

Sitting posture

...straight on a stool, with the lower jaw slightly
...in, the trunk stretched, the chest slightly
...in and the back erect, the shoulders relaxed
...the elbows hanging down, the hands placed
...on the knees or thighs, and the palms facing
...ward. The feet are placed firmly on the floor,
...width apart, with the knees flexed at an
...of 90° (see Figures 6-7 and 6-8). If the stool
...at a suitable height, a pad or cushion can be
...under the buttocks or legs.



Figure 6-7 Sitting posture (side view)

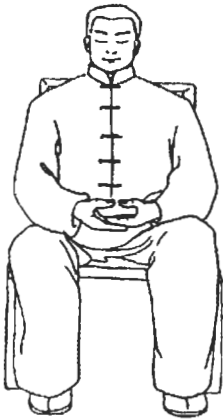


Figure 6-8 Sitting posture (front view)

Strengthening posture

The requirements are almost the same as the basic supine posture; however, the height of the pillow should be increased to 8 cun and the shoulders and back cushioned in a sloping position with no free space left between them and the bed. Close up the heels and place the hands firmly alongside the thighs with the palms facing downward (see Figure 6-9).

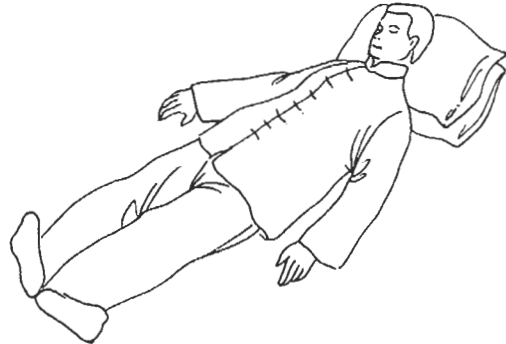


Figure 6-9 Strengthening posture

RESPIRATION

In inner-nourishing Qigong, respiration exercises are relatively complicated and are performed by breathing and pausing in coordination with tongue movements and the saying of words, phrases or sentences silently to oneself. Three respiration methods are commonly used.

Inhale-pause-exhale

Breathe through the nose with the mouth slightly closed. Inhale first and use the mind to direct Qi downward to the lower abdomen. Then hold the breath and pause for a short while (neither inhaling nor exhaling) before exhaling slowly. The sequence is therefore inhale-pause-exhale.

This breathing sequence is accompanied by saying words silently to oneself. Start with a short phrase such as "I am calm and relaxed". Say "I am" when inhaling, "calm and" when pausing and "relaxed" when exhaling. When practicing Qigong, many Chinese start with "xi ji jing" ("I am calm within myself") – "xi" when inhaling, "ji" when pausing and "jing" when exhaling. Select words or

phrases which mean relaxation, tranquility, joy or benefit to the health and increase the number of words gradually up to a maximum of nine.

Movement of the tongue also accompanies the respiration sequence and the silent saying of words; raise the tongue against the hard palate when inhaling, hold it there during the pause, and lower it when exhaling.

Inhale-exhale-pause

Breathe through the nose or the nose and mouth. Exhale immediately after inhaling, then hold the breath. The sequence is therefore inhale-exhale-pause. Say the first word or part of the phrase silently to oneself when inhaling (raise the tongue against the hard palate), the second word or part of the phrase when exhaling (lower the tongue) and the rest of the phrase while holding the breath (no tongue movement).

Inhale-pause-inhale-exhale

Inhale a little air through the nose; at the same time, raise the tongue against the hard palate and say the first word or part of the phrase silently to oneself. Then, hold the breath for a short while and say the second word or part of the phrase silently to oneself while the tongue is still pressed against the hard palate. Immediately afterwards, inhale a large amount of air and guide Qi down to the lower abdomen while saying the rest of the phrase silently to oneself. Do not hold the breath, but exhale slowly while lowering the tongue. The sequence is therefore inhale-pause-inhale-exhale.

MEDITATION

In inner-nourishing Qigong, meditation focuses on the lower Dantian, CV-17 Danzhong (the middle Dantian) or the toes.

• *Meditation on the lower Dantian*

In inner-nourishing Qigong, Dantian is 1.5 cun below the umbilicus and coincides with CV-6 Qihai. However, meditation does not necessarily have to focus on the point itself, but rather on a circular area on the surface of the lower abdomen surrounding it, or on an imaginary sphere inside the lower abdomen.

• *Meditation on CV-17 Danzhong*

Meditate on a round area between the breasts centered on CV-17 Danzhong, or on the area below the xiphoid process.

• *Meditation on the toes*

With the eyes slightly closed, direct the mind to follow the line of vision to the big toe, or close the eyes and silently recall the image of the toes.

Notes

• Practicing inner-nourishing Qigong generally starts with a lying posture (latericumbent or supine). Patients with gastric complaints, increased peristalsis or slow evacuation of the stomach should adopt the right latericumbent posture, especially when practicing Qigong after a meal. Otherwise, the left or right latericumbent or the supine position can be chosen depending on the condition and nature of the disease and the patient's habits. Sitting and lying postures can be adopted alternately or one only used. However, strengthening supine posture in inner-nourishing Qigong should be assumed in the later stages of Qigong exercising in order to strengthen the body.

• Meditation should focus on Dantian. When respiration is rhythmically regulated, stray thoughts can be banished from the mind and concentration improved. During heavy or profuse menstruation, meditation should focus on CV-17 Danzhong rather than on the lower Dantian. Those with many stray thoughts who find it difficult to meditate with the eyes closed can meditate on the toes instead. Meditation is one of the fundamental elements of Qigong exercises, but it must come naturally and cannot be forced.

Indications

This method can be used to regulate the functions of the Spleen and Stomach, improve the appetite, aid digestion and supplement the Root of Earth Heaven Qi. It is suitable for patients with a weak constitution in the later stages of cancer or for patients who have undergone an operation or are undertaking chemotherapy or radiotherapy, in particular patients with cancer of the stomach or rectum.