

Qi Gong for Pain and Stress Management: 8 Brocades

Qi Gong is a Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) practice for the mind, body, and spirit, which involves breathing, movement, stretching, self-massage, focused intent, and sound.

You are invited to try these exercises individually or in a sequence to invite the flow of qi or flow of energy in your body and mind. Qi Gong can also help you soothe painful muscles and joints and loosen stiffness.

8 Brocades of Qi Gong



1. Two Hands Hold Up the Heavens

Two Hands Hold Up the Heavens is an exercise thought to help control "primal energy," particularly the fight, flight, or freeze stress response and stimulate internal organs. It is excellent to help balance stress.

How to practice the movement:

1. Start with a strong, deep inhale
2. As you exhale, turn your hands inwards toward your waist
3. Space your legs shoulder-width apart with your knees slightly bent
4. Then straighten your legs slowly as you stretch your hands upwards



2. Drawing the Bow

Drawing the Bow helps strengthen the core (your body's mid-section). A strong core can help you maintain balance, energy, and strength. It is also thought to help balance the kidneys and spleen.

How to practice the movement:

1. Begin with a slow, deep breath as you gaze forward
2. As you exhale, space your legs shoulder-width apart with your knees slightly bent
3. Hold your hands up at shoulder level and pretend to pull a string like you're shooting a bow and arrow. For best results, try to keep your back straight



3. Separating the Heaven and the Earth

Separating Heaven and Earth helps loosen and strengthen stiff muscles and tendons.

How to practice the movement:

1. Begin with a deep inhale and exhale
2. As you exhale, space your legs shoulder-width apart with a straight back
3. Make a fist and bend your elbows
4. Turn your fists inward as you bend your elbows until your fists touch
5. Lift one arm up toward the sky and the other to the earth as you flatten your palms and press with resistance.
6. Repeat the movement with opposite hands for balance



4. The Wise Owl Gazes Backward

The Wise Owl Gazes Backward is thought to boost energy and loosen stiff, sore muscles. If you have a stiff neck, this exercise can help loosen it up.

How to practice the movement:

1. Begin with your legs spaced shoulder-width apart with your gluteal muscles (sitting bones) tucked inward
2. Inhale deeply
3. Exhale slowly as you drop your hands loosely, palms facing down
4. Slowly open your arms with your elbows at your hips and your palms facing forward
5. Twist your head slowly to one side
6. Repeat with opposite hands



5. Punching With an Angry Gaze

Punching With an Angry Gaze promotes the flow of qi for mental balance. It is thought to support balance the liver meridian, the organ connected to anger. The rapid punching movement also helps loosen your hips, shoulder, and spine.

How to practice the movement:

1. Inhale as you space your feet shoulder-width apart and gently bend your knees
2. Slowly exhale as you close your right fist with fingers facing downward and make a punching motion forward
3. Inhale as you bring your fist back
4. Repeat with the opposite hand



6. The Big Bear Turns Side to Side

The The Big Bear Turns Side to Side is thought to support the heart and lungs to encourage a flow of energy throughout your body. This movement is also excellent for hip flexibility.

How to practice the movement:

1. Space your feet shoulder-width apart, toes running parallel
2. Sink your weight gently with your knees slightly bent
3. Bring your hands in front of your abdomen, making a circular shape with your arms
4. Place your hands just above your knees and bring your hands together, palms facing up
5. Bring your left foot to meet the right with your left foot slightly bent in a horse-like stance as you bring your palms in front of your face
6. Squat as you bring your hands down and rest your hands just above your knees
7. Slowly round your body round your body at the hip until you face the opposite direction



7. Touching Toes Then Bending Backward

Touching toes then bending backward is thought to stimulate your vital organs. It is also a great exercise for lengthening the hamstrings, hip muscles, upper back, and neck joints. It also gives a gentle massage to the spleen and liver.

How to practice the movement:

1. Inhale as you space your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Tighten your abdomen slightly
3. Place your palms on your lower back lean backward gently
4. Lift your chest upward
5. Exhale
6. Slide your hands down the back of your legs gradually as you bring your hands forward to the front of your feet



8. Bouncing on the Toes

Bouncing on the Toes is thought to boost the immune system and generate energy in the body. It is also useful in increasing the energy flow in the body and strengthening your calf muscles.

How to practice the movement:

1. Space your feet shoulder-width apart
2. Inhale as you slowly rise onto the balls of your feet
3. Hold the stance for a second
4. Exhale as you drop your heels