LEARN
QIGONG
MEDITATION

A Seven-Week
Home-Study Course

Copyright 2006
By Kevin D. Schoeninger
All World Rights Reserved

Published by
The Power of Practice, LLC
Lafayette, CO, USA
http://www.ThePowerOfPractice.com
CONTENTS

READ THIS FIRST: How to Use This Course 3

WHY MEDITATE?
Sensory Overload and Stress 5
The Genesis of Stress 8
The Benefits of Qigong 10
Introductory Questions 11

WHAT IS QIGONG?
Definition and Brief History 12
Energetic Anatomy 13
An Energetic Vision 14
Basic Qigong Theory 16

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MEDITATION PRACTICE 18

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THIS COURSE 21

WEEK 1
Standing Meditation 25
Shake Your Body Technique 29
Seated Meditation #1: Relaxing Down Three Lines 30

WEEK 2
Seated Meditation #2: Lower Dantian Breathing 40

WEEK 3
Seated Meditation #3: Two Dantian Breathing 48

WEEK 4
Seated Meditation #4: The Inner Smile 54

WEEK 5
Seated Meditation #5: Small Heaven 61

WEEK 6
Seated Meditation #6: Three Dantians & Central Channel 68

WEEK 7
Seated Meditation #7: The Empty Vessel 76

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS 83
READ THIS FIRST:

If you are at all concerned that this course will be challenging, at a minimum you can simply put on the audio CDs and follow along. They will lead you easily, step-by-step through the meditations. To get the most out of this course read the following:

How to Use This Course:

1) This program is printed notebook style with blank opposing pages and log sections to encourage you to make notes and interact with the material. Make this book your own by writing your thoughts, feelings, and comments in it.

2) There are at least three ways to practice the eight 15-minute meditations in this course (one Standing Meditation and seven Seated Meditations):
   A) Practice the Standing Meditation first each day, for all seven weeks, followed by the Seated Meditation for each particular week for a total practice time of 30 minutes daily. This is most effective and the way that the course is set up in this book.
   B) Take eight weeks to go through the course, practicing one of the meditations each week. Begin with the Standing Meditation in Week 1, then, practice Seated Meditations 1-7 over the following seven weeks. Total practice time 15 minutes daily.
   C) Take eight weeks to go through the course, practicing one meditation each week, but starting with the seven Seated Meditations and finishing the last week with the Standing Meditation. Some people find the Standing Meditation to be more challenging and like to save it for the end. Others find the Standing Meditation more comfortable and prefer to begin with that, as in option “B.” Total practice time with this option, 15 minutes daily.

3) Whatever option you choose, if you’re anxious to get started meditating, first read the section “Specific Guidelines,” then, read Week 1 meditation instructions. Begin meditating by following the appropriate tracks on the Guided Meditation Audio Disc 1. Then, go back and read this book from the start. If you want to ease your way into the course with a thorough introduction, follow the sequence suggested below:
4) First, read the section “Why Meditate.” Understand the concepts and adverse effects of sensory overload and stress. Know what the author means by “Core Energy.” Understand the effects of qigong meditation on body, emotion, mind, and spirit. Answer the Introductory Questions at the end of this section. Set your goals for the course.

5) Read “What is Qigong.” Understand where qigong originated, how it is defined, and the range of qigong practices. Understand the basic structures of the subtle energy system along with the basic theory and practical principles that will guide your practice.

6) Read “General Guidelines” and “Specific Guidelines” to orient you to the seven weeks of this course.

7) Read the instructions for Week 1 meditations. Begin your meditation practice by following the Guided Meditation Audio instructions on Disc 1. The written instructions are more detailed to give you a richer meaning context for your practice. The audio instructions are less detailed to allow space for you to feel the experience. Log six days of practice before moving on to Week 2. Continue in this way through all seven weeks of the course.

8) Refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions” section as issues arise during your practice. Feel free to email the author with any other questions or comments on the material through the “Ask the Instructor” link on the website: http://www.thepowerofpractice.com. On the website you will also find additional resources to support your practice, such as a free monthly newsletter, articles, interactive Blog, and more.

9) For further study refer to the “Suggested Reading” and “Online Resources” sections.

10) Finally, read “The Daily Practice Log” instructions and design your own Practice Plan using one or more of the meditations that you have learned. Put your plan into action. Revise it as needed.

NOW YOU ARE READY TO BEGIN!
“More than 5000 years ago, Chinese physicians came to understand that everything is composed of the same energetic substance called Qi (pronounced “chee”). These ancient masters concluded that there is a oneness and wholeness in all existence, and that energetically everything is interconnected as one body, although energy may appear to take on many different forms. All things in nature and, in fact, all things in the universe are woven together so that we are, quite literally, all symbiotically one with the universe through the system of Qi.”

Jerry Alan Johnson, Chinese Medical Qigong Therapy, Pacific Grove, CA: The International Institute of Medical Qigong, 2000, p. 3.

**WHY MEDITATE?**

**Sensory Overload and Stress**

As we move into the new millennium, we witness the effects of increasing environmental, economic, and psychological stress. "Sensory overload" is taxing the human system. The pressures upon all life on earth have reached unparalleled proportions.

Our bodies are subject to an onslaught of man-made stressors: crisscrossing fields of microwave, radio, television, and electronic transmissions, pollution, noise, and traffic, as well as the bombardments of information and advertising, and the requirements to produce more and more efficiently in the face of fierce economic competition. Add to that the threats of terrorism and war that have created a palpable level of world anxiety and we have a culture dominated by stress, tension, and fear. We are beings of energy vibrating at the edge of disintegration in a stormy sea of over-stimulation.

In the middle of this seeming chaos, we find a lessening in the prominence of traditional sources of stability, such as religious structure, nuclear families, and geographic fixity. We are under increasing pressures with fewer resources to deal with them. If we do have the traditional resources to keep us stable, then we must push for time to participate in them. The joys and rewards of family, religion, and community become further demands on our time and energy.
If this pattern of life is causing stress, wearing us down, or deadening our vitality, we may feel the need for change. One solution is to take a course like this one. This creates yet another demand in our life. How do we fit it all in? How do we maintain our balance? What do we do when an intense stressor such as a lost job, divorce, or the death of a loved one lands on top of the load we bear? What if, to complicate matters, this load rests on a personal history of trauma?

One of the main reasons we have a hard time breaking out of this cycle is that we do not realize how deeply we are affected by stress. On the surface, we may speak of being in a time-crunch, feeling burned-out, or needing to get away. We joke about vibrating from all the pressure. When our stress is intensified, we feel that we are going to go ballistic. We blow off steam in more or less productive ways, from exercise to alcohol to road rage, but the underlying pattern of denial remains.

Psychologists describe our perpetual tension, or the fight/flight response, as a reaction to the relentless fronts of over-stimulation. This response pattern is characterized by high-frequency brain waves termed beta waves. We are functioning as if we are on storm alert all of the time.

Moreover, medical scientists are discovering how this state of perpetual tension adversely affects our well-being. Stress creates chronic patterns of muscular tension. Muscular tension restricts the flow of blood, lymphatic fluid, and nerve impulses. Cells are deprived of oxygen and nutrients and unable to clear toxic substances. This leads to chronic pain, cellular toxicity, and decreased immune response.

On an emotional level, we experience chronic anxiety and reactive response patterns marked by inappropriate anger and projected blame and criticism. Mentally, we become locked in rigid thinking patterns marked by a defensive mindset governed by fear. Spiritually we resign ourselves to being victims of circumstances and isolate ourselves in a survival mode. While our problems are not new, the pace of modern life has multiplied their negative effects exponentially.

If that sounds overly grim, take heart. It can be motivation to shift our state of awareness. It can intensify the search for ways to live differently. In recent decades, a time-honored light has begun to shine through the dense, tangled lines of our modern networks. This light radiates through a variety of old and new refractions. We see the
emergence of a multitude of holistic practices. In support of these phenomena, research has shown that certain exercises for the mind and body reduce stress and produce deep relaxation via slower alpha-theta brain-wave frequencies. In the states affected by these exercises, such a slowdown simultaneously occurs in many of the body's systems. This slowdown produces integrating, synchronizing, and healing effects. The practice of such exercises can develop capacities within us that will enable us to handle the pressures of our lives.

Taking these exercises even further, we are able to develop senses and modes of perception that have been latent in human evolution, as we know it. We can develop the ability to perceive and cultivate ourselves as the energetic beings that we are on the most fundamental level.

As an entry point to the expansion of the conscious domain, biofeedback research shows that we can positively affect aspects of our lives that we thought were automatic and inaccessible, such as brain-wave frequencies, heart rate, respiration, and chronic muscle-tension, to name a few. Guided-imagery research has proven the power of imagination and visualization in overcoming disease and increasing wellness. Meditation research describes how, through the application of awareness and intention, we can positively affect the intricate pathways that serve as conductors for qi ("chee"), the universal vitalizing force that enlivens our bodies.

Dr. John Sarno, a physician who specializes in pain relief, has shown that emotion and consciousness play a large role in health and disease. He has coined the term Tension Myositis Syndrome (TMS) to describe a host of symptoms that are caused by stress, tension, and repressed rage. To show the direct relationship of consciousness to TMS he found that “Awareness, insight, knowledge, and information were the magic medicines that would cure this disorder” (The Mindbody Prescription, New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1998, p. xxi). This supports what physicists have been saying for many years, which is that consciousness and physical reality are interwoven; mind and matter are inseparable. In the context of this course, we will see how body, emotion, mind, and spirit form a feedback system that can be used to shift our state of being.

Tension-causing sensory overload is both our most predominant problem and our window of opportunity. It is through a thorough understanding of our stress that we will
find a new way. When we uncover the source of stress and take action to release this tension, we open to new possibilities. We recover and develop our fuller sensitivities and feelings of vitality. These are not the mists of fantasy or the mere ear tickle of sweet sounding words. This is a well-mapped path. As we will discover in this course, the Chinese have practiced qigong (“chee-gung”) meditation for more than two thousand years.

The Genesis of Stress:

Psychologists tell us that it is not outward conditions of over-stimulation alone that threaten us; it is our perception of these conditions that has even greater impact. Psychoneuro-immunologist Dr. Myrin Borysenko gave the following definition of stress at the 1992 Mind/Body Fitness Conference held in Santa Fe, New Mexico:

Stress is the perception of a threat and the perception of one's inability to cope with that threat.

The first thing we see in this definition is the importance of perception. Stress is not some force "out there" beyond our control. It is the result of the way we are looking at things. It is the product of past conditioning, which acts as a thick, uneven, colored lens skewing and distorting our vision.

Perception is something that we can modify by re-grinding the lens through which we see. Therefore, stress is something we can control. We can change how stressors affect us. To change our lives we must first change our perception of what is possible.

As a test for the importance of perception, recall a time when you learned a new word. Immediately you began to hear this word everywhere. It was as if this word did not exist until you learned its meaning. Once known, this word appeared all around you. Was it not there before? The reality was there, you just did not have the lens through which to see it. Language, perception, and reality are interwoven. In this course, we will learn a new language of qi, of subtle energy flow, and we will learn how to positively influence the flow of qi to reduce stress and increase our health and well-being.

The next key to the definition of stress is that it has two parts. The first part relates to the power of a threat and the second relates to our own abilities and resources.
Threats are stressors we perceive as outside our control. When we are repeatedly faced with stressors that we perceive as beyond our ability to deal with them, we develop patterns of spiritual resignation. Yoga teacher Linda Christy Weiler says “Patterns of resignation are bodily indicators of trauma, submission, and lack of freedom. These patterns are characteristic behaviors, postures, and mannerisms that indicate the underlying emotions of fear, guilt, anger, or sorrow. These patterns imply that something in one’s body and one’s psyche has been relinquished or diminished.” (Yoga For Prevention of Low Back Pain, Brentwood, TN: www.yogaforanewday.com, 2005, p. 4).

What is diminished in us that leads us to feel stress? We have lost awareness of our essential vitality. In qigong, we recover the joyful flow of universal qi through our bodies and experience a feeling of unity with the wholeness of life. When we allow universal qi to flow smoothly through us, we experience health and well-being. When we are unconscious of the flow of life force within us, we become tense, fearful, and overwhelmed by life’s stress. In stress mode, we restrict the flow of qi physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

When universal qi flows smoothly through us, it harmonizes body, emotion, mind, and spirit. According to James MacRitchie “Characteristics of this state are feeling calm, clear, relaxed, aware, strong, centred, whole, integrated, balanced and fully alive—to name but a few” (The Chi Kung Way, San Francisco: Thorsons, 1997, p.xi). MacRitchie calls this state of being a “Chi Kung State” (“chi kung” is an alternate spelling for “qigong”). I like to call it a Core Energy State, because in this state we are aware of the universal life force within us.

**Core Energy is the universal life force within each of us.**

**A Core Energy State occurs when we are aware of universal qi flowing smoothly through all layers of our being.**

The key, then, is how do we awaken this awareness? How do we shift from a state of stress to a state of consciously smooth flowing qi?

Meditation is one of the most powerful techniques to facilitate a Core Energy State. Qigong meditation, in particular, is a holistic system that provides cues to facilitate
conscious awareness and smooth qi flow. By holistic I mean that qigong works with body, emotion, mind, and spirit to consciously affect the flow of universal qi through the whole person. Physical exercise systems usually work with physical movement, breathing, and posture. Most meditation systems work with emotional attitude, mental focus, and spiritual intention. Qigong combines all of these into a complete system of self development. Within qigong itself, some systems emphasize physical movement while others emphasize still meditative practice. In this course, we emphasize the still meditative component. Though our emphasis is meditative, our practice involves cues for body, emotion, mind, and spirit and positively benefits these four layers of self.

The Benefits of Qigong Meditation:

1. **Reduce stress and create vitality in your body.** Qigong meditation relaxes tension, improves blood and lymphatic flow, improves nerve conductivity, positively affects brain waves, brain coherence, and brain chemistry, enhances the efficiency of all physiological systems, and increases immune response and longevity.

2. **Balance your emotions and open your heart.** Qigong releases emotional holding patterns and opens appropriate emotional responsiveness.

3. **Clear, expand, and focus your mind.** Qigong is a great meditation system for active minds. It develops your ability to focus your attention, release from negative mindsets, and observe yourself with detachment.

4. **Develop spiritual empowerment.** Qigong enhances your spiritual awareness by producing a feeling of wholeness and integrity. It improves your ability to cultivate and refine the universal life force within you. Qigong empowers you to actively participate in creating the life you desire.

Why meditate? I’ve given you some good reasons. What brings YOU to this practice? Answer the questions below to clarify why you want to commit to qigong. Being clear about your motivation will help you get started and stick with it.
After the questions, the next section will give you an introduction to qigong meditation through definitions, a brief history, a vision of energetic anatomy, some basic theory, key practical principles, and some experiential signs of qi flow.

**Introductory Questions:**

1. Why do you want to practice qigong meditation? What are your goals for this course?

2. Do you commit to daily meditation practice (six days a week) for seven weeks to see what happens?

3. When will you practice? (I suggest first thing in the morning or last thing at night, though any consistent time will work.)

4. Where will you practice? (You will need a private, quiet place, free from external distractions, with enough space to sit on a chair and to stand with arms stretched in front of you, out to your sides, and overhead.)
WHAT IS QIGONG?

At the end of the last section you answered for yourself why you want to meditate, you’ve committed to it for seven weeks, and you’ve decided when and where you will practice.

In this section, I want to give you a brief overview of qigong meditation. We begin this section with a definition and brief history, and then we’ll move into a vision of Energetic Anatomy to give your mind’s eye something to work with. Finally, we’ll talk about some basic tenets of qigong theory, some practical principles, and a few markers by which you can recognize qi flow in your own practice.

Definition of Qigong and Brief History

Kenneth Cohen translates qigong as “working with life energy, learning how to control the flow and distribution of qi to improve the health and harmony of mind and body” (The Way of Qigong, New York: Ballantine Books, 1997, p.3). Such practices have been prevalent in China for 2000-3000 years. The term qigong in the sense that we are using it, the practice of cultivating and refining qi, is a relatively new usage. In ancient China, these exercises were commonly called “dao-yin” which Cohen translates as “leading and guiding the energy” (The Way of Qigong, p. 13).

The grandfather of Chinese Daoist philosophy, Lao Zi (or Lao Tzu), describes dao-yin practice in his Dao De Jing (or Tao Teh Ching) written in the third and fourth centuries B.C. The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine recommended dao-yin exercises in the first and second century B.C. to cure colds and fevers, to attain tranquility, and to cultivate vital energy. A folded piece of silk from the second century B.C., called the Dao-yin Tu, shows four rows of painted figures representing “all major categories of modern qigong: breathing, stances, movement, and self-massage from standing, seated, and supine positions. . .Of great interest are the captions that name specific disorders, such as kidney disease, flatulence, painful knees, lumbago, rheumatism, gastric disturbance, and anxiety, suggesting that by 168 B.C. specific exercises were used to treat specific illnesses” (The Way of Qigong, p. 18).
Today, according to Qigong Master Tianyou Hao, there are over 35,000 different forms of qigong exercises. Master Hao says that “A Qigong form is a specific mental and/or physical exercise or coordination of a series of exercises all prescribed to train, develop and condition the mind and body for the purpose of health, healing, longevity, and opening wisdom” (from Master Hao’s Qigong Instructor Training Course available through www.qi-healing.com).

Although there are so many forms of qigong, the underlying theory, energetic anatomy, and principles of practice are common across most forms. The system taught in this course is a complete system of meditative qigong, along with some simple movements to release tension and increase energy flow. Meditative qigong is called jing gong or quiet form (with standing and seated versions). This is in contrast to moving qigong forms, such as Taiji (or T’ai chi), which use bodily movement to mobilize qi. The emphasis in meditative qigong is the development of mind and spirit through the calm entrainment of body and emotion. This is accomplished by using your mind to relax your body, adjust your emotional attitude, and lead qi along specific pathways through your body.

Qigong meditation develops our ability to feel qi, build and store qi, and circulate qi smoothly throughout the body. The effects of meditative qigong are holistic: they positively affect all four levels of our being. The smooth flow of qi is the key to physical health, emotional balance, mental clarity, and spiritual integration. Cultivating awareness of qi flow is a path of personal growth.

To start on this path you need at least a basic understanding of energetic anatomy, the structures of your subtle energy system. The next section will give you a visual portrait of the qi system.

**Energetic Anatomy**

Qi circulates through a network of meridians or channels. Through qigong training one can facilitate the movement of qi through the body. The movement of qi leads the circulation of the blood and other bodily fluids. In the following description, we visualize one of the primary qi patterns, the Small Heavenly Circuit. We also familiarize ourselves with a few other main components of energetic anatomy: the
Central Channel, Accupoints (key points of access) along the channels, energy fields within and around the body, and the Three Dantians (pronounced don-tee-en and meaning “field of the elixir” or energy center).

An Energetic Vision:

Spiraling in to the navel, energy enters a secret circuit. The circuit is secret not for lack of reality and effect, but simply from lack of knowledge, focus, and attention. Equipped with these, it becomes apparent that you have tapped something vital. You have found a lost treasure. Part of you knew this was there, but you didn't know how to look for it.

Drawn by a magnetic attraction, you follow the umbilical circling inside. Like a tributary from the universal field, qi flows into a collecting chamber where it's greeted by intelligence, which ushers it along multiple lanes. You follow one such path downward through the lower abdominal region. If there were signs, this channel would read "Conception." Down through the pulsing seat of such births, you witness an orange luminescence that reddens as it flows to the perineum, between the genitals and the anus.
To the rear, an adjoining path, the Governor, beckons. You move toward this call, to the base of the sacrum, where a cauldron bubbles and steams misty liquid light up the spine. Your attention is drawn up through each vertebra. On-ramps and off-ramps feed and divert the current at key acupoints: opposite the navel, at the base of the ribs, at the base of the neck, and up to the "jade pillow," the gateway to the brain. There you feel a finer effervescence that tingles into the center of your head. Your path, however, is upward to the crown, where energy shimmers violet and white in the frequency of Spirit. From this peak it descends to indigo at the "third eye," a brilliant blue headlight at the forehead. A blue river flows from there down through the throat. It fires pink and green at the heart, yellow at the solar plexus, and completes the Small Heavenly Circuit by returning to the navel.

The circuit repeats, around again and again. Each time around, the path glows brighter. The network comes into focus as an energetic bodymap, pulsing with life. You watch it, you feel it, and then there comes a faint hum. Like a sound from the universal womb, this hum comforts your spirit. It is the nascent persistent drone, the primordial sustaining vibration, the Divine Word, the OM that sends you forth into life.

With this hum, you feel a tingle at the crown-point. A shower of light washes down through the center and fills a vertical column, the central channel or "pillar of God," in front of and including your spine. Fed from this column are three glowing orbs, the dantians, in the lower abdomen, in the center of the chest, and in the center of the brain. These three each sponsor an energetic layer, each one overlaying the others to form a luminous cocoon around your body. Each layer inhabits a frequency unto itself while sharing with the others the same spatial domain. Together they form a feedback system which operates via sympathetic vibration.

You marvel at this field that is you, and you wonder again at its sudden appearance. With this thought comes laughter, because you realize the reverse truth: this field was here first. In this subtle field dwells the energetic blueprint that preceded and patterned your body.

In these energetic layers, you read the instructions for every cellular function. As you read them, they change. Awareness has an effect of opening and clearing. This realm is fluid; malleable by attention and intention. Every moment offers choice. Your
energetic attitude creates not only the specific shape and degree of wellness in your body but also the circumstances that are drawn to you.

You realize this insight with absolute clarity and understand what the subtle part of you has known since the beginning. You are a flowing current of consciousness. At the core of your being is a wellspring of universal qi.

**Basic Qigong Theory:**

Qigong is a truly holistic philosophy and system of health care and self development. The primary principle of qigong practice is this: Where qi flows smoothly there is health, happiness, and well-being. Where qi flow is impeded, there is disease, distress, and conflict.

Smooth qi flow is regarded as a natural state of being. This natural state is affected by our responses to the demands of life. When we become sick or have dis-ease on any level of our being the questions in this system are: 1) Where is qi flow impeded? 2) What is impeding smooth qi flow? and 3) How do we facilitate smooth qi flow? Qi flow is interrupted by the way that we handle internal and external stressors. Qi can be impeded by physical tension, emotional holding patterns, rigid thought patterns, and patterns of spiritual resignation. The more general pattern of impeded qi flow is experiencing yourself as a passive victim of circumstances that cause the conditions of your life. By contrast, in qigong we learn to experience ourselves as empowered participants in our health and self development.

This leads us to a second qigong principle: The mind leads the qi and the qi follows the mind. The term mind here means mental powers and spiritual intent. In qigong, we learn to use powers of mind and spirit to feel, gather, store, cultivate, refine, and circulate universal qi. The circulation of qi leads the circulation of blood, lymphatic fluid, and nerve impulses along their respective pathways. We lead qi in qigong meditation by following these cues: 1) Relaxing and aligning posture, 2) Smiling and breathing consciously, 3) Visualizing qi pathways, and 4) Imagining and feeling universal qi flowing smoothly along these pathways.

One further note on this principle: It may be more accurate to say we “allow” qi to flow smoothly rather than we “lead” it, because smooth qi flow is natural. We allow this
natural process to occur when we stop restricting it. When we live in stress mode we restrict qi flow. When we center our awareness in universal qi, we allow a greater wisdom to work through us. We let go of ego control and allow higher powers of mind and spirit to come forth. Letting go leads us to the next qigong principle.

**The third basic principle of qigong is active relaxation.** The ability to actively relax is the first step toward a Core Energy State. When practicing, Master Tianyou Hao says “Don’t forget, don’t pursue.” In qigong one is present and aware while being relaxed and calm. We learn to detach from our patterns of stress so we can recover the original joy and vitality which resides steadfastly ever-available at the core of our being.

What does smooth qi flow feel like? The classic signs of qi activity in the body are called the eight sensations. These are: heat, cold, pain, numbness, soreness, swelling, itching, and twitching. The less pleasant qi sensations occur when qi is blocked or when it is beginning to move in an area that has been stagnant. Most commonly the positive feelings of smooth qi flow are warmth, fullness, tingling, and a sense of overall happiness and well-being.

Now that you know some qigong basics, it’s time to get to the most important part—practicing. Daily practice is the key to realizing the amazing positive effects of qigong meditation.
GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR
MEDITATION PRACTICE

This text is a practical guide for qigong meditation. As is obvious from its size, it is not intended to exhaustively answer every question. The purpose is to teach you a step-by-step system of progressive meditations. When you master the tools in this course, you have the foundation to pursue a lifetime of qi refinement and spiritual growth.

Through consistent repetition, you will come to a deeper and broader understanding of these practices. The answer to every question is available in your experience at that moment. Each moment offers the opportunity to connect with a dimension that knows, and already is, what you desire. To establish a continuous communication with this dimension of your being, and to have your life flow from that experience is the highest intention of this material.

To expand from your personal experiential inquiry, Suggested Reading and Online Resources are given at the end of this book. For those open to it, this work is a continual learning process. Let inner wisdom guide you, and let the meditations develop your ability to perceive this wisdom.

As you work with these meditations, there is a fine balance between exerting effort and letting things be. There is a balance between discipline, persistent practice, and "just doing it" on the one hand, and lightness, self-acceptance, and joy on the other.

You may find strong resistance to some of the meditations in this course. The key to overcoming resistance is awareness of it, awareness of core-level desire, and the development of will. Core desire is not like the desire for chocolate or money. It is not the desire for any instant or ego-centered gratification. It is a desire that flows from awareness of the central currents of your being. When this desire burns inside you and it is joined by will and awareness, resistance will dissolve. Some days your desire to shift your state of being will carry you through. You will look forward to the meditations because you feel their positive effects. Other days, you just won't be able to summon that deep desire no matter how hard you try. On those days, you must summon your will.
There is tremendous power in a will that is fully developed. To develop will power you must exercise it. Persevering in practice is one way to grow your will. Another way is to replace "I should" statements with either "I will" or "I won't" statements.

Though desire and will are what move us into practice, it is letting-be awareness that is the key to success. Although these may seem to be opposites, on the path of qigong we find that opposites are balancing aspects. Once desire and will have drawn us into the exercises, we cultivate an attitude of letting-be, of following rather than forcing. When we begin these exercises it is natural to want to do them "right." We often try too hard to have the experience we think we "should" have. However, the general mood for successful practice is this:

Follow it, don't force it. Don't forget, don't pursue.

All this talk of resistance is not to dampen the spirit of the process, but to alert you to common misconceptions. Beginning any new venture, we do not yet have "new eyes." We see the new within our old frames of reference. So often we read some new ideas or gain a new language and think that we are different because of it. Often we simply have a new set of words to disguise our same old patterns. Although we find new labels for ourselves, this does not change our being. How often do we sense that someone is spouting wonderful words without "being" their meaning? The words are empty. How often do we talk the talk, but it does not come from walking the walk? Walking the walk comes from consistent practice over an extended period of time.

While we are accustomed to using our five external senses, we need to develop our sixth sense, the one that is tuned to subtle energy currents. Through these exercises, we build awareness of the universal life force within us and discover that part of us that is relaxed, effortless, alert, enthusiastic, and responsive, yet non-reactive, non-grasping, and unattached. The way to this Core Energy State of being is by the persistent practice of listening to, seeing, and feeling the “qi body” or "inner body."

Observing the inner body requires us to slow down from the usual frantic pace of external over-stimulation. In our busy culture, we need to take structured time-outs. Time to practice inner awareness is a preliminary, if not a constant, requirement.
Through this work we may or may not experience the curing of illnesses. We may or may not see changes in aspects of ourselves that we view as imperfections. Healing may not be in the form that we expect. What is most important is not the specific external results, but that by going deeply into our own process we open ourselves to live with greater presence, compassion, consciousness, peace, joy, and spiritual connection. We come to know that these are always available at the core of our being.

Qigong meditation helps us discover and develop the universal qi within us. Meditation releases neurotransmitters, such as GABA and serotonin, in the brain and throughout the body as a whole. These neurotransmitters positively alter brain chemistry, balance emotions, and override patterns of resignation. Meditation has a balancing effect on all physiological systems, taking them out of stress mode into calm efficiency. Because of these effects, meditation is one of the most powerful enhancers of immune response, health, and longevity.

Qigong meditation, in particular, opens and clears the channels (meridians) through which life force flows. To re-affirm what I’ve said previously, qigong meditation positively affects body, emotion, mind, and spirit through relaxation and postural alignment, conscious breathing and positive emotional attitude, visualization of qi pathways, and imagining and feeling universal qi flowing smoothly along its paths.

Cultivate a spirit of lightness and enjoyment in practice. Learn to recognize and follow the movements of your qi. Let this process unfold as it needs to, not as you think it should. Let go of "should's" and practice letting-be awareness. This practice is about being where we are, as we are, and allowing others to do the same.

At first, practice may come slowly or in fits and starts. It takes repetition to build new patterns. In time, you will come to know that vitality, love, peace, and purpose are natural attributes of universal qi, and universal qi flows at the core of your being. The opportunity to shift from stress mode into a Core Energy State is available every moment.
SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR THIS COURSE

We will practice three types of qigong meditation exercises: still standing, moving, and still sitting. While there are overlapping effects between these practices, each type of meditation emphasizes certain elements. Standing practice relaxes and aligns the body while opening the major channels and building energy. Moving practice releases tension and circulates the energy through the open channels and into the cells. Sitting practice focuses and clears the mind and prepares us to enter into transcendent spiritual states. What makes qigong meditation unique among meditative systems is its use of energetic physiology to relax the body, balance the emotions, entrain the mind, and strengthen spiritual intention.

We practice these exercises alone or in a practice group, in a quiet place, before, after, or during a time-out from, the activities of our day. The effects of this practice reach outward from a quiet, inward space to affect the quality of our actions. Meditation techniques are anchors for attention. These anchors draw us inward and downward (or upward) to deeper currents. They connect conscious awareness with the underlying flow of qi and offer an inner focus to return to whenever we drift away on surface waves.

It is good to perform meditation exercises first thing in the morning, before eating or drinking. An empty stomach and a relaxed, rested body give us a slowed metabolic, cardio-respiratory, and mental state, which is conducive to the desired effects. Practice first thing in the morning establishes a fresh and positive reference point for the day. Practicing at the same time every day patterns this experience into the body's biorhythms. A second meditation session in the evening enhances the effects of practice.

Although the meditation exercises can be done at any point in the day, we receive certain benefits from practice first thing in the morning, which are not gained otherwise. You may resist morning meditation as part of your everyday routine. It may seem impossible to fit into your schedule. Yes, it does take commitment, but the rewards far exceed the effort.

If you practice consistently, meditation will become pleasurable and vitalizing. It will set the stage for positive experiences in the day to come.
With all that said in favor of practice first thing in the morning, the most important thing is to find some time to do it, whether it is first thing or not. You will receive benefits from regular practice at any time of the day. Many people find that ending their day with meditation is most convenient and effective. It is a good way to let go of the day and clear the way for deep rest and a fresh start the next day. Give yourself the gift of this time. You will enjoy a better quality of sleep when you meditate for fifteen minutes before going to bed.

Success is not to be measured by your feelings during the meditation period itself (these will be varied) but by qualitative changes in everyday responses to life after an extended period of practice. In other words, sometimes these meditations may feel good, other times they may feel uncomfortable. In either case, know that the process of growth is unfolding as it needs to. Do not judge yourself for a lack of progress. If you are practicing, you are moving forward, nothing more, nothing less. You are connected to a wisdom that is beyond your self and is guiding this process.

You cannot pass or fail this course. You can do the exercises or not do them. If you do them, you will receive cumulative benefits. If you do not do them, you simply will not get these benefits.

There are eight fifteen-minute meditations in this seven-week course: a standing meditation to be done throughout all seven weeks and seven different seated meditations, one for each week. At the end of the course, you will design your own Daily Practice Plan based upon what you have learned.

All the meditations work with four types of meditation cues. These cues correspond to the four layers of our being. For body, “Relax and align posture” to release tension and create vitality. For emotion, “Smile and breathe consciously” to balance your emotions and open your heart. For mind, “Visualize a qi pathway” to clear and focus your mind and open a specific path through your body. Each meditation follows a different qi pathway. For spirit, “Imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path.”

Layer these cues one upon the other until they fuse into a unified experience. After going through the cues in sequence, allow the flow of universal qi within each path
to summarize the process and anchor your attention. Return to the feeling of smooth qi flow whenever your mind wanders.

Each day of this Home Study Course has four practices:

1. Standing Meditation,
2. Shaking Your Body to release tension and facilitate energy flow,
3. Seated Meditation,
4. Stretching

I recommend that you practice the Standing Meditation first thing in the morning followed by the seated meditation for that week. The whole practice will take approximately thirty minutes. If you would rather break the meditation into two segments, practice the standing meditation in the morning and the seated meditation later in the day. Although meditating first thing in the morning is recommended, the most important thing is to meditate at some time daily. If thirty minutes is more time than you are willing to commit, then practice the fifteen-minute standing meditation by itself for the first week, then proceed week by week through each of the fifteen-minute seated meditations by themselves. Aim for practicing six days per week. In other words, give yourself one day off every week. If you miss many days, continue to practice the exercises for a given week until you have completed them six times.

Make notes on your practice in the Practice Log section. After recording the date and time of the meditations, you will find two different log sections: Experience and Comments. In the Experience section record the raw data of your meditation experience such as physical sensations, thoughts that went through your mind, and the overall feeling tone of the practice that day. For example, “I felt anxious and my feet kept moving and twitching” or “When I took those slow deep breaths I felt my whole self let go and deeply relax.”

In the Comments section record your interpretation of your experience, any associations that come to mind, any evaluations of your practice, or any ways that you would like to adjust your practice in subsequent sessions. For example, “I hate that anxious feeling, it makes me want to give up” or “I loved that deep breathing. I can’t
wait to do it again tomorrow.” Experience is raw data. Comments are made about the raw data. Learning to separate these two is a lesson in detachment. “Log six days of practice before moving on to the next week of the course.

Meditation is a learned skill. Like any skill, you will improve with practice over time. At first, you may find it difficult to stand or sit still and follow the cues. You may find yourself fighting your own mind. Be patient. Observe and accept yourself as you are, without judgment. Return to the anchor of smooth qi flow whenever your attention wanders. Relax into the present moment. Allow your experience of the life force to expand easily. If you have difficulties or questions along the way, you may find the Frequently Asked Questions section, located near the end of this book, to be helpful.

Before practicing the meditations, review your answers to the introductory questions to strengthen your purpose for practicing. Each week has written instructions for visual/conceptual learning, illustrations demonstrating body positions and qi pathways for kinesthetic learning, and guided meditation audio instructions for auditory learning and guidance. The Practice Log sections will help you process and better retain your experience. Read the written instructions and view the illustrations for Week 1 before practicing along with the audio. As we said earlier, the written instructions are more detailed to give you a rich meaning context for your practice. The audio instructions are less detailed to allow space for you to feel the meditative state.

When you are ready, find a quiet place by yourself and experience the power of practice. The first meditation form is Standing Meditation.
WEEK 1

Allow one hour to go over the instructions for the first week’s meditations and to complete your first practice session. After you have invested this hour, you will be able to complete the meditations each day in thirty minutes. View the illustrations for each meditation before and after reading the written instructions. Illustrations appear on the page following the written instructions for each week.

Standing Meditation

For the next seven weeks, begin your day with ten minutes of Standing Meditation followed by “Shaking Your Body.” This practice introduces us to sensing the inner body and following the flow of qi. We call this body “inner” not because it is enclosed within the physical body but because it can be sensed by focusing inside our physical body. Once sensed, this inner qi body is found to fill the physical body and extend beyond it. Whether you are skeptical about the existence of such an inner body or not, the meditations in this course will give you evidence grounded in concrete experience. The Standing Meditation relaxes the body, aligns posture, improves breathing, builds energy, and opens the channels through which qi flows.

These instructions are detailed and may seem elaborate at first. Read through the instructions once quickly, then reread them slowly to absorb the details. To begin your practice, listen to the recorded meditation that will lead you step by step. Give yourself extra time this week to become familiar with the instructions. Don’t rush. Each subsequent week will repeat the key points until they are second nature. Be patient with yourself.

To practice Standing, arrange your environment to eliminate distractions, to be quiet, private, and comfortable. Take off your shoes, glasses, watch, and anything that restricts your comfort. Stand with your feet parallel and hip wide or slightly wider. Begin with the bodily cues: “Relax and align posture” to release tension and create vitality. Follow these five posture points:
LEARN QIGONG MEDITATION

1. Relax Down. Soften the muscles in your face and relax your jaw. Drop your shoulders onto your ribcage, let your elbows hang heavily, release tension in your lower back, soften your buttocks and hips, and bend your knees slightly. Sit down into your hips as if readying to jump. Imagine a heavy weight attached to your tailbone.

2. Extend upright. Imagine that there is a string attached to the top of your head drawing your spine gently upright. Tuck your chin slightly, further lengthening the back of your neck. Feel as if your upper body is filled with helium.

3. Breathe from the lower dantian. The lower dantian is the physical center-point of your body (approximately three finger-widths below the navel and three-sevenths of the way from the front to the back of the body). Feel this energy center as a vibrant, heavy sphere. Focusing here brings feelings of presence, vitality, grounding, inner peace, and stability. Allow your breath to gently fill your lower abdomen and lower back as you inhale. Let it fill up the lower dantian sphere. Allow the lower dantian to relax inward and empty out as you exhale.

4. Soften your hands. Let all tension release from your fingers so that they become soft, relaxed, pliable, and sensitive. Feel openness through your palms and allow a soft, light energy to fill your entire hand and fingers.

5. Find your root. Feel the contact of both feet on the ground. Become aware of weight distribution between the two. Is it 100 percent on one leg? Is it 50/50? Become aware of weight distribution forward toward the balls of your feet or backward toward your heels. Center your weight in your feet just behind the balls of your feet (the "bubbling-well" points). Feel as if your feet are rooted into the ground through these points and that your weight is evenly distributed around the bottoms of both feet. Focusing attention to the feet has a calming effect. Our feet ground us in the present moment.

Once you have gone through the five posture points, add the following to complete the postural elements:

Stand as if you are sitting on a horse. Bend your knees as deeply as is comfortable (somewhere between 5 and 30 degrees of bend) and sink your weight into the bubbling-well points. If your thigh muscles burn too much, bend your knees less.

Bend your elbows to 90 degrees. Bend your pinkie and ring fingers and wrap your thumbs around them. Point your first and second fingers straight ahead. This is
called "sword fingers." Feel a slight curve from your fingers on one hand through your forearm, around your back, and out through the fingers on the other hand. Feel as if your elbows are connected to your spine at the level of your navel.

Look straight ahead or slightly downward, and then close your eyes lightly. Look, listen, and feel inwardly. Roll the tip of your tongue up to touch the roof of your mouth. This connects two of the body's major energy channels: the Conception meridian, which runs down the front centerline of the body, and the Governor meridian, which runs up the spine, over the top of the head, and down to the roof of the mouth. If you touch your tongue to the roof of your mouth every time you meditate, this will become a cue for you to enter a state of relaxed awareness. This gesture with your tongue serves as an unusual cue, signaling your body to develop a new pattern. It also releases jaw tension, enhances energy flow, and keeps your mouth from drying out. This completes the posture points for body awareness.

Add the emotional cue: “Smile and breathe consciously” to balance your emotions and open your heart. Allow a subtle smile of appreciation to relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Smile down through your whole body, letting your whole body relax and soften. Feel how your emotional attitude affects the feeling of your body with this simple gesture of smiling. Observe how conscious attention to your emotional attitude changes your perceptual field and alters your experience. Maintain your smile of appreciation throughout these meditations.

Take several deep breaths. Gently expand and fill up your lower abdomen as you inhale. Empty the lower abdomen and allow it to flatten back toward your spine as you exhale. Let your breathing slow down. Allow your inhalation and exhalation to be equal in duration. Observe your breathing without forcing it to happen a certain way. Let your breathing become quiet and soft. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Add the mental cue: “Visualize a qi pathway” to clear and focus your mind and open a qi path through your body. Each meditation focuses into a different qi pathway. For Standing Meditation, imagine and feel a central channel coming in through the top of your head and descending down through your body, in front of and including your spine, into your lower abdomen, the lower dantian. Once that channel is in place, imagine and feel channels ascending up through the center of each foot, up through your legs and into
your lower dantian. Then imagine and feel all three channels at once and feel their connection in your lower dantian.

Add the spiritual cue: “Imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path.” Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Imagine and feel that you are breathing this universal energy along the described channels. To help with visualization you may imagine that your qi is like white misty steam.

More specifically, center your attention in your lower dantian and, as you inhale, draw the energy of the sky above you, as if it is like steam, in through the top of your head, down through the central channel to your lower dantian. Simultaneously draw the energy of the earth beneath you, like steam, up through the bottoms of your feet, through your legs to your lower dantian. As you exhale, send your breath like steam from your abdomen out through your forearms and pointed fingers.

To reiterate, inhale into the lower dantian drawing in the energy of earth and sky, like steam, along the three channels. Exhale that steam from your lower dantian out through your arms and sword fingers. Imagine and feel the paths described. Allow your breathing to be slow in speed, long in duration, deep into your abdomen, even between your inhalation and your exhalation, and soft. Your breathing should be quiet, without sound, and not forced.

Think of qigong meditation in layers. The first layer is relaxation and aligned posture. The second layer is smiling and breathing consciously. The third layer is imagining and feeling qi pathways in your body. The fourth layer is feeling the universal life force flowing within the qi pathways. Layer these cues one upon the other until they fuse into a unified experience. After going through the cues in sequence, allow the smooth flow of universal qi along the described paths to summarize the process and anchor your attention. Return to the feeling of smooth qi flow whenever your mind wanders. Return as many times as you are distracted.

Follow this practice for ten (or more) minutes. Time all of these exercises with a clock placed in front of you, in your line of vision. You can open your eyes, check the time, and return to your practice without interrupting your state of being. When you begin the exercise, check the time and then add ten minutes so you know what numbers
you are looking for without pausing to think. **If you are using the practice audio, the exercises are guided and timed for you.**

In the first days or weeks of practicing Standing Meditation, you may feel nauseous or lightheaded. This is a sign of the energy balancing process in action. If the feelings are intense, you may need to gradually work your way up to ten minutes. Also, make sure that your eyes are directed straight ahead or slightly downward, even with eyes closed. Do not let your eyes roll upward. If Standing feels good, you may gradually expand your time up to thirty minutes. The longer you practice, the greater the benefits.

After finishing Standing, lower your hands to your sides, come up out of your knee bend so your knees are only slightly bent, and practice the. . .

**Shake Your Body Technique:**

Begin to bounce gently on the balls of your feet by raising your heels up and down off the ground. Let your shoulders, elbows, wrists, and hips hang loosely, like a rag doll. Feel the vibration of your heels hitting the ground traveling up through your legs, torso, head, and arms, through all the muscles of your body, and through all your internal organs. Let your whole body shake loose. Especially, put your mind into any areas of chronic tension or pain and allow them to relax, release, and shake free. Shake your body for three minutes. This movement releases muscular tension, improves the circulation of blood and lymphatic fluid, boosts your immune system, and energizes your whole body.

At the end of three minutes, stop, be as still as you can be, and feel the sensation of your body as a whole from the inside. You may feel relaxation, warmth, tingling, or a sense of fullness. These are sensations of qi moving through your body. Imagine this energy as a white misty steam rising up through your feet, legs, torso, head, and arms. Let it fill your body evenly and completely. Once that feeling is strong, open your eyes and focus on the floor in front of you. Continue to imagine and feel that steam filling your whole body with your eyes open. Internally record the feeling of relaxation, awareness, and energy in every cell, so you can return to that sense of deep connection at any time. After spending several moments with that sensation, you are ready for sitting
meditation. If you are doing seated meditation at another time, take the feeling of Standing Meditation with you into your day.

**Sitting Meditation #1: Relaxing Down Three Lines**

As we did with Standing Meditation, we begin with the bodily cues: relax and align posture. Relaxation is key. Relaxation releases tension and opens energy flow.

Sit in an upright position on the front edge of a chair or bed, with your feet flat on the floor and parallel. Feel as if you are standing when you are sitting. This gives you the feeling of upright posture. The height of the seat should be such that your hips are level with or just above your knees. Sit far enough forward so that there is some weight in your feet. Extend your spine upright, as if a string is attached to the highest point of your head pulling gently upward. Tuck your chin slightly and roll the tip of your tongue up to touch the roof of your mouth. Look straight ahead or slightly downward, and then close your eyes lightly. Look, listen, and feel inwardly.

Drop your shoulders, let your elbows feel heavy, and rest your hands palms down on your thighs near your knees. (Each postural element is a bodily cue that affects your thoughts and emotions. Posture and its relationship to mental and emotional attitude is an important part of qigong meditation practice. These postural cues aide us in being relaxed, yet awake and alert. With repetition, this posture acts as a facilitator for entering a Core Energy State.)

Add the emotional cues: smile and breathe consciously. Allow a subtle smile of appreciation to relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Smile down through your whole body, letting your whole body soften and relax. Take several deep breaths. Allow your abdomen and lower back to expand and fill up as you inhale. Let your abdomen relax inward and empty out as you exhale. Allow your breathing to slow down, to become subtle, quiet, and soft. **Maintain your subtle smile of appreciation and breathe in and out through your nose throughout all the meditations.**

Add the mental cue: visualize a qi pathway. The qi path for the first seated meditation includes three lines: from the shoulders to the fingertips, from the hips to the toes, and from the top of the head down the spine. Begin the exercise at your right shoulder.
Add the spiritual cue: imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Imagine and feel universal qi in your right shoulder. Relax your shoulder downward and feel warmth, heaviness, relaxation, and/or "tingling" in muscles around your shoulder joint. The feeling may be strong, dull, or non-existent. If you don’t feel anything, imagine qi in your shoulder. Follow your qi like a warm liquid down into your upper arm, through your right elbow, into your right forearm, through your wrist, into the palm of your right hand, and out through your fingertips. Then feel warmth, heaviness, and relaxation filling your right arm as a whole, from your shoulder through your fingertips. Though this description is fast-paced, the practice should move slowly; feel every centimeter of your body as you go.

Next, center your attention in your right hip joint. Allow warmth, heaviness, and relaxation to fill the muscles around your hip joint and then follow qi like a warm liquid down your upper leg to your knee, then down your shin and calf, through your ankle and foot, and out your toes. Remember to go slowly. Feel your right leg as a whole, from your hip through your toes, warm, heavy, and relaxed.

Compare your right side with your left side and feel the difference. The right side will feel fuller, more relaxed, integrated, and alive.

Repeat the above sequence from your left shoulder and then from your left hip.

For the third line, focus on the sensation of warmth, heaviness, and relaxation at the crown-point of your head. Follow qi as it flows down the back of your head like a slow waterfall, down your neck, between your shoulder blades, through your lower back, through the base of your spine, and into the ground. As with the other lines, follow this line patiently. Let all tension release and relax downward from the crown to the ground.

After you have completed the three lines, enjoy the sensation of universal qi filling your whole body. Take fifteen minutes to complete this meditation sequence.

If your attention is distracted at any point in the exercise, simply, gently return to the last point of awareness and continue feeling smooth qi flow from there. If you forget where you were, begin again with your right shoulder.
If you finish the sequence and it took less than fifteen minutes, sit still and feel your body filled with universal qi for the remaining time. Return to this feeling whenever your mind wanders.

At the end of your practice, take some time to come out of the exercise. Do not rush off into the day. Open your eyes slowly and focus on the floor in front of you. Feel the pleasure of the Core Energy State. Affirm this feeling and register it in your memory. Record it in every cell of your body, so you can return to this feeling whenever you need to.

Before standing up, log your experience and comments in the Practice Log section at the end of this week's instructions. It is important to follow each of the stationary meditations, the standing and the sitting practices, with movement. Stretching, breathing, and moving helps to circulate energy and release any stagnation. After the Standing Meditation, do the Shake Your Body technique previously described.

After the sitting meditations stand, stretch, move, and breathe as follows:

1. Reach both arms overhead. Interlace your fingers and turn your palms up. Inhale through your nose and press your palms as high as you can overhead. Exhale through your mouth and lean to one side, feeling the stretch on the opposite side of your body. Inhale and return to center. Exhale and lean to the other side. Repeat each side three times.

2. Bring your hands down in front of your chest, with fingers still interlaced, and palms facing you as if you are holding a large beach ball at chest level. Inhale through your nose. Exhale through your mouth and rotate as far as you can to one side, staying upright. Inhale and return to center. Exhale and turn to the opposite side. Inhale as you return to center. Repeat three times to each side.

3. Shake out your arms and legs. Shake your legs one at a time from the hip, letting your foot hang loosely. Shake your hands from your shoulders, letting your hands hang loosely.

4. Finish your practice by placing your hands on your lower abdomen and taking three deep breathes in through your nose and out completely through your mouth. Collect qi in your lower dantian. Carry that energy into your day.
When beginning these meditations, it is likely that you will not feel sensations of relaxation, warmth, tingling, or fullness in certain areas of your body, or maybe not anywhere at all. If this is the case, don’t be worried. It may take time to feel qi. The most likely place for you to feel sensation first, and/or strongest, is in the palms of your hands. You may want to take some extra time in sensing your hands to become familiar with feeling sensation there and then see if you feel this anywhere else in your body. To reiterate, you may feel sensation or you may not. Either way, you can still follow the four cues: relax and align posture, smile and breathe consciously, visualize a qi pathway, and imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path.

Some common challenges faced when beginning meditation include:
*pain from sitting in an unsupported posture,
*distraction by being carried off in thoughts and irritation that this happens,
*a feeling of fatigue while doing the exercise, or
*depression or sadness during or after the exercise.

It may take some time to adapt to the meditation posture. If you have pain along your spine or elsewhere, you may want to sit forward for the first few minutes of your practice and then sit against a seatback for the remainder of the time. Gradually expand the time that you sit in the forward, unsupported position. You may feel the need to scratch an itch, or shift positions, or stretch at some point in the exercise. Do not fight these feelings. Simply scratch, move, or stretch as necessary and then return to the posture and meditation technique.

When your attention wanes or you are distracted by persistent thoughts, simply return to the feeling of smooth qi flow as often as you are distracted. This is the technique of qigong meditation. By repeatedly "returning" to the anchor of technique, we build lines of connection. "Come back" as many times as you "go away." For those who suffer from a severe inability to remain focused, the same rules apply. Do not label or judge yourself. Be aware of your irritation, then, let it go and return to your focus. Your ability to concentrate will improve through repetition.
Fatigue while practicing usually goes away after the first few weeks. For now, try to practice through it. See if it changes over the length of this course.

Sadness, tears, anger, or fears may bubble to the surface during meditation. The slowdown in our heart rate, respiration, brainwaves, etc. frees up energy that is used to process "old" information. Beneath our awareness, this subconscious processing heals and integrates past pain, trauma, and sensory overload.

If you find emotions welling up for no apparent reason, you are experiencing the subconscious release that is enabled by the meditative state. Maintain letting-be awareness and allow this process to run its course. If the feelings are overwhelming, divide your practice into three sessions per day and limit the focus of relaxation to your hands, your lower abdomen, or your feet (whichever best holds your attention). Focus on relaxing that area while breathing slowly, softly, and deeply for one to three minutes. As this becomes comfortable, return to Relaxing Down Three Lines.

If these or other distracting symptoms persist, instructions for dealing with them may be found in the "Frequently Asked Questions" section of this book. If negative symptoms appear and persist, it may be advisable to seek the assistance of a knowledgeable teacher or counseling professional to guide you through the difficulty. You may also email questions to me through the “Ask The Instructor” link on the website: http://www.thepowerofpractice.com

Relaxing Down Three Lines has several purposes. First, we learn to actively relax and release tension. Second, we learn to connect body, emotion, mind, and spirit. Feeling qi in our bodies grounds and connects us with what is happening in the present moment. The body is a reliable source of information once we become accustomed to feeling internal sensation. As we develop our capacity to feel qi in our bodies, we create a reference point from which we can observe, discern, and relate to those around us. We regain our sensitivity to life in general.
Although the Standing and Relaxing Down Three Lines meditations form a beneficial combination, if you have difficulty blocking out enough time in the morning, you may try doing the Standing in the morning and the Relaxation in the evening. When you do allow enough time, practice the two together. They feed each other. Remember to follow them with the movements as described.

Also, remember to record your Experiences and Comments in the Practice Log section which follows the Illustrations for Week 1.

**Log six days of practice before moving on to Week 2 of the course.**
**Week 1 Meditation Illustrations**

**Standing Meditation**

Inhale

Exhale

**Seated Meditation #1: Relaxing Down Three Lines**

Line 1: Shoulder through Fingertips
Line 2: Hip through Toes
(Right side first, then left)

Line 3: From top of head down spine
Week 1 Practice Log

WK 1, DAY 1: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_____
    Duration:_______
    Experience:

Comments:

WK 1, DAY 2: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_____
    Duration:_______
    Experience:

Comments:

WK 1, DAY 3: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_____
    Duration:_______
    Experience:
WK 1, DAY 4: Meditation: Date:______ Time:______
Duration:______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 1, DAY 5: Meditation: Date:______ Time:______
Duration:______
Experience:

Comments:
WK 1, DAY 6: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
   Duration:_______
   Experience:

   Comments:
WEEK 2

Practice Standing Meditation for ten minutes and Shake Your Body for three minutes, and then begin the Lower Dantian Breathing meditation.

**Sitting Meditation #2: Lower Dantian Breathing**

In Week 2, we work with a new seated meditation in place of Relaxing Down Three Lines. If you found the first week's seated meditation especially effective, you can return to it as part of your Daily Practice Plan after the seven weeks of the course. For now, focus on the seated meditation for this week.

Before describing this week's sitting meditation, let's talk briefly about breathing. Mindful breathing is a simple, yet powerful practice. Deep breathing has energizing qualities: it fills us with oxygen and helps circulate it through our bodies. Full breathing gives us postural support and eases the pressure on our back and neck muscles.

Tension-holding patterns inhibit us from breathing fully. Short, rapid breathing is one sign of acute stress. Shallow, constricted breathing is a sign of chronic tension. On the other hand, breathing that is mindfully directed into an area of tension can facilitate release. This release can also happen subconsciously and is stimulated by practicing a meditation that we will call Lower Dantian Breathing (or Full Breathing).

In addition, attention to the breath is an effective way of putting us into the present moment. It connects us with the most vital and basic event that is taking place here and now: we are alive and breathing. When we get caught up in the stress of what has been in the past or what might be in the future, our breath can bring us back into the moment "right now" so we can take action and accomplish what we need to do.
Breathing is a great tool to balance emotions.

Mindful breathing connects the conscious mind with the subconscious. Without our attention, breathing, like most other bodily processes, occurs subconsciously. By attending to the breath we link the most vital subconscious aspect of our being with our conscious awareness.
Lower Dantian Breathing is initiated by the diaphragm. The diaphragm is a muscle situated along the bottom edge of the ribs, over the stomach, spleen, and liver and under the heart and lungs. In its resting position, the diaphragm has a domelike shape over the lower, internal organs.

When the diaphragm contracts, it flattens downward, pressing on the organs below and causing the lower abdominal region to expand slightly. This action opens space for the lungs to expand above. The expansion of the lungs creates a vacuum that draws air in to fill the lungs from bottom to top. As the lungs fill, the rib cage lifts and expands to accommodate more air.

To exhale, the diaphragm returns to its domed shape, pushing air upward out of the lungs. This is also aided by the elasticity of the lungs and the intercostal muscles of the ribs returning to their resting positions.

With the image of this process in your mind, try to feel this happening in your body. Initiate a full in-breath by gently expanding the lower abdominal area. (As stated, what is actually happening is that the diaphragm is pressing downward on the internal organs, and hence the abdominal cavity expands.) Let the filling rise upward and outward so that the rib cage lifts and expands. Lower Dantian Breathing should feel like filling up your entire abdominal region and thoracic cavity from bottom to top. The exhalation should be a relaxed emptying of the same space. The abdominal wall flattens back toward the spine and the ribcage returns to its resting position.

Follow this process, do not force it. Initially, you may take a few exaggerated breaths to get a feel for the dynamics of what happens more subtly in breathing at a natural relaxed level.

The meditation exercise for this week is to focus your attention into the process of Lower Dantian Breathing for fifteen minutes. Sit on the front edge of a chair or bed and settle into your meditation cues. Begin with the bodily cues: relax and align your posture (reread the seated posture points from Week 1).

Add the emotional cues: smile and breathe consciously. Allow a subtle smile of appreciation to relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Smile down through your whole body, allowing your whole body to soften and relax. Focus into your lower abdomen. Breathe consciously as described above. As you inhale, allow the lower
abdomen and lower back to fill and expand gently and easily. As you exhale, feel the lower abdomen empty and flatten back toward your spine. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Add the mental cue: visualize a qi pathway. In this case, imagine a glowing sphere, the lower dantian, in your lower abdomen. Imagine that the lower dantian sphere expands and fills up as you inhale and relaxes inward and empties out as you exhale.

Add the spiritual cue: imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Feel that energy infusing the sphere in your lower abdomen. Imagine that your breath feeds this sphere of energy, so that it glows warmer and brighter and feels heavier.

Layer the four cues one upon the other and allow them to fuse into a unified experience. Allow the feeling of smooth qi flow in the lower dantian to summarize the process and anchor your attention. Whenever your attention wanders, simply and gently recognize that you have been distracted, and return to the breathing sphere of qi in your lower abdomen. Return as many times as your attention is pulled away.

As the exercise progresses, your breathing may have different rates and different volumes of expansion. Allow your breath to operate as it wants to. Do not try to breathe "correctly" or as you "should" do it. Do not interfere, just observe it, feel it, let it be. At certain times, your breathing may become so subtle and quiet that it seems to disappear. In qigong meditation practice, this is called the fetal breath; it's one of life's great pleasures. Become sensitive to that subtle filling and emptying. Wait for it, allow it to happen.

To reemphasize, whenever you become aware of any thoughts, commentary, analysis, feelings, images, inspirations, sensations, etc., let them pass by and gently return attention to the breathing sphere of qi in your lower abdomen. Do not resist any thought, do not follow any thought. Note them, let them go, and return to the anchor of technique. Become absolutely interested in following your breath, as if nothing else matters at this moment.

The purpose of this week's seated meditation is to anchor us in our breathing process and to open it to the Lower Dantian Breathing pattern. Lower Dantian Breathing, as previously described, has a relaxing effect. Because major energetic meridians run
through your diaphragm, deep breathing also helps circulate energy throughout your body. You may find yourself naturally or purposely taking deep breaths during the week to center yourself. As we said earlier, attention to breathing is a way of coming back to being in the present when expectations or fears pull us away.

After meditating in your breath for fifteen minutes, slowly open your eyes and focus on the floor in front of you. Feel your body as a whole from the inside. Record the feeling of qi in every cell so you can return to it at any time. Then, take a few minutes to record your observations and comments in the Practice Log section.

When you are finished, take a few moments to scan your body for any areas of tension. Feel which muscles are tight. Squeeze them to emphasize the contraction and to become more aware of how they are being held. Then find a position that lengthens those muscles and stretches them out. For example, if your neck muscles are tense, pull your shoulders up and squeeze them even tighter. Next, let your shoulders drop and lean your head to one side, stretching the muscles on the side of your neck. Once you feel that stretch, take a deep full breath and draw it into the muscles you are stretching. Imagine your breath entering those muscles and gently expand and stretch them further. Exhale and feel as if those muscles are emptying out and releasing completely. Repeat on the other side. Any stretch can be enhanced by breathing into it. Experiment. Feel the stretches you need the most.

In addition to the stretches that you come to on your own, practice the four movements suggested in Week 1 for after the seated meditations. When you are finished, take the feeling of qi with you into the day.

**Log six days of practice before continuing on to Week 3.**
Week 2 Meditation Illustrations

Standing Meditation

Inhale

Exhale

Seated Meditation #2: Lower Dantian Breathing

Inhale

Exhale
Week 2 Practice Log

WK 2, DAY 1: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
  Duration:_______
  Experience:

Comments:

WK 2, DAY 2: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
  Duration:_______
  Experience:

Comments:

WK 2, DAY 3: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
  Duration:_______
  Experience:
Comments:

WK 2, DAY 4: Meditation
Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 2, DAY 5: Meditation
Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:
WK 2, DAY 6: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
   Duration:_______
   Experience:

Comments:
WEEK 3

Practice Standing Meditation for ten minutes and Shake Your Body for three minutes then begin the Two Dantian Breathing meditation.

**Sitting Meditation #3: Two Dantian Breathing**

This week we practice the third of our preparatory meditations, Two Dantian Breathing, sometimes called Reverse Breathing or Contrary Breathing. The first three meditations train us to relax, sense, and focus in ways that enable us to work directly with specific qi pathways. In the initial weeks, we quiet the reactive mind, slow our brainwaves, and enter into centered awareness. In this third week, we again use breath as a meditative tool.

Sit in the same position on the front edge of a chair. Activate the bodily cues: relax and align posture. Refer to the posture cues from Week 1. Let all tension release down and out of your body. Focus your attention inward.

Add the emotional cues: smile and breathe consciously. Let the feeling of smiling with appreciation relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Smile down through your whole body, letting your whole body soften and relax. Allow your breathing to slow down, to become quiet and soft. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Add the mental cue: visualize a qi pathway. The path this week is an energy sphere in the lower abdomen (lower dantian), an energy sphere in the center of the chest (middle dantian), and a channel connecting the two (central channel). Imagine and feel both energy spheres and the channel between them.

Add the spiritual cue: imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Imagine universal qi like steam. As you inhale, draw that steam from the lower dantian upward through the central channel into the middle dantian. Draw your lower abdomen inward slightly as you inhale. As you exhale send qi, like steam, from the middle dantian downward through the central channel into the lower dantian. Allow your abdomen to expand slightly as you exhale.
Two dantian breathing builds energy in the lower dantian and opens the path between the lower and the middle dantian. Think of the lower dantian as a storehouse for qi.

To re-iterate this practice: slowly inhale, draw your lower abdomen inward, and draw your breath upward through the central channel into your middle dantian. Slowly exhale, allow your lower abdomen to expand slightly, and send your breath downward through the central channel to your lower dantian. Don't force this to be a large movement. Allow your breathing to be quiet and subtle. Imagine that your breath is clearing a pathway between the middle and the lower dantians. Pause at the end of inhalation and focus on the sphere in the center of your chest. Pause at the end of exhalation and focus on the sphere in the center of your lower abdomen.

Practice Two Dantian Breathing for fifteen minutes.

As before, if you become aware of any thoughts, images, feelings, sensations, or other distractions from your focus, simply recognize them, let them pass by, and gently return to feeling smooth qi flow in the two dantian breathing pattern. Become absolutely interested in following your breathing as if nothing else matters at this moment.

After fifteen minutes, take several slow full breaths using the lower dantian breathing pattern as done in the second week. Inhale and allow your abdomen to expand, exhale and relax your abdomen inward. Slowly open your eyes. Feel your body as a whole from the inside. Record the feeling of universal qi in every cell, so you can return to that feeling at any time. Write down your observations and comments in the Practice Log section.

Log six days of practice before moving on to Week 4.
Week 3 Meditation Illustrations

Standing Meditation

Seated Meditation #3: Two Dantian Breathing
Week 3 Practice Log

WK 3, DAY 1: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 3, DAY 2: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 3, DAY 3: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:
WK 3, DAY 4: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
   Duration:_______
   Experience:

Comments:

WK 3, DAY 5: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
   Duration:_______
   Experience:

Comments:
WK 3, DAY 6: Meditation: Date:______ Time:______
  Duration:______
  Experience:

Comments:
WEEK 4

Practice Standing Meditation for ten minutes and Shake Your Body for three minutes, then, begin the Inner Smile meditation.

Sitting Meditation #4: The Inner Smile

This week we follow qi throughout our internal organs and spine. The most immediate results of this practice include heightened immune response and greater overall health and well-being. This is a great meditation for creating vitality. Directing attention in this way empowers us to take charge of our health.

As usual, we begin with the bodily cues. Relax and align posture: follow the cues for the seated meditation given in Week 1. As always, roll the tip of your tongue up to touch the roof of your mouth.

Add the emotional cues: smile and breathe consciously. Allow a smile of appreciation to relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Take a few full breaths, and settle into centered awareness. Let your concerns dissolve in your breathing and give yourself the next fifteen minutes to be here now. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Add the mental cue: visualize a qi pathway. The Inner Smile follows three paths through the internal organs and spine. The first path we will follow is called the yin organ path. The yin organs include the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, adrenals, spleen, and pancreas.

To start the path, direct your attention to your eyes and forehead. Relaxing your eyes has a calming effect on the entire nervous system. The nervous system in turn sends these calming signals to every organ in the body.

Add the spiritual cue: imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Imagine and feel that energy as a soothing white light shining on your forehead and bringing a smile into your eyes. Allow that smiling radiant energy to warm and soften your eyes and forehead.
Continue the path by allowing the warm smiling energy to flow down over your face, down the front of your throat, and into to your heart. Feel your heart relax and warm with universal qi. Let that energy saturate every blood cell that is pumped from your heart to the rest of your body. Take a few moments to settle your attention in your heart. If you are visually oriented, combine the feeling of smiling with the color ruby red filling your heart.

From your heart, follow the smiling energy to your lungs. Feel your lungs relax and open. Breathe in warm smiling energy so that it fills your lungs from bottom to top. Spend enough time smiling into the lungs to feel the sensation saturate every cell. Combine the feeling of smiling with the color pearl white filling your lungs.

From your lungs, follow the smiling energy to your liver, just below your ribs on the right side. Let your smile relax and soften your liver. Combine the feeling of smiling with the color emerald green filling your liver. Spend time with your liver, then move through the rest of the first path.

Don't rush this practice. Let energy saturate every organ fully before moving on to the next. From the liver follow the smiling energy around your ribs on the right side to your kidneys, at the base of your ribs on either side of your spine. Smile into your kidneys. Combine the feeling of smiling with the color sapphire blue filling your kidneys.

From the kidneys follow the smiling energy around your ribs on the left side to the front of your body. Smile into your spleen, just to the left of your stomach, and into your pancreas, just behind your stomach. Combine the feeling of smiling with the color solar yellow filling your spleen and pancreas. After spending some time with these organs, finish the path by following the smiling energy to your navel. Then allow the energy to collect in the lower dantian, your lower abdomen.

Second Path: Return your attention to the warm smiling energy at your forehead. The second path of the Inner Smile is your digestive system. Allow the warm smiling energy to wash down your face and into your mouth. Take a deep swallow and imagine and feel qi traveling down your throat to your stomach. From your stomach follow the qi down through your small intestine in the center of your abdomen. From the small intestine follow the qi into the large intestine which wraps from the center of your lower
abdomen up your right side, across your upper abdomen from right to left, and then down the left side of your abdomen and out of your body at your anus.

Third Path: Return your attention to the warm smiling energy at your forehead and eyes. Draw that energy back through the center of your brain, back to the point where your spine enters your skull. From there, follow the smiling energy slowly down through each vertebrae in your spine, to your sacrum, and then to the tip of your tailbone.

Finish the Inner Smile by feeling warm smiling energy filling your body as a whole. Allow it to saturate every cell. Imprint that feeling so you can return to it at any time.

As usual, take your time at the end of the meditation. Open your eyes slowly and record your observations and comments in the Practice Log section. Stand, stretch as described for the previous weeks, and shake out your arms and legs.

**Log six days of practice before moving on to Week 5.**
Week 4 Meditation Illustrations

Standing Meditation

Inhale

Exhale

Seated Meditation #4: The Inner Smile

Yin Organ Path: Eyes, Heart, Lungs, Liver (Green)
Spleen & Pancreas (Yellow)
Lower Dantian

Kidneys
Second Path: Digestive System:
Forehead & Eyes, Mouth, Throat,
Stomach (Red), Small Intestine (Yellow)
Large Intestine (Orange).

Third Path: Forehead & Eyes,
Center of Brain, Down Spine

Week 4 Practice Log
WK 4, DAY 1: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:
Leak Qigong Meditation

WK 4, DAY 2: Meditation
Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 4, DAY 3: Meditation
Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 4, DAY 4: Meditation
Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:
WK 4, DAY 5: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
   Duration:_______
   Experience:

Comments:

WK 4, DAY 6: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
   Duration:_______
   Experience:

Comments:
WEEK 5

Practice Standing Meditation for ten minutes and Shake Your Body for three minutes, then, begin the Small Heaven meditation.

**Sitting Meditation #5: Small Heaven**

Small Heaven is a meditation that connects two major energy flows, the Governor channel (Du Mai meridian), which flows up the spine, and the Conception channel (Ren Mai meridian), which moves down the front centerline of the body. There are several sources through which this exercise has come to the Western world. In particular, works by Mantak Chia give detailed explanations. (See "Suggested Reading.")

Small Heaven is an important discipline for qigong meditation practitioners as well as body-energy therapists. Along with the Inner Smile, it brings a balanced, smooth flow to the subtle energies and promotes the health of the spine, central nervous system, and all internal organs. Effective practice of Small Heaven lays the groundwork so that even more advanced energetic practices can be done safely and effectively.

As usual, begin seated on the front edge of a chair or bed. Begin with the bodily cues: relax and align posture as done in previous weeks.

Add the emotional cues: smile and breathe consciously. Let the feeling of smiling with appreciation relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Smile down through your whole body, relaxing and softening your whole body. Place your hands on your lower abdomen and feel the expansion and relaxation of your breathing against your hands. When the energy has built up there, rest your hands on your thighs. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Add the mental cue: visualize a qi pathway. The pathway for this meditation is to imagine a series of accupoints in a circuit around your body. The first focal point for Small Heaven is below the navel, between your hips, just inside your lower abdominal wall. This point is in front of the lower (Xia) dantian and we refer to it as the Xia dantian point. (For assistance locating any of these points, refer to the illustration at the end of this section.) Gently contract that point a few times to activate it and to sensitize you to
it, then relax and imagine the point as a pearl. Whether you feel it or not, direct your attention to the Xia dantian point and focus there.

Add the spiritual cue: imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Imagine and feel qi flowing into the pearl so that it glows warm and bright. If your mind wanders, bring it back to the feeling of qi in the pearl.

From the Xia dantian point, follow the qi pearl downward to the perineum (Hui Yin point), between the genitals and anus. Imagine that the pearl leaves a trail of qi between the accupoints. Contract the Hui Yin point a few times, then relax and imagine the glowing pearl there. Allow the pearl to gradually expand and glow brighter. Sensation may be subtle and transitory at first, or you may not feel anything at all. Simply focus your attention, visualize, and feel. Doing the practice is success, no matter what the specific effects are. Practice is progress.

From the Hui Yin point, direct attention back and up to the lower tip of the tailbone (Wei Lu point). At the tailbone, contract, relax, and imagine the glowing pearl. Feel it tingle. Let it grow in warmth and radiance.

At certain points in this exercise, you may find it hard to focus on the suggested area. That is normal. Simply direct your attention to that area for a period of time.

It is your concentration on the area and not the specific sensation, or lack of it that is most important. In qigong practice it is said that: "The mind leads the qi, and the qi follows the mind." Develop your ability to focus your mind.

Repeat the same practice through the rest of the points in this sequence. Contract, relax, and focus on a pearl of qi at each of these points. Imagine that the pearl leaves an energetic trail from one point to the next. Spend some time allowing your attention to settle into each area. Do not rush to be done. It's better not to practice at all then to rush through it.

From the Wei Lu point, move up to the kidney (Ming Men) point, between lumbar vertebrae two and three, at the level of your elbows.

From there, move upward to the Da Zhui point, which is located at the spine bump (C7 vertebrae) at the base of your neck.
Move from the Da Zhui point upward to where your spine enters your skull, the Yu Zhen point. The Yu Zhen is also called the "jade pillow."

From the jade pillow, move to the crown (Bai Hui) point on top of your head.

From the Bai Hui point, move downward to the "third eye" (Sang dantian) point on your forehead, between and just above your eyebrows.

From the Sang dantian, move downward through the tip of your tongue (which is curled up to touch the roof of your mouth, as it is for all of the meditation exercises) to the Zhong dantian (heart) point in the center of your sternum.

From the Zhong dantian point, follow the qi pearl downward and return to the Xia dantian point where you began. Although we have moved quickly through this description, do not hurry through your practice. Take time to put your mental focus and spiritual intention into each point. Allow each point to infuse with universal qi.

If one circuit takes less than fifteen minutes, repeat the cycle. Always finish at the Xia dantian. Then allow qi to collect in the lower abdomen. Slowly open your eyes. Feel the sensation of your body as a whole from the inside. Record the feeling of qi in every cell so you can return to that sense of relaxation, awareness, and vitality at any time. Take time to log and comment on your experience in the Practice Log. Then stand, stretch, and shake out your arms and legs.

Log six days of practice before moving on to Week 6.
Week 5 Meditation Illustrations

Standing Meditation

Seated Meditation #5: Small Heaven

Order of Small Heaven Circulation: Xia Dantian, Hui Yin, Wei Lu, Ming Men, Da Zhui, Yu Chen, Bai Hui, Sang Dantian, Chong Dantian, Xia Dantian
Week 5 Practice Log

WK 5, DAY 1: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 5, DAY 2: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 5, DAY 3: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:
WK 5, DAY 4: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
  Duration:_______
  Experience:

Comments:

WK 5, DAY 5: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
  Duration:_______
  Experience:

Comments:
WK 5, DAY 6: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______

Duration:_______

Experience:

Comments:
WEEK 6

Practice Standing Meditation for ten minutes and Shake Your Body for three minutes, then begin the Three Dantians and the Central Channel meditation.

**Sitting Meditation #6: Three Dantians and the Central Channel**

The meditations in this course are foundational qigong practices. By working with them consistently you will receive phenomenal results in terms of health, vitality, healing, and self-development. They lay the groundwork for well-being by enabling you to feel, take in, store, and circulate life energy.

---

**The goal of qigong meditation is to become aware of universal qi, to facilitate its smooth flow throughout the body as a whole, and to refine it by conscious awareness of your oneness with the wholeness of life.**

---

The Daoists, who are masters of subtle energy, work with three primary energy centers, each of which is associated with a certain energetic quality or frequency. They call these the three dantian (pronounced "don-tee-en" and meaning "field of the elixir" as mentioned earlier). The elixir produced by cultivating universal qi in the three dantians gives us health, longevity, and spiritual enlightenment. Because of these profound effects you may also hear the dantians referred to as the Three Treasures.

The lower (Xia) dantian is located three finger widths below the navel, in the lower abdomen (three-sevenths of the way from the front to the back of the body). The middle (Zhong) dantian is located in the center of the chest. The upper (Sang) dantian is located in the center of the head at the intersection of energetic lines from the forehead, the crown-point, and the base of the skull.

These elixir fields are developed within the body by focusing attention. Concentrated attention draws energy into an area developing its capacity. The three dantians are highly beneficial places in which to store qi and from which to circulate it.

The Xia dantian is the center of gravity, grounding, stability, mobility, and balance for the body, as well as being the reservoir for jing (sexual energy). This energy
is associated with the body and with our hereditary structure, health, vitality, and physical stamina. It is related to the element of water and to the reproductive organs and fluids. It is also the center for primary emotions such as trust and fear. Concentration on the lower dantian develops our capacity for sensitivity and personal presence within the larger energetic field.

The Zhong dantian has purifying and relational functions. It is the center of emotion. The energy here is associated with heart awareness, purifying emotions, respiration (drawing qi energy from the environment), and the health of the internal organs. It is affiliated with love and refined qualities of exchange with others in the world. The middle dantian resolves the energies of the lower and upper dantians into a dynamic unity. Focusing on opening this energy center develops our capacity for love and compassion.

The Sang dantian is associated with shen energy and powers of mind and awareness, including attention, concentration, imagination, observation, and analytical intelligence, as well as with regulating levels of tension and relaxation in the body. The energy here is light and high frequency. Focus on the upper dantian clears the mind and facilitates the relaxation response, which slows heart rate and respiration while releasing muscle tension. In the upper dantian you may hear the eternal vibration of creation, the "OM." Listening to this internal sound has synchronizing and refining effects upon the brain and central nervous system.

Connecting the three dantians is the central channel (Chong Mai) meridian. For the purposes of this exercise, we describe the central channel as starting at the perineum (Hui Yin), between the genitals and anus. The channel can be visualized as an energetic cylinder extending from the Hui Yin upward in front of and including the spine through the three dantians to the top of the head (Bai Hui). This channel can also be described as extending farther downward, connecting us to earth energies, and upward, connecting us to higher levels of consciousness. For this meditation, we will focus on the channel as it is described within the body. Think of the central channel as your energetic core. The central channel relates to spiritual awareness and to the intentional infusion of life energy from the universal field.
Certainly this is a brief outline of this primary energetic template, but it is sufficient for leading us into practice. In line with the intention of this course, we are most interested in developing the felt experience of these energies rather than in gaining detailed theoretical information. As we explore our subtle energy system, it will inform us with what we need to know.

As in previous weeks, we begin the Three Dantians and the Central Channel meditation with bodily cues: relax and align posture. Review the posture points from Week 1.

Add the emotional cues: smile and breathe consciously. Let the feeling of an appreciative smile relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Smile down through your whole body, letting your whole body soften and relax. Focus into your lower abdomen and take several slow full breaths. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Add the mental cue: visualize a qi pathway. The qi pathway for this week includes the three dantians and the central channel connecting them. Imagine and feel all three dantians and the central channel.

Add the spiritual cue: imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Imagine and feel qi infusing the sphere in your lower dantian. Center your mind there. As you inhale, allow this sphere to fill up and brighten. As in Lower Dantian Breathing, allow your breath to gently expand the lower abdominal area and lower back. With each exhalation, the sphere relaxes inward and empties out. Expand on inhalation, relax inward on exhalation.

When you have given sufficient attention to the lower dantian, slowly move your attention upward through the central channel to the middle dantian, in the center of your chest. Feel the connection between the lower and the middle dantians. Then, inhale and feel a sphere of qi expand at the middle dantian. Exhale and allow the sphere to relax inward and empty out. Settle your attention in this process. If your mind wanders at any point, simply and gently return to your focus on the qi sphere at the middle dantian. Bring your attention back as many times as you wander off.

When you are ready, move your attention up through the central channel to the upper dantian in the center of your brain. Feel the connection between the middle and
upper dantians. Then, inhale and feel a sphere of qi expand in the center of your brain. Exhale and feel it relax inward and empty out. Feel relaxation and peace saturating the center of your brain. At some point you may "hear," as if with inner ears, the hum of the universe, the "OM." If you hear this subtle sound, listen deeply into it. Whether that eternal vibration comes to you or not, center your mind in the upper dantian.

When you are ready, allow that vibration of peace and relaxation in the center of your brain to flow down the central channel into the middle dantian. Allow it to settle there. Feel love and compassion in your middle dantian. Center your mind there for a while. Then, allow that feeling to flow down through the central channel to the lower dantian. Collect qi in the lower dantian and allow any thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, memories, worries, etc. to dissolve there. Feel a deep sense of peace, relaxation, and vitality in your lower abdomen.

If the path up and down through the central channel took less than fifteen minutes repeat the process focusing on each of the three dantians as you arrive at them. Always end by returning to the lower dantian and allowing qi to collect there. After fifteen minutes, slowly open your eyes. Feel the sensation of your body as a whole from the inside. Allow qi to saturate every cell. Record that sensation internally so you can return to it at any time.

Take some time for note taking. Log and comment on your experience. Then stand, stretch, and shake out your arms and legs.

**Log six days of practice before moving on to Week 7.**
Week 6 Meditation Illustrations

Standing Meditation

Seated Meditation #6: Three Dantians & Central Channel
Week 6 Practice Log

WK 6, DAY 1: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 6, DAY 2: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 6, DAY 3: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:
WK 6, DAY 4: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
    Duration:_______
    Experience:

Comments:

WK 6, DAY 5: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
    Duration:_______
    Experience:

Comments:
LEARN QIGONG MEDITATION

WK 6, DAY 6: Meditation: Date:________ Time:________

Duration:_______

Experience:

Comments:
WEEK 7

Practice Standing Meditation for ten minutes and Shake Your Body for three minutes, then begin The Empty Vessel meditation.

**Sitting Meditation #7: The Empty Vessel**

Assume the same seated posture as in previous sitting meditation exercises. Add the bodily cues for relaxation and postural alignment. Release all tension downwards. Let your arms and legs feel heavy. For this meditation, cup your hands, one in the other, palm up, in your lap, with your thumbs touching. As usual, your head is upright with your spine gently extended. Together your feet, legs, hips, forearms, cupped hands, and lower abdomen are heavy and form the base of your empty vessel. The solid base of your vessel grounds you in the present moment.

Add the emotional cues: smile and breathe consciously. Allow an appreciative smile to relax and soften your face, eyes, and forehead. Smile down through your whole body, letting your whole body relax and soften. Focus into your lower abdomen and become aware of your breathing. Allow your breathing to slow down and become quiet and soft. Breathe in and out through your nose.

Add the mental cue: visualize the following qi pathway: draw your breath downward and then let it fill you up and define the shape of an empty vessel. Imagine that your vessel is the shape of a luminous egg. Your torso, neck, and head form an open receptacle. The word "Empty" in the name of this meditation emphasizes the spacious quality of subtle energy. The space inside the vessel is open and clear. You may see this space as a blank screen. Imagine any distracting thoughts, feelings, or sensations dissolving into emptiness on that screen. In the midst of this empty vessel center your mind into the center of your brain (physiologically speaking, the area of the brain stem and limbic brain; energetically speaking, the upper dantian).

The brain stem controls your heart rate, respiration, and levels of tension and relaxation throughout your body. The limbic brain houses emotions and memories. Relaxing these areas sends calmer synchronizing brainwave frequencies throughout your body.
brain as a whole. Neurotransmitters are released into the brain spurring the production of new neural connections and the overriding of negative thought patterns. Focusing into the center of the brain strongly internalizes attention enabling you to sense inwardly and feel your energy as a whole. Settling into a single-pointed focus in the center of your brain stills the movements of thoughts and leads you into a nurturing solitude.

Add the spiritual cue: imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Feel the life force within. Core energy is the universal life force within you. Imagine and feel qi radiating upward and outward from the center of your brain. Allow a feeling of calm, peaceful, cool spiritual energy to reside there. Whenever you are distracted, return to the feeling of qi flowing upward and forward from the center of your brain. If you are visually oriented, imagine this energy being a deep indigo blue color.

As stated previously, qi is discovered by sensing the "inner body." Once perceived, this subtle body is found to fill the physical body and extend beyond it. It is found to be integrated, whole, and more spacious than solid. It is found to be inseparably one with the energetic field of creation. When you are present in your inner qi body you may open yourself to a state of transcendence of your normal ego sense of self and know yourself as one with the wholeness of life.

When transcendence of your normal ego sense of self occurs, there is no need for meditative technique. You will rest in open clear awareness, the state Master Hao calls "Nothing." In this state, you experience pure consciousness without an object.

To review, the Empty Vessel meditation has four cues which you layer one upon the other until they fuse into a unified experience: (1) Sit relaxed with aligned posture and feel the solid, rooted, heavy base formed by your feet, legs, hips, hands, and lower abdomen. (2) Smile and breathe consciously. (3) Visualize yourself as an empty vessel by imagining the shape of a luminous egg and feeling open clear space through your torso, upper arms, and head. In the midst of the empty vessel, focus into the center of your brain, the upper dantian. (4) Imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path. Imagine and feel qi flowing upward and forward from the center of your brain, enlightening your mind. Whenever you become aware of any thought, feeling, image, or sensation, simply note it, and let it dissolve in the center of your brain. Allow a feeling of calm, peaceful, cool energy to reside there. Imagine this energy being a deep indigo blue.
In this meditation you may experience the seamless, irreducible field of universal qi. You may find yourself in gentle, rhythmic movements such as rocking, bobbing, or circling. If you do, let them be. Do not try to be still and do not try to move. This meditation is excellent for letting go of "trying too hard."

If you allow yourself to enter deeply into the center of your brain, you may hear, emanating from your brain stem, the inward hum of universal qi. The sound of the subtle energy currents has been called the "OM" vibration. Attending to this vibration integrates the four energies of self and bathes the cells of the body in finer frequencies. If you hear or feel this subtle hum, like the soft purring of a smooth engine or like the wind blowing, let it capture your attention and draw you deeper. Let it radiate upward to enlighten your upper brain. At the end of the meditation, let the energy flow downward to fill the empty vessel.

Whether you hear this sound or feel the energy or not, the important point of this meditation is to maintain an attitude of attentive receptivity (be open and empty of self concerns). Look, listen, and feel into the center of your brain. Allow the energy of universal qi to work within you.

Focusing on qi in the brain stem and limbic brain can powerfully alter your brain chemistry without any negative side effects. This practice can radically change the way you think, feel, and act. Since your being attracts your life, this practice can set in motion real life transformation.

After fifteen minutes or more of this practice, allow the positive energy in your upper dantian to flow downward and saturate your whole body. Then, take time to come back to the sounds and the feeling of the space around you. Slowly open your eyes. Feel your body as a whole from the inside with your eyes open. Record the feeling of universal qi in every cell, so you can return to it whenever you are drawn into stress. Make notes on your experience in the Practice Log section. Then, stand, stretch, and shake out as usual.

Log six days of practice, then read FAQs, and start The Daily Practice Log.
Week 7 Meditation Illustrations

Standing Meditation

Seated Meditation #7: The Empty Vessel
Week 7 Practice Log

WK 7, DAY 1: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 7, DAY 2: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:

Comments:

WK 7, DAY 3, Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
Duration:_______
Experience:
WK 7, DAY 4: Meditation: Date:______ Time:______
   Duration:______
   Experience:

Comments:

WK 7, DAY 5: Meditation: Date:______ Time:______
   Duration:______
   Experience:

Comments:
WK 7, DAY 6: Meditation: Date:_______ Time:_______
   Duration:_______
   Experience:

Comments:
Q: My back and neck hurt from sitting upright without back support during the meditation exercises. Do I have to sit this way?

A: The purpose of the posture is several-fold. First, this position requires the least expenditure of energy to maintain once the muscles in your body relax their tension. Given our skeletal structure, this posture expresses your most efficient alignment with gravity. By attending to posture, we see where we hold tension so that we can actively release it.

Second, sitting in this posture will train the muscles in your body to be able to maintain good posture.

Third, this posture becomes a bodily cue to relaxed awareness. In time, simply sitting into this posture will lead you into a centered state. Upright posture enhances energy flow.

Fourth, upright posture signals the body to be awake and alert while relaxing all tension. It is a cue that awakens us.

If you have difficulty maintaining this posture, try it for a short time during the beginning of the practice period, then sit back against a back support for the remainder of the session. Gradually expand the time that you sit upright at the front edge of your seat. With consistent practice, as tension relaxes and muscles strengthen, the upright, unsupported position will be comfortable and even pleasurable. Focusing on filling your abdominal and chest cavity with your breath as you meditate will also give your spine support.

Certain people are not able to sit in this posture due to physical challenges. If that is the case, find the most comfortable, least supported, upright position possible.

Pain and/or fatigue during practice may be a sign of tension release. During these exercises there is a great deal going on beneath awareness. The processing of past pain and trauma releases bodily tension associated with past events. When this happens, our bodies may feel overwhelmed by pain or fatigue. This is a natural part of the practice. If
these symptoms are quite severe, you may want to reduce the length of your meditation sessions for a period of time.

Q: I'm not a morning person. Do I have to get up early so that I do my meditation first thing?

A: Practicing first thing in the morning serves several purposes. First of all, we are in a slower metabolic, cardio-respiratory, and brain-wave state that is conducive to meditating. There is also some research to suggest that the body's adrenal system is in an alerted state from the hours of 4 to 8 A.M. and that practicing at this time may have beneficial calming and settling effects.

Second, getting up early is a discipline. If these exercises are important to us, we will wake up early to make time for them. This builds our will power and empowers us in all areas of our lives.

Third, if we do not practice first thing, it may not get done that day. Daily activities have a way of pushing aside the priority of practice. Only by making time first thing are we assured of getting in our session.

Finally, practicing first thing sets a positive reference point for the day. When we get entangled in the demands of our day, we can return to centered awareness.

Most important, though, is to find some time to practice. You can receive great benefit from this work no matter what time of day you practice. Many people find that meditating right before bedtime is the most convenient and effective time.

Many people find that a few short meditation sessions at opportune moments during the day greatly enhance the overall effect of their practice. Let inner wisdom guide you.

Q: Why meditate for fifteen minutes?

A: After the preparation of Standing Meditation and Shake Your Body, fifteen minutes is long enough to settle into an experience of inner peace and receive the benefits, yet short enough that we, in our busy culture, can fit it into the day.

It is possible, on the other hand, to overdo your practice. In some cases, people have been known to become addicted to the experience and to use it in an unhealthy way. (Excessive would be many hours every day.) I recommend that you keep to fifteen to thirty minutes once or twice a day at the beginning of your practice. More than that may
overload your system with subconscious processing. As we mentioned earlier, the state induced by meditation frees up energy that is used to process old information, trauma, or pain that may have been held in tension for years awaiting release. The initial effects of this release can result in drowsiness, light-headedness, or intense images. By limiting meditation time in the initial stages of practice, we allow this processing to occur gradually so that it does not overwhelm us.

After several weeks or months of practice, expand your meditation time as it feels right. In general, except in extraordinary situations, keep meditation to an hour or less, once or twice daily. As suggested in the previous answer, several short sessions throughout the day may be a better fit for some personalities and lifestyles.

Q: My mind wanders and "chatters" during the entire meditation period. I'm frustrated. What should I do?

A: Thoughts and mental chatter are a natural part of this process. You may find quite unusual and persistent images and sensations. These are the by-products of psychological processes of integration. Whatever their source, the key is to note them and let them pass through; do not resist them and do not follow them.

Simply, gently, repeatedly return to the cues of the particular meditation that you are following. Return to your cues as many times as you are distracted. In time, through consistent practice, your relationship to this mental chatter will change. Mental chatter occurs on a surface level, meditation connects us to deeper currents. Other types of therapy can take us into interacting with the stream of consciousness and allow it to speak to us. Take time for this other work if it appeals to you. During the time that you have committed to meditation practice, let any thoughts, feelings, and sensations pass by and return to your focus on smooth qi flow within the particular qi pathway.

Q: I get some great inspirations, problem solutions, and powerful images during my meditation time. Can I take a brief break and write them down?

A: As stated above, the thinking mind loves to chatter. It is in the habit of nonstop association and is quite inventive in trying to get us to pay attention to it. We are so accustomed to these words in our head that we identify ourselves with them. During meditation practice, we see that this mental talk is not who we are. We let it pass by as surface waves.
Meditation changes our relationship to the words in our head. If we attend to our mental monologue and interrupt practice, we perpetuate attachment to it. If an inspiration or solution is truly valuable, it will be with us at the end of the practice period or later when it is needed. Let it go and return to the meditation cues for the week. When we detach from being caught up in our thoughts, we can connect with our essential being.

Q: I have some disturbing, violent images and feelings during many of my meditation sessions. I feel more negative than ever. I thought this work was supposed to make me feel good. I’m depressed. Sometimes I just start to cry for no reason during meditation or during the day. I am afraid to practice for that reason. What should I do?

A: Such images or feelings are signs of intense emotional release. Although this feels negative, the effect of what is happening is therapeutic and healing. If these feelings are overwhelming and persistent, you may want to decrease the length of your meditation to ten or even five minutes for awhile so that integration of your inner self can occur at a slower pace. In time, meditation enables us to observe our feelings without being entangled in or overwhelmed by them. Even for experienced meditators, the first few minutes of meditation practice are often filled with the "burn off" of subconscious images and the release of unresolved tensions.

You may find that writing about your experiences will help you to sort things out and bring you to a new level of healing and insight. If that does not work, you may want to seek some other form of therapy to resolve the feelings that arise.

However, the most important thing that you can do to free yourself is to realize that you have feelings, but you are not your feelings. When you stop identifying with your feelings as if they define who you are, you will gain detachment from them.

Q: I find that music relaxes me the most. Can I play music softly in the background while I meditate?

A: Many forms of meditation do use music as a cue. If you are struggling with doing the meditation exercises as given, you might try music. If you do use music, choose a recording that is as non-musical, non-interesting as possible, so that you’re mind isn’t drawn to paying attention to it. The music should be simple, relaxing, soft, and in the background.
The emphasis of this course, however, is upon learning that we can shift to a core energy state without needing any "things" to help us get there. One of the characteristics of our ego self is "reaching outside" to fill inner emptiness. It is important in overcoming this to know that we can experience a meditative state without the use of any other "things." We can learn to shift into this state regardless of outer circumstances or conditions.

Initially, certain circumstances will enhance your practice. Try to create these conditions: sit in a quiet, private, comfortable place, without chance for interruption. Once you can meditate in that environment, other circumstances may prove useful or beneficial.

Q: I wonder if I'm "getting it" when I meditate. I don't feel qi. I do feel relaxed and aware though. In fact, some days I just sit into the posture and feel relaxed right away. Is this what I should be feeling?

A: Open clear awareness, relaxed wakefulness, and a feeling of unity with all things are all ways of describing meditative states. In qigong meditation, you will first shift into feeling calm and relaxed. As you continue on, you will likely feel a sense of energetic infusion, tingling, or illumination within each qi pathway. When you have reached a deep meditative state, the technique will drop away. You will rest in universal qi. Through persistent practice you will come to feel a sense of unity with the wholeness of life. When you are ready, this will lead you into a deeper transcendent state of pure consciousness without an object, the state Master Hao calls "Nothing."

Whether you shift into deep relaxation, energetic infusion, or pure consciousness, the most important thing is to put your full intention into the exercises. The specific feelings you do or do not have may be different every day. As long as you are layering the four cues and returning to your intention to imagine and feel universal qi flowing smoothly along its path, you are practicing. Whenever you recognize that your mind is distracted, return to your meditative focus.

The effects of your practice will change over time. In China, these qigong meditations are considered a lifelong endeavor. For the first twenty years you are considered a beginner. Let that thought reassure you that you are not a failure if you do not have the ultimate experience right away. However, if you practice daily, qi will
become palpable and your consciousness of it will be unmistakable. This experience will become a highlight of each day, an experience that you will look forward to, and one that you can take with you to positively affect every moment of your life.

---   ---   ---

For those who have benefited from this in-depth introduction to qigong meditation and who want continuing support for their practice, you may contact Kevin Schoeninger through the “Ask The Instructor” link on The Power Of Practice website: http://www.thepowerofpractice.com. There are also many excellent resources for this work. See the "For Further Study" section on the next page for some of these. After the resource page, you will find a Daily Practice Log to support you in your ongoing practice.
FOR FURTHER STUDY:

Suggested Reading:


Online Resources:

Ask The Instructor, Online Resources:

The Power of Practice: [http://www.thepowerofpractice.com](http://www.thepowerofpractice.com)

Qigong Courses and China Trips:

Healing Tao USA: [http://www.healingdao.com](http://www.healingdao.com)

Inner Dan Arts (Master Hao’s site): [http://www.qi-healing.com](http://www.qi-healing.com)

Organizations that support and promote qigong:

National Qigong Association: [http://www.nqa.org](http://www.nqa.org)

Qigong Institute: [http://www.qigonginstitute.org](http://www.qigonginstitute.org)

Online Stores and Qigong Products:

Qi Magazine and Product Catalog: [http://www.qi-journal.com](http://www.qi-journal.com)

THE DAILY PRACTICE LOG

The Daily Practice Log is here to support your practice after you have finished this course. Although this log can be used for anything that you want to practice, the focus here is on helping you continue with qigong meditation.

How to Use Your Daily Practice Log:

1) **COMMIT**: Commit to one month of qigong meditation practice by writing your name at the top of the Daily Practice Log. At the end of the first month, you can review your practice, modify (if needed), and commit to a second month (and so on).

2) **YOUR LONG-TERM GOAL**: At the top of the first month’s log sheet, define the long-term goal of your practice. Review your answers to the Introductory questions at the beginning of this course. Modify your goal as you desire. All spaces in this log are small to encourage you to keep it simple.

3) **MONTHLY GOAL**: For each month, set a monthly goal, which is an incremental step toward your long-term goal.

4) **DAILY PRACTICE**: Define your daily meditation practice by choosing one or more of the meditations you’ve learned.

5) **COMMIT TIME**: Decide how much time you will devote to your practice on a daily basis: 15, 30, or 60 minutes/day.

6) **SCHEDULE** a specific time for your practice. To learn a new skill, such as meditation, it is best to schedule the same time everyday to ingrain the habit.

7) **LOG YOUR PRACTICE**: Every day for the next month, re-read your long-term goal, your monthly goal, and your daily practice at the top of the monthly log sheet and log your practice using the chart provided. Describe what you did, how much you did,
when you did it, and how it went. Rate your practice from 0-10 and briefly describe your experience. 0 means you didn’t do your practice, 10 means it was a great experience. Briefly describe your experience to integrate it and log it for review. Log six days of practice each week, leaving one line blank every seven days (Not recording a 0 for it).

8) REVIEW: At month’s end, review your log. Add up your daily rating numbers for all days and divide by the number of days that you recorded to get your average rating for the month. Ask yourself: What worked? What didn’t work? What to change next month?

9) MODIFY: If you need to, modify your practice for the next month. Be positive and realistic. Consistent small actions build great things.

Use the Daily Practice Log sheet at the back of your book.
DAILY PRACTICE LOG     Month: _______ Year:____

LONG-TERM GOAL: _____________________________________________________________

THIS MONTH’S GOAL: ___________________________________________________________

DAILY PRACTICE: What:____________________ When: _______________ How Much:____________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>What I Did</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>How Much</th>
<th>How It Went (Rate It 0-10 &amp; briefly describe)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MONTHLY REVIEW: Average Daily Rating: Add up ratings____divide by ___(# of days)=___ (Avg.)
What worked?__________________________
What didn’t work?__________________________
What to change for next month?__________________________