

Introduction to Qigong

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What is Qigong?

“*Qi* is the most basic building block of everything in the universe... energy, material and information, which is constantly in the process of change.”* There is an infinite store of pure *Qi* in the universe. *Gong* is the Chinese word for work or cultivation. Qigong is working with our mind, body and breath to facilitate the gathering of *Qi* into our bodies and to open the channels within so *Qi* can freely flow. According to Chinese medical theory, this is the basis of good health.

Qigong is also a **mindfulness** practice, bringing us into awareness of the current moment and the lessons of impermanence.

Qigong helps to promote a calm, relaxed state, supporting our bodies' self-healing capacities.

Qigong Practice

The following explanations and illustrations are from the *The Healing Promise of Qi* by Roger Jahnke** unless otherwise noted.

Breath naturally.

Opening

1. Align the Three Treasures (Body, Mind and Spirit) by making Three Intentful Corrections: (Figure 1)

Body: Stand with feet apart comfortably. Sink slightly with a secret bend of the knees, bowl of pelvis is balanced upright (hands on belly, push in slightly). Shoulders relaxed, arms hanging comfortably at sides. Heaven is gently pulling your head and upper torso upward, Earth exerts a gentle force, pulling your tailbone downward. Feel spaciousness between.

Breath: Take a few deep breaths.

Mind: Present moment focus. Past in one hand, future in the other, bring hands together, pouring away concerns and worries and focusing on the present.

2. Adjust the body and mind by relaxing and engaging with the Six Verses (RenXue):

Feet apart at shoulder width, sit/stand/lie down in a natural posture, arms hanging naturally. Body is centered and upright. Look straightforward; draw the vision back slowly, gently closing your eyelids. Tongue tip on the upper palate. Relax the whole body: relax the head, neck, shoulders, arms, chest and upper back, abdomen and lower back, hips, legs, and feet. Relax the whole body from head to toe, from inside out.

Adjust the mind (Six Verses): Awareness inside the body, feel the emptiness and spaciousness inside. Expand this awareness out, becoming one with the universe. Draw this awareness back into the body, calm and peaceful. Open to the universe with reverence and wonder. Let the bright universe nurture your heart with compassion and love. Feel relaxed, free and joyful. Qi is flowing smoothly and harmoniously.

Supplemental

Flowing: (Figure 2) Inhale slowly and turn your palms forward. For standing: Slowly lift your body weight onto the balls of your feet as you swing your arms forward and upward. The hands, palms up, and arms rise up to the height of the shoulders, elbows slightly bent. Turn the palms downward, exhale, lower the arms slowly, and sink the body weight down so the feet are flat on the ground. When the hands pass the legs, allow them to continue to swing toward the back slightly. Lift your toes as high as possible. Turn the palms forward, begin to inhale, and repeat the movement. Build up a gentle rhythm. For sitting: Lift the heels and put the weight of the legs on the toes while raising the arms and inhaling. Then while lowering the arms, exhale. Swing your arms downward and behind you and lift the toes as high as possible.

The Nine Phases

Discover Qi: (Figure 3) Shoulders relaxed, armpits hollow, hands holding a ball in front of the abdomen. Palms hollow, fingers open and relaxed, at the armpits a small qi ball. Open out the elbows as if strings are gently pulling them. Close, gently pulling in wrists, elbows. Hands come close to one another, holding a Qi ball but not touching. Open, close. Gather, expand/disperse. Move slowly, evenly and smoothly. *I connect deeply with nature and become aware of a powerful new way of perceiving and being.*

Gather Qi: (Figure 4) Beginning from the opening posture, open your arms and sink down to gather Qi. Gather the resources of Earth in your arms and rise up carrying them upward. When your hands come in front of your heart begin to open your arms again, this time reaching up toward Heaven. Gather the resources of Heaven and carry them downward until your hands are again in front of the heart. *I access and purposefully draw upon the forces of nature for healing and empowerment*

Circulate Qi: (Figure 5) Turn to the left, with palms facing each other as chest height. Shift your weight forward, encourage flow by moving arms. Turn palms to face you and shift weight back. When your hands reach the heart, turn palms downward and begin to bend down. Weight remains on the rear leg as you run your hands down along the front of the leg as if you are encouraging Qi flow in the leg channels. Return to the upright position, run hands up the leg as if you are encouraging flow upward. Turn to the right, repeat. *I deliver potent restorative resources to strengthen and fuel my organs, glands and*

issues.

Purify Qi: (Figure 6) With hands at heart level, turn palms to face out and push the palms away from the center as if you are pushing something very heavy. Return hands to the heart and press upward. Return. Press forward. Return, Turn palms downward and press downward. Return.

I restore inner harmony by cleansing and dispelling spent and unneeded Qi and open to the inflow of fresh natural life force and power.

Direct Qi: (Figure 7) Starting with hands at heart level, turn palms toward body and “wash your face” with Qi, proceed upward over the top of your head and down your neck, shoulders, under the arms and then down the back. Reach up and then trace down the back, over the sacrum and down the back of the legs. Then trace up along the torso and to the neck and face again. Reach out the left arm and trace the channels on the inside of the arm, around the hand. Turn hand over and trace the channels along the top of the hand and arm to the shoulders, along the face and repeat on the other side. Cross hands in front of the chest and raise the arms over the head. Continue tracing the channels along the back of the head, shoulders, under the arms, down the back and back of the legs, around the feet and up again.

I transmit healing and empowering resources specifically to accelerate healing and restore balance and harmony.

Conserve Qi: (Figure 8) Hands at heart level, open arms and allow the right hand to make a circle, drop the right hand gently down the right side, pass the belly to the left, raise your hand up the left side until your hand is to the left of your face. Imagine that it is a cloud passing. Make a circle with the left hand, move down the left, across the belly to the right, up the right to the right of the face and eyes. Both hands move together: when the right hand is passing from the left of your face to the right, the left hand is passing the belly to the right also. As the right hand then continues down on the right, the left hand is coming up. When the left hand cloud is passing from the right of your face to the left, the right hand is passing the belly to the left below. As the left hand now drops down on the left, the right hand is rising up the left getting ready to be your next cloud. *I protect my inner essence and accumulate the subtle ingredients for refining the inner elixir.*

Store Qi: (Figure 9) Reach both arms towards the ground and scoop earth Qi up, past the torso to the heavens. Turn palms downward and bath yourself in these resources, letting them be stored in the Dantians and deep inside the body to the marrow of your bones.

I create, maximize and sustain an inner reserve of potential or optimize health, life and being.

Transform Qi: (Figure 10) Form a Qi ball as in Discover Qi and turn it around. Carry it up on both sides and then stretch it to the shoulders on both sides. Hold the ball and lift it up inside the torso to the head and then down again three times. End by holding the ball

in front of you, comfortably.

I am changed deeply, expressing my eternal nature and unlimited potential.

Dissolve into Qi: (Figure 11) Stand comfortably, arms in any of the ways shown. Focus on the breath and/or on the flow of Qi as you dissolve into Qi, expanding, gathering. “Feel the drop of yourself as you unite with the ocean of all being.”
I merge with the boundless, universal field of being.

Closing

Bone Marrow Bathing (Store Qi)

Head and Face Massage:

Rub palms and gather Qi. Middle fingers to the point mid-forehead between the eyebrows (yingtang), open out to the temples, rub around, eyes, rub around. Sides of nose, unblock. Rub the whole face with Qi, comb the head with Qi from front to back. At top of head (baihui) and base of the skull (yuzhen), vibrate Qi in. Palms on the ears and vibrate Qi in. With your thumb and index fingers, rub the ears from tip to lobe, gently pull the lobes. Arms at sides, hands hanging naturally. From deep inside, say something positive to yourself. You are healthy and your mind, heart and spirit are clear and bright. So be it. Open your eyes slowly.

*Yuan Tze, *Ren Xue and Yuan Gong Teachers & Therapists Training Year One, 2013.*

** Roger Jahnke, *The Healing Promise of Qi, 2002* Contemporary Books.

Studies:

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NMJ Contributors, *Natural Medicine Journal*, 2010

Jahnke, Larkey, Rogers, Etnier, Lin. *A Comprehensive Review of Health Benefits of Qigong and Tai Chi, Am J Health Promotion* 2010 Jul-Aug; 24(6): e1-e25

Six Pillars of Energy Medicine: Clinical Strengths of a Complementary Paradigm.
Feinstein, Eden. *Alternative Therapies*, Jan.Feb 2008, Vol 4, No. 1

Internet Resources: Yuan Gong: renxueamericas.org; National Qigong Association: nqa.org, IIQTC: instituteofintegralqigongandtaichi.org

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Level One Yuan Gong Teacher, IIQTC, Level One Practice Leader

Practice is dedicated to the highest good of all life. The healing continues. All is well. So be it.

Qigong Practice Illustrations

Figure 1: Align the Three Treasures

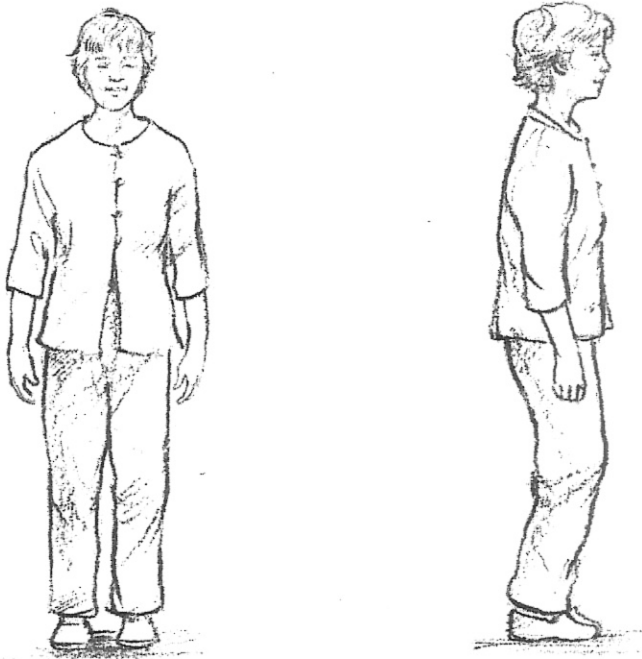


Figure 3: Discover Qi

Figure 2: Flowing

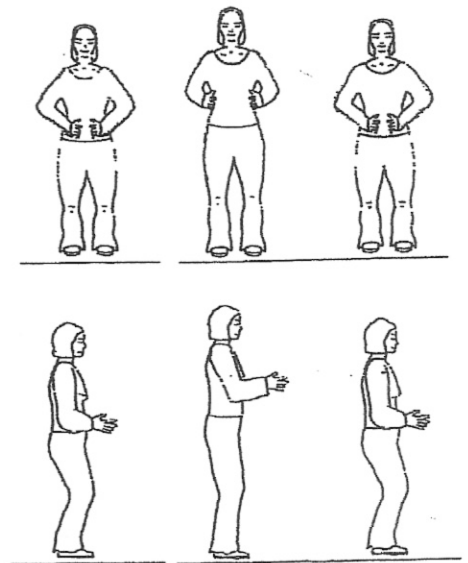
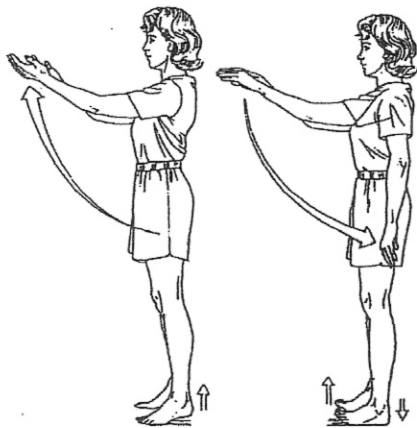


Figure 4: Gathering Qi
Gathering Qi from Heaven and Earth

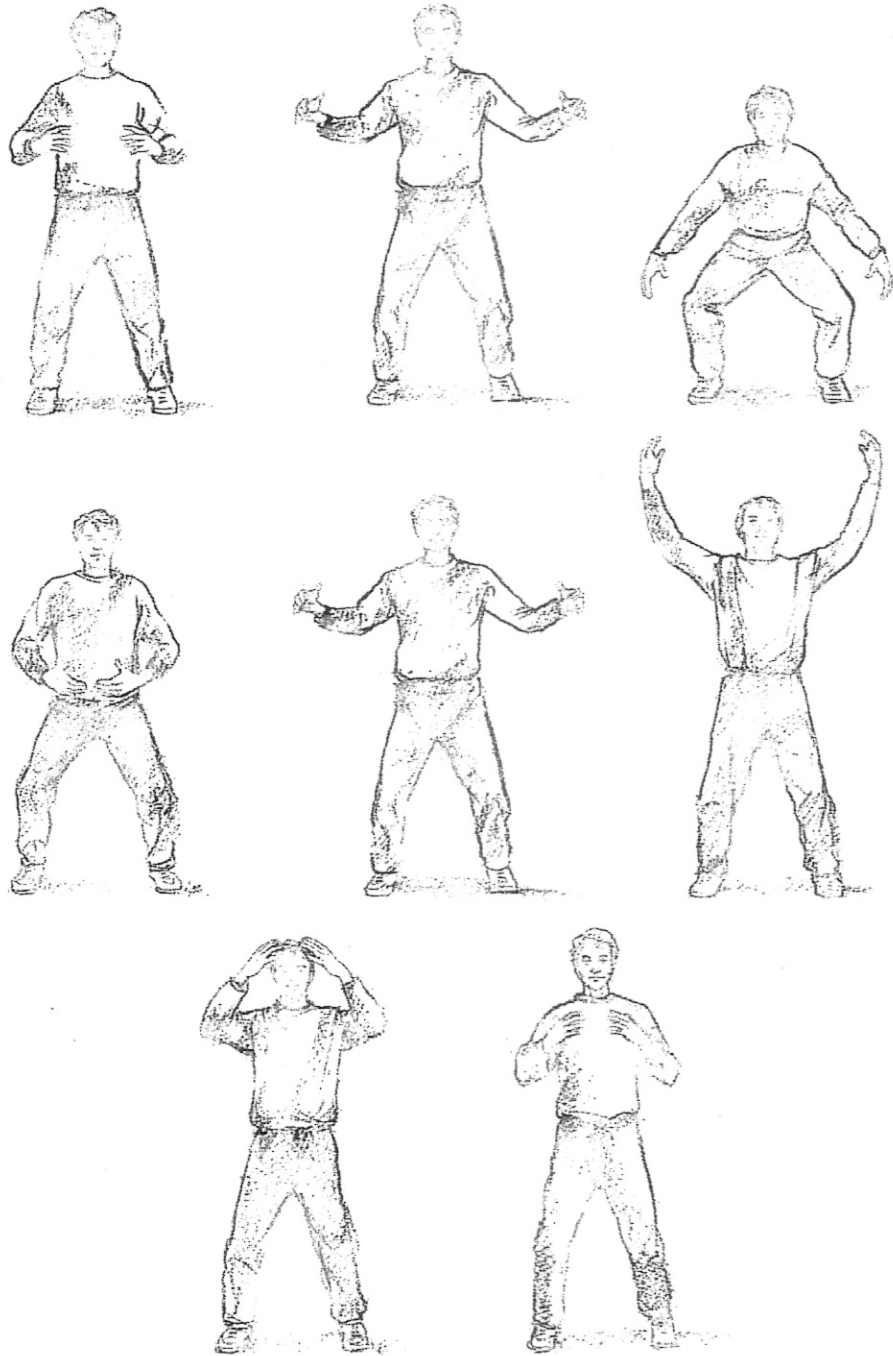


Figure 5: Circulating Qi
Inner Rivers Flowing

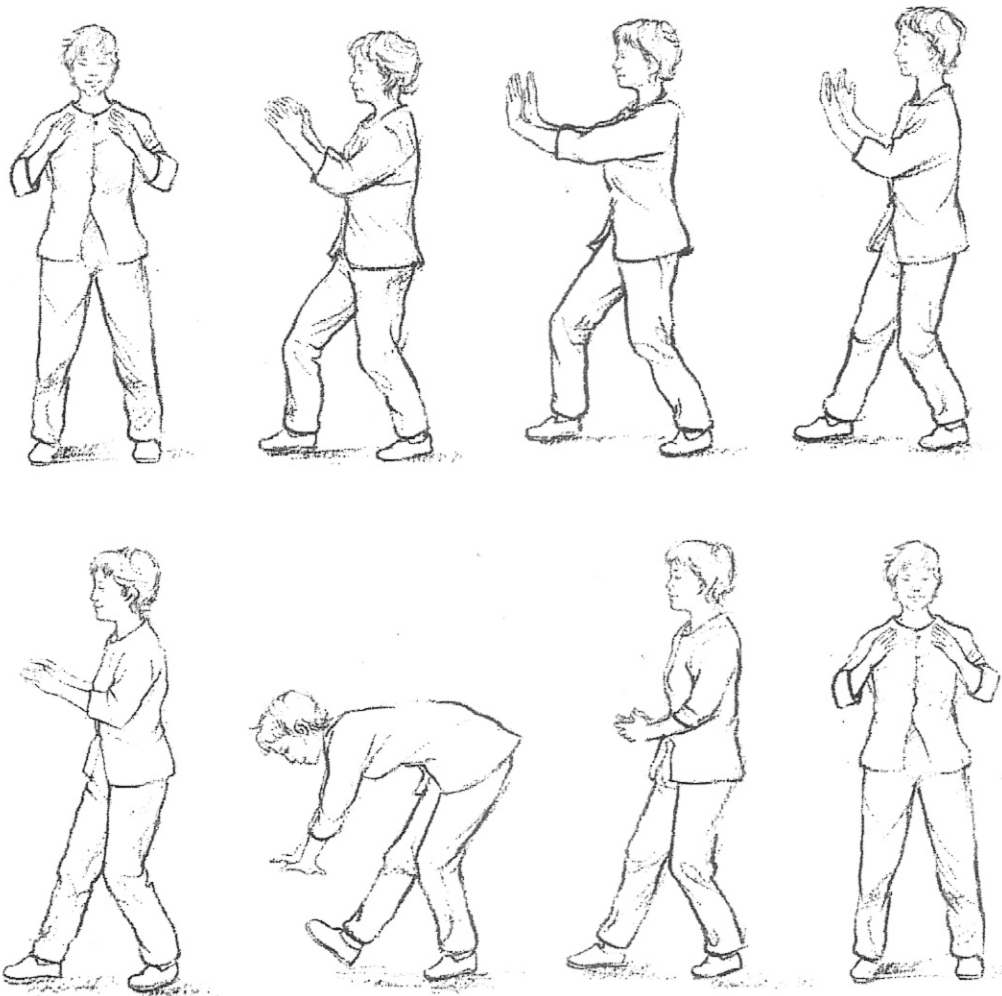


Figure 6: Purifying Qi
Clearing the Small Universe

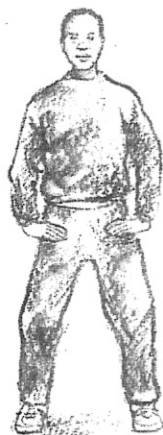
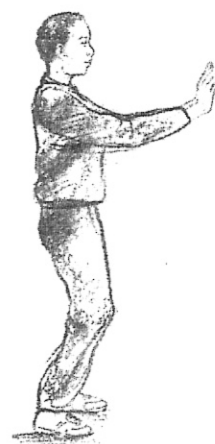
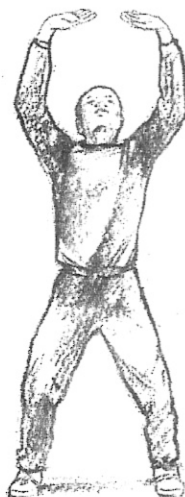


Figure 7: Directing Qi
Trace the Yan-Yang Channels

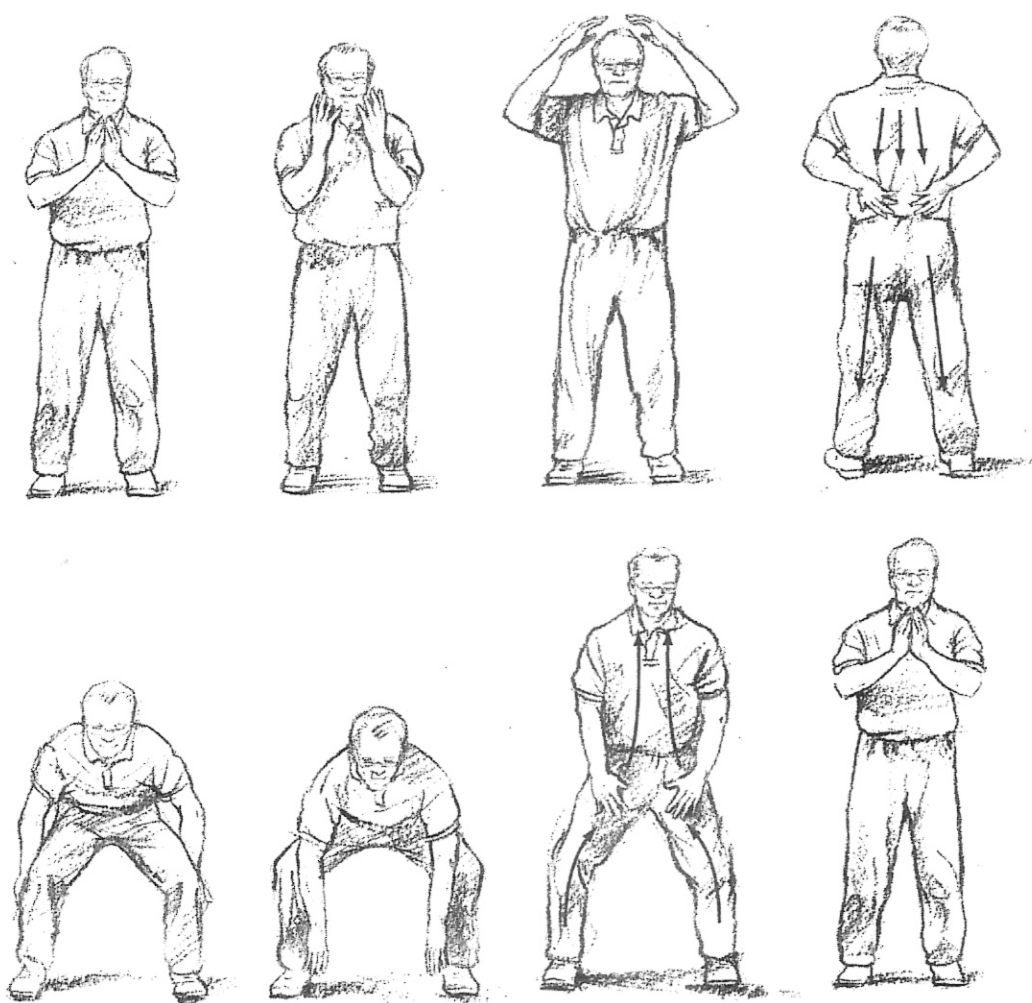


Figure 8: Conserving Qi
Watching Clouds Pass

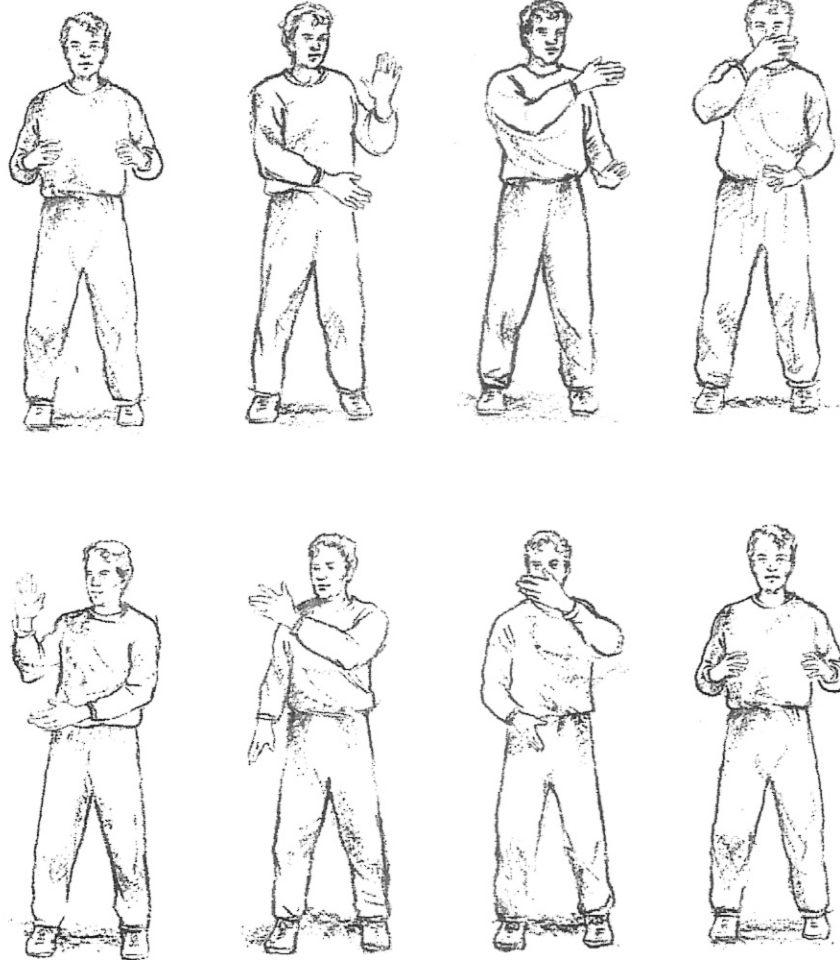


Figure 9: Storing Qi
Bathing the Marrow

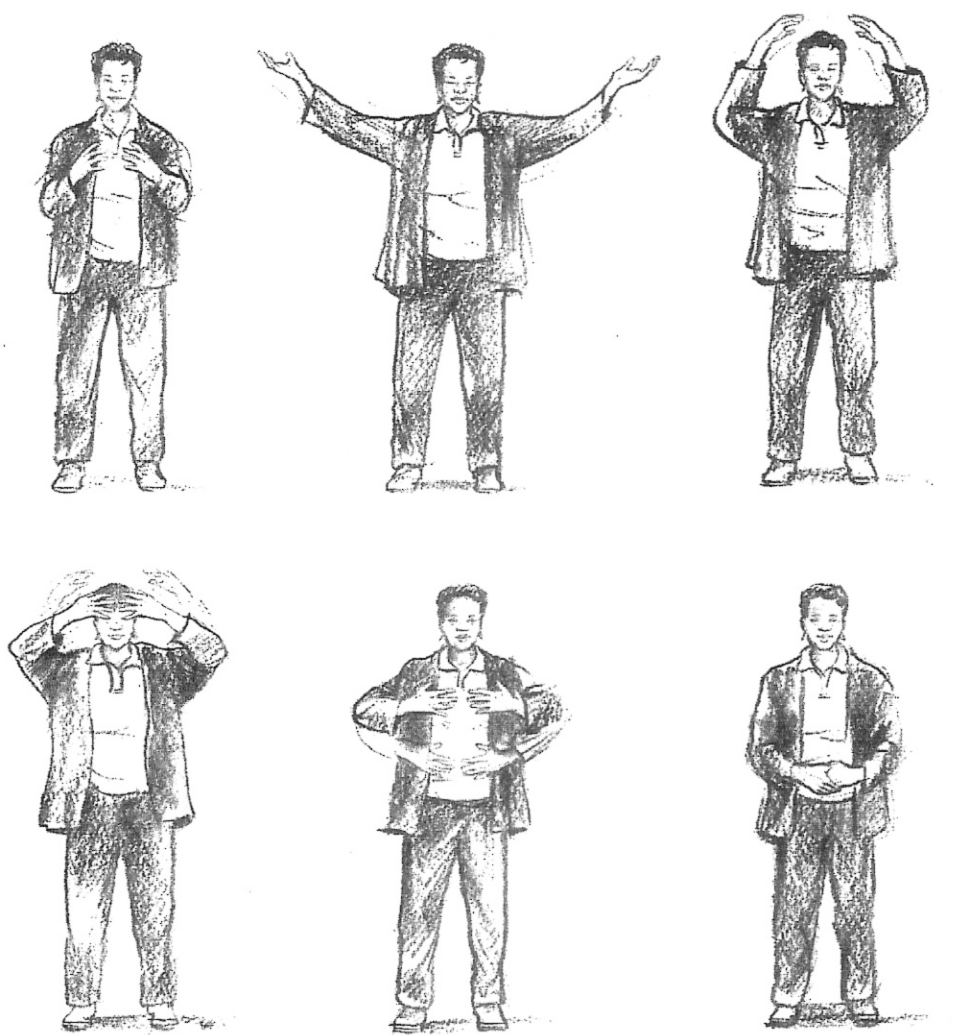


Figure 10: Transforming Qi
Immortal Dragon Cultivating Golden Elixir

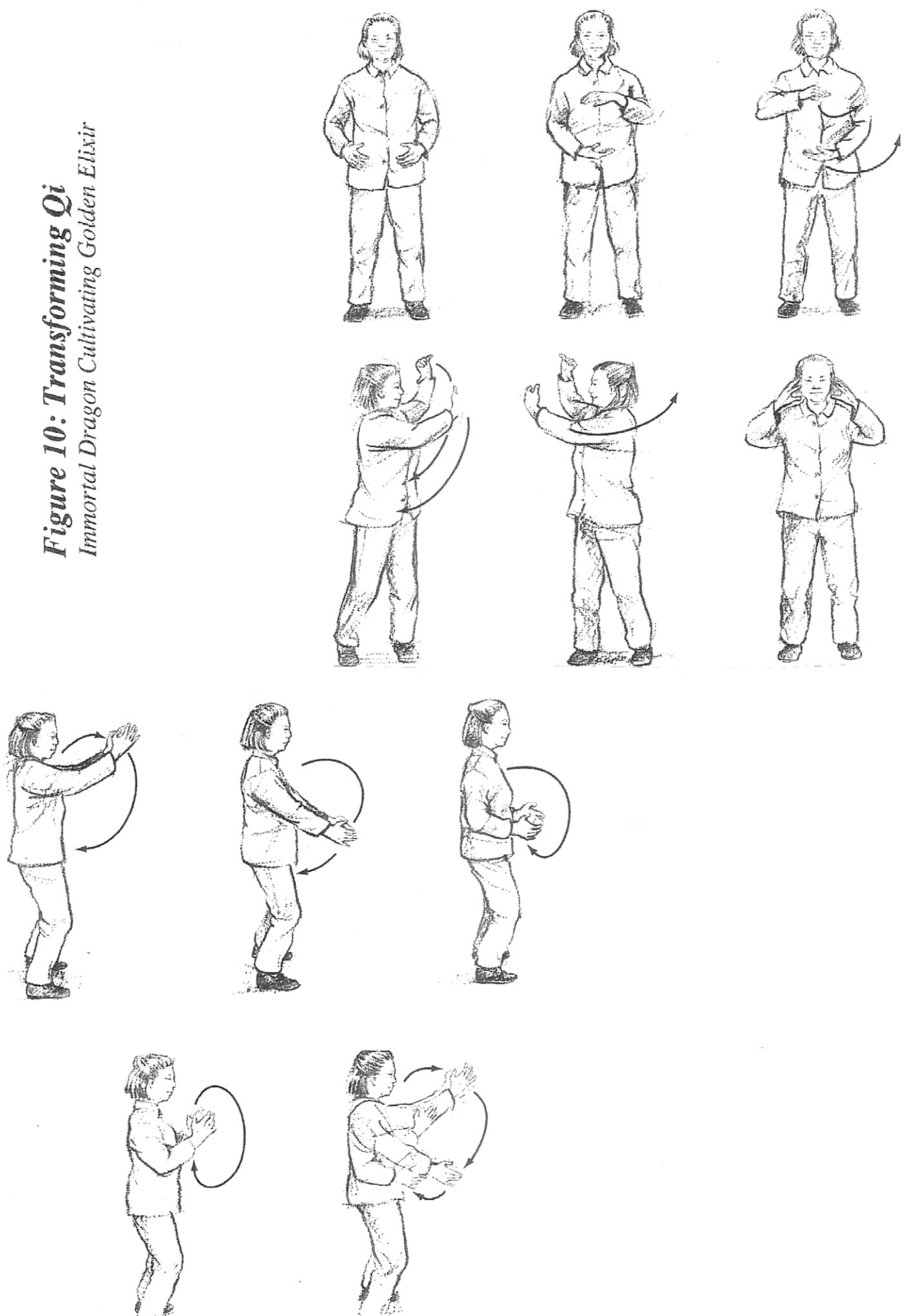


Figure 11: Dissolving in Qi
Dissolve into Light

