



PRINCIPLES OF QIGONG PRACTICE

After learning the forms and purpose of your qigong, practice with precision and ease; let go into intuitive embodiment that allows the form to be the doorway to the practice of principle. Practice the forms as embodied mindfulness.

1. **Relaxed Intention (guide and inform) directs movement:** Undertake the actions with ease rather than forcefulness, letting your intention rather than will-power guide your movements. “Presence Awareness” *through* action brings about ease and creates calm.

2. **Being Present:** This is the meditative practice of relaxing awareness in the “now” – referred to here as “Essential Mindfulness”. Breath is engaged to enhance and stabilize mindful awareness. Unify your mind and body with the breath. This opens you to *presence awareness*—to the direct experience of feeling the interconnectedness of spirit, mind, and body through natural expansive focused attention.

3. **Practice Underdoing:** Practicing within approximately 70% of your capacity and range of motion enables you to be mindfully present, and makes it possible to stay connected with feeling and flow, release excess tension, and optimize the effect of practice. Learn the value of underdoing!

4. **Cultivate Dynamic Relaxation:** Cultivate dynamic relaxation—attention without tension or laxity, or unnecessary effort. This is the foundation for skillful and wise effort. Dynamic relaxation has the quality of continuity and wakeful presence known in Aikido as “Zanshin”. It is the stability that arises from effortless conscious relaxation.

5. **Allow the *feeling of openness*:** *lengthening, deepening and expanding* from within. Cultivate relaxed, non-dual “field” awareness. Cultivate the *feeling* of openness and expansion by connecting awareness to direct experience. Use the qigong forms as a gateway to connecting to the innate intelligence of your organism (microcosm) and universal intelligence – the Tao (macrocosm).

Learn how to let go and trust this knowing/being.

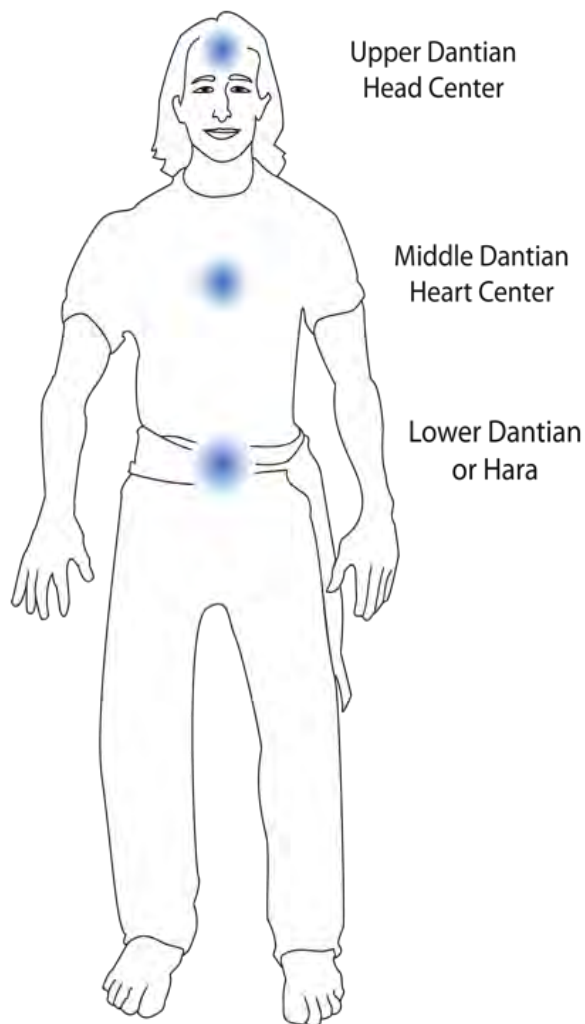
6. **Develop the *feeling of poise*:** The qualities of grounded and centered dignified presence arise when you practice this qigong as embodied mindfulness. Consciously embodying inner balance and equanimity builds strength and tone of the brain and nervous system. Developing stability of the structural and energetic systems of the organism supports the feeling of poise and well-being.

7. **Listen to the *qi*** – the life force – and develop trust in this natural intelligence. Authentic transformation evolves from balanced and skillful endeavor that harmonizes intention, developing skill and intuitive awareness. Nourish your being through practice. This is the confluence of the streams of qigong and meditation – embodiment and presence. This is QigongDharma.



The Elements of Alignment

- More than just postural corrections, the elements of alignment offer optimal processes, refinements and guidance for deriving the most benefit from movement and stillness meditation.
- Study and contemplate the elements of alignment in your moving qigong procedures, in sitting meditation gestures, in lying down meditation forms and in mindfulness walking meditation methods.
- Alignment builds body, mind and spirit coherence; a primary regulator of nervous system and biophysical responses. Alignment also increases clarity of mind, innate compassion, and direct certainty of our connection with the Universe.



Key Points of Postural and Energetic Alignment relating to all forms of Standing, Seated or Lying-down meditation

1. Feet parallel, in line with hips – feeling: *Stable*
2. Knees unlocked, allowing flow through the legs – feeling: *Clear*
3. Hips relaxed, tailbone moving downward – feeling: *Settled*
4. Spine is naturally vertically aligned – feeling: *Open Length*
5. Whole body peaceful, but poised – feeling: *Balance*
6. Standing with minimum effort – feeling: *Equanimity*
7. All the joints are open and smooth – feeling: *Spacious*
8. Body weight flows naturally through open hips, legs and feet
9. Energy along centerline simultaneously grounds and lifts
10. Natural vertical alignment of head, heart and *hara*
11. Head lifts effortlessly by slightly dropping chin and softening the neck; crown opens energetically
12. Natural abdominal breathing – calming mind and emotions
13. Eyes 'soft' and peaceful – peripheral vision active
14. Relax jaw as tongue softens and lightly rests on upper palette
15. Qualities of breath: soft, slow, smooth, deep, even and natural
16. Mind is awake, aware, calm, reflective and present
17. Inner Smile

