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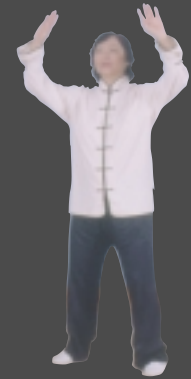


6 HEALING MOVEMENTS

# Qigong

FOR  
HEALTH  
STRENGTH  
LONGEVITY

Master Gin Foon Mark



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The authors and publisher of this material are not responsible in any manner whatsoever for any injury which may occur through reading or following the instructions in this manual.

The activities, physical or otherwise, described in this material may be too strenuous or dangerous for some people, and the reader(s) should consult a physician before engaging in them.

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## Foreword

I am honored to have the opportunity to comment on two genuine treasures in my life: Six Healing Sounds Qigong and Master Gin Foon Mark. I first began my studies with Master Mark in 1986, and have been privileged to train with him in Qigong, Gongfu, and Chinese brush painting, as well as enjoying the full range of his marvelous cooking skills. I have found in him that paradoxical combination of indisputable mastery and self-confidence in his own skills contrasted with genuine humility, a joy and openness in sharing his knowledge, and a heartwarming sense of humor.

Master Mark's lineage and accomplishments are too extensive to list here except in briefest outline. Born into a family with a rich martial arts heritage in pre-communist China, he studied the full range of martial, medical, meditation,

cooking, and fine arts with renowned martial artists in his own family and in several temples in China and Macao. He continued as teacher and student after his move to New York in 1947 where he concentrated on, and was eventually designated Master of, the Southern Praying Mantis Gongfu system. Master Mark learned Six Healing Sounds Qigong from its originator, "Old Man" Ma Laitong, on his subsequent travels back to Beijing.

Qigong is one of the more recently popularized Chinese mind/body arts. It joins the arts of Gongfu, Chinese Medicine/Acupuncture, Taiji, Feng Shui, etc. in commanding the interest and fascination of many Americans eager for activities and perspectives that go beyond the traditional Western paradigms. As is typical of our culture, when a

subject gains mass interest, the market is deluged with books, videos, and classes from myriad teachers looking to satisfy that new interest. While the majority of these new teachers undoubtedly offer valuable information to the public, it is exceedingly rare to have the opportunity to learn from a true master of the art.

I have found Six Healing Sounds Qigong to be one of the most beneficial and easily learned forms of the art. Besides notable enhancement of my energy level and general well-being, practice of this Qigong brought about the resolution of a nagging physical condition that had not previously responded to yoga, taiji, or massage therapy. I also believe that routine practice can have a significant balancing effect on female hormone levels. This has potential effects on PMS, menopause, and even fertility.

Master Mark's students all have stories of "Qigong" babies, conceived after the mothers or couples began Qigong training. While having a new baby may not be the goal of most readers of this book, I do wish everyone the birthing of new possibilities for physical and mental health through the practice of Six Healing Sounds Qigong.

Dr. James J. Rosamilia, Jr.  
Minnesota, November 2000

## About the Author

Gin Foon Mark was born in 1927 in Toison, China, a small village near Canton (Guandong). At the age of five he began his studies in the art of Gongfu, under the supervision of his uncle Kong Boon Fu, a 4th generation master of White Crane Gongfu. His grandfather, who was also a master, tutored him in their family style known as Mok Gar (Mark Style) Gongfu.

At the age of nine he was admitted to the Shaolin Temple at Chun San and studied with the monk Moot Ki Fut Sai. During his stay in the Shaolin Temple Master Mark received instruction in the Five Animal Style, White Crane, Eagle Claw, Leopard, and Tiger Gongfu styles.

While in the Shaolin Temple he learned many external and internal Qigong exercises, including Iron Shirt, Iron Palm and Cotton Palm. He also

learned acupuncture techniques for healing.

In 1947 the Chinese Association of New York asked Master Mark to come to the United States to teach Gongfu to the Chinese community. In 1956, at the age of 29, Gin Foon Mark began studying under Lum Wing Fai, the fourth generation master of the Southern Praying Mantis Gongfu system. For the next 13 years he studied with Master Lum. In 1969 Master Lum closed his hands (retired) and appointed Master Mark to take over as the fifth generation master of this system.

Master Mark opened Southern Praying Mantis Gongfu schools in New York and Philadelphia. In 1970 he moved to Minnesota and also opened a school in Minneapolis. Master Mark is now living in St. Paul, Minnesota and teaching daily classes.

In 1979 Master Mark went back to China. While he was there he studied Six Healing Sounds Qigong in Beijing under a teacher known as the “Old Master of China”. Master Mark gained much valuable knowledge from his study of many Qigong styles, so he decided to share his knowledge and experience by teaching the “Six Healing Sounds” to students in his Gongfu school.

Master Mark is also an accomplished Chinese ink-brush artist and calligrapher. He has been featured on the national television program “You Asked for It.” The State of Minnesota holds Master Mark in high esteem and has produced a videotape of him that is included in the collection of their State Cultural Treasure Program.

Master Mark is now writing a book on the Southern Praying Mantis Gongfu system.



Gin Foon Mark, Author



Paula Mark, Model

## How to Use this Book

This book was designed to give you an introduction to the art of Qigong and a step-by-step guide to follow when doing the Qigong exercises.

First read through the book and familiarize yourself with the concepts. Then re-read the book, underlining the important passages that interest you. When you feel you understand the concepts and are familiar with how to do the exercises, you may begin the exercises, keeping the book near at hand. Check the book often, especially when you are not sure that you are doing the exercises correctly.

Read this book carefully and follow the exercises exactly. Do not take shortcuts in your practice. If at all possible, take lessons from a qualified instructor who will demonstrate, instruct, and make suggestions and corrections when necessary. Some of the ideas inherent to Qigong are

best taught and explained by an instructor. Books are better used for background information and to supplement the instruction of a qualified teacher.

Qigong is an art you will use for the rest of your life. As you begin to learn the concepts, avoid becoming impatient while awaiting results. Sometimes beginners expect results overnight. Qigong takes time, practice, and patience. As time passes you will see the benefits of your Qigong practice. Success depends solely on you, and on your perseverance in doing the exercises daily. If you take the time to practice the Six Healing Sounds Qigong daily, you can experience results in as little as two weeks.

Keep an open mind as you read this book and above all else have fun and enjoy yourself.

## Editor's Note

Since its inception several thousand years ago, Qigong has been passed down from Master to Sifu to student, from man to man to man. Traditionally the masters and practitioners of the Chinese healing and martial arts were men. But during the twentieth century, when these arts were allowed to leave China, they became available to members of both sexes, in China and the world over, and more women began to practice and eventually teach. Note that the practitioner shown in the photos is a woman. YMAA assigned us to work together as a team so that we could strike the balance required to present the subject as universally as possible, balancing the yin and yang (female and male) considerations as best we can.

As a woman practicing Qigong for the last fifteen years,

I can attest to the fact that these practices can be as beneficial to women as they are to men. I must point out however that there are still many principles directed at the male anatomy and condition that are just now being addressed from the female perspective. In the section in Chapter 3 entitled "When Not to Practice" Master Mark's instructions regarding practice during menstruation are specific, but other female issues are being studied as they arise, and some have even yet to be considered. My advice to all women is to pay close attention to your bodies' responses to these, or any, exercises. In the case of pregnant women, you must consult your doctors before beginning Qigong, just as you would before undertaking any new exercise system.

YMAA provides us with the

tools to learn and improve. In everything that we do, each of us, male and female alike, bears the ultimate responsibility for listening to his or her own body and proceeding appropriately.

Lynn Teale  
Editor

## CHAPTER 2

# GENERAL GUIDELINES OF QIGONG

### BASIC GUIDELINES

No matter what deep breathing exercises you train in, you must master the art of regulating the mind, the breath, and the body.

Regulating the mind means that you allow your mind to relax into a state of tranquility, where you will, as much as possible, eliminate all thoughts that intrude as you do the exercises.

Regulating the breath means regulating the respiration and making it flow naturally, smoothly, slowly, and evenly.

Regulating the body means that all exercises are performed in the correct posture, requiring the entire body to be relaxed and natural.

The benefits you attain from Qigong primarily depend on

your ability to become relaxed and tranquil. Whether the posture is correct, or whether the regulation of the breath is proper, will also directly affect the mind's ability to attain a relaxed state.

Regulating the mind, breath, and body will enable you to increase your vital energy and spirit, bringing your body's latent energy into play. This allows you to achieve the aim of strengthening the physique and enhancing your resistance against diseases.

**In Summary:** You must not force the motions but should let them happen naturally. At first the movements will feel awkward and unnatural, but through constant practice the body and mind will become



figure 2-1



figure 2-2



figure 2-3

accustomed to the movements, eventually allowing them to feel relaxed and natural. You must use as little force as possible while doing the exercises. To remain calm and relaxed with the mind concentrated is the key to Qigong. Do not talk with others while you train.

## POSTURES

Although it is not necessary to practice all three of this chapter's Qigong postures during the same session, if you were to practice all three, the ideal sequence would begin with the sitting posture, followed by the standing posture, and finishing with the sleeping posture. But no matter what posture or postures you practice, the major criteria for your choice of posture should be your ability to remain completely relaxed, to be able to relax all your muscles, and to breathe in a relaxed and natural

way. Most often the posture that feels the best for you is the best posture for you to practice.

When the posture is correct, Qi will flow freely.

If you feel any discomfort in any part of your body during practice, correct your posture or bring the exercise to a close.

### sitting posture

The most important thing to remember is to keep the spinal cord straight and free of tension.

Sit up straight on the edge of the chair (figures 2-1 to 2-3). Do not incline to either side. Straighten the neck. Relax the waist, back, chest, and abdomen. Keep the head upright, as if it were suspended from above. The face should be slightly forward. Pull the chest in slightly and loosen the shoulders by dropping both elbows. Bend both knees. Place the feet shoulder width apart with both feet flat on the ground.

Remember:

It is important that the chair be the right height so that your knees are bent at a right angle and your thighs are parallel to the floor.

Do not lean back against the chair at any time.

Do not allow the lower back to curve backward in a slouch or forward to cause the abdomen to protrude.

### **standing posture**

The standing posture (figure 2-4) is the main posture in Qigong.

Standing, when done properly, is an important form of exercise. In order to stand in a relaxed manner, one must use the force of gravity. The force of gravity acts downward. If the body, from the top of the head to the bottom of the feet, is visualized as if it were dangling from a string like a puppet, it will automatically follow the force of gravity.

Guidelines for the Standing Posture:

**Head:** Hold the head as if it were suspended by a rope from the heavens. Keep the head from tilting from side to side and front to back.

**Eyes:** Relax the eyes and let the upper lids droop naturally.

**Tongue:** The tongue should be touching the upper palate during inhalation and dropped down during exhalation.

**Chin:** Tuck in the chin.

**Neck:** Relax the neck (circle the head a few times to loosen the neck muscles).

**Shoulders:** Relax the shoulder joints and let them droop naturally.

**Chest:** Relax the chest. The chest should bend slightly forward thereby relaxing the diaphragm.

**Elbows:** Relax the elbows and hold them slightly away from the body in order to form hollows in the armpits.

**Hands and fingertips:** Are relaxed and at ease.

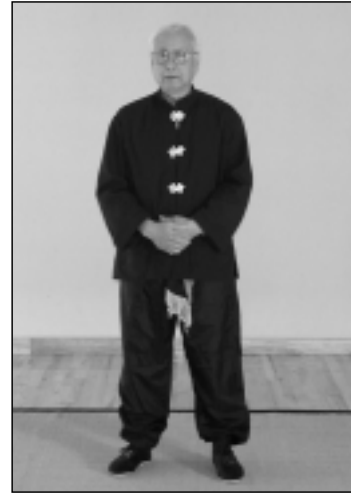


figure 2-4



figure 2-5

Waist: Relax the waist and hips. When the waist is relaxed the spine will stand upright. To relax the waist lift up both shoulders, then relax them downward giving a big sigh (exhalation) as they drop down.

Stomach: Relax the entire abdomen and then pull the upper abdomen in.

Knees: Relax the knees and bend them slightly.

Feet: Stand with the feet shoulder width apart and the weight evenly distributed. Point the toes in slightly.

Remember:

The main point to remember about the standing position is to keep the upper body relaxed and to concentrate on the lower Dan Tian (lower belly) or, if that is uncomfortable, the soles of your feet. All arm movements should be made using the minimum amount of effort.

If you become unable to relax in the standing position, it is better to bring the exercise to an end and assume another

posture in which you are able to relax completely.

The earth's energy, the life force, rises from the bottoms of your feet to the top of your head.

### **sleeping posture**

You should lie on your right side (not on the front or back) and keep the right leg slightly bent (figure 2-5). Rest the left leg on the right leg with the knee bent. The right hand supports the head in such a way that the hand encircles the ear and keeps it open. The upper arm can rest either on the side or folded so that the closed fist rests over the navel.

While falling asleep, concentrate the mind on the lower Dan Tian and let the breathing be as relaxed as possible.

Remember:

One third of your life is spent in sleep. Sleeping the right way is very important.

## HOW TO BREATHE

We can go without food and water for many days, yet if we stop breathing for even thirty seconds we quickly realize that we cannot do without air for even a short while. Through bad habits or ignorance, the majority of people breathe very shallow breaths, using only about one third of their lung capacity.

When breathing one usually does not expand and contract the lungs to their full capacity, only the upper sections dilate and shrink, while the lower sections remain virtually unmoving. Since a full supply of oxygen cannot be breathed in, nor all the carbon dioxide breathed out, the blood cannot be completely purified. This bad habit opens the door for any number of illnesses. This is the harmful effect of unnatural breathing.

Natural breathing, also called natural abdominal breathing, is comprised of an inhalation and exhalation that start from the

lower belly or lower Dan Tian. Regulating the breath under controlled conditions will enable you to drive your breath downward to the lower abdomen, activating the internal energy held there. This in turn activates the energy so that it will force up and rise as you inhale. When you exhale the diaphragm will relax, taking the pressure off the lower abdomen, and allowing the internal energy to sink back to it. When you inhale, as the air enters, the chest will already be relaxed and the belly will expand. During the inhalation, the huiyin (perineum, figure 2-6) is relaxed. When exhaling the belly should contract and push the diaphragm up to the lungs, forcing out all the impure air. During the exhalation, the huiyin is contracted, or pulled up, maximizing the expulsion of impure air. It is therefore necessary that the respiratory function that expands and contracts the lungs should

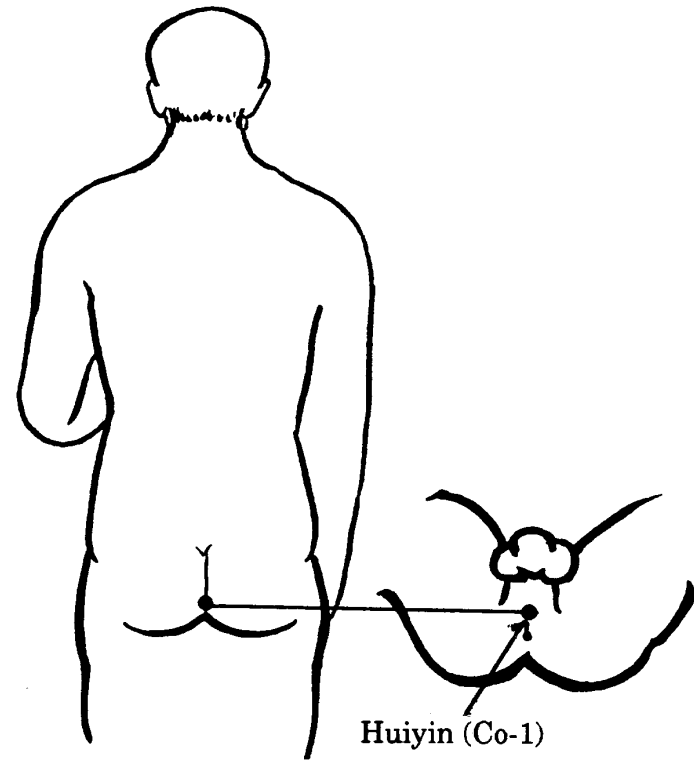


figure 2-6

harmonize with the movements of the belly and diaphragm, thus ensuring free circulation of the blood. This method of breathing should be followed at all times, whether walking, sitting, standing, or reclining. Regular practice of this method will re-train your normal breathing so that healthy, diaphragmatic breathing will become natural and automatic for you.

A short pause should occur naturally and effortlessly after each inhalation and exhalation. You should never force or strain yourself to stop between breaths. There is no need to try and reduce your respiration rate intentionally, just breathe in a relaxed and comfortable way, keeping your breath calm, steady, and silent.

Remember:

One must concentrate on the movements of the lower abdomen. In abdominal breathing the diaphragm is pushed down with every inhalation, causing the lower

abdomen to expand, and with every exhalation the diaphragm is pushed up causing the lower abdomen to contract.

Breathing must remain natural and unrestrained.

Moving the abdominal muscles in and out in an intentional and mechanical function will not do.

The upper abdomen should remain motionless, only the lower abdomen should be moving.

## POSITION OF THE TONGUE

Relax your tongue and find a position that is comfortable for you.

The spot on the center of the roof of the mouth where the tongue touches is called the Tien Tzie (heavenly pond) or Lung Chuan (Dragon spring)

The purpose of touching the incisor gum with the tongue is to stimulate the secretion of saliva.

Concentrating on raising and

lowering the tongue in time with your breathing will help to keep your mind from becoming distracted by thoughts, thus helping it relax. The up and down motion also stimulates the cerebrum, the part of the brain associated with the digestive organs. This stimulation causes an increase in the excretion of saliva. In Chinese meditation this is called Da Qiao, or building the bridge, because it connects Du Mai and Ren Mai, the two main energy channels in the body.

Remember:

Swallow the saliva. As you swallow the saliva let your mind follow it down to your lower abdomen.

## MENTAL ATTITUDE

In Qigong, what one needs to watch is one's own mind. If any emotion, motivation, or thought arises to disturb your peace of mind, do not struggle with it. Do not try to force such

thoughts out of your mind.

Simply release them and watch as they depart. Detach yourself; be a spectator to the thinking process, not a participant.

Concentration of thought is like riding an obstinate mule. Like the mule, a thought will continually take a direction entirely its own. Every time you the rider become aware that your mule, or thought, is straying, you must forcibly turn its head back toward the right path.

The mind affects the body, and the body affects the mind.

Qigong makes use of this body/mind relationship. An individual must attempt to concentrate his or her entire mind on the exercises. The mind has to be obedient if you are going to be successful. You have to control, train, and teach it to concentrate on each individual task, whatever it may be, giving it your wholehearted attention. Allow no other thoughts to enter your mind

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while you are occupied with the task at hand.

Quiet is basic to taking care of the body and it is the foundation of Qigong. When taking care of the body, health and longevity are most easily developed in a state of quiet. During Qigong, one becomes mentally quieter and thinking becomes slower, so the burden on the heart is decreased. If one can attain the state of forgetting one's own body, or remaining quiet without taking mental action, there will be a moment when suddenly all tension is gone, and the mind and body are loose and at ease.

Be patient with your practice and yourself. No one can become an efficient musician in three months or ten easy lessons. Yet most of us expect to win life's best prizes after practicing only a short time, or expending little effort. We become despondent when we fail to realize immediate, significantly recognizable, improvements.

Remember:

Without eagerness or a spirit to learn, learning will be difficult. The secret of learning is joyfulness, fun, and delight.

Patience and indifference to repeated failure are essential in obtaining final success in Qigong.

Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will take care of itself. Happiness and a calm state of mind are signs of spiritual progress.