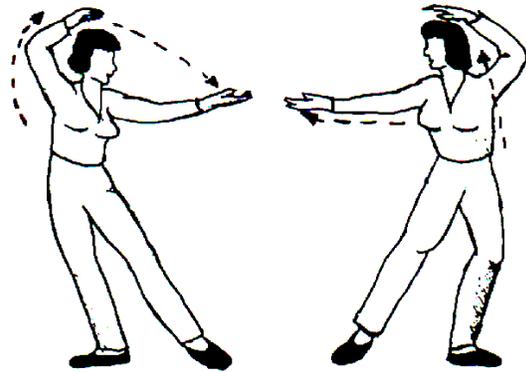


## What is Taiji Qigong

Taiji Qigong is an ancient form of Chinese exercise consisting of slow, graceful, rhythmic movements combined deep abdominal breathing and mental focus to give a general feeling of well being. Energy is stimulated and mobilised around the body giving many benefits muscle tone, mobility, flexibility, balance, breath control, and relaxation creating a peaceful harmony between body and mind. A popular form practiced all around the world is called Shibashi.



When performing Qigong it is important that limbs are always held in a soft curve, never rigid and straight. The flowing movements avoid sudden changes in direction, ensuring that the momentum of the body's movements are absorbed by the muscles rather than by the joints. This helps to prevent undue strain from being put on any part of the body.

The exercises involve load-bearing techniques, which help to build strong muscles to support our skeletal structures taking stress off the joints. Combining the movements with deep abdominal breathing helps to improve our lung capacity and helps to slow us down this aids meditation which helps to calm the mind. These exercises can be performed seated or standing with good posture, shoulders down and belly relaxed so that the lungs can expand freely. These exercises may help to improve many conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, asthma, stress and tension, insomnia, mental and physical fatigue and depression.

## Benefits of Practicing Qigong

Each day we subject ourselves to different forms of stress and tension – both physical and mental, this can change the way we feel about ourselves and also affects the way our body's function. We begin to feel the harmful effects of stress and tension quite quickly, with illness - headaches, loss of appetite, tension, insomnia, poor mobility. All of these symptoms can accumulate resulting in bad posture and mental fatigue.

We should all try to make time for relaxation away from the hectic pace of our daily lives perhaps to do some Qigong. The slow, graceful, rhythmic movements

combined with deep abdominal breathing and mental focus to give a general feeling of well being. Energy is stimulated and mobilised around the body improving muscle tone, mobility, flexibility, balance, breath control, and relaxation creating a peaceful harmony between body and mind.

It is important that whilst exercising you must recognize your own limitations and not push yourself too hard. Nothing is to be gained by rushing into an exercise plan, damaging yourself not only physically but also through feelings of failure. It is much better begin with 3 or 4 repeats of each exercises pausing regularly allowing the body time to slowly unwind, to relax tight muscles and release stiff joints.

Gradually over a period of weeks as the exercises become more familiar and your muscles gain strength, you may wish to increase the amount of Qigong exercise undertaken. This may include a combination of seated and standing exercises to suit your needs. These modifications make Qigong a suitable form of exercise for all different ages and physical abilities.

Tai Chi Qigong is fun and easy to learn and gives many benefits. As you progress, the movements gain depth quality and richness. Why not experience this system for health for yourself and see how it enhances your Lifestyle

Remember we are all individuals, just as our hearts beat at a different rate so we must practice our Tai Chi. Relax and unwind as the gentle rhythm moves you, explore the energy inside your body and the freedom within your mind, let these dictate the timing and flow of your practice

