



Guelph Tai Chi for Health
Linda J. Kearns, Instructor

Dr. Shen's Taiji Qigong

Based on notes taken by Linda Kearns, August, 1995
and by Steve Higgins, 1990-1994.

Unless specifically noted, we press the tongue up against the palate and back of front teeth when we breathe in, and we drop the tongue and open the mouth slightly when we breathe out. Ideally, every exercise in this sequence should be repeated for a few minutes before going on to the next. The entire sequence should take between 20 minutes to half an hour, so leave lots of time to do this. Soft tai chi music is a nice enhancement to this set of exercises. Also, this should be a continuous sequence, like a Taiji form. Therefore, don't stop or break between exercises; keep them flowing from one into the next.

Some of these exercises exist in several variations, which Dr. Shen Zaiwen has taught from time-to-time over the years.

1. Taiji Dong She ("Taiji Throw the Hand")

This exercise activates the *Yongquan* or "Bubbling Springs" and utilizes natural breathing.

Stand with shoulders relaxed, back straight, head erect but not tight, hands loosely at sides, thumbs turned forwards. Turn hands out and back, to help relax shoulders and neck areas. Imagine two fireballs (hot coals, hot marbles) under the balls of both feet. Maintaining your body alignment, with no flexing at waist or knees (maintaining *Wu-ji* stance), start moving your arms backwards and forwards, gently swaying your body so that the fireballs move up and down the centerline of the feet, from ball of foot to center of heel. Think only of the fireballs moving up and down the centerlines and of relaxing. Close your eyes, if you wish.

2. Taiji Kai He ("Taiji Open and Close")

This exercise focuses on passing Qi between the Navel and *Ming-men* (between kidneys in the back)

- (a) Take the two fireballs that were in your feet into your hands and then bring them up to the middle *Dan-tien*. Split them in two and bring them around your waistline to the *Ming-men* and pass through your body from back to front, bending and opening your *Ming-men*/back (point behind the navel) as you take the Qi in, and straightening up as you release it out the front. When the energy is released out the front, the palms are facing each other as in a prayer position and the Qi passes out between them like a ray of

- energy. Then “breast-stroke” with the arms, bringing the Qi to the Ming-men, and repeat.
- (b) Take the fireballs and reverse direction, so that the Qi is entering the front and passing out the back. The Qi is brought in the navel with the hands palms-up (as in “Tea-cups”) and is then released out the spine.

3. Yao Yun Dai Mai (“Belt Meridian Pulse”)

This exercise circles the Qi, on the *Dai*/Belt Meridian, and uses natural breathing. The hands are loosened at the wrist and held side by side in front of you. Take the two fireballs, join them together at the front and then send them clockwise around the beltline; the hands held loosely in front trace the circular course of the fireball and the hips swivel, helping to push them. After the correct number of repetitions, reverse direction and repeat counter-clockwise. The purpose of this exercise is to open the abdomen and relax the mid-region so as to enhance the flow of qi vertically through the body. The abdomen should be thought of as a kind of vessel. When we are tense parts of the vessel are pinched and this inhibits the movement of qi. Concentrate on opening the vessel. One beneficial side effect can be improvement in balance. Another is reduction of anxiety.

(Note: Numbers 4-6 which follow are variations on the “Dan Yu”; correct configuration must be maintained, if injury is to be avoided. One benefit of these exercises is purely physical, in that Dan Yu’s have the effect of opening the hips and helping the Ming-men/back to relax and open; also, they build quad-strength.)

4. Tong Len Duo Mai (“Central Meridian”)

This is the first Microcosmic Orbit and focuses on the “Fire Path”, bringing the Qi up the back and down the front.

From the previous exercise, take the fireball and go down the front to the *Hui-yin* point (perineum); as you do so, you bend slightly, flexing the knees, palms open to the front, held out and down off knees approximately 45 degrees. Now, rising up and raising hands, pull the Qi up the back over top of head to point between and slightly above the eyebrows. Holding hands up palm-out, open your eyes and “look at the moon”. Close eyes and pass Qi down the front, sinking hands fingers-down and held back to back; once the Qi has passed through your tongue, drop it and exhale as you once again sink the body and sink the Qi to the *Hui-yin* opening the arms/palms out as at the beginning. The eyes are open only at the point when you “look at the moon”. Note: It is important, in this kind of exercise, never to hold the breath; therefore, one may wish to take an extra breath while “looking at the moon”, depending upon individual oxygen requirements.

5. Tong Ying Yang Vie (“Side of Body”)

This is the 2nd. Microcosmic Orbit, which activates both the inner (*Ying Qiao*) and outer (*Yang Qiao*) vessels, up and down the sides of the body.

From the previous exercise, take the fireball down the front to the *Hui Yin*, but split it and send each fireball down the inside of the thigh to the spot about four inches above the ankle-bone. From here, circle the Qi to the outside of the leg and bring up the sides of legs, torso, outside of shoulders, backs of arms etc. to palms, then press out and once again “look at the moon”. From here, lower palms palm down the front of body, passing Qi through tongue/palate as above. At breast-level the palms turn toward your body; as you move down, track the

heat of the palms/fireballs as it/they pass down front, insides of thighs, etc. The Qi is unified down the front of the body, but then splits to go down thighs and up sides, joining into one again when you "look at the moon". The sinking of the body is lower than in the previous exercise and the hands are raised palms up, but more to the sides.

6. Tong Yang Qiao (3rd. Microcosmic Orbit / Yang Qiao)

The version of the movement we practice passes the Qi, not down the Yang Qiao, but down the Governor Vessel (back). It has a cooling effect and works nicely as the final orbit of the set. The set can therefore be used as a sequence of three different orbits, this being the last one of the cycle.

Start by sinking and touching the knees with your elbows. Raise the Qi up the front, palms up, visualizing it as water, rather than as fire. Pour it down the back of your head. The palms then sink around the shoulders and under the armpits ("tea-cups") as you once again lower the body and again touch the elbows to the knees.

7. Tong Ying Qiao (Put Qi into Eyes / Ying Qiao)

Just as the previous exercise worked the external surface of the limbs, this works the insider surface.

After the previous exercise, in the lowered position take the two Qi fireballs between the thumb and first 2 fingers of both hands. Rising with palms-up, press the fireballs into the inside corners of the eyes (which are open at this point) and then, with the fireballs, outline the corners of the mouth, and then draw them in two close parallel lines down the front of the body, inside of thighs to ankles, then repeat.

8. Taiji Lian Yi (Yin Yang Palms)

Send the Qi down into the RIGHT heel, around the right little toe, the right big toe, then shoot it over to the LEFT heel and along the outside of the foot to the left little toe, the right big toe, then back to the RIGHT heel. Do this without hand movements for a while to establish the feeling of the flow, then add the hands. Remember, the outside hand turns palm-UP while the inside hand is turning palm-DOWN. At the end/side of the movement, there is an internal sinking of the Qi when it goes to the heel.

9. Huan Long Ru Dong ("Yellow Dragon Goes to Hole")

Bring the Qi up to the C-7 bone and then let it cascade in a clockwise spiral down to the tailbone. The hands hang relaxed in front, one under the other, and trace the pattern – clockwise down and counterclockwise up, reversing at top and bottom with a Yin-Yang pattern reversal. (*A beginner version of the movement features a large circle on top, medium in middle and small at bottom of the spine, then back up; this three-zone activation can then be lengthened into the spiral.)

10. Ding Bu Yong She ("Steady Step Hands Like Clouds")

Use the right hand to bring the fireball up from the left leg, across the body to the right shoulder, then push it down the right leg and repeat to the opposite side. Keep the arms loosely rounded in front of the body, not held tight and close. The energy travels in a figure-8 between the feet and also in a figure-8 from the loaded foot to the opposite hand, down into the ground and then back across.

11. Dao Bai Yuan Bi (“Monkey Arm”)

One arm is extended in front with palm down. Extend other arm behind, palm-up and breathing force from the universe into that palm. Then turn it over and to the front, simultaneously turning the extended arm palm up. Pour the Qi into the underside of that arm at the elbow joint and exhaling/pushing it all the way out the fingers. Sink into the knees while doing so, straightening/standing taller when you then extend the alternate arm behind to repeat on the opposite side.

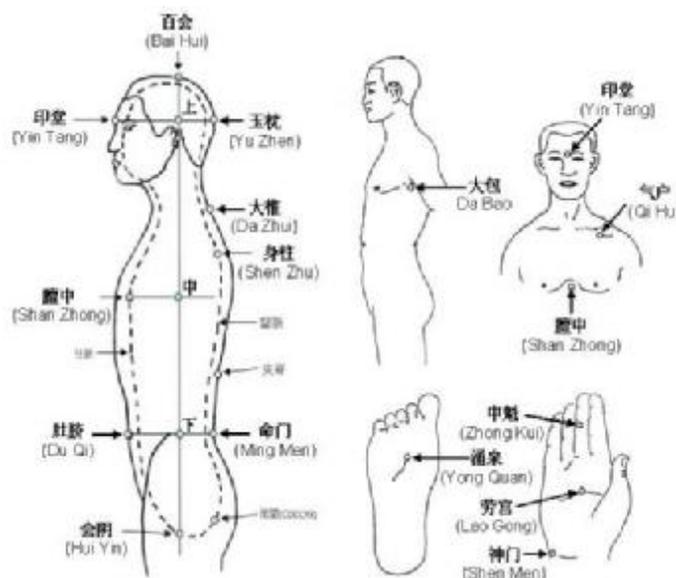
12. Qi Oui Dan Tien (Gather Qi into Dan-tien and Rest)

There are a number of additional parts of this form that we can add. These have been added and deleted by Dr. Shen from year to year. The only other movement we typically add is “Young Lion Rolls the Ball”. This is meant to loosen and relax all of the joints after standing in the qigong posture for as much as a half hour. Taking an imaginary ball of qi between the palms imagine you are rolling it in any direction you wish – up, down, sideways. As you do this work the joints, bend up, down and sideways. Place the ball in the lower dantien when you are finished.

Conclusion: Hands come up from the Dan-tien, a little crossed at the wrist, palms facing in until they reach the shoulder/throat area. Then turn the palms out and separate the arms, letting them rise slightly. Bring the Qi back down into the chest area in a rounded ball the size of a beach-ball. Slowly shrink the beach-ball into a fireball that will lodge in the middle Dan-tien.

Washing Face / Conclusion

Be sure to “wash your face” when finished, because the relaxation is very profound from this exercise and to resume “normal” activity without waking yourself up a little can undermine the effects of the relaxation you have achieved. Following this with the tai chi self massage routine leaves you feeling quite cleansed, relaxed, and ready for tai chi!



Microcosmic orbit