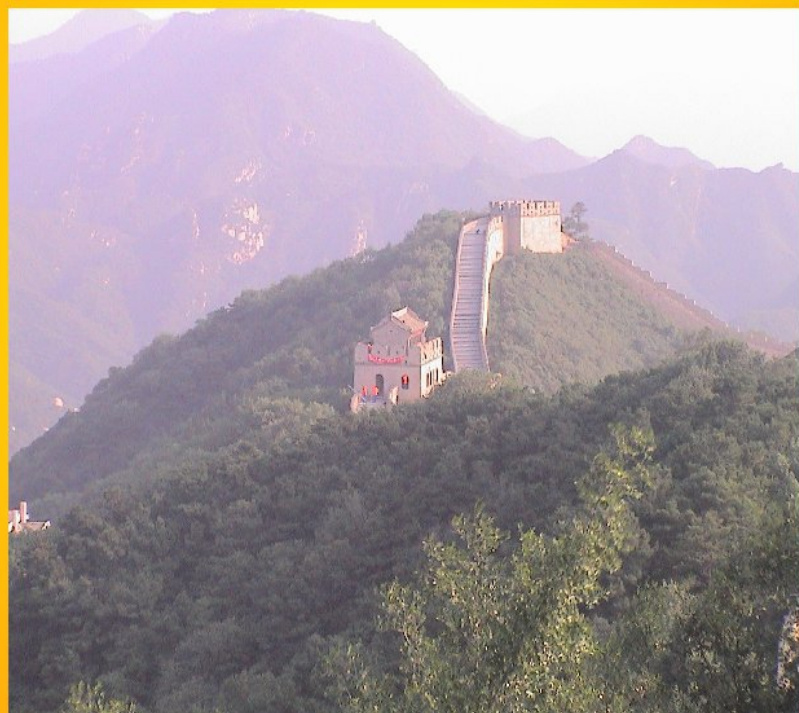


Introduction to Qigong

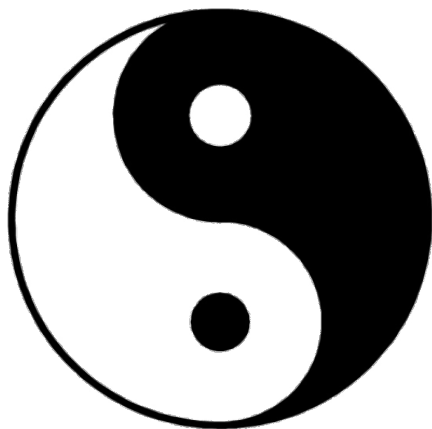
A Path to Wellness



Thomas Calabris

INTRODUCTION TO QIGONG

A PATH TO WELLNESS



THOMAS CALABRIS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Preface](#)

[Introduction](#)

[What is Qigong?](#)

[Relaxation Is Important](#)

[Qigong Helps Balance Our Lives](#)

[Qigong Improves Qi Flow](#)

[Get Qi, Feel Qi, Use Qi](#)

[Qigong Practice](#)

[References](#)

[About The Author](#)

[Home Study](#)

PREFACE

"Wisdom begins with wonder."

- Socrates

I thank you for your interest in learning about Qigong. I have studied and practiced various forms of Qigong for almost thirty years. Qigong has made a huge difference in my life and I know it can make a big difference in your life. Qigong is a path to wellness. Qigong can help bring balance and harmony to your life. It can increase your energy, reduce the effects of stress and improve your overall health. I hope you will take the time to let Qigong into your life. If you have any questions, please check out our website at www.InnerVitalityQigong.com or contact us directly at +1-440-678-8CHI. I hope you enjoy this brief introduction to Qigong and find it informative. If you would like to learn more about Qigong, please visit our website for information about our classes and our Qigong home study kits. If you can change your mind, then you can change your life.

INTRODUCTION

"If you want to be healthy and live to 100, do Qigong."

- Dr. Mehmet Oz M.D.

People are so busy and overwhelmed with their kids, jobs, cell phones, internet, TV, video games, etc. that they totally neglect their health. Then one day they do not feel well and they do not understand why. People are overwhelmed by the stress in their lives. People have so much on their minds, that they cannot shut it down when it comes time to sleep. The good news is that practicing Qigong (Chi Kung), pronounced "*chee gong*", is a great way to reduce the effects of stress and improve one's health. An article, published on July 2, 2008 by www.washingtonpost.com, reported that methods of relaxation, such as meditation, prayer and yoga, have an effect on reversing genes that are turned on or off by stress. [1]

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines stress as "a: a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily or mental tension and may be a factor in disease causation. b: a state of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium." [2]

Keep in mind that some levels of stress are necessary for basic life. However, when stress is chronic and unbalanced, it can lead to hypertension, weaken the immune system, digestive function and other systems of the body, all of which may lead to a disease state. In the following chapters, we will briefly explore what Qigong is and how it can help to bring balance, improved health and vitality back to your life. Qigong can change your life and all that is needed is an open mind and little bit of effort.

WHAT IS QIGONG?

"The Doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will involve the patient in the proper use of food, fresh air, and exercise."

- Thomas Edison

Qigong is a system of exercises, meditations and breathing exercises that are practiced for reducing one's stress, improving one's health and increasing one's longevity. It is a three thousand year old technology from China that has its roots in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Qigong and other TCM branches were originally documented in "Huangdi Neijing" (Yellow Emperor's Inner Cannon) around 2000 years ago [3]. However, scholars speculate that the theories of Qigong are about 5000 years old or older and the teachings were handed down verbally from teacher to student for thousands of years prior to the Neijing. Some scholars and Qigong Masters regard Qigong as the Grandfather to Chinese Medicine.

The "Qi" part of Qigong refers to the universal energy or life force that is present in all living organisms. According to TCM, disease occurs in the human body when Qi flow is disturbed (excess, deficient or blocked). The "Gong" part of Qigong refers to level or ability [4]. Thus, Qigong refers one's

ability to enhance and utilize Qi. The practice of Qigong will help to increase and smooth out the flow of Qi in the body, thus, restoring balance and improving one's health.

RELAXATION IS IMPORTANT

***"Tension is who you think you should be.
Relaxation is who you are."***

- Chinese Proverb

Relaxation is one of the most important aspects of Qigong. Relaxation of both mind and body are important. The focus of Qigong is to cultivate the practitioner's mind power of concentration, thus improving their ability to relax. Thus, practicing Qigong allows one to relax, thereby, activating the body's own innate ability to heal. Daily practice of Qigong exercises and meditations also helps the practitioner to learn to control their ability to focus their mind and reduce the mental chatter.

One technique that can be used to relax is a simple breathing exercise. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Breathe deeply in to the abdomen. As you inhale deeply, your abdomen expands. As you exhale, your abdomen contracts (not forcefully). Try this a few times. This is called abdominal breathing. Now begin to count your breath cycles: inhale-exhale 1, inhale-exhale 2, inhale-exhale 3, ..., etc. Repeat this for five minutes or longer. Abdominal breathing not only relaxes your mind and body, but it also massages your internal organs.

QIGONG HELPS BALANCE OUR LIVES

***"Tension is who you think you should be.
Relaxation is who you are."***

- Chinese Proverb

Qigong also teaches one to balance their life through the science of Yin and Yang. Yin is the soft and feminine aspect and yang is the strong and masculine aspect. Our lives get out of balance when either yin or yang dominate. For example, we become too yang when our lives are so busy (yang) that we do not take enough time to rest (yin). Thus, we become too yang. Likewise, if we stay in bed all day, we would become too yin. Being out of balance with our actions and activities causes our bodies and minds to be out of balance. Overtime, this will cause our Qi flow to become out of balance. This means that the Qi flow may become reduced in some areas of the body and/or it may become excessive in other areas of the body. If we are too exhausted too long, Qi can become weak or depleted. The practice of Qigong will bring balance to our lives.

QIGONG IMPROVES QI FLOW

"The mind leads the Qi, the Qi follows the mind."

- Qigong Grandmaster Tianyou Hao

There are many forms (or exercises) of Qigong. There are breathing forms (yin), movement forms (yang) and quiet forms (yin), also referred to as meditations. Qigong is a holistic approach to maintaining one's health. The breathing forms help to detoxify and energize the body. Breathing forms also help to build up a Qi reserve that can be used during times of mental and physical stress. The movement forms help to detoxify and strengthen the body and open the energy channels (meridians), which improves Qi flow and blood flow. And the quiet forms relax both the body and the mind, thus reducing the effects of stress. Mental and physical stress causes one to use and waste Qi and also restricts Qi and blood flow to vital organs and energy centers of the body. In some quiet forms, the mind directs the flow of Qi through various channels or pathways in the body, thus affecting the Qi flow and improving one's health. A saying of my Qigong teacher, Grandmaster Tianyou Hao is "The mind leads the Qi, the Qi follows the mind". Thus, the mind focus during meditation is very important for directing Qi flow. Visualization and imagination are important components of Qigong that helps the practitioner to focus their mind and relax. By visualizing the healthy flow of energy, such as white light, moving through the body, the mind leads the Qi

increasing the amount of energy in the body and smoothing out or balancing its flow.

GET QI, FEEL QI, USE QI

"Energy and persistence conquers all things."

- Benjamin Franklin

According to my Qigong teacher, Grandmaster Tianyou Hao, the practice of Qigong allows one to “Get Qi, Feel Qi and Use Qi”. Let’s examine this closer to get a better understanding of the basic science of Qigong. The first part is “Get Qi”. The practice of Qigong improves one’s ability to absorb and collect or store Qi in the body. Qi comes into the body in many different ways. Qi comes into the body from breathing, eating and the practice of Qigong. In fact, we are all surrounded by Qi, sometimes called *Universal Qi*. Qigong breathing and other exercises help one to connect with the Universal Qi and bring it into the body. Absorbing and collecting extra Qi in the body may cause the practitioner to have different internal feelings and sensations such as warmth, cold, tingling, vibrations, twitching, etc. This is the “Feel Qi” part. Qigong teaches us how to use this Qi to improve our health. This is the “Use Qi” part. Qigong practice helps us to use this extra Qi to open energy channels in the body and smooth the flow of Qi in the body.

QIGONG PRACTICE

"Energy and persistence conquers all things."

- Benjamin Franklin

You do not have to spend hours and hours of practicing Qigong to get benefits. Qigong can be practiced in as little as five to ten minutes at a time, although more is usually better. It is best to spread it out so that you practice some in the morning, afternoon and at night. It is recommended that you practice with a class and/or a partner to keep you motivated. Having an open mind to try Qigong, being persistent and practicing daily, will yield benefits beyond measure.

If you have any questions about Qigong and/or you would like to take one of our Qigong classes, please visit our website at www.InnerVitalityQigong.com and/or contact us directly at +1-440-678-8CHI.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas Calabris has studied and practiced various forms of Qigong for almost thirty years. He has studied Qigong from Grandmaster Robert Krueger. Most recently, he studied Inner Dan Arts Qigong with Grandmaster Tianyou Hao, since January, 2001. He is also a Certified Instructor of Inner Dan Arts Qigong. He has also studied Qinway Qigong with Grandmaster Qinyin and Wisdom Healing Qigong with Master Mingtong Gu. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering and a Master of Science Degree in Biomedical Engineering. He has also studied anatomy and physiology and various areas of natural health. He brings a unique perspective of science, tradition and experience to his teachings.

Learn more about Qigong and Thomas Calabris at
<http://www.InnerVitalityQigong.com>

HOME STUDY

Beginning Qigong Meditation – Home Study Kit:

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