills are very valuable to those involved in high-performance activities. Athletes and dancers who are trained in qigong energy practices such as Dragon and Tiger find that their performances improve and injuries are minimized. Moreover, when they are injured, they heal faster.

You Don't Have to Feel Your Chi to Benefit

Dragon and Tiger's seven physical movements develop and strengthen chi and make you healthier. You do not need to feel your own chi to benefit from these movements. These movements enable you to feel all parts of your body, which might otherwise remain relatively numb, while helping you become more physically and possibly more emotionally sensitive. Over time, this increased sensitivity will help you naturally develop a personal and experiential sense of your chi moving along the pathways. As this happens, you will begin to learn to use your intent together with your movements to more strongly direct your chi. As you practice, your chi, body and mind will begin to move in harmony.

Dragon and Tiger—Layers of Meaning

The words “dragon” and “tiger” have many layers of meaning. In Chinese medicine, the tiger’s immense strength and responsiveness are traits that derive from the liver—hence the tiger is a metaphor for a strong, healthy liver and powerful muscles. The dragon’s ability to fly is a trait that resides in the lungs—hence the dragon is a metaphor for healthy and strong lungs. Metaphorically, Dragon and Tiger Qigong helps you develop the agility and flexibility of a flying dragon and the relaxed power of a moving tiger.

In ancient Chinese culture, the dragon usually represents the yang or male forces of nature and the tiger the yin or female forces. Balancing those energies inside yourself is an essential part of this ancient self-healing system.

In China, the words “dragon” and “tiger” appear in many branches of qigong and in various martial arts.

Taoists brought Dragon and Tiger Qigong to China’s Shaolin temple, where it was preserved intact by Chan Buddhists. This was the original form of qigong from which the usage of the words “dragon” and “tiger” entered into the world of martial arts and qigong. Dragon and Tiger Qigong was commonly taught only to the Shaolin high clergy and not to the general public or ordinary monks. For this reason, many people in China still refer to it as a form of Buddhist qigong. However, because Dragon and Tiger develops and integrates the internal energetic principles of neigong, it is deeply rooted in Taoist qigong.

After China’s Communist revolution, Dragon and Tiger spread rapidly for a variety of reasons. First, it encompassed only seven movements and was therefore easy to learn. Second, it proved to be extremely effective in healing all manner of ailments and formed the basis for a hands-on qigong bodywork/massage system. Third, qigong and tai chi were sanctioned and promoted by the government to help the country solve its health crisis.

Today Dragon and Tiger is most well-known in China as a form of medical rather than martial art qigong.

Learning Strategies

This book provides you with an effective method to accurately learn the movements of Dragon and Tiger and continue to improve your practice. Just as Rome was not built in a day, neither can any high-quality form of qigong be quickly assimilated. Give yourself the strength and

patience of time to learn this valuable self-healing exercise.

You will be shown a systematic way to learn and practice the movements, one stage at a time. Each instruction builds upon and amplifies the one before it so that you can integrate it into what you have already learned.

Each chapter contains many microcomponents, each of which should be learned in the sequence presented. Understanding how the small details work will enable you to gain the maximum benefit from the time and effort you spend practicing.

Movements 1 and 2 Are Front-end Loaded

The first two movements contain basics—such as standing, alignments, weight-shifting, breathing, turning and how to protect the knees—that are common to many movements of Dragon and Tiger as well as other forms of qigong, tai chi and martial arts. Chi principles—tracing the acupuncture meridians, pulling and pushing energy, and releasing stagnant chi—are also discussed in some detail because Movements 3–7 use them in different ways.

Core Learning Principle: First Separate and Then Combine

The principle of breaking movements into microcomponents follows an ancient Taoist principle of learning called “first separate and then combine.” First you learn to become comfortable with a specific microcomponent. Next you learn and practice a second one. Then you combine both components and practice them simultaneously until they feel as though they are one movement. After this you will practice a new component by itself until it becomes comfortable. Then you will combine and integrate it with the others until these three components feel like one. In this way you will build your skill in a relaxed manner and avoid feeling overwhelmed or leaving valuable parts out.

Take Breaks

At the end of many microcomponents in this book, you will be asked to take a break to encourage you to stop and let your nervous system assimilate what you have studied before going back to practicing that component again or moving on. It is especially important to assimilate the material in each component before attempting to learn the next one.

The breaks between might include

- Taking twenty minutes off before practicing a microcomponent again
- Using a few days to a week or more to practice and assimilate one microcomponent

- Taking a few days to a week or more before going to a new complete movement, such as between Movements 2 and 3 or Movements 6 and 7.

What is important is to be patient and not be in a rush. If you give yourself the gift of time to take breaks, your learning will be smoother and less frustrating. Even the most talented and well-coordinated athletes have had challenges to overcome when learning qigong.

These breaks are those which I have seen to be the most effective for learning, both from my experience studying in China and from teaching Taoist energy arts since 1972. The goal is to build the necessary foundation that will make learning enjoyable and beneficial.

The 70 Percent Rule: Do Neither Too Much nor Too Little

All Taoist chi practices from the original Water tradition of Lao Tse incorporate the principle of moderation that can be described as the “70 percent rule.”

The rule states that you should only do a movement, or any chi technique, to 70 percent of your capacity. Striving for 100 percent produces excess tension and stress. As soon as you strain or go beyond your capacity, your body has a natural tendency to tense up or shut down, without you necessarily being consciously aware that this is happening.

Over time, staying within 70 percent of your capacities will help you attain optimum physical accomplishment in the shortest amount of time and simultaneously reduce stress. Although it may seem counterintuitive, the more you relax, the more energy, stamina and strength you will gain and the greater your range of motion will become.

In this modern era, people are led to believe that by straining, they will progress faster and further. However, if you always push your energy to 100 percent, you will never allow your nerves and muscles to relax so that you can progress efficiently without unnecessary stress or needless physical injuries.

By staying within your comfort zone, your physical tension and subliminal psychological stress will gradually decrease and in time disappear. You will move forward faster than you would if you were to strain. Avoiding straining or stressing your body helps you to relax. And remember: no one goes to the hospital for a relaxation attack.

Following this rule will also help you to uncover and actualize your highest potential.

Whether you are a novice or an experienced practitioner, this method will help you to move through the levels of accomplishment faster.

Incorporating the 70 percent rule into your practice may include

- How far down you bend your legs
- How much you turn your waist
- How much you straighten your elbows and knees
- How deep a breath you take
- How much time you practice
- How much mental energy you expend.

Adjusting the 70 Percent Rule When You Have Illness, Pain or Injury

If you are injured, or ill with any kind of chronic condition, or you have a cold or flu, you should temporarily practice qigong using the 40 or 50 percent rule; i.e., move only to 40 or 50 percent of your maximum capability until you are healed. This may include doing movements while sitting or lying down. Once you are healed, you can resume practice again to 70 percent of your capacity.

If you have pain, your maximum capacity is the point where your pain begins; you should only move to 40 or 50 percent of this limit. This may enable your pain to dissipate. When it is completely gone, you can return to the regular 70 percent rule.

If you are in pain all the time, then your maximum movement should be the point at which your pain begins to escalate to the next level of significant or dramatic intensity. This pain level difference is very subjective, but it is the difference between “ouch” and “aaargh!” This could easily result in your range of movement being only 30 or 40 percent of what you could normally do before your ailment began or even less. When the problem is resolved, return to the regular 70 percent rule.

Following this principle will allow your nerves to relax and your pain to heal in the fastest time possible. In addition, you will be able to naturally return to your previous range of motion more quickly without discomfort.

Best Practice Surfaces

The best surfaces on which to practice are grass, dirt, carpet and wood. Concrete is not recommended. If you are sick or injured, try to practice on as soft a surface as possible.

Expect Chi Reactions

Dragon and Tiger is a powerful tool for awakening your body on physical, energetic, emotional, mental and spiritual levels. As you practice these movements and begin to move your body in ways that may be different for you, energy and fluids in your body are stirred up and begin to move more vigorously. At some point you may experience reactions that may seem either positive or negative to you. These are called chi reactions: the body's response to the effects of energy beginning to flow more freely through previously blocked places.

These reactions may show up immediately, hours after practicing, or even a day or two later. Although many people will not begin to feel either negative or positive reactions without practicing a lot, others, particularly if they have done other forms of personal development work, may notice reactions almost immediately.

Positive Chi Reactions

Positive reactions can range from feeling less pain and having more energy to being more centered, relaxed and comfortable with your body. Some people report that they sleep much better; others report greater flexibility and balance. You may also notice that you are calmer and have fewer mood swings. You may experience an overall reduction in stress and tension.

A transformative effect that most people consider positive, is an increase in and awareness of sexual energy. This is entirely normal as it is the most fundamental energy in your body, and practice of Dragon and Tiger will increase sexual energy.

Finally, a transformative effect that confuses many people is what we call "good pain." Dragon and Tiger is designed to gradually work more and more deeply into your body, to release muscles and other tissues and joints that have been restricted or blocked. When an area of your body that has been frozen begins to loosen and realign, more energy moves through that area than you are used to. But if the energy cannot flow freely or fully, you may experience temporary pain in the area.

The Chinese medical theory of the body holds that pain in an area is a sign that the energy there is not flowing freely. You feel “bad” pain when an area is newly injured or hurt. In general, “good” pains tend to be temporary (lasting from a minute to at most a couple of days) and are usually dull, rather than sharp. As you practice you will learn to recognize such pains as signs of progress. Treat them with great care and keep within the 40 to 50 percent rule when you have pain, illness or injury (see p. 7). Back off practicing and be sure to consult your healthcare provider if you begin experiencing either significant pain or pain that does not go away quickly.

Negative Chi Reactions

As your body wakes up on various levels, it may do so the same way as when aroused from a deep slumber—cranky, sore and confused. You may experience some negative chi reactions. These can range from relatively mild but confusing aches, nausea, light-headedness, tingles, fatigue, unsteadiness, body temperature shifts or mood changes to strong emotional releases and mood swings to unusual dreams or shifts in perception. You may also experience physical discharges, such as stronger body odors or more frequent bowel movements.

As blocked and stagnant energy moves or leaves the body, energetic memories that are associated with the problem, stored in either your energy channels or physical tissue can awaken and cause you to relive the underlying and often repressed causes of the problem—especially if you have a severe condition.

You might experience what doctors refer to as a “healing crisis.” The term refers to that time during healing when a patient’s body temporarily feels worse before it feels better. For example, when the body burns out infections, the patient often has a high fever. When the fever breaks, the symptoms of the disease pass. The fever may cause the patient to feel terrible, until the stored toxins or blocked energy are released. Afterwards the individual feels better as the illness passes.

All these reactions are common to many natural forms of healing and are often a sign that your body is cleansing itself. Many people have a healing crisis when they fast or switch to a cleansing or vegetarian diet. The practice of Dragon and Tiger may often trigger such effects; they are fairly normal reactions. What is important to remember is that these reactions are temporary and usually pass when your body begins to rebalance itself.

If you begin to experience strong or uncomfortable sensations, immediately sit down, put your hands on your belly and gently breathe with your belly to ground and center yourself. Such sensations will usually pass within minutes. Then suspend or reduce your practice for

a while. Start again by following the 20 percent or 40 percent rule and very gently explore your body's reactions to these practices. Remember that you are not alone in such experiences; almost everyone who practices will experience some of these reactions at some time.

If the symptoms are intense, pull back your practice to 30 percent or 40 percent of what you consider your normal practice and consult with your teacher.

Remember to drink plenty of water. Water helps accelerate the release of toxins. Taking some vitamin C also helps that process.

Make sure you rest after practicing.

Be sure to consult a healthcare professional immediately if you have any symptoms that might be a sign of a medical or psychological problem.

Best Way to Learn

The best way to learn Dragon and Tiger is to take a class with a certified Energy Arts instructor, who can help make the learning process quicker and more enjoyable. When first learning any new program, many people like to learn in a group. They feel less awkward when they see that others initially may also have difficulty learning the movements and coordinating them in a relaxed manner.

However, if you do not live near an Energy Arts instructor, this book makes it possible for you to learn Dragon and Tiger on your own. Also, two additional learning aids for Dragon and Tiger Qigong are available. The first is a two-DVD set. The second is a large laminated poster showing all the movements and transitions between them, as well as when to inhale and exhale.¹ In Dragon and Tiger, only for Movement 5 are the right and left sides of the body moving in symmetry. However for the other movements, the same motions alternate on the right and left sides and it does not matter which side you start with. Therefore you can follow the DVD, poster or book illustrations doing a mirror image of what is shown if that is easier for you.

¹ Visit EnergyArts.com for a list of Certified Energy Arts Instructors and details of the Dragon and Tiger DVD set and laminated poster.



STANDING POSTURE AND LONGEVITY BREATHING

Movement 1 Basics

All Taoist energy practices—qigong, bagua, tai chi, hsing-i and meditation—emphasize fundamental physical, breathing and energetic principles as you perform their movements. These components systematically train your mind and body to relax and master the control of chi. They empower your body by creating maximum internal movement. Each part of the body moves to align as a whole—not only your muscles but also the deepest internal subsystems. These include internal organs, glands, bodily fluids, ligaments, tendons and nerves.

Two fundamental principles are taught in this chapter: the standing posture and Longevity Breathing,[°] which are both derived from ancient Taoist techniques.¹ These principles are integral to learning Dragon and Tiger's first movement and are incorporated into many of its other movements.

Learn the Basic Standing Posture

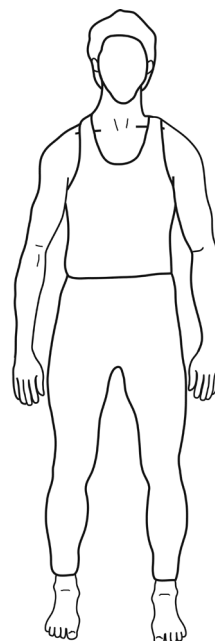
The standing posture is fundamental to all the movements of Dragon and Tiger and the transitions between movements. This posture provides the best structural integrity, as it enables your body to maintain its stability, balance (root) and relaxation as you perform Dragon and Tiger's movements. The fundamental alignments of the standing posture will help to free your body from tension and the habits of poor posture.

¹ Taoist breathing is fundamental to all Taoist longevity practices. Although these practices are thousands of years old, the author has developed his own method for teaching them, called Longevity Breathing, to make these practices accessible and easy to learn, particularly for Westerners.

Fundamental Alignments of the Standing Posture

The basic alignments² are as follows (Figure 2-1):

1. Your feet are parallel, approximately shoulders' width apart.
2. Your weight should be distributed evenly on both feet. The ball, outside edge and heel of each foot must evenly touch the ground, so that you do not ride up on the outside edges or collapse on the inside of your feet.
3. Your knees should be slightly bent.
4. Your tailbone should point to the ground, rather than backward.
5. Your lower back should be straight, perpendicular to the ground.
6. Your belly and buttock muscles should be relaxed.
7. Your chest should be relaxed, slightly rounded and dropped. It should not be thrust forward, as in a military posture.
8. Your shoulders should be relaxed and your shoulders and shoulder blades should be rounded slightly forward.
9. Your arms should be relaxed downward and placed comfortably at your sides with the palms facing backward and your fingers pointing downward at the outsides of your feet. Your armpits should be slightly open, as though they were holding a small ball.
10. Your neck and head should be lifted slightly and held straight.



Basic Standing Posture
Figure 2-1

Ideal Stance: Feet Shoulders' Width Apart

The force of gravity has a powerful effect on the human body. The more directly gravity moves downward from the place it contacts your body to its exit point in the ground, the less your muscles must work to maintain any physical position. This is true for sitting and standing. In terms of body stability this is similar to the situation of a table whose legs extend perpendicularly to the ground. This positioning is inherently more stable and strong than one where the table's legs angle significantly either toward or away from the outer circumference of the tabletop.

In terms of body alignments, the line of the force of gravity falling through your body is most

² More detailed information on how to achieve these basic alignments is found in the author's book *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*, revised edition (North Atlantic Books, 2006).

direct when your head and torso sit on your hips, your hips sit on your legs and your legs sit on your feet. When you are standing, this best occurs when your feet are shoulders' width apart with your weight distributed evenly on both feet. In this position

- Physical balance is easiest to maintain
- Your weight falls the most easily to your feet without your muscles compensating for the force of gravity
- Your thigh, hip and lower back muscles have to work the least to maintain the position
- Your joints retain their stability with a minimum of physical tension and strain.

This width has been found to be within 70 percent of most people's physical capacity. In this stance, your legs will feel comfortable and relaxed, and you will be able to maintain your balance with minimum effort and tension.

How to Practice Standing

Take another look at the ten-point checklist on the previous page. Then practice the standing posture for three to five minutes. As you practice this posture, sequentially focus on each alignment. Your primary consideration is that your stance is comfortable and relaxed. At all times, remember the 70 percent rule. No alignment should be strained and stressed. Initially, most people cannot maintain all the alignments of the standing posture. For example, many find it difficult to place their feet parallel. As you practice and incorporate these alignments into Dragon and Tiger's movements, your body will slowly relax and you will find it increasingly easier to maintain them.

Take a Short Break

It is recommended that you take a break at this point in order to allow your nervous system to absorb what you have just learned.

Learn Basic Longevity Breathing

All Taoist qigong practices, including Dragon and Tiger Qigong, incorporate the principles of Taoist breathing. If I could teach only one exercise that would have the maximum effect of changing people's lives for the better, I would teach Longevity Breathing. Of all self-help exercises, breathing properly is one of the most effective ways to improve overall health, decrease stress and mitigate the negative effects of aging.

Most Westerners are shallow breathers and use only a portion of the top of the front of their lungs. Not using the rest of the lungs is like starving the body of one of its most important rejuvenators. Very few people use their entire lung capacity and breathe deeply, smoothly and well. The rest inhale or exhale poorly, or hold or clutch their breath when they become tense or emotionally upset. Many experience shortness of breath as they age, a precursor to ill health, weakness and depression.

Learning how to take steady, smooth and deep breaths will enable you to improve not only your practice of Dragon and Tiger and other qigong exercises, but also your overall health, stamina and mental clarity. It will help to train and increase your body's natural ability and desire to relax.

Breathing and Relaxation

In terms of breath and tension, here's a simple fact: the sympathetic nervous system turns on, stimulates and locks in stress. This means that every time you hold your breath, gulp air or breathe spasmodically in response to a negative situation, you lock stress and anxiety into your body and mind. Your body becomes conditioned to frequently adopt a fight, flight or freeze response, which activates your adrenal glands and causes tension throughout your body. If you also hold your breath while eating, talking or thinking, you unconsciously reinforce poor breathing patterns that bring more stress into your life.

On the other hand, smooth, steady and even breathing patterns help your body to relax and stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system to lock in relaxation messages.

The antidote is to become aware of poor breathing patterns and change them to bring positive benefits to your parasympathetic nervous system. Once you learn Taoist Longevity Breathing, you can use it to relax your body and mind twenty-four hours a day.

The Oxygen-Carbon Dioxide Exchange

When you breathe, you inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. The oxygen is released into your cells and powers your body's metabolism, circulation and ability to heal. When you don't get enough oxygen, your body becomes like a car that does not burn its fuel cleanly; it becomes sluggish and prone to problems.

As you exhale, you release carbon dioxide, a waste product that builds up in the cells and lungs. Not fully exhaling causes carbon dioxide to build up in your lungs. This can cause you to yawn frequently, or makes you sleepy or spaced out. Excessive buildup of carbon dioxide also decreases the amount of oxygen available to your cells and activates a vicious downward spiral: your arteries start to contract, causing your airways to constrict, which in turn causes you to hold your breath. Of course, the brain can't go long without oxygen, so it sends signals of tension and a cascade of stress responses via the nerves that get dumped into the blood stream and circulated throughout the body. So a smooth, full exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide maintains the homeostasis necessary for fostering optimal health.

First, you must bring oxygen into your lungs strongly enough for it to be released into your cells and fully used by your body. Second, you must completely exhale carbon dioxide to maximize oxygen intake and make it available to the cells. If you don't exhale sufficiently to get the carbon dioxide out, the cells can't get all the oxygen they need. This is comparable to having enough money in the bank, but not being able to withdraw it.

The best way to get a strong oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange is by practicing deep breathing using your diaphragm and belly. Breathing from the upper chest is too shallow and weak to provide full inhales and exhales. When you breath from your belly, the inhales and exhales will rise and fall seamlessly, as a natural reflex.

Breathe from Your Belly

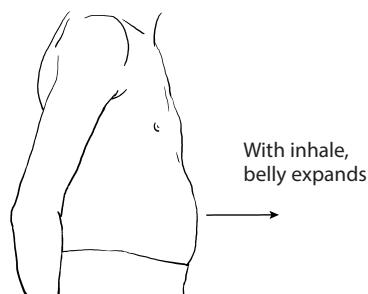
Always breathe from your belly and not solely from your chest. This is the way you breathed when you were a baby. Belly breathing is the first step in learning Longevity Breathing practices and ideally should be incorporated into all Taoist qigong or tai chi practices. Belly breathing drops and lifts the big muscle of the diaphragm, the natural body mechanism that pushes air in and out of your lungs.

Belly breathing helps center your awareness in your body, rather than in your head, so that you feel more physically and energetically grounded. It helps you to relax your neck, shoulders and arms. It improves the circulation of blood and the flow of chi in your internal organs.

Belly breathing provides a wonderful massage for your internal organs. Just as massaging your muscles adds to their tone and overall functioning, so will belly breathing benefit your internal organs. In terms of your health, massaging your internal organs is more important than toning your visible muscles. Belly breathing increases the blood circulation in the blood vessels that nourish your internal organs.

Ideally, inhale and exhale only through your nostrils. If medical reasons make this impractical, inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. Inhale and exhale through your mouth only as a last resort.

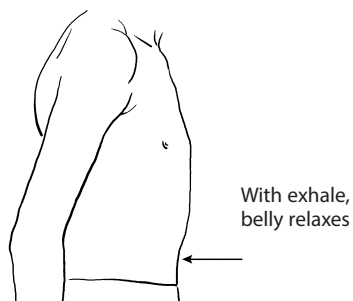
1. When you inhale, feel your breath come into your nose, down your throat and into your lungs and belly. Let your belly muscles expand to move your belly forward (Figure 2-2).



Breathing with the Belly: Inhale

Figure 2-2

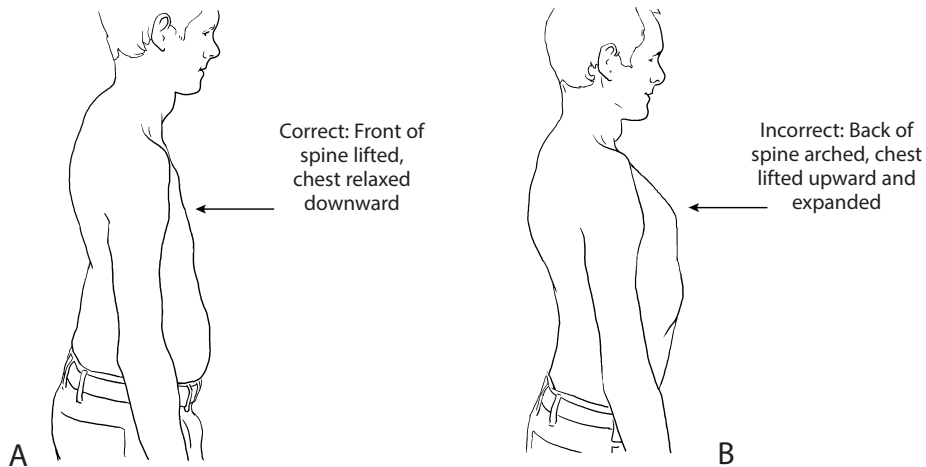
2. When you exhale, let your belly return to its original position and relax (Figure 2-3).



Breathing with the Belly: Exhale

Figure 2-3

Do your best to completely relax your chest (Figure 2-4 A) and not use any strength to puff it out when you breathe (Figure 2-4 B). You should have very little or no sense of air going into your chest.



Breath with the Belly, Not the Chest

Figure 2-4

3. First, practice by focusing on expanding and relaxing your lower belly. Your lower belly extends from slightly above the top of your pubic hair to your navel. Breathe in such a way that the lower belly does not move from below the top of your pubic hair. Avoid straining or any feeling of pressure in your genitals.
4. When you can expand and relax your lower belly comfortably, turn your attention to moving the middle belly when you breathe, which for most people is more difficult. The middle belly extends from your navel to just before your diaphragm. Placing your hands on the lower, middle and upper parts of your belly as you breathe will give you clear feedback as to whether and how much your belly is moving.
5. Finally, concentrate on expanding and relaxing your upper belly—your diaphragm and solar plexus—just underneath your lowest ribs. Try to have your diaphragm move downward as you inhale and upward as you exhale. This will help push air into the back and top of your lungs, parts that seldom get exercised.

Eventually, you will be able to move all three parts of your belly in unison.

Breathe Smoothly and Deeply

As you breathe, make both your inhales and exhales smooth and full, without strain. When your exhale is full, your next inhale will naturally and smoothly arise by itself. Conversely, if your last exhale is shallow and not full, your next inhale will not come smoothly. You may have a tendency to hold your breath, gulp your inhale or even hyperventilate.

Deep and smooth breathing enables you to take in and use more oxygen, better release carbon dioxide and calm your nerves. Over time, you take longer breaths, increasing the length of your inhale and exhale, without strain.

To get the sense of how to breathe smoothly and deeply, practice breathing from a straw for a few minutes a day, in a smooth and steady fashion. It will help you tune in to your breathing habits, and, over time, help you overcome poor ones. Often lifetime habits of poor breathing can be overcome by practicing breathing with a straw for a few weeks.

Exhale Fully

Exhaling fully will get rid of the carbon dioxide in your cells and lungs and decrease its buildup in your cells, which produces sluggishness and yawning, diminishes mental clarity and increases stress.

Exhaling fully will also make it easier for you to breathe in sufficient oxygen and make it easier for your cells to procure it.

You can do this in one of three ways.

The first is by exhaling a little more than you inhale. For example if you inhale for four seconds, you might take five seconds to exhale. This is the method to use when practicing breathing without doing any movements. You will use this method in Dragon and Tiger Movements 1, 3 and 4.

The second method is to do an extremely rapid exhale (one or two seconds very forcibly). If you find yourself getting sluggish or yawning, you can do three to ten forceful exhales and wake yourself up. Rapid exhales are used in Movement 5 of Dragon and Tiger.

The third way is to vary the speed of the exhale. For instance you might exhale 50 or 60 percent of your breath in the first two seconds and take four more seconds to exhale the rest of your breath. Dragon and Tiger Movements 2, 6 and 7 use this method.

Never Hold Your Breath

Focus on not holding your breath between the end of an inhale/exhale and the beginning of the next inhale/exhale. Let one flow into the other in as relaxed a manner as you can.

Holding your breath can cause emotional tension and jangle your nervous system. Breathe smoothly and evenly, without stop-and-start breaks or jerkiness. Involuntarily holding the breath both triggers and escalates stress.

Keep the Tip of Your Tongue on the Roof of Your Mouth

As you breathe, keep the tip of your tongue touching the roof of your mouth. (If you make the sound “le,” as pronounced in the word “let,” your tongue will touch the correct spot just slightly behind your top front teeth.) Eventually, the muscles on the base of your tongue will stretch slightly and allow you to maintain this position comfortably, without effort.

When your tongue touches the roof of your mouth, it continuously stimulates and balances all your body’s acupuncture meridians. The twelve main acupuncture meridians of your body are all connected to points along the governing and conception vessels, which are two of acupuncture’s eight extraordinary meridians. The points along these two special meridians interface with and influence all the acupuncture points and meridians within your body. These two vessels form the chi pathway that is called the “microcosmic orbit.” That place just behind your upper front teeth on your hard palate is the acupuncture point where the governing and conception vessels meet. At this point, upward-flowing energy from yang meridians in the back of your body changes to downward-flowing energy in the yin meridians in the front of your body.

Only Breathe to 70 Percent of Your Capacity

There is no gain in putting tension in your body by straining to take longer inhales and exhales. Because breath is such a primary human function, it is quite possible to negatively pattern yourself and lock tension into your nervous system by forcing your breath. If breath-induced tension lodges in your nervous system, the tension and stress will far outweigh the benefits of breathing quietly, softly and deeply in a relaxed manner. By staying within 70 percent of your capacity, you will wean yourself from pushing yourself and gain the habit of relaxation.

How to Practice Breathing

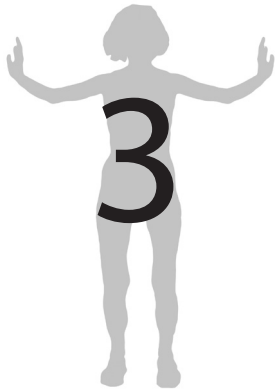
You can practice Longevity Breathing any time you remember to do so. The goal is to train the body to breathe this way twenty-four hours a day.³

³ You can learn Taoist breathing principles in more detail from the author’s book, *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body*, revised edition, or from his *Longevity Breathing* DVD and *Taoist Breathing* CDs.

When you first start, establish a time when you know that you will be undisturbed for five or ten minutes and practice either standing, sitting or lying down. This might be when you first wake up in the morning or while you are having your first cup of coffee or tea. Focusing on belly breathing is also a way to calm the mind before you go to sleep.

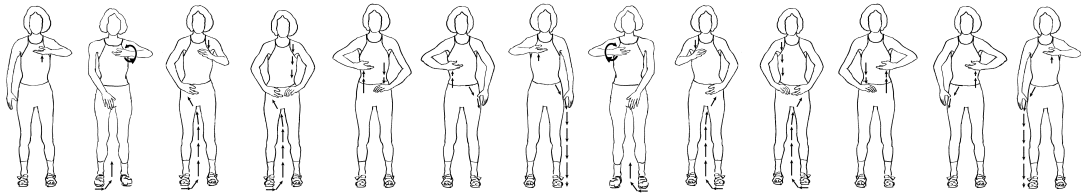
In any session, focus on one breathing principle at a time until it feels comfortable, for example moving one part of your belly. Then integrate it with another breathing principle, such as moving another part of your belly. Add, then combine the new principles one at a time, integrating each one with the last one you have become comfortable doing. At some point, you will find that you have integrated all these separate principles into one seamless, smooth and relaxed breath.

Later, add more practice times, perhaps during or after meals. Finally, put your focus on your breathing while moving, such as when practicing Dragon and Tiger, walking or doing chores. Eventually, you will learn to focus on your breathing during larger and larger parts of the day and use it as a tool to become less stressed and more balanced.



DRAGON AND TIGER MEET

Movement 1 Components



In the first movement of Dragon and Tiger, you will learn to use your hands to trace “energy pathways” over acupuncture meridians that you wish to activate. The pathways for each movement of Dragon and Tiger are different. Each pathway is designed so that a hand movement in the etheric body will stimulate chi flow through acupuncture meridians beneath it and eventually through the deeper energy channels of the body.

Chi flows in the direction that the hand moves. Your hands should stay over these pathways during the entire movement. The more precisely you move your hands along the specified energy pathways in the correct sequence, the more you will reap the full benefits of Dragon and Tiger Qigong.

In this chapter, you will learn the separate components of Movement 1. Learn each step sequentially. Take as much time as you need to absorb and comfortably integrate the material of each step to develop confidence and make it easier to learn the next step.

Chapter 4 will teach you how to combine these components and put the whole movement together.

Step 1: Trace the Energy Pathways by Touch

Correctly tracing the energy pathways of this movement is best learned by practicing with a partner and then by yourself. Working with a partner will make it easier for you to precisely feel and trace the energy pathways without looking at your body.

Your partner will lightly pat your body along the correct pathways. As you practice Movement 1, focus on feeling what your partner is touching, either with your eyes closed or looking neutrally at the space in front of you. Human touch helps most people to feel or sense the nearby space just outside their body.

The pats should be done very lightly with the tips of the fingers and relatively slowly and continuously along the energy pathways. In addition, pats should contact broad areas along the body rather than narrow lines.

If you do not have a partner, you can follow these instructions and pat these pathways by yourself. While doing so, look at the energy pathway you are activating (Figure 3-1 A–B).

Upward

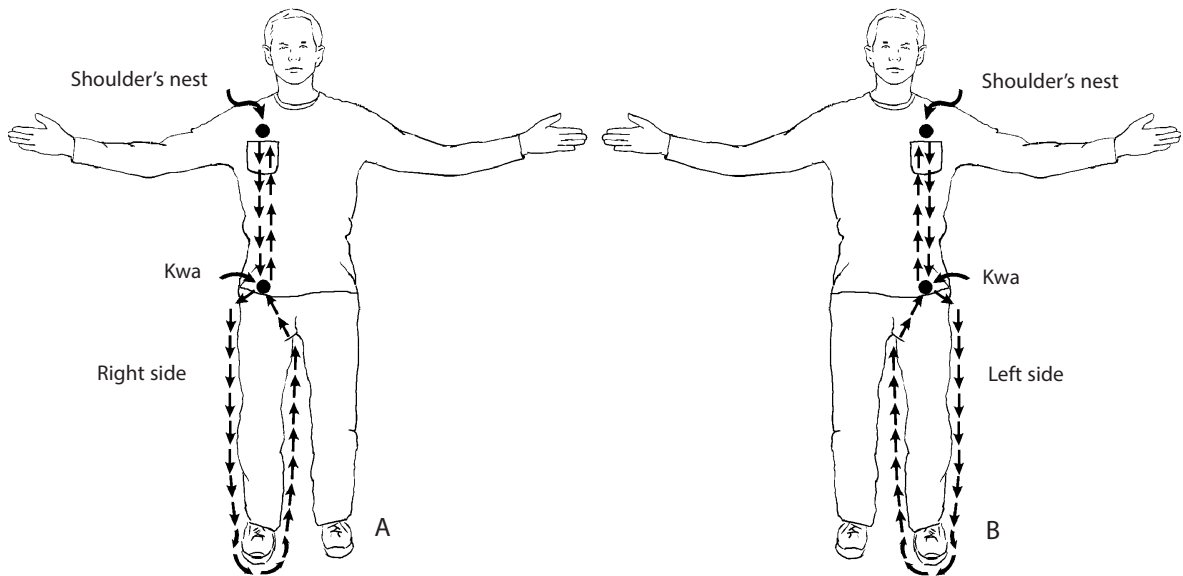
You or your partner will pat your body as follows (Figure 3-1 A–B):

1. Begin on the inside of one of your ankles and continue upward along the inside surface of your calf, knee and thigh to the kwa (hip joint) without touching your genitals.
2. Continue upward from the kwa along the front of the torso on a straight line to your nipple and shoulder's nest (front of your shoulder).

Downward

3. From the shoulder's nest, pat downward on a straight line from the nipple to the kwa on the same side of the torso.
4. Continue patting as you cross over to the outside of your hip.
5. Continue to pat downward along the outside of your thigh, knee and calf to the bottom outside edge of your foot.

Your partner (or you yourself) should tap in this manner several times on both sides of your body to help you to feel these energy pathways.



Energy Pathways to Trace
 Pat up the inside of the leg to the kwa, then up to the shoulder's nest.
 Trace back down to the kwa, then down the outside of the leg.

Figure 3-1

Body Memory

Mind-body fusion methods are not normally a part of Western education. Our system trains people to memorize and manipulate symbols and images, but rarely instructs people about how to have a distinct and felt consciousness of their body (body memory).¹ Most people can, with eyes closed, visualize their body moving in space, but, unless trained, are unable to translate their internal images into accurately feeling where their hands and feet are moving in relationship to their body. Tracing energy pathways, first by tapping them and then by using your hands in space, will help you develop an accurate awareness of how your body is positioned or moving in space (proprioception). This includes the effects of posture, movement and weight shifts, and helps you perform the movements of Dragon and Tiger Qigong more precisely.

Take a Short Break

It is recommended that you take a break at this point in order to allow your nervous system to absorb what you have just learned.

¹ Many of the ancient traditions of the world practiced mind-body fusions as part of their traditional educational process. The tools these traditions used included, but were not limited to, martial arts, yoga and shamanic practices.



Photo by Eric Nornberg

Learning how to trace the energy pathways of your body with your hands is an essential part of all seven movements of Dragon and Tiger Qigong.

Step 2: Trace the Energy Pathways without Touching Your Body

Now you will trace the same energy pathways shown in Figure 3-1 A–B. Keep your palm facing the pathway you are tracing at all times. In Movement 1, although you will trace the exact same pathways, the hand motions themselves will be different (see Step 3, pp. 30–34).

Since this method of feeling your body may be new to you, practice will be helpful. You must develop an experiential awareness of knowing where your hands are in relation to your body, whether you are still or moving. Ideally, you should keep your hands six to eight inches away from your body and never allow your hand to move closer than the width of your own closed fist.

You can check the accuracy of where your hands move by either having a friend observe and comment or by using a full-length mirror to check yourself. If it is the latter, start by tracing the pathways with your eyes open, then close your eyes and open them at discrete points to check the accuracy of your movements. At some point you will be able to directly feel your hands tracing the energy pathways without looking at them. Check your positions visually until you establish your ability to accurately feel where your hands are.

You can trace the energy pathways while sitting or standing. However, unless you are ill or injured, standing is preferred as this is how Dragon and Tiger's seven movements are most commonly practiced.

Option 1: Trace the Energy Pathways While Sitting

Sit in a chair or on the floor with your legs slightly separated. You will trace the same energy pathways shown in Figure 3-1 A–B and hold your palm six to eight inches away from your body as you do so. Keep your palm facing the pathway you are tracing at all times.

Option 2: Trace the Energy Pathways While Standing

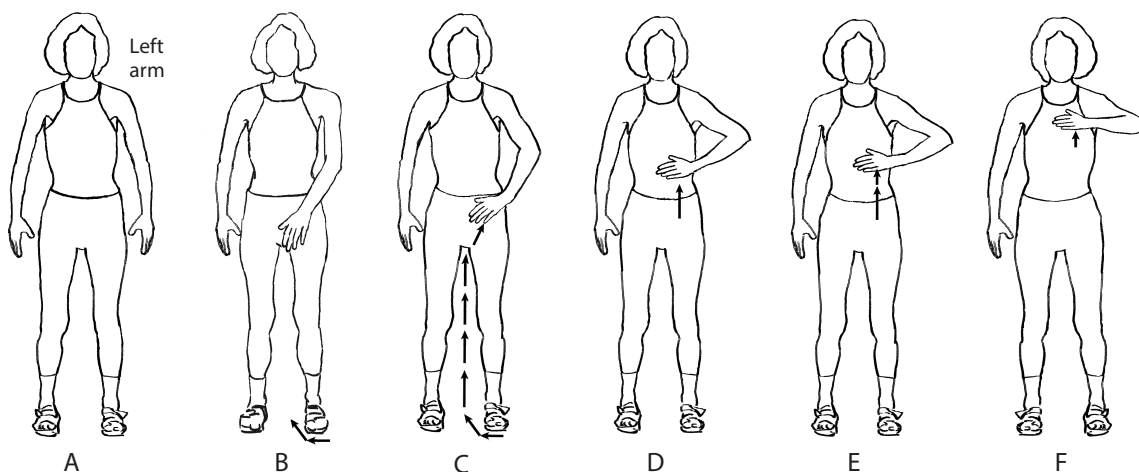
Remain standing upright throughout the tracing of the energy pathways. The palm of the hand that is tracing the pathways must face your skin during this entire step.

Upward—Left Arm Only

Beginning position: Start with your feet parallel, shoulders' width apart, with your weight evenly distributed on both feet. Your arms rest comfortably at your sides, with your armpits slightly open. Your fingers point downward at the outsides of your feet (Figure 3-2 A).

1. Bring your left arm around your foot so that your fingers point toward the bottom inside of your left foot (Figure 3-2 B).
2. Slowly rotate and bring your left arm upward, with your fingers first pointing toward the inside of your left ankle. Your arm continues to move slowly upward, as your fingers point to the inside surface of the calf and knee and thigh to your kwa (Figure 3-2 C). Your palm will continue to face your body at the height of your kwa.
3. Continue to move your arm upward with your palm facing your body. Trace the energy pathways along the left channel of your body to your nipple and then to your shoulder's nest. Your palm continues to face your torso (Figure 3-2 D–F).

Try to keep your hand six to eight inches away from your body at all times. As you trace the energy pathways, imagine you are pulling energy up the inside of your left leg and then up the left energy channel of your body to your shoulder's nest.



Trace the Energy Pathways with One Hand While Standing
Left Palm and Fingers Face Your Body

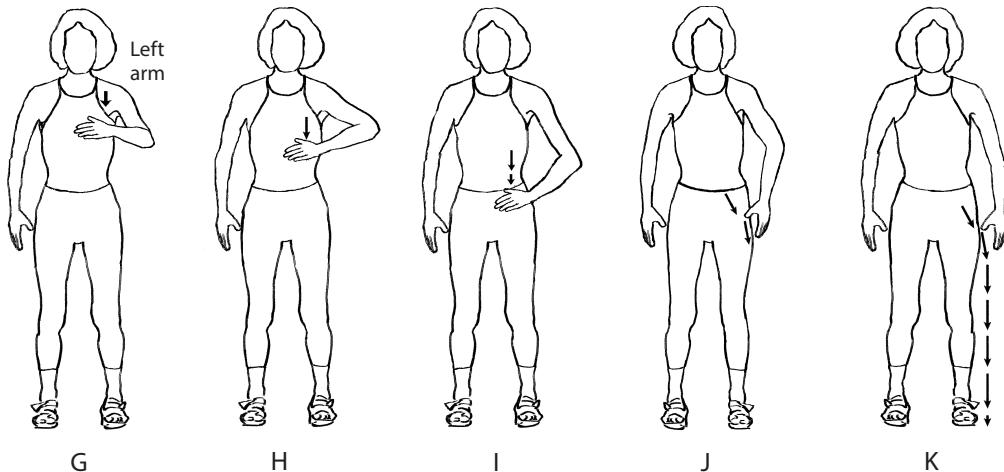
Figure 3-2

Downward—Left Arm Only

4. When your left palm reaches the top of your shoulder's nest, your arm will reverse direction and move slowly downward as you trace the energy pathways from your shoulder's nest to your nipple to your kwa at approximately waist height (Figure 3-2 G–I). Your palm and fingers continue to face your torso.
5. At the kwa, move your palm around from your kwa to the side of your hip socket. Your fingers now point downward (Figure 3-2 J).
6. Move your left arm downward and continue pointing your fingers downward along the outside of the thigh, knee and calf to the bottom outside edge of your foot (Figure 3-2 K). As you do so, imagine you are pushing energy down the outside of your leg.

Practice tracing the energy pathways on the left side of your body ten times or more. Try to keep your hand six to eight inches away from your body at all times.

As you trace these energy pathways, imagine you are pushing energy downward from your shoulder's nest, down the left energy channel, to the outside of your leg and foot.



Continue to Trace the Energy Pathways with One Hand While Standing
Left Palm and Fingers Face Your Body

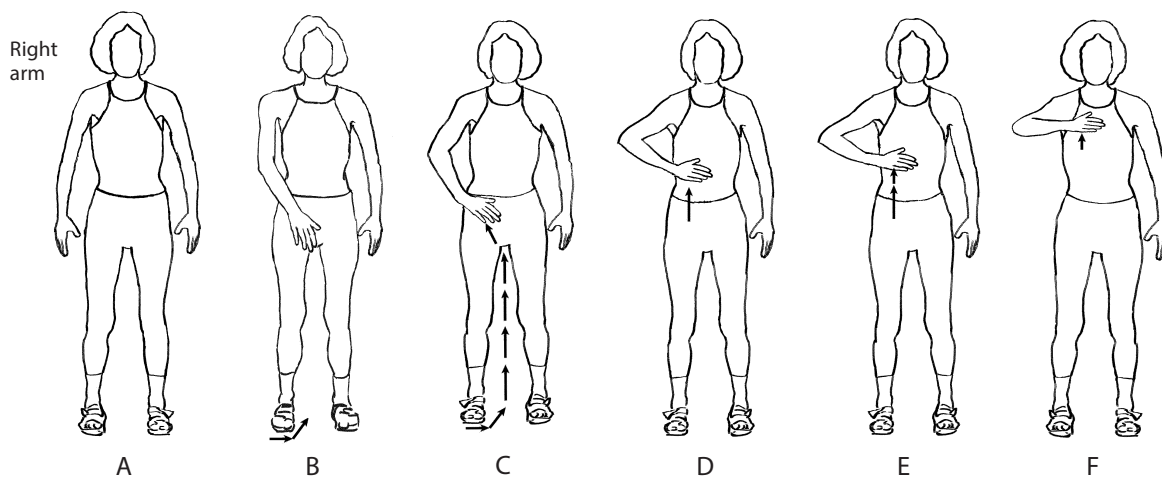
Figure 3-2

Upward—Right Arm Only

Beginning position: Start with your feet parallel, shoulders' width apart with your weight evenly distributed on both feet. Your arms rest comfortably to your sides, with your armpits slightly open. Your fingers point downward at the outsides of your feet (Figure 3-3 A).

1. Bring your right arm around so that your palm and fingers point toward the bottom inside of your right foot (Figure 3-3 B).
2. Slowly bring your right arm upward, with your fingers first pointing toward the inside of your right ankle. Your right arm continues to move slowly upward, as your palm and fingers point to the inside surface of the calf and knee and thigh to your kwa (Figure 3-3 C). Your palm will continue to face your body at the height of your kwa. Imagine you are pulling energy up the inside of your right leg.
3. Continue to move your right arm upward with your palm facing your body. Trace the energy pathways along the right channel of your body to your nipple and then to your shoulder's nest. Your fingers point sideways and your palm faces your torso (Figure 3-3 D–F).

Try to keep your hand six to eight inches away from your body at all times. As you trace the energy pathways, imagine you are pulling energy up the inside of your right leg and then up the right energy channel of your body to your shoulder's nest.



Trace the Energy Pathways with One Hand While Standing
Right Palm and Fingers Face Your Body

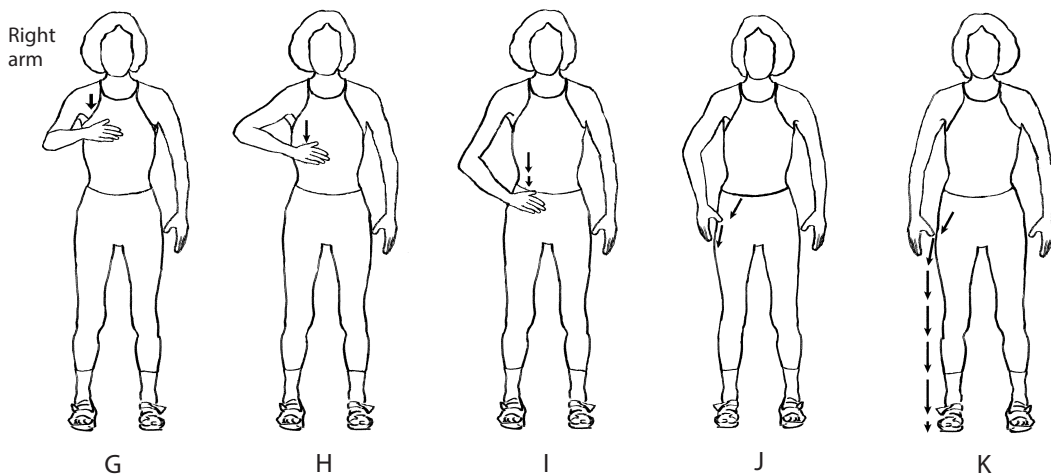
Figure 3-3

Downward—Right Arm Only

4. As your palm traces the energy pathways to the top of your shoulder's nest, your arm will reverse direction and move slowly downward as you trace the energy pathways from your shoulder's nest to your nipple to your kwa at approximately waist height (Figure 3-3 G–I). Your palm and fingertips continue to face your torso.
5. At the kwa, move your hand around from your kwa to the side of your hip socket. Your fingers now point downward (Figure 3-3 J).
6. Move your right arm downward and continue pointing your fingers downward along the outside of the thigh, knee and calf to the bottom outside edge of your foot (Figure 3-3 K). As you do so, imagine you are pushing energy down the outside of your right leg.

Practice tracing the energy pathways on the right side of your body ten times or more. Try to keep your hand six to eight inches away from your body at all times.

As you trace these energy pathways, imagine you are pushing energy down the right energy channel from your shoulder's nest to your kwa and then down the outside of your leg and foot.



Continue to Trace the Energy Pathways with One Hand While Standing
Right Palm and Fingers Face Your Body

Figure 3-3

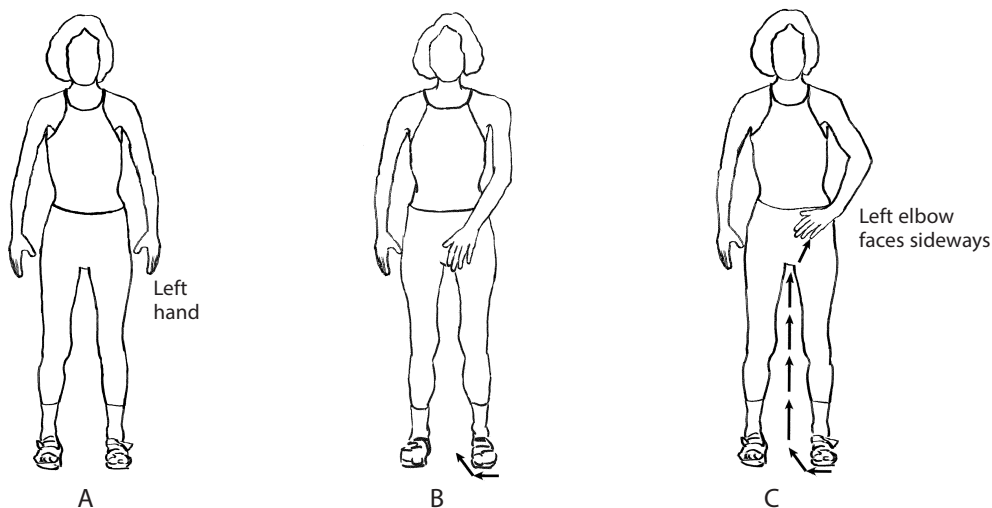
Step 3: Learn Precise Arm, Elbow, Palm and Finger Positions

Your hand movements will follow the same energy pathways outlined in Step 2. Now you will learn more precise positionings for the arms, elbows, palms and fingers. Practice each hand separately. Try to keep your hand six to eight inches away from your body at all times.

Upward Movement—Left Hand Only

Beginning position: Start with your feet parallel, shoulders' width apart, with your weight evenly distributed on both feet. Your arms rest comfortably at your sides, with your armpits slightly open. Your fingers point downward at the outsides of your feet (Figure 3-4 A).

1. Rotate your left elbow and hand so that your fingers first point at the tips of your toes and then at the inside of your foot. Do not lock your elbow, wrist or finger joints. Keep your arm relaxed as you let the rotation come from your elbow and shoulder. Point your left fingers toward the inside of your left foot (Figure 3-4 B). Your palm faces the inside of the leg.
2. With your left hand's fingertips and palm, trace the energy pathways along the inside of your



Upward Left Hand Movements—Arm, Elbow, Palm and Finger Positions

Figure 3-4

left leg from foot to knee to kwa. Imagine you are energetically touching and pulling energy up the inside of your leg (Figure 3-4 C). By the time your left hand reaches your kwa, the tip of your left elbow should be facing fully sideways. This elbow position will keep your armpit open and maintain the flow of energy from your spine to your arm.

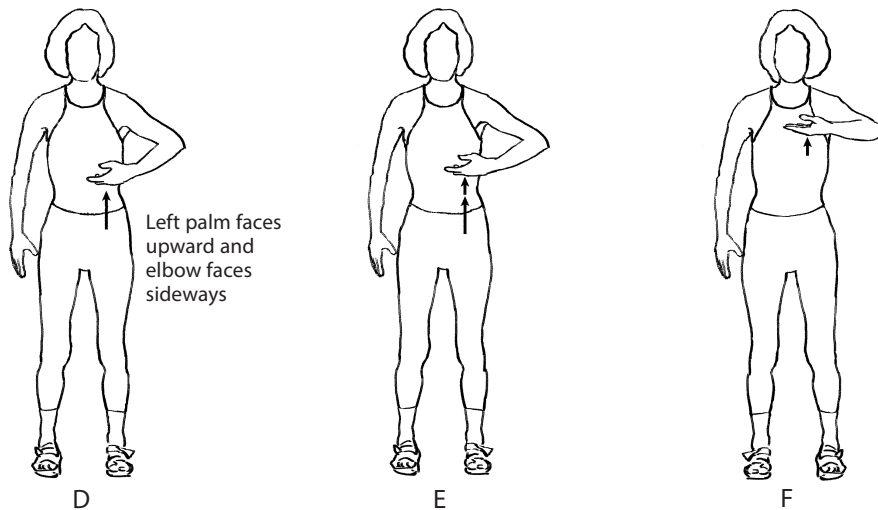
3. From the kwa, gradually turn your palm to face upward as you bring your arm up the left energy channel through your nipple to the shoulder's nest (Figure 3-4 D–F). Your fingertips should point directly across your torso toward the right.

As your palm, which finishes facing upward, moves up from your kwa to your shoulder's nest, make sure to the extent of your 70 percent capability that

- The center of your left palm traces and always remains over your left channel
- Your elbow, upper arm and shoulder are relaxed and feel slightly heavy
- Your shoulders are down.

4. In the final position of the upward hand movement, the palm of your hand faces completely upward as your elbow tip and fingers are on a straight line pointing through the fingers directly sideways toward your right arm (Figure 3-4 F).

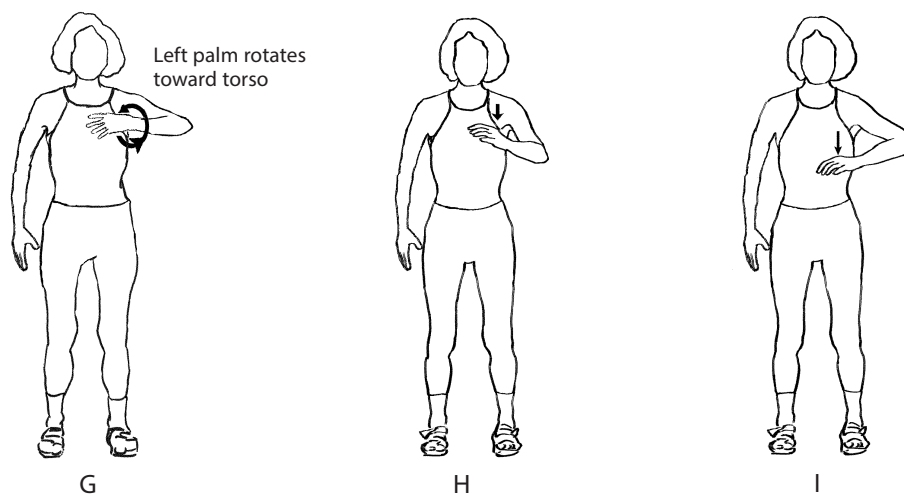
Downward Movement—Left Hand Only



Upward Left Hand Movements—Arm, Elbow, Palm and Finger Positions

Figure 3-4

5. At the top of your upward hand movement rotate your elbow and palm in place until your palm is facing the ground (Figure 3-4 G). Turning the palm completely over requires your shoulder rotation movement to be relatively loose. Doing the movement at 70 percent will gradually loosen your shoulder.
 6. In a relaxed way, push your palm down over the left channel to your kwa (Figure 3-4 H–J). Maintain the sideways position of your elbows and fingers and the position of the center of your palm over your left energy channel. Feel as if you are gently pushing your hand through water. Maintain this feeling in your hand at all times as you move it up and down. Sometimes, the movements of qigong and tai chi are called “swimming on dry land” because practitioners strive to maintain this feeling.
 7. At the kwa, curve your arm and palm, so the center of your palm faces your body as you move your hand around from your kwa to the side of your hip socket (Figure 3-4 J–K).
 8. Lower your palm as it faces the outside of your leg, as far as you comfortably can go without locking your arm and without any strength or tension (Figure 3-4 L). As you do so, progressively point your fingertips down your thigh, knee and calf until they point toward the outside of your foot. As your hand lowers, imagine you are projecting energy down the outside of your leg to your foot.
- Repeat the upward and downward movements as much as you need to, until you feel



Downward Left Hand Movements—Arm, Elbow, Palm and Finger Positions

Figure 3-4

competent in the basic procedure without having to refer to the text. Your goal is to practice until you can turn your palm, hand and fingers in the right directions at the proper positions and trace the correct energy pathways in a smooth, relaxed manner.

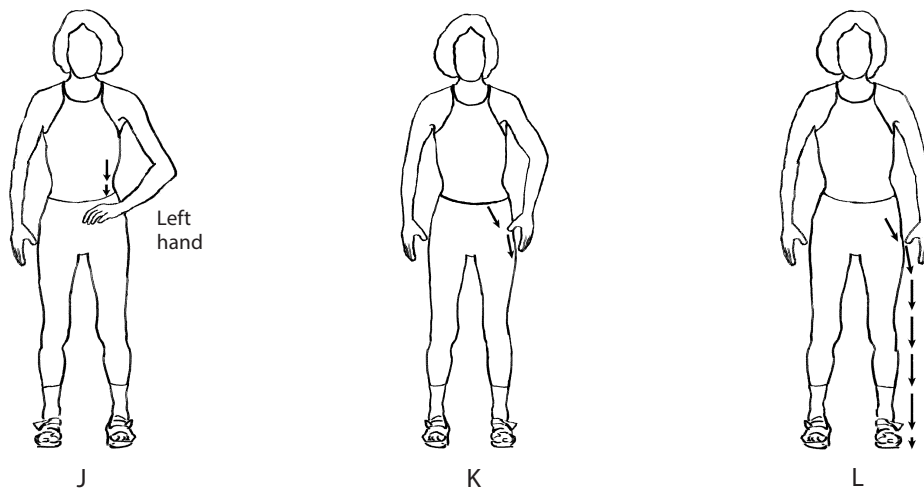
How High Do I Raise My Palm?

Initially, the ideal height is in front of your collarbone, just slightly above your shoulder's nest. This is the optimal height for physically loosening your shoulder.

However, when you begin learning this movement, it may only feel comfortable to raise your hand as high as the bottom of your ribs. With practice you will gradually reach the nipple, the shoulder's nest and then the collarbone. If you are stiff or injured raise your hand only to a height that does not cause tension or pain to begin. The highest you should raise your hand is to your collarbone. Although you may be physically able to raise your hand higher, you will not gain any energetic benefit by doing so.

The ideal height energetically is at the shoulder's nest, where you will have the strongest positive effect on stimulating energy flows in this area—that is, after you are stretched and can comfortably reach your collarbone.

By staying within your comfort boundary as you repeat the movements, your physical tension will gradually decrease and in time disappear. It may take you a few weeks or months to get your hands all the way to your shoulder's nest or collarbone, but when you do, your energy will flow more strongly than if you had forced your shoulders to stretch.

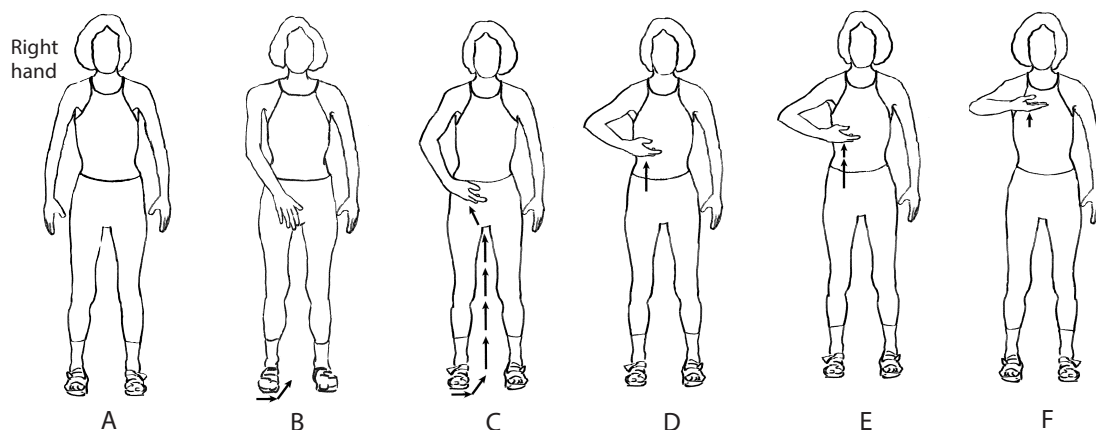


Downward Left Hand Movements—Arm, Elbow, Palm and Finger Positions

Figure 3-4

Upward Movement—Right Hand Only

Follow the previous Instructions 1–4 with your right hand (Figure 3-5 A–F).

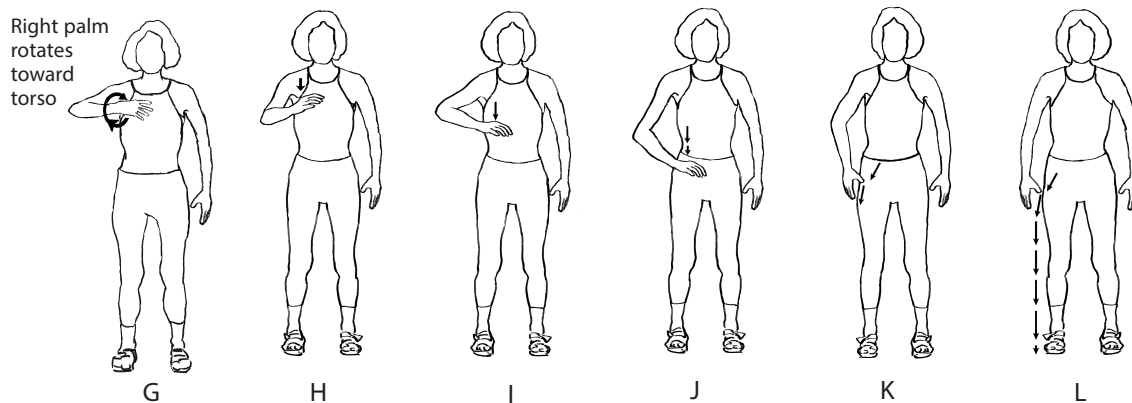


Upward Movements—Right Hand

Figure 3-5

Downward Movement—Right Hand Only

Follow the previous Instructions 5–8 with your right hand (Figure 3-5 G–L). Repeat the movements with your right hand as much as you need to until you feel competent in the basic procedure of moving your hand up and down the energy pathways.



Downward Movements—Right Hand

Figure 3-5

Take a Short Break

It is recommended that you take a break at this point in order to allow your nervous system to absorb what you have just learned.



Photo by Don Kellogg

Movement 1 energizes the lungs and the liver. It is useful for getting rid of stress and fatigue.

Step 4: Learn to Shift Weight

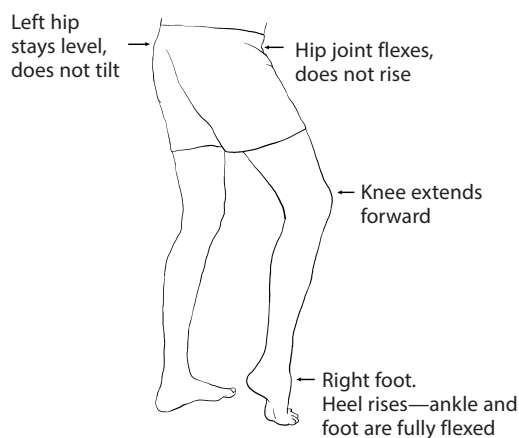
Some of Dragon and Tiger's movements require that you shift your weight side to side, fully, smoothly and evenly from one foot to the other. Other movements require that you turn your torso while smoothly shifting weight (see Chapter 5). These basic weight shifting methods are also used in other qigong exercises and in tai chi.

Shift Weight to Left Foot and Back to Center

In this step, you will learn to shift your weight from being evenly distributed on both feet to being primarily centered on your left foot.

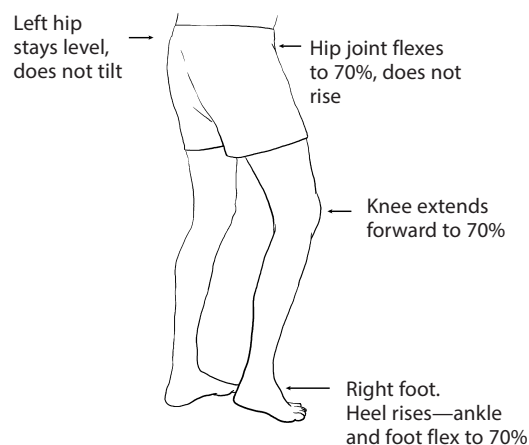
Beginning position: Start with the standing posture—face forward, feet flat on the floor, parallel to each other, approximately shoulders' width apart, with your weight distributed evenly on both feet.

1. Ideally, shift your body's entire weight to your left foot, keeping your left leg slightly bent. Gently exert pressure through your left heel. This will cause energy to drop down the left side of your body. As you do so, lift your right heel off the ground, while keeping the ball of your foot on the ground (Figure 3-6 or 3-7). This will cause energy to rise on the right side of your body.



Shift Weight to Left Foot—Ideal

Figure 3-6



Shift Weight to Left Foot—70%

Figure 3-7

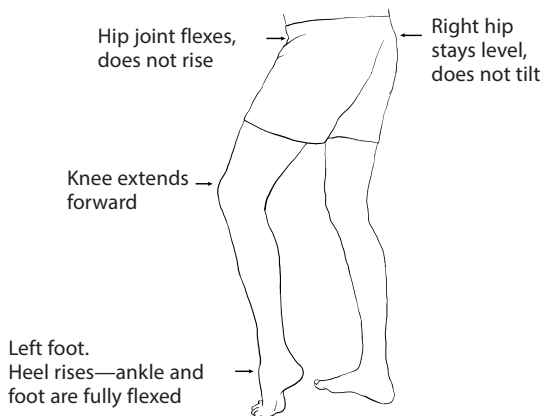
- Your left leg and foot must stay relaxed. Your hips must remain even and not tilted.
- Remember the 70 percent rule and lift your heel only as high as you are able to maintain a relaxed leg, stay comfortable and keep your balance.
- Let your right knee go forward and allow your right toe, ankle, knee and hip joints to move in a smooth, loose manner as the heel rises.
- Ideally, your right leg becomes weightless. However, if you cannot comfortably shift all the weight to your left foot while keeping your left hip and leg muscles relaxed, shift only as much weight as is comfortable. Allow some weight to remain on your right foot. As you practice, you will become increasingly comfortable in shifting more and more of your weight to your left foot. At some point, you will be able to make the 100 percent weight shift. The main point is not to force it.

2. Shift your weight from the left foot back to both feet until your weight is evenly distributed on both feet. Do not force a 100 percent weight shift if it does not feel comfortable or makes you feel unbalanced.

Shift your weight from center to the left and back again ten times. Try to feel the spring in your feet as your heel gently presses down on the weighted foot and the heel rises up on the unweighted foot.

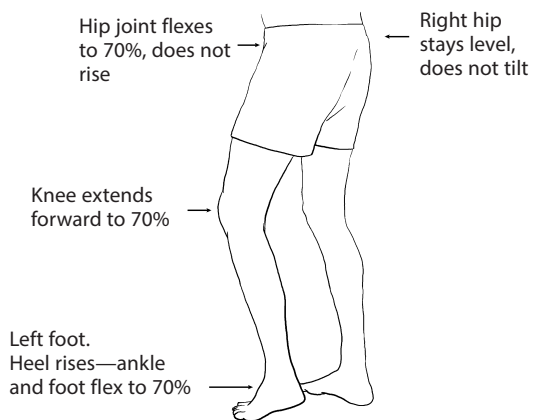
Shift Weight to Right Foot and Back to Center

Repeat Instructions 1 and 2 for your right foot. Shift your weight to your right foot and back to center (Figure 3-8 or 3-9).



Shift Weight to Right Foot—Ideal

Figure 3-8



Shift Weight to Right Foot—70%

Figure 3-9

Shift Weight from One Foot to the Other

Practice either of the options described below until your weight is shifting smoothly and evenly. Aim toward making the up and down movements merge seamlessly. At first, you may abruptly stop and start. However, as the spring in your ankles increases, the transition between up and down will become uninterrupted. You want to get the feeling of simultaneously pumping one foot up and the other down as though you were pedaling a bicycle.

As you shift weight, while lifting and lowering your legs and feet, let your movements become very smooth, steady, rhythmical and continuous. Play with finding a slow, steady rhythm that is relaxing and feels good. Move as if you were a big cat, steadily, carefully and consciously. Let all the muscles of your legs, feet and hips relax so that you use only those muscles necessary for the movement. This will allow your feet to exchange chi with the earth. Try to be aware of every joint in your toes, feet, ankles, knees and hips, attempting to move every part in unison in a liquid manner.

Beginning position: Right leg weighted, left heel raised.

Option 1 (Ideal)

As you put your left heel down, your right heel will simultaneously rise as you shift your weight to your left foot. When you shift your weight back to the right foot, your left heel will simultaneously rise as you put your right heel down. This will provide the smoothest and most seamless weight shift. Both heels will be off the ground for only the briefest moment in the middle of your weight shift.

Option 2

At first you may find that it is easier and more comfortable to put the heel of your foot down before beginning to shift your weight back to that side. As you become comfortable doing the weight shift smoothly from side to side, you will find it unnecessary to do this.

Take a Short Break

It is recommended that you take a break at this point in order to allow your nervous system to absorb what you have just learned.



Photo by Mark Thayer

Dragon and Tiger students learn knee alignments. Correct alignments are important to maximize the benefits of Dragon and Tiger and to protect the knees.

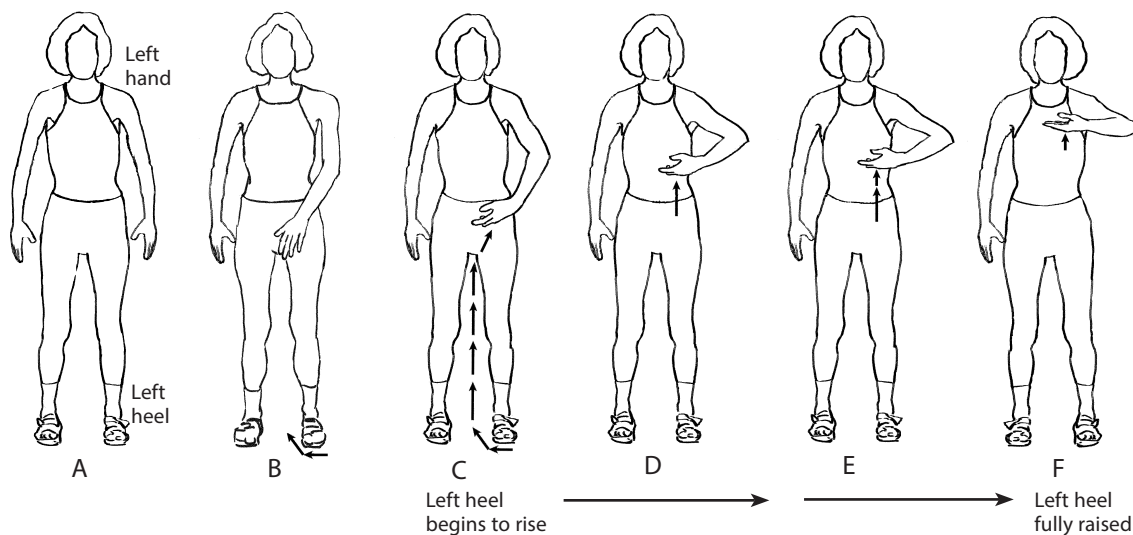
Step 5: Coordinate Raising and Lowering Hand and Heel—One Side Only

Left Heel/Left Hand

Beginning position: Start with your feet flat on the floor, parallel to each other, approximately shoulders' width apart. The weight is distributed evenly on both feet. Place both hands comfortably at your sides, open your armpits slightly and point your left fingers at the outside of your left foot (Figure 3-10 A).

Your goal is to lift and lower your left hand and left heel in unison. Doing so will mean that you must keep the ratio of the movement of your hand and heel constant, so that they begin and finish together and are always at the same percentage of their respective ranges of movement. This is challenging because the tendency of many people is to have the heel go up and down faster than the hand.

1. Rotate your left elbow, wrist and palm so that your fingers first point at the tips of your toes and then at the inside of your left foot (Figure 3-10 B).



Trace the Energy Pathways with One Hand While Standing
Left Hand and Heel Rise

Figure 3-10

2. Begin to shift your weight to your right foot and slightly raise your left heel. With your left hand's fingertips, trace the energy pathways along the inside of your left leg from foot to knee to kwa (Figure 3-10 C). At this point, your left heel will be raised halfway.
3. Finish shifting your weight onto your right leg and raise your left heel to its maximum comfortable height as you gradually turn your left palm upward and bring it up to your shoulder's nest (Figure 3-10 D–F).
4. After your left hand rotates to face palm down, it then moves down the left energy pathway of your body. At the same time, begin lowering your left heel (Figure 3-10 G).
5. As your hand pushes down the energy pathway of your torso (Figure 3-10 H–I) your left heel will continue to fall. When your hand reaches the kwa, your left heel will be halfway down (Figure 3-10 J). As your left hand turns from the kwa to face the outside of your leg, your heel will continue to go down (Figure 3-10 K).
6. When your hand has finished tracing the energy pathway down the outside of your foot, the left heel will be fully lowered (Figure 3-10 L).

Practice coordinating the timing of your left heel rising and falling with your left hand rising and falling a minimum of twenty times.

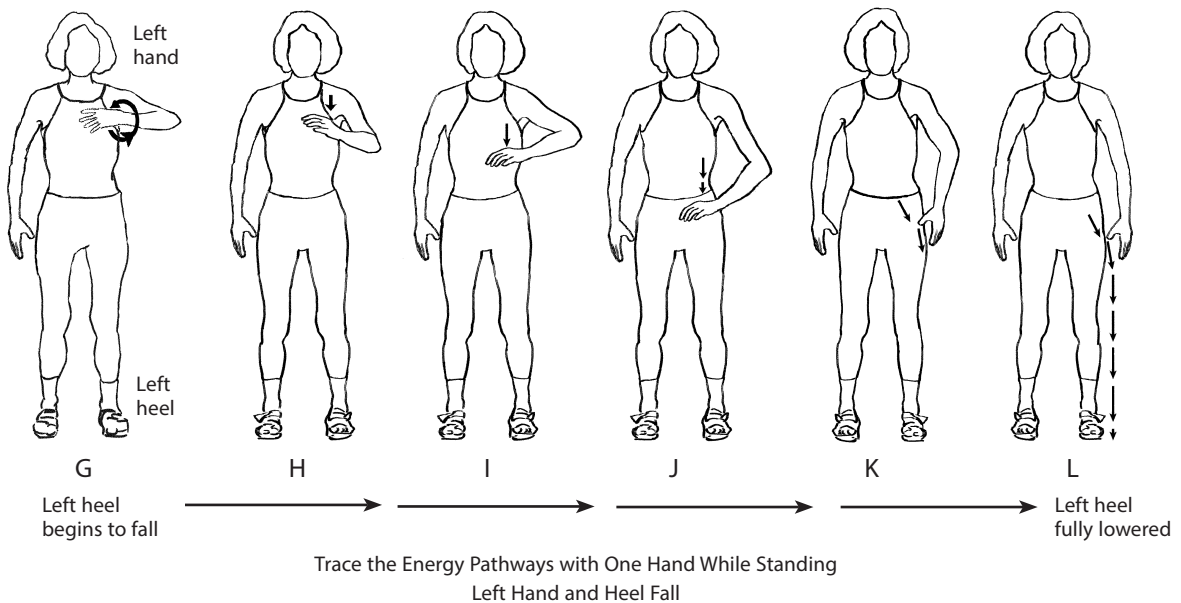
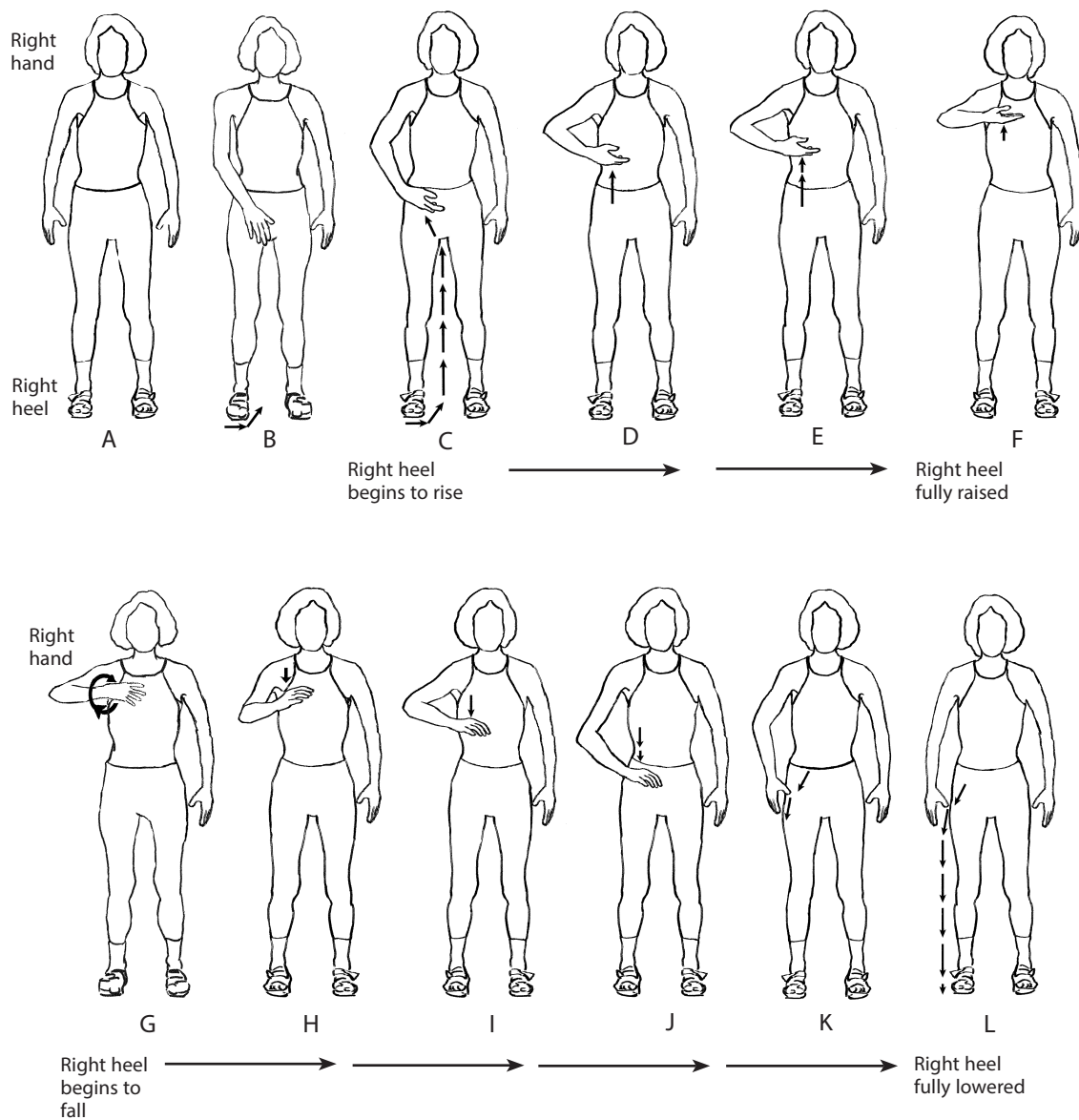


Figure 3-10

Right Heel/Right Hand

Repeat Step 5, coordinating the rising and falling of your right hand and right heel (Figure 3-11 A–L).



Trace the Energy Pathways with One Hand While Standing
Right Hand and Heel Rise and Fall

Figure 3-11



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Movement 1 Integration

In the previous two chapters, you learned the important components of Movement 1: the standing posture, fundamental principles of breathing from the belly, weight shifting with heels rising and falling, tracing the energy pathways, and precise arm, elbow, palm and finger positions.

Now you are ready to learn how to combine these separate components and put the whole movement together. You will learn how to synchronize your weight shifts with your arm movements and coordinate them with breathing so that your body functions as one integrated whole. There is no need to be concerned about learning the movement perfectly. Doing the movements in a “more or less” fashion is quite acceptable. Be gentle with yourself and don’t worry about trying to be perfect.

Overview

Your main goal is to coordinate the following into one seamless, integrated and flowing movement:

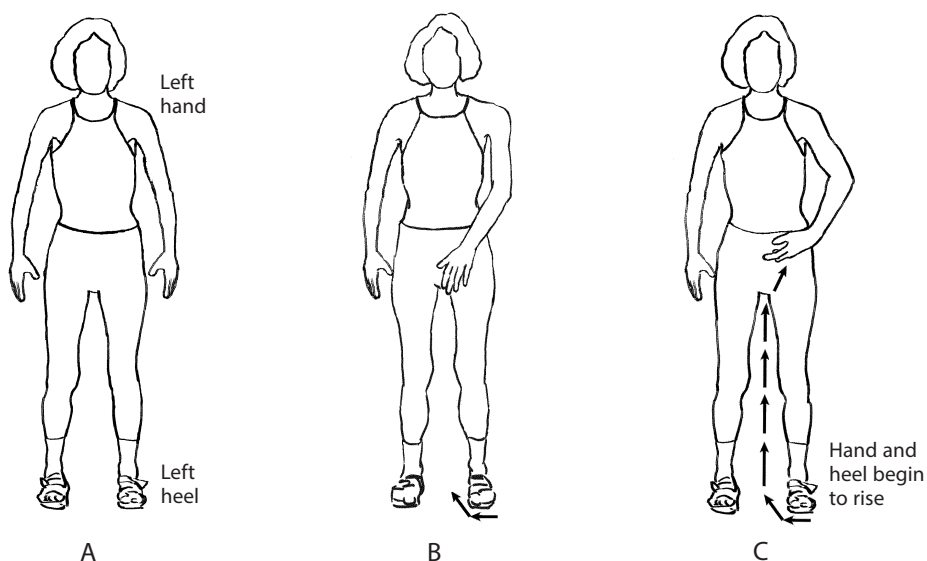
- Moving your palms and fingers in prescribed patterns through your etheric body to activate the acupuncture meridians
- Raising and lowering your heels in coordination with your hand movements
- Shifting all your weight from one leg to the other in coordination with your hand movements
- Inhaling and exhaling in coordination with your leg and hand movements

Step 1: Raising and Lowering Your Hands and Heels—Both Sides of the Body

Now you are ready to learn how to coordinate the movement of your hands and feet on both sides. You will shift weight as you simultaneously move your hand to trace the energy pathways. When you perform Movement 1 correctly, you will feel as though there is a continuous pulley-like motion between your right and left sides.

Beginning position: Stand comfortably, feet parallel, shoulders' width apart, with your weight evenly distributed on both feet. Your arms rest comfortably at your sides, palms facing the outsides of your legs and fingers pointing toward the floor. Maintain a little space within both armpits and keep your elbows slightly bent (Figure 4-1 A).

Breathe comfortably using your belly (see Chapter 2, pp. 15–20). Let your breath become very steady and relaxed. Let your mind become calm and feel your breath move in and out of your body. Let your thoughts drop away and prepare to begin the movement.



Begin Movement 1

Figure 4-1

1. Rotate your left elbow, wrist and palm so that your fingers first point at the tips of your toes and then at the inside of your left foot (Figure 4-1 B).
2. Begin to shift your weight to your right foot and begin to slightly raise your left heel. With your left hand's fingertips, trace the energy pathways along the inside of your left leg from foot to knee to kwa (Figure 4-1 C).

When your hand reaches the kwa, your heel will be raised halfway.

3. Finish shifting your weight onto your right leg, raising your left heel to its maximum comfortable height as you gradually turn your left palm upward and bring it up to your shoulder's nest (Figure 4-1 D–F).

You are now ready to begin coordinating the hands and feet on both sides. Ideally, as one side of your body's hand and heel are moving downward, the other side's hand and heel simultaneously are going upward. Your weight shift should be 100 percent onto the side of your descending hand. As all your weight is shifting onto the side of your descending hand, the heel on the side of your ascending hand rises. There should be no perceivable stops or starts at the ends or beginnings of the weight shifts.

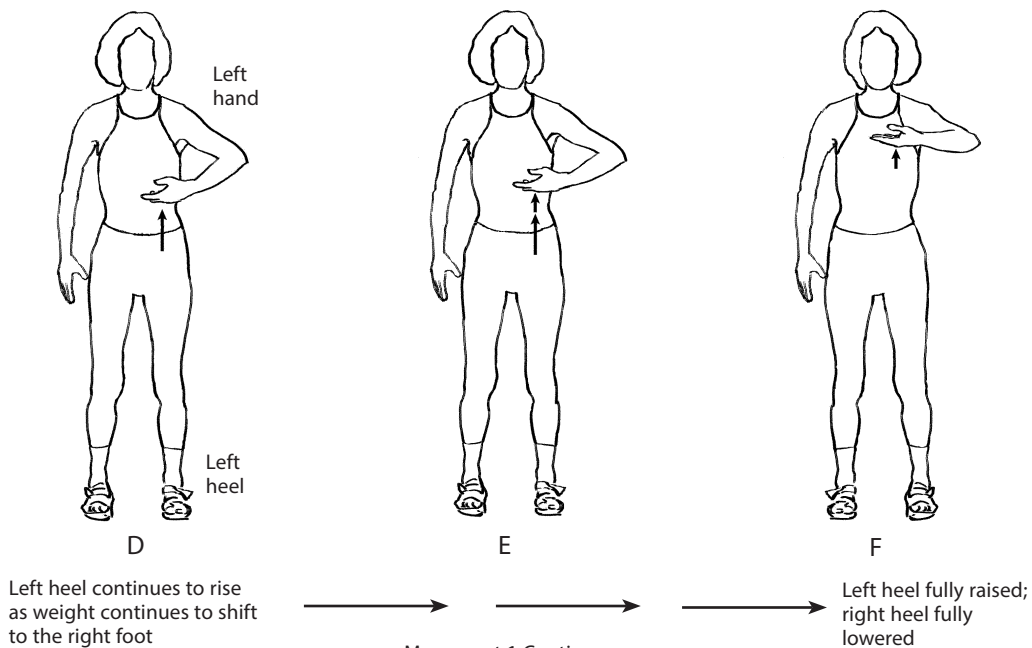


Figure 4-1

Left Hand and Heel Down/Right Hand and Heel Up

Beginning position: Your left heel is fully raised and your left hand is turned palm up at your shoulder's nest. Your right leg is 100 percent weighted; your right palm faces the outside of your right foot (Figure 4-1 G).

1. Rotate your right hand and fingers to point at the inside of your right foot and begin to raise your hand up inside of your leg with the palm facing the leg. At the same time, begin to rotate your left hand to turn palm down. Smoothly begin to shift your weight from your right foot to your left: your right heel will begin to rise and your left heel will begin to fall (Figure 4-1 H).
2. Continue to shift your weight as your right palm moves upward from facing the inside of the leg to gradually facing fully upward at the kwa. Once your left palm faces downward, lower it toward your left nipple. Continue to drop your left heel and raise your right (Figure 4-1 I).

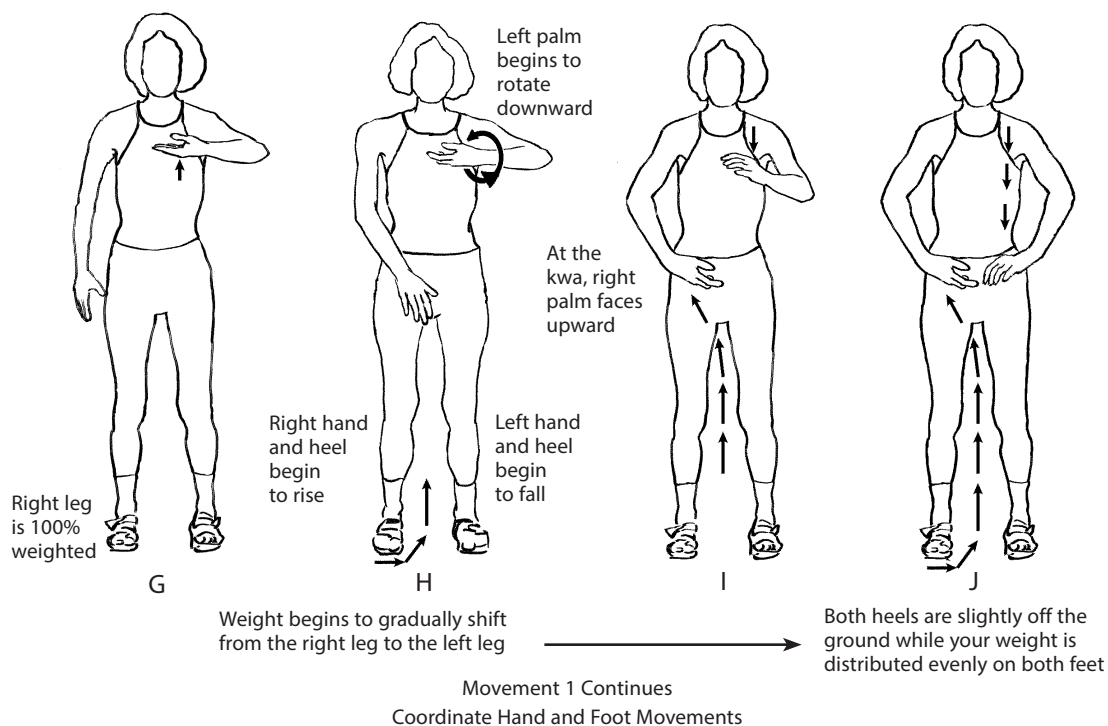


Figure 4-1

3. Finish shifting your weight to both feet as your rising right hand, with palm up, passes your falling left hand with its palm facing down, ideally at the level of your lower tantien (Figure 4-1 J). Both heels will be briefly off the ground and your weight will be evenly distributed on both feet.
4. Shift your weight toward your left leg as you move your right hand up to your right nipple, move your left hand down to your left kwa, drop your left heel further toward the ground and further raise your right heel (Figure 4-1 K).
5. At the kwa, curve your left arm and palm, so the center of your palm faces your body as you move your hand around from your kwa to the side of your left hip socket (Figure 4-1 L).
6. Finish shifting your weight 100 percent onto your left leg as you move your right hand up to your shoulder's nest, move your left hand and fingers down the outside of your leg to point at the outside of your foot, and finish dropping your left heel and raising your right heel (Figure 4-1 M).

As you shift the weight from your right leg to your left leg, ideally your right and left heels should rise and fall at the same respective speed.

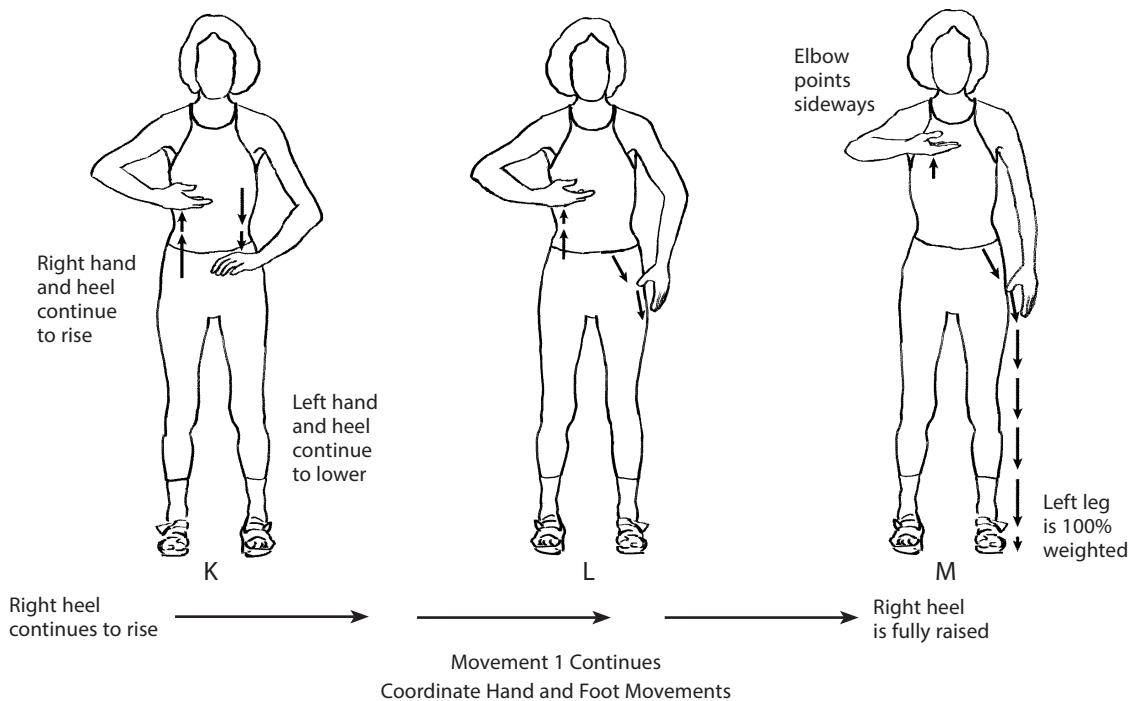
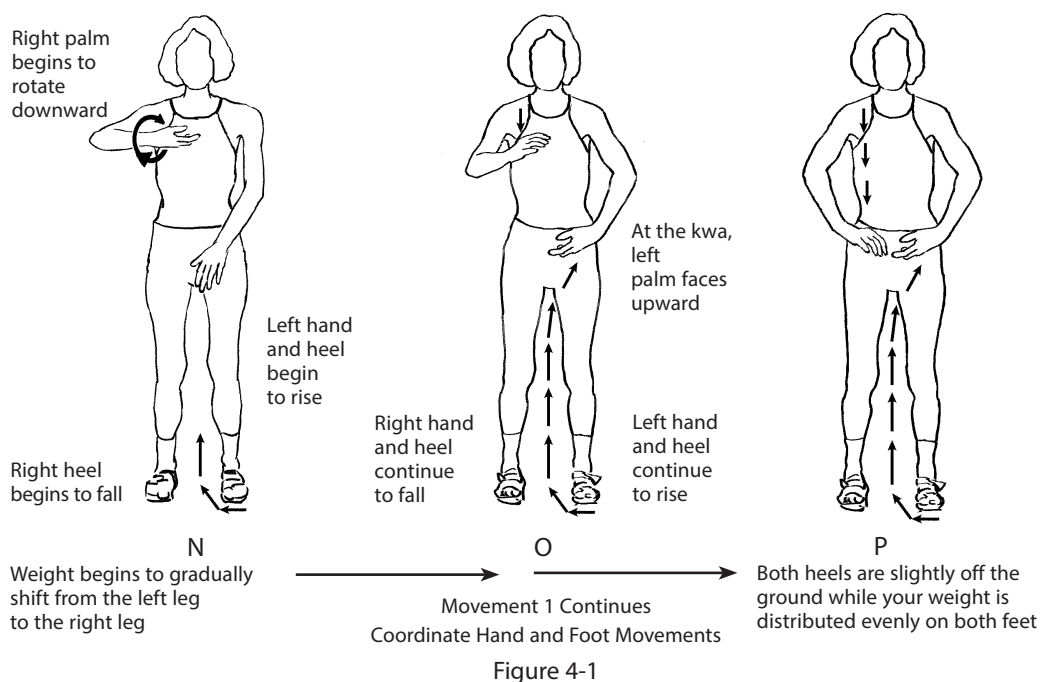


Figure 4-1

Right Hand and Heel Down/Left Hand and Heel Up

7. Rotate your left hand and fingers to point at the inside of your left foot with your palm facing your leg. At the same time, rotate your right hand to turn your palm down. Smoothly begin to shift your weight from your left foot to your right: your left heel will begin to rise and your right heel will begin to drop (Figure 4-1 N).
8. Continue to shift your weight as your left palm moves upward from facing the inside of the leg to gradually facing fully upward at the kwa. Move your right palm that is facing down toward your right nipple. Continue to drop your right heel and raise your left (Figure 4-1 O).
9. Finish shifting your weight to both feet as your rising left hand passes your falling right hand, ideally at the level of your lower tantien (Figure 4-1 P). Both heels will be briefly off the ground and then your weight will be evenly distributed on both feet.
10. Shift your weight toward your right leg as you move your left hand up to your left nipple, move your right hand down to your right kwa, drop your right heel further toward the ground and further raise your left heel (Figure 4-1 Q).
11. At the kwa, curve your right arm and palm, so the center of the palm faces your body as you

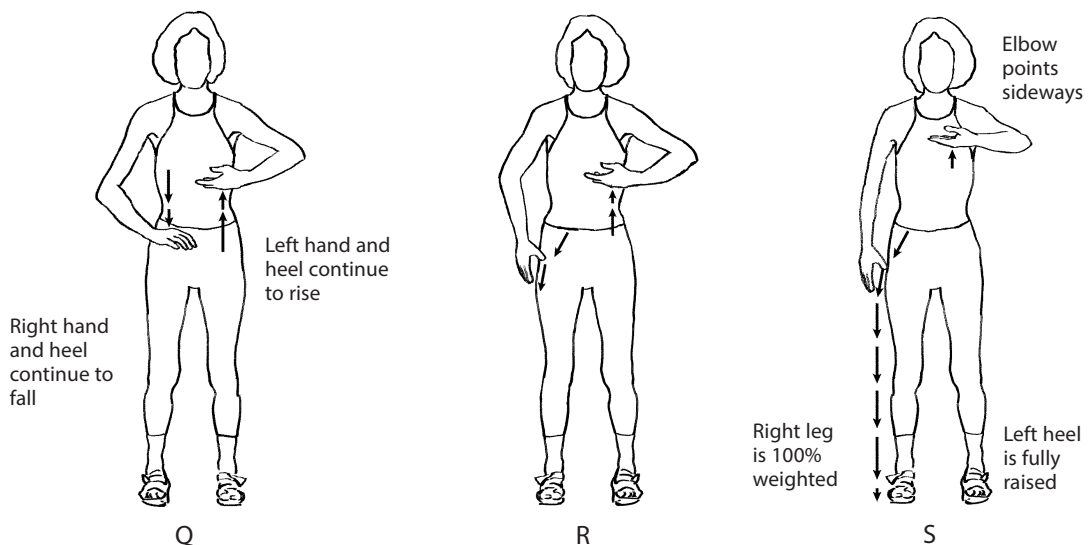


move your hand around from your kwa to the side of your right hip socket while your left palm rises slightly higher (Figure 4-1 R).

12. Finish shifting your weight 100 percent onto your right leg as you move your left hand up to your shoulder's nest, move your right hand and fingers down the outside of your leg to point at the outside of your foot, and finish dropping your right heel and raising your left heel (Figure 4-1 S).

Repeat Instructions 1–12 in a continuous loop, with one hand and foot moving up while the opposite hand and foot go down. There should be no sudden starts or stops at the beginning or end of each weight shift or hand movement. During your weight shifts, your right and left hands should rise and fall at the same respective speed.

If you lose your place, begin again at either position 4-1 F or 4-1 M. In these positions, one hand and heel are fully raised and the other hand and heel are fully lowered.



Movement 1 Continues
Coordinate Hand and Foot Movements

Figure 4-1

Take a Short Break

It is recommended that you take a break at this point in order to allow your nervous system to absorb what you have just learned.

Step 2: Coordinate Breathing with the Movements

Beginning position: Stand comfortably with your feet parallel and shoulders' width apart, hands at your sides.

Breathe softly from the belly and calm your mind. Feel free to choose whichever one of your hands you can keep track of the most easily and calibrate your breathing pattern to the motion of that hand. Figure 4-2 coordinates the breathing with the left hand. The movement of both hands, both feet and the breath should be as smooth and relaxed as possible.

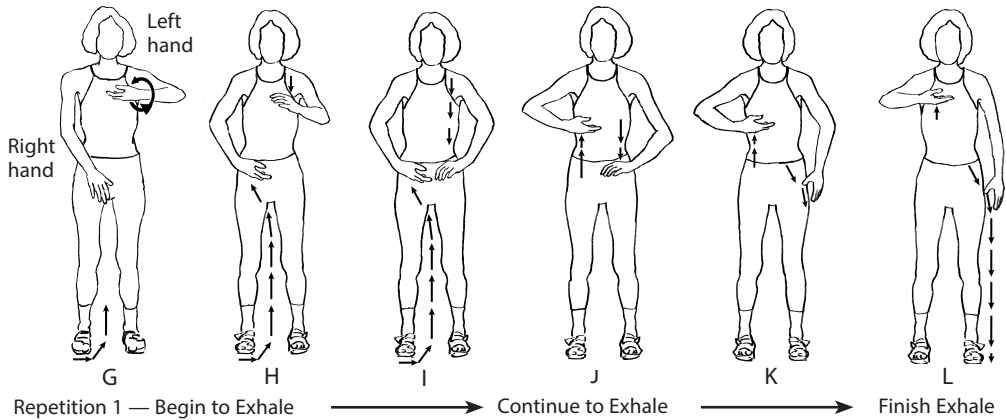
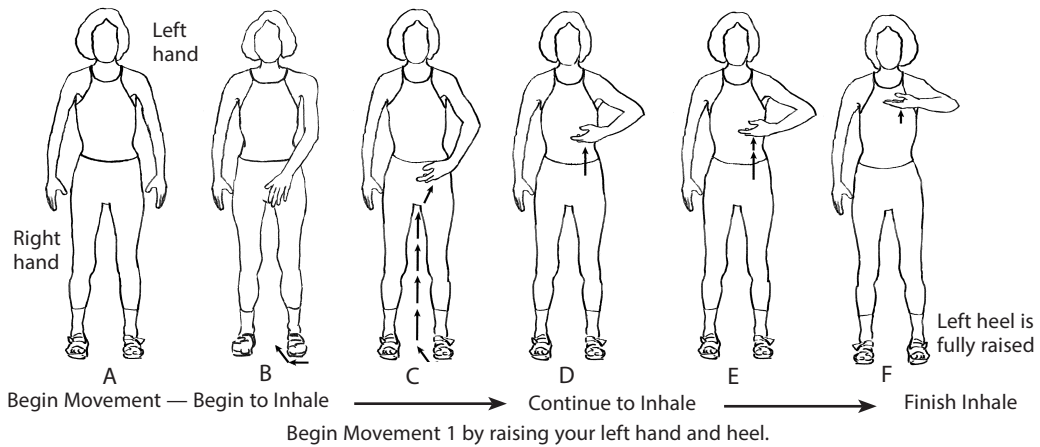
1. Inhale as your left hand and heel rises (Figure 4-2 A–F).
2. Let your inhale turn into an exhale when you rotate your left hand at the shoulder's nest and your lower right hand around the bottom of your right foot (Figure 4-2 G). Let this happen smoothly and try not to hold your breath or have any gap between inhale or exhale.
3. Continue to exhale as your left hand drops to your kwa, and then the outside of your foot (Figure 4-2 H–L).
4. Then smoothly transition from your exhale to an inhale as you rotate your lower left hand from the outside of your left foot to the inside, and your upper right hand from palm up to palm down at the shoulder's nest (Figure 4-2 M).
5. Continue to inhale as your left hand and heel rises (Figure 4-2 N–R).
6. Repeat Instruction 2.

Continue coordinating your breathing and your movements until it feels comfortable.

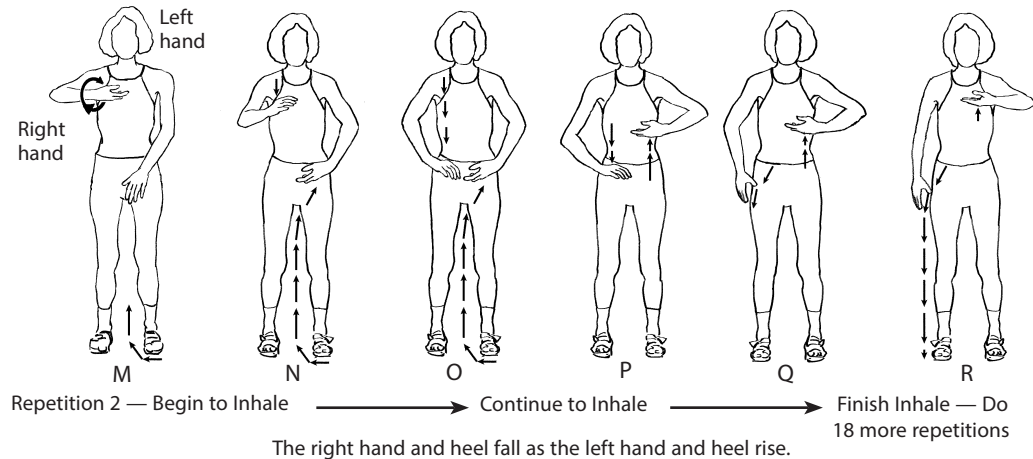
During any practice session, you may choose either hand with which to coordinate your breathing, so feel free to try either side at any time. A preferred technique for developing a more balanced awareness of both sides of your body is to coordinate your breathing with the hand that you feel less aware of while doing these movements.

Take a Short Break

It is recommended that you take a break at this point in order to allow your nervous system to absorb what you have just learned.



Coordinate both hands and feet together.
The left hand and heel fall as the right hand and heel rise.



Movement Integration
Figure 4-2

Step 3: Integration and Practice

Once you have comfortably integrated your breathing with the movements, you are ready to do twenty repetitions of Movement 1 of Dragon and Tiger (see Figure 4-2). One repetition is defined as one cycle of a hand moving from down to up (Figure 4-2 F–L or Figure 4-2 L–R). Choose your right or left hand and count the rising of that hand as one, its falling as two, its next rising as three, etc. Doing twenty continuous repetitions without rest is considered one round of practice.

Use Movement 1 to Balance Your Chi

Now you can start to use Movement 1 to balance the chi of your feet, legs, hands, arms and torso.

Begin to do Movement 1 slowly, steadily and continuously. Try to keep your arms and hands, and your legs and feet moving at all times. If you stop moving a part of your body for an instant, then your chi circulation in that part of your body will slow or even stop. It will lag behind the circulation in other parts of your body and your overall chi flow will become less balanced. So the first step in balancing your chi is to move continuously.

The next step is to notice which parts of your body feel more alive and easy to move and which feel less responsive and more sluggish or tight. For a while just practice feeling your body as you do the movements. Be aware of what you notice, but do not try to do anything yet. Relax and open your mind and let yourself learn to feel many parts of your body simultaneously.

Once you can do this a bit, then begin to play within your body. Put a little more attention into the parts of your body that feel less alive and responsive. Play with how you do the movements so that you try to awaken these areas. For example, you might exaggerate how you move those areas or how you move your hands across those areas to make them more alive.

Moving with the Breath

You can also use your breath to help you focus on less responsive areas of your body. To breathe in concert with the movements, pick a hand or foot with which to coordinate your breath. As that hand or foot moves up, you inhale. As it moves down, you exhale.

Try not to hold your breath at any time; let it smoothly shift from inhale to exhale and vice versa. For example, as your hand smoothly turns over near the front of your shoulder, let your

breath smoothly and steadily move from inhale to exhale. As your hand circles from the outside of your foot to the inside, let your breath change smoothly from exhale to inhale.

Choose to coordinate your breath with the part of your body that you'd like to awaken. For example, if your left leg or foot seems like the least responsive part of your body, then breathe in concert with the movement of your left foot. If it is your right shoulder, then breathe in concert with the movement of your right hand.

Emphasize the Downward Movement

A slightly more advanced aspect of Movement 1 is to try to balance the up and down flows of energy between your body and the earth. The best way to do this is to emphasize the downward action of your hands and heels. The way chi works in the body is that if you can cause energy to sink down your body into the earth, chi will naturally rise up again. (This does not necessarily work in reverse; an upward flow won't necessarily cause a downward flow to occur.)

So in Movement 1 you should play with sinking energy out of whichever heel is dropping at any time. You can simultaneously play with moving chi with your falling hand down the front of your torso and the outside of your leg into the earth.

It is best to master the downward flow before trying to work with the upward flow. Once you get those downward movements going, then you can start to play as well with the hand and foot that are rising. Try to move in such a way that you feel your dropping hand and heel causing your other hand and heel to rise up your body.

Important Points to Remember

- Pay special attention to using your hands to trace the correct energy pathways. If you do so, then you will more fully reap the benefits of Dragon and Tiger Qigong.
- Keep your hands six to eight inches away from your body and never allow your hand to move closer than the width of your closed fist.
- Remember the 70 percent rule and raise your hand and heel only as far as you can without strain.
- Putting a little pressure on the heel of the weighted foot will cause energy to drop down your body. Putting a little pressure on the ball of the weighted foot will cause energy to rise.
- The raising of the hand and heel occur simultaneously. Keep the ratio of the movement of your hand and heel constant, so they begin and finish together and are always at the same percentage of their respective ranges of movement.

- As your hand rises, make sure the tops of your shoulders stay relaxed and down.
- The weight shifts should be seamless and comfortable.
- The breath should be relaxed and your transitions from inhale to exhale and vice versa should be smooth and without gaps. You should not hold your breath at any time during the movement.
- When you perform Movement 1 correctly, you will feel as though there is a continuous pulley-like motion between your right and left sides.
- Be gentle with yourself and do not try to be perfect.

Congratulations! You have learned the first of Dragon and Tiger's seven movements. Practice this movement until you become very comfortable with it. Then you can begin to learn the second movement.

Resources to help you learn Dragon and tiger qigong from home!



Enhance your practice with
the Book, DVD and Poster package

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