



Guelph Tai Chi for Health
January, 2009

Balancing the Heart - Shuxin Pingue Gong - Part 1- Background & Theory¹

Shuxin - (shoo-shin) Extending, opening or expanding the heart

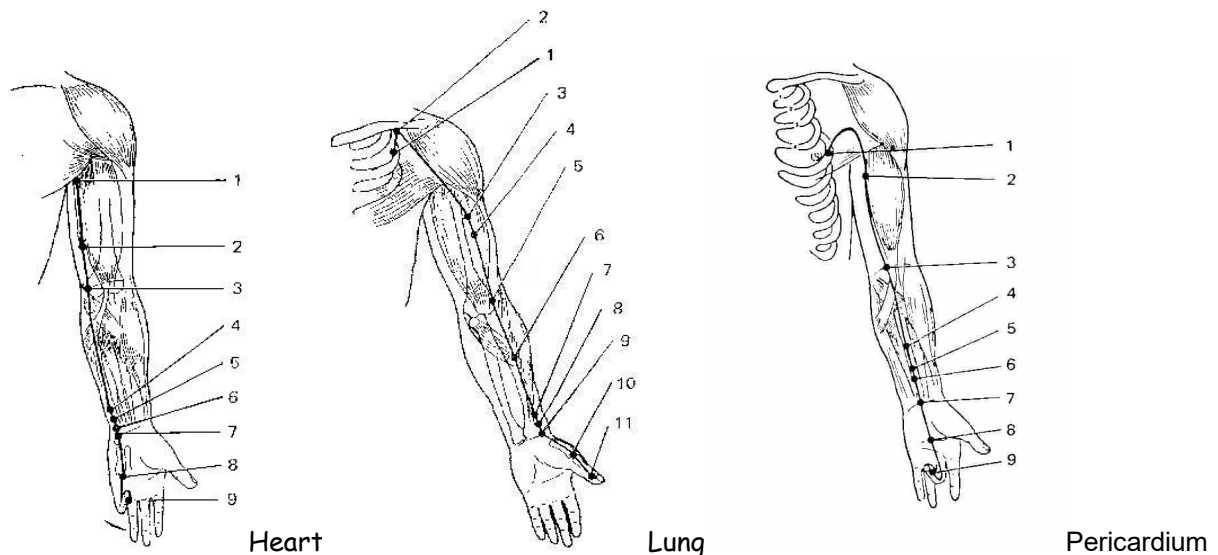
Pingue - (ping-shway) Balancing the blood

Gong - (gung) - training or exercise

The exercise routine we have been doing that is called "Balancing the Heart" is a form of qigong that is practised widely in China. It is a non-medicinal approach to keeping the blood pressure balanced and the cardio-vascular system healthy.

The movements in the "Balancing the Heart" routine are intended to stretch and exercise three meridians that are associated with the heart - the Heart, Lung, and Pericardium meridians.

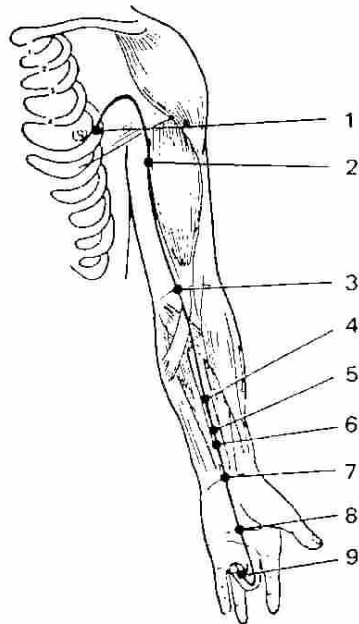
First, let's just look at the location of the three meridians. Stretching, flexing, and rotating the arms in "Balancing the Heart" opens and aligns these channels to enable the free flow of "qi".



Of the three, the Pericardium is the most important. The pericardium is a sack that surrounds and protects the heart. Keeping it healthy and well-nourished helps to keep

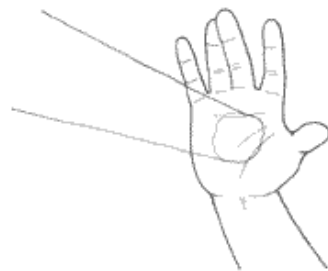
¹ NOTE: The material for these handouts originates from workshops and videos by SAM MASICH, who taught me "the Balancing the Heart" qigong routine. For more about Sam visit <http://masichinternalarts.com>

the heart healthy. Note that the pericardium meridian lies between the Heart and the Lung meridians on the arm.



Pericardium meridian

The *Lao Gong*, one of the major "gates"² of the body, is situated on the Pericardium meridian. It is sometimes called the "labour palace" - when the whole hand moves, it is the still or inactive place in the centre of the hand. It is also Pericardium meridian point number 8. The finger tip of the middle finger is the termination of the Pericardium meridian, point number 9. In "Balancing the Heart" the tip of the middle finger touching the *Lao gong* closes the gate creating an internal circuit along which qi flows.



Lao gong, P-8



² The corresponding "gate" on the foot is the Yong Quan point, the bubbling well.

On the hand, the inside of the little finger corresponds with the small intestine meridian. The back side of the little finger corresponds with the heart meridian. The inside of the ring finger corresponds with the Triple warmer (associated with our endocrine functions), and the outside with a branch of the Pericardium meridian. The whole middle finger is associated with the Pericardium meridian.

When we practice the movements of the "Balancing the Heart" routine it is important to be mindful of our hand and arm movements. Look at the fists made by Sam Masich in "The White Ape Presents Fruit". Look at the flex in his chest and arms.



Master Sam Masich

As is the case with all tai chi and qigong practice the breathing should be deep and relaxed. Breath should be pulled in through the nose, but may be exhaled through the nose, mouth & nose, or mouth. Let the abdomen swell with each breath. The number of repetitions done of each movement is based on your general fitness level, motivation, and available time. The whole form with only one repetition of each of the 8 movements takes about 10 minutes. It is recommended that you do at least two repetitions of each movement if you are able.

Remember: "Quiet time is productive time." - Sam Masich, Tai chi Master