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FOREWORD

By Dr. Yang,
Jwing-Ming



Dear Friends:

If we were born in heaven and had never left, how would we truly know that we had been in heaven? Only those who have been in hell and have experienced what hell is can know what heaven really is. Usually, we take things for granted; we lose appreciation for them in a short time. For example, we never appreciate the food we have even though we are indeed in a "food heaven." We won't wake up and appreciate this heaven until the day comes that we have a food shortage. It is for this reason that those who have grown up in heaven will never know that they are in heaven.

The knowledge of heaven and hell comes from comparison of the two. Without this comparison, people would never realize whether they were in heaven or in hell. Often we have seen examples of people who were born into rich families and never had to work hard, yet have become alcoholics or drug addicts. The reason is simply that they are in the "pain of heaven." They find that there is no meaning in their lives. In order to have meaning in life, we must work for what we have so that we can appreciate it. Only by going through hell, can we create heaven.

My student Ramel Rones once told me a story about a young Samurai who came to see a master. He said, "Respected Master, I have learned the theory of Zen and have already reached a high level. But I am very confused about one thing, which leads me here to seek your advice."

The master looked at this proud and highly dignified young man and asked, "May I ask what you really want to know?"

"Please tell me, what is heaven and what is hell?" the young man asked.

"How can you teach a young Samurai about heaven and hell without him ever having felt it?" the master wondered.

He looked at the young man and said, "How dare you ask about heaven and hell? You do not even know what life is!"

He criticized and berated the young man for a long time. At first, the young man listened patiently. But before long, he started losing his temper. Without thinking, he placed his hand on his sword and got ready to unsheathe it. He thought, "I don't care that you are a master! I will not take this insult. I will end your life."

When the master saw this, he pointed his finger to the young man and said, "Now, you are in hell!"

Immediately, the young man realized that he had lost his temper and indeed was living in hell. He changed his attitude, bowed to the master and apologized.

The master pointed his finger again and said, "Now, you are in heaven!"

Friends, from this we can see that we create our own heaven and hell. It is all in our attitudes. If we can appreciate all that we have, surely we are in heaven.

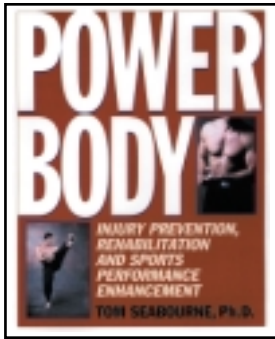
The YMAA Newsletter Wants to Hear from You!

As the number of YMAA schools throughout the world continues to grow, Dr. Yang believes that it is important to promote a spirit of unity. One of the ways we can do this is through the YMAA Newsletter. We invite all YMAA schools to submit articles on any Martial Arts and Qigong topics, including moral stories, training ideas, and health information, as well as anything concerning the YMAA organization. Photos to accompany the articles are also encouraged. Keep us updated on important events going on in your school. And this note is not just for instructors, spread the word, let all your students know. Let the YMAA family know how you are!

Write, fax, or email to:
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Figure A-1



Figure A-2



Figure A-3



Figure A-4



Figure A-5

Explosive Movements

Squat Thrust: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. In one fluid motion, while keeping your feet flat on the ground, squat until your thighs are parallel to the ground (no farther) and place your palms flat on the floor alongside your feet. Keeping your weight planted over your arms, kick your feet straight back so that you end up in a straight-armed push-up position. Do one push-up, hop back into the starting squat, and stand (Figures A-1 to A-5).

- Week 1: 20 reps
- Week 2: 30 reps
- Week 3: 40 reps
- Week 4: 60 reps

Stair Sprint: If your training area has enough room, sprint fifteen to twenty yards to the base of a flight of stairs, then sprint up them. Take the stairs two or three at a time, raising your knees high. Try not to hunch your torso forward, and stop if you experience any lower-back pain.

- Week 1: 2 sprints
- Week 2: 4 sprints
- Week 3: 4 sprints
- Week 4: 6 sprints

Lunge Jump: With your head up and back in its natural alignment, step forward with your left leg, lowering your body until your front knee is bent ninety degrees and your right knee almost touches the floor. From this starting position, jump up a few inches and switch feet in the air, landing in the starting position with your right foot forward (Figures A-6 to A-8).

- Week 1: 10 reps
- Week 2: 15 reps
- Week 3: 15 reps
- Week 4: 20 reps



Figure A-6



Figure A-7

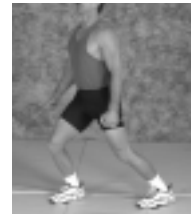


Figure A-8

Knee Up: Drive your right knee into the air toward your chest while simultaneously jumping up with your left leg. Bring your left knee up toward your chest while straightening your right knee to land. Switch legs and repeat.

- Week 1: 6 reps
- Week 2: 10 reps
- Week 3: 16 reps
- Week 4: 30 reps

Upper Body Movements

Push-Up: Use the standard, back-straight military push-up form, but change grip position on each set. Start with a grip that is wider than your shoulders, then move to a shoulder's width grip and, finally, a "diamond" grip with your hands together and your thumbs and index fingers forming the diamond (Figures A-9 to A-13).



Figure A-9



Figure A-10



Figure A-11



Figure A-12



Figure A-13

- Wk 1: 20/15/10 reps
- Wk 2: 30/25/20 reps
- Wk 3: 40/35/30 reps
- Wk 4: 50/45/35 reps

Plyometric Push-Up: Follow the same form for a medium-grip push-up, but explode off the ground an inch or so at the end of each rep. Land softly, lower your chest to the ground slowly, then push yourself off the floor again. This will build explosiveness, but if you push yourself too hard, too soon, you'll face plant. Watch out.

- Week 1: 6 reps
- Week 2: 8 reps
- Week 3: 10 reps
- Week 4: 15 reps

Chair Dip: Place your hands on two chairs or a bench so that they are slightly behind your torso. Your feet should rest on the floor or a bench two or three feet away. Your torso should be bent about ninety degrees at the waist. Lower your upper body as far as is comfortable, then push back up to the starting position (Figures A-14 to A-16).



Figure A-14



Figure A-15



Figure A-16

Week 1: 30 reps
 Week 2: 40 reps
 Week 3: 50 reps
 Week 4: 50 reps

Pull-Up: Grab the bar with your hands shoulder's width apart and slowly raise yourself as high as you can. Stop at the bottom of each repetition, but don't lock your arms. Keep your abdominals contracted, and your torso still at all times. Don't kip, and don't use momentum. (If you can easily do more than twelve pull-ups in a row, widen your grip and/or add resistance by wearing a weight belt or holding a dumbbell between your feet.)

Week 1: max. with perfect form
 Week 2: max. with perfect form
 Week 3: max. with perfect form
 Week 4: max. with perfect form

Lower Body Movements

One-Legged Squats: Stand six to twelve inches in front of a chair. Bend the knee of the non-working leg; support it on the chair. Squat deeply with the working leg, bending its knee about eighty degrees. Rise up until the knee is bent slightly (twenty degrees); do not lock your knee. Each rep should take several seconds—the idea is to move slowly through a full range of motion. (Figures A-17 to A-19)



Figure A-17



Figure A-18



Figure A-19

Week 1: 25 reps per leg Week 3: 35 reps per leg
 Week 2: 30 reps per leg Week 4: 40 reps per leg

Plie Squat: Stand with your feet slightly farther than shoulder's width apart; point the toes of both feet off to the sides at about a forty-five degree angle. Bend your knees until your core is directly over your heels. Then rise up on the balls of your feet, raising your heels; hold for an instant, then lower them slowly to the floor.

Week 1: 25
 Week 2: 30
 Week 3: 35
 Week 4: 40

Lunge with Back Leg Lift: Start in a standard lunge position, then lift your back leg off the ground a few inches by contracting your glutes. Balance for a second, lower and repeat. Switch legs (Figure A-20).

Week 1: 10/leg
 Week 2: 20/leg
 Week 3: 25/leg
 Week 4: 30/leg

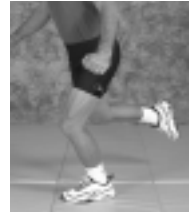


Figure A-20

Abdominal Movements

Butterfly Crunches: Lie on your back with your hands behind your head, then press the soles of your feet together a few inches in front of your groin. Wait a few seconds for your inner-thigh muscles to relax, then curl your torso a few inches toward your knees while keeping your lower back flat on the floor. Hold the contraction for a beat, then lower your shoulders. The physiologists like this variation because it focuses the entire contraction on your abs, not your hip muscles.

Week 1: 3 sets, 15 reps
 Week 2: 3 sets, 25 reps
 Week 3: 3 sets, 40 reps
 Week 4: 3 sets, 50 reps

Twist Crunch: Lie on your back with your hands behind your head and your knees bent perpendicular to the floor. Crunch your torso forward while aiming your right elbow at your left knee; simultaneously extend your right leg in front of you. Slowly lower yourself back to the ground while returning your right leg to the starting position. Repeat on the opposite side, crunching your left elbow toward your right knee while extending your left leg. This will make your hip flexors ache, but for athletes, that's not a bad thing (Figures A-21 to A-22).

Week 1: 3 sets, 15
 Week 2: 3 sets, 20
 Week 3: 3 sets, 25
 Week 4: 3 sets, 30



Figure A-21



Figure A-22

Excerpts from Notes on Martial Training during Pregnancy

by Maureen Burke Santos, YMAA Marshfield, Seven Stars Academy of Martial Arts.

In some primitive cultures warrior status was given to all mothers. The belief was that they braved crossing over to the “other side” (risked their lives) to bring another spirit into this world. So perhaps my writing about my pregnancy as it relates to martial training isn't completely absurd. In fact most of my experiences while training during that time were magnifications of experiences and questions I'd had before, but the pregnancy, whether by added weight, fluid, or other factors, emphasized exactly where I had the most work to do.

1-3 Months: Aside from the fatigue and discontinuing sparring, my training was mostly unchanged during this time. However, I used caution when practicing Chin Na with a partner as my joints and ligaments began softening early on.

4 Months: My energy level has picked up considerably. I may be feeling too good! I had to be reminded by a student (after the fact) that maybe I shouldn't be throwing large people right now. I looked at the 200 lb. man in shock remembering that my doctor had stipulated “No sparring and no throwing 200 lb. men.” I must report, however, that many such techniques, when done correctly, require little effort on the part of the doer. Already I am able to use pregnancy to check technique. If it takes effort I need to go back and check the technique.

I am particularly curious to note any changes in my experience of Qi while pregnant but so far have not.

It's quite an experience having my body change so much so fast at age 40. I'd always been somewhat slight so becoming “ample” instead takes some adjustment. All this high-fluid-content tissue that keeps moving after I stop! Very, very different for me. It makes me think about the Eastern philosophies that have influenced the martial arts and how they teach “detachment” from all material things, but particularly from the body. Of course martial artists must always be ready to face death or else they are completely ineffective; controlled by fear. So it is said, “The Warrior always chooses death.” He may not have to die, but he is prepared to—so he can fully commit. So in a small way I get some real life practice in “choosing death”: giving up my previous concept of my physical body. Might I also add that this also provides lots of practice in letting go of the ego! This is true not only looking in the mirror and seeing other than present society's idea

of an ideal female, but also from this: it becomes obvious that this miracle is occurring through no effort on my part. One of the goals of a martial artist is self mastery. The irony of this is that we are also aspiring to let go of the ego. So with all this training in “control” it is a revelation to discover that I am not controlling the event taking place within my own body. It's happening with or without my consent or help, and in most cases it's happening perfectly. What more assurance do I need that letting go of my ego might just allow the Universe to direct me down my path more wisely than I could do myself?

4.5 Months: In Taiji yesterday I felt a much stronger sensation in my hands when I held them in front of my belly! Instead of the usual pulsing it was more of a throbbing. Also more of a pulse in my feet. I'm not sure whether this is connected with increased blood volume and slightly higher blood pressure. It is of course said that the blood follows the Qi and vice versa.

5.5 Months: Uniforms are becoming a problem. There is nowhere one can buy a maternity Karate uniform or Taiji pants!

6 Months: In Chin Na my joints are getting very sensitive and even more flexible. My fingers can be felt to separate at the slightest pull and my wrists almost fold over onto my forearm. Fortunately I have a very trusted partner.

7 Months: The baby is moving so much now that I can see my belly change and move as she does. I'm told that not all babies are quite this active. She loves Taiji and when I stop she really gets going as if to tell me to start again. I'm still able to participate fully in Taiji with a few adjustments. I'm feeling energy strongly now and am wondering about its relation to blood volume. Does increased blood volume increase Qi? About three weeks ago I started retaining fluid. Water conducts electricity. Does that explain the increased experience of Qi or could it simply be the added Life Force of the baby that has made me more sensitive to Qi in my body now.

8 Months: Baby is really doing some gymnastics in my belly as I write. I've had a question come up; since most of us are used to defining our physical selves by the space we take up, how is it possible that some of the space I'm taking up is not me???

Labor is imminent—all this talk about the PAIN. It seems that separation is always more painful than joining but just as necessary to Life. Worth remembering.

YMAA MARSHFIELD
Whidden's School of Fitness
822 Webster Street
Marshfield, MA 02050
Director: Roger Whidden
Tel: (781) 834-9161

Taiji teacher Roger Whidden, of YMAA Marshfield/Whidden's School of Fitness, Inc. reports a great first year. An important factor in the building of this Branch was Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming's gift of several hundred of his children's books for the opening year. Roger in turn gave these books to the Marshfield and surrounding towns' schools, libraries, churches, adoption groups, and other organizations.

Dr. Yang's *The Essence of Shaolin White Crane* was used as the required text for Marshfield High School's new summer school martial arts elective program. Though a challenging text for High Schoolers (especially since the participants had failed either the Health and/or Physical Education classes the previous year), they all passed the 100

question written test and really worked hard in classes. Overall, the books are being enthusiastically received and they effectively promote the message that we have a quality Gong Fu school, not the common "McDonalds" martial arts that proliferate on the South Shore.

Roger calls this last year a "Pedal to the Medal" year. He finished the building, taught all the classes, and ran the startup corporation. Throughout, Roger felt the support of Dr. Yang since, "Dr. Yang is one of the few people who know the lifelong commitment that it has taken to get to this point."

Roger (affectionately known as "Mr. Roger" to his young students) and his wife Mary also teach Karate, and senior/entry level exercise classes. The Whidden's also rent their building out for Yoga; Chinese Language & Culture; Dance classes; and for services in Acupuncture, Chiropractic, and Massage Therapy.

Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming will be at YMAA Marshfield for workshops in Qigong for Health and Martial Arts (May 6, 2000) and in Chin Na and Taijiquan (May 7, 2000).

AROUND THE GLOBE

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- 1st Place Traditional Taijiquan
- 1st Place Traditional Barehand Forms
- 1st Place Traditional Weapons, Internal Style

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Tibor Toth:

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Dr. Jwing-Ming Yang

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