



TAI CHI EXERCISES



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Master Jenny Wu, retired 2019.

Ba Duan Jin (八段锦)

The Baduanjin (The Eight Pieces of Brocade) as a whole is broken down into eight separate exercises, each focusing on a different physical area and qi meridian. The Baduanjin traditionally contains both a standing and seated set of eight postures each. In the modern era, the standing version is by far the most widely practiced. The particular order in which the eight pieces are executed sometimes varies, with the following order being the most common.

Ba Duan Jin (The Eight Pieces of Brocade) was developed during the twelfth century by the famous general Yueh Fei as a way to strengthen the body, to balance the vital functions and to drive stagnant energy and toxins from the system. Baduanjin is a very popular qigong set, ideal for beginners. Although simple, these exercises have a lot to offer. By involving your mind in your qigong practice you will get their full benefits. But, even by practicing the set as simple physical exercises, the Baduanjin routine will loosen your muscles, improve your posture, enhance your blood circulation, and relax you. Each exercise should be repeated 12 times. You may start off with 6 times each and add more repetitions. The ancient texts recommend 24 to 36 repetitions each.

1. Two Hands Hold up the Heavens (Shuang Shou Tuo Tian)

This move is said to stimulate the "Triple Warmer" meridian (Sanjiao). It consists of an upward movement of the hands, which are loosely joined and travel up the center of the body.

Stand in the Horse Stance, empty the lungs and relax. Inhale and raise the hands palms up slowly. When the palms reach heart level turn them around to face upwards and continue raising them. Palms are raised to heaven upon completion of inhalation. Stretch all the way up lifting the heels off the ground. Exhale smoothly while bringing back the arms slowly down to the sides and lower both heels to return to a standing position with hands relaxed at the sides.

Benefits: Balances energy in all the internal organs (The Triple Burner refers to the Heart, Lungs and Stomach).

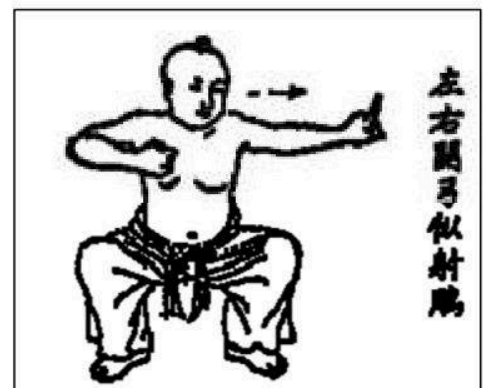


2. Drawing the Bow to Shoot the Hawk (or Vulture)

While in a lower horse stance, the practitioner imitates the action of drawing a bow to either side. It is said to exercise the waist area, focusing on the kidneys and spleen.

Stand in a lower Horse Stance. Relax your hands and lift them up to the chest area. As you breathe in, push out with one hand while pulling back the other as though shooting with a bow and arrow. Repeat the procedure for both sides. Breathe in when pulling back breathe out when returning to the center.

Benefits: Realigns the back muscles and the spine and strengthens the muscles of the arms abdomen, back and legs. Promotes overall good health and vitality.



3. Separate Heaven and Earth

This resembles a version of the first piece with the hands pressing in opposite directions, one up and one down. A smooth motion in which the hands switch positions is the main action, and it is said to especially stimulate the stomach.

Stand in the Horse. Bring the hands below the navel with palms facing up the sky. Inhale while raising both hands together up to heart level. When the hands reach the heart and the breath is full, turn one palm out and around 360 degrees so that it faces the sky and continue raising it, and turn the other palm in and around 180 degrees so that it faces the ground and bring it down. Exhale while you turn both palms around and slowly bring them back to heart level. Breath and reverse sides.

Benefits: Invigorates the torso with energy from the heavens and from the earth. Opens the chest for deeper breathing.



4. Wise Owl Gazes Backwards or Look Back

This is a stretch of the neck to the left and the right in an alternating fashion.

Stand upright, feet together and look to the far distance. Breath in. Turn the head to one side following with eyes to look behind you. Keep the trunk of the body straight. Repeat this head turning routine for both sides. Breathe out when turning, breathe in when returning.

Benefits: Exercises the neck and eyes muscles, releases tension. Nourishes the internal organs with vital energy and freshly oxygenated blood.



5. Sway the Head and Shake the Tail

This is said to regulate the function of the heart and lungs. Its primary aim is to remove excess heat (or fire) (xin huo) from the heart. Xin huo is also associated with heart fire in traditional Chinese medicine. In performing this piece, the practitioner squats in a low horse stance, places the hands on thighs with the elbows facing out and twists to glance backwards on each side.

Stand in a low Horse Stance. Place your hands on top of your knees. Shift your weight to your left leg and press down heavily with your ha. Turn your head to the left side and look backward while extending your right leg. Repeat the same thing on the other side.

Benefits: Expels Fire Energy from the system by drawing it out through the lungs and energy gates.



6. Two Hands Hold the Feet to Strengthen the Kidneys and Waist

This involves a stretch upwards followed by a forward bend and a holding of the toes.

Stand in the Horse. Exhale slowly through the mouth, lean forward and bend down. Inhale and rise slowly, raising your arms upward over your head, with the palms facing each other. Exhale smoothly, relax the shoulders while bringing the arms down the sides with the palms down and turned outward. Inhale in the Horse Stance.

Benefits: Stretches and tones the entire spinal column. Promotes the circulation of freshly oxygenated blood to the brain. Balances energy flow between the front and back and the upper and lower parts of the body.



7. Clench the Fists and Glare Fiercely (or Angrily)

This resembles the second piece, and is largely a punching movement either to the sides or forward while in horse stance. This, which is the most external of the pieces, is aimed at increasing general vitality and muscular strength.

Stand in a lower Horse Stance. Hold your fists beside your waist. Extend one arm to the side in a twisting punch motion. Glare fiercely at an imaginary opponent. Imagine that energy is projected from the fist. your other hand stay beside your waist in a tight fist. Bring the extended arm back, repeat on the other side. Exhale as you punch, inhale as the arm moves back.

Benefits: Angry and tense feelings are dispelled. Additional oxygen is supplied to the blood.



8. Bouncing on the Toes

This is a push upward from the toes with a small rocking motion on landing. The gentle shaking vibrations of this piece is said to "smooth out" the qi after practice of the preceding seven pieces.

Stand in the Horse and look straight in the distance. Let your arms hang loosely at your sides. Make sure your shoulders are relaxed, and empty your mind of all thoughts. Lift the heels off the ground as you inhale. Remain stable using the toes for balance. Lower the heels back to the ground as you exhale. Repeat the procedure breathing in when lifting the heels and breathing out when lowering them.

Benefits: Generates waves of energy, improves blood flow to the internal organs, which helps detoxify them. Enhances the balance and coordination. Draws terrestrial energy up from the earth through the Bubbling Spring on the soles.



Muscle and Tendon Changing Classic

(易筋经 Yi Jin Jing)

The basic purpose of Yijinjing is to turn flaccid and frail sinews and tendons into strong and sturdy ones. The movements of Yijinjing are simultaneously vigorous and gentle. Their performance calls for a unity of will and strength, i.e. using one's will to direct the exertion of muscular strength. It is coordinated with breathing. Better muscles and tendons means better health and shape, more resistance, flexibility, endurance, and is obtained as follows:

- Posture influences the static and nervous structure of the body
- Stretching of muscles and sinews affects organs, joints, meridians and Qi
- Torsion affects metabolism and Jing production
- Breathing produces more and better refined Qi
- Active working builds balance and strength to body and mind (brain, nervous system and spirit)

Power and endurance are of paramount importance if we look at becoming qualified in whatever practice we choose, be it martial arts, or simply better health and wisdom. Already another well-known Qigong system, Baduanjin, in its more radical and strong forms was used in the past in martial arts schools as preparation of the physical body, making it strong and flexible to train in the fighting arts. Baduanjin still remains the first, entry-level routine to learn at Shaolin training schools in Song Mountains.

Yijinjing is unique in that the movements are energetic and intense, but at the same time it is also supple and flexible. Yijinjing unifies intention (yi) with strength (li), consciousness (yin) with muscular force (yang). The mind should be free from scattered thoughts and the breathing is harmonious.

Some classic recurring points of Yijinjing can be described as follows:

- Most of the movements use open palms, fists are used only for stretching the tendons.
- The name of exercises changes, but often the basic idea of movement remains the same.
- Movements are done standing, sometimes bending forward, but never lying or sitting.
- Eyes are always open, never closed.
- Movements are slow but full and tensed, face and body shows relaxed attitude.
- The entire upper body section (especially shoulders) is active and moved
- Dynamic tension rules the moves.
- All parts of the body work together.
- The form can be adapted according to the health condition of the practitioner.

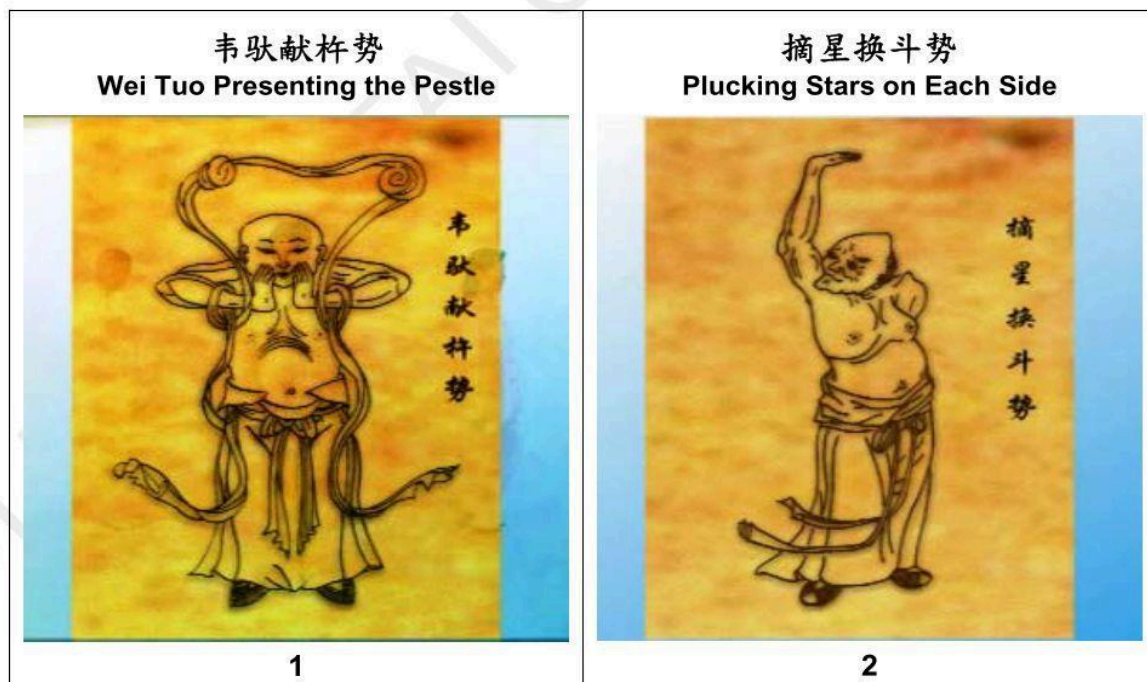
According to traditional wisdom:

- The first year of training gives back physical and mental vitality
- The second year enhances blood circulation and nurtures meridians
- The third year allows flexibility to muscles and nurtures the organs
- The forth year meridians are better and viscera are nurtured
- The fifth year the marrow is washed and the brain is nurtured

The Five rules of Yijinjing are:

- Quietness: Like lake water reflecting the moon, a calm spirit allows energy to move inside the body
- Slowness: For deep muscle flex; blood and energy flow requires slow movements
- Extension: Each movement must be brought to the maximum extension
- Pause: Efficacy comes through waiting and keeping tension for a longer time
- Flexibility: full extension of limbs and trunk to promote blood and energy circulation, to achieve flexibility.

易筋经 Yi Jin Jing Names of Moves



倒拽九牛尾势
Pulling Nine Cows by their Tails



3

出爪亮翅势
Showing Talons and Spreading Wings



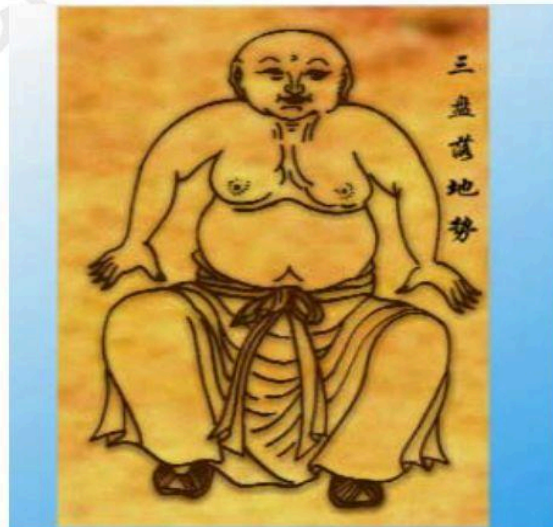
4

九鬼拔马刀势
Nine Ghosts Drawing Sabers



5

三盘落地势
Sinking the Three Bodily Zones



6

青龙探爪势
Green Dragon Displaying Its Claws



7

卧虎扑食势
Tiger Springing On Its Prey



8

打躬势
Bowing Down in Salutation



9

掉尾式
Swinging the Tail



10

Five Animals Qi Gong

(五禽戏 Wu Qin Xi)

The "Five Animals" (五禽戲, Wu Qin Xi) are a set of qigong exercises developed during the Han dynasty (202 BC - 220 AD). There are claims that this Qi Gong set is authored by "Huatuo", one of the most famous and highly respected Chinese physician and surgeon in Chinese history.

The five animals in the exercises are the tiger, deer, bear, monkey and bird. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) theory of the Five Elements, each animal has two exercises corresponding to the yin and yang internal organs (Zang/Fu). Regular practise of this Qi Gong is said to improve functioning of the Liver/Gall Bladder (Wood Element - tiger), Kidneys/Bladder (Water Element - deer), Spleen/Stomach (Earth Element - bear), Heart/Small Intestine (Fire Element - monkey) and Lung/Large Intestine (Metal Element - bird) respectively.

Tiger

虎举 *Tiger raising paw*

- Concentrate strength in the fingers as they are spread.
- When raising palms, expand chest and contract abdomen.
- When lowering palms, contract chest and relax abdomen.
- Eyes following movement of the hands.
- Inhale as palms are raised, exhale as palms are lowered.
- Promotes circulation of Qi in the triple warmer.
- Reinforces grip power and drives blood circulation to the extreme joints of the arms.

虎扑 *Tiger seizing prey*

- Extend arms forward as far as possible keeping spine straight and fully extended.
- Movements are continuous and coordinated from legs to body to arms.
- When seizing the prey on empty stance, adjust depth and speed according to an individual's physical condition.
- Strength applied is reinforced by Qi from the Dantian all the way to the finger tips.
- Improves flexibility and suppleness of the spine.
- Strengthens lumbar muscles, prevent and treat common problems of the waist.



Deer

鹿抵 *Deer colliding*

- When the waist is rotated and bent laterally, the concave side should be tight while the convex side should be fully stretched.
- Rear heel must be firmly planted on the ground to increase the rotating range of the hip and waist.
- Inhale when raising hands, exhale when rotating body.
- Increases muscular strength in the waist and nourishes the kidneys.
- Can prevent and treat disturbances in the vertebrae.

鹿奔 *Deer running*

- When shifting weight backwards, the arms are extended forward, from the head down the back, abdomen and legs should form a vertical bow.
- Inhale when stepping forward, exhale when forming the bow.
- Prevents and treats frozen shoulder and corrects deformity of the spinal column.
- Promotes circulation of Qi through the Dumai ¹ meridian.



Bear

熊运 *Bear rotating waist*

- Motion of the waist and abdomen is driven from an internal force.
- Inhale when lifting upward and exhale when leaning forward and downward.
- Can prevent and treat lumber muscular strains or soft tissue injury of the back.
- Improves functions of the stomach and spleen.
- Has a massaging effect on the digestive system to prevent or treat indigestion, poor appetite, abdominal distension and constipation.

熊晃 *Bear swaying*

- The leg is lifted by contracting the lateral lumber muscles then flexing the knee.
- Drop the leg heavily on the ground to produce a slight tremor that transmits to the hip joint.
- Can adjust functions of the liver and spleen.
- Strengthens muscles around hips and lower limbs, improves balance.



¹ Dumai meridian starts from the anus, runs up along the back to the top of the head and down the centre of the face, stopping at the gum on the upper teeth.

Monkey

猿提 *Monkey raising paws*

- Lift the shoulders, contract the abdomen, pull the pelvic bottom up and then lift the heels.
- Relax the shoulders, abdomen, pelvic bottom and then drop the heels.
- Inhale when lifting the hands, exhale when pressing the hands down.

猿摘 *Monkey plucking fruit*

- Eyes follow the arms and the fruit.
- Contract the body in empty stance and fully extend when reaching for the fruit.
- Improves blood circulation to the brain.
- Integrating the complicated movements with mental focus is useful for preventing and treating nervousness and mental depression.



Bird

鸟伸 *Bird stretching*

- Contract the neck, shoulders and hip region when raising the hands and relax when lowering the hands.
- Protrude the body forward to assume a bow shape when the arms are extended backward.
- Improves lung capacity and can alleviate symptoms of chronic bronchitis and pulmonary emphysema.
- Stimulates the Dumai and Renmai² meridians.

鸟飞 *Bird flying*

- Expand the chest when the arms are stretched outwards, contract the chest when the arms are moving downwards.
- Inhale when raising the hands, exhale when lowering the hands.
- Promotes respiration and expansion of the chest.
- Has a massaging effect on the heart and lungs, improving oxygenation of blood.
- Stimulates the Lung³ meridian.
- Improves balance.



² Renmai meridian starts from the perineum, runs up the front of the body and stops at the center of the mentolabial groove directly below the lip.

³ Lung meridian starts at the inner shoulder, extends along medial surface of the upper arms and stopping at the tip of the thumb.

Tai Chi 8 Form (八式太极拳)

1. Commencing form
2. Whirl arm (right & left, two time each side)
3. Brush knee and twist step (left and right)
4. Part the wild horse's mane (left and right)
5. Wave hands like clouds (two time each side)
6. Golden rooster stands on one leg (left and right)
7. Heel kicks (right and left)
8. Grasp sparrow's tail (right and left)
9. Cross hands
10. Closing form

Tai Chi 24 Form (二十四式太极拳)

1. Commence form
2. Parting wild horse's mane (3 times)
3. White crane spreads its wings
4. Brush knee and push hand (3 times)
5. Play the Pipa
6. Repulse the monkey (4 times)
7. Grasp the sparrow's tail (left and right)
8. Single whip
9. Wave hands like clouds(3 times)
10. Single whip
11. High pat on horse
12. Right heel kick
13. Strike opponent's ears with fists
14. Turn around, left heel kick
15. Snake creeps down
16. Golden rooster standing on left leg
17. Snake creeps down
18. Golden rooster standing on right leg
19. Fair lady works the shuttles (right and left)
20. Needles at sea bottom
21. Fan through back
22. Turn around, block, parry and punch
23. Withdraw and push
24. Cross hands and close form



End