

## *Chi Kung Cautions - Yanling Jobnson*

*Why can mushrooms grow by themselves on one piece of wood? There are no "germs" to help them grow. They grow themselves. Similarly, you grow your own germ-diseases. Taoism says that overworking yourself physically will kill you, and thinking too much will change your own nature. Only when these two work together harmoniously will a person stay healthy. In this way, only qigong can help you. So many people practice qigong. There are many types of qigong and there are many teachers. There is also a growing number of qigong video tapes made and books written. It is wise to learn qigong only from a tape or from a book. The best way is to learn from a qualified teacher. When you learn and practice qigong you have to learn some knowledge first. The following is something that a qigong learner needs to know:*

- 1. Never move against the flow of the natural world: the season, the temperature, the geography, etc. The human body is affected by the natural world. Always adapt yourself to the changes in the environment. Spring and summer are full of yang energy, while autumn and winter are the yin seasons. During the strong yang seasons, be careful to nurture and store yin energy. During the yin seasons nurture and store yang.*
- 2. Do not rage. Anger harms the yin energy in your body and harms the liver. Do not indulge in grief; it harms the yang energy in your body and also your kidneys. Always try to maintain a balance of yin and yang.*
- 3. Do not exercise during storms or strong winds, or in too hot or too cold an environment. Harmonize with the atmosphere.*
- 4. Do not exercise in polluted or smoky areas. While helping to conserve energy, qigong stimulates and supplies the material base of the body. When exercising qigong, large amounts of air will be inhaled and exhaled. If the air around you causes coughing, shortness of breath, a stuffy chest, and dizziness, it will retard your progress and harm you.*
- 5. People who have rheumatism or heart conditions related to dampness should not exercise near waterfalls, rivers, the ocean or in damp, cold caves.*
- 6. Do not exercise against the wind. Keep warm and dry.*
- 7. Do not exercise near stagnant water because it may give off harmful vapors.*
- 8. Do not use the mind too much or breathe irregularly while practicing qigong. Relax the mind, turn inward. Always breathe in and out slowly, naturally, deeply and evenly.*
- 9. Beginners should not attempt to modify the style of qigong they were taught. Stick to the teachings and do the exercises constantly, regularly, and consistently. Without proper knowledge, practicing different styles of qigong at the same time may cause problems. For example, you may be focusing on one channel, while your body movements are guiding chi along another.*
- 10. Practicing qigong is not only exercise; it is also the development of a transcending moral character. Only by being a virtuous person can one learn qigong well and eventually reach a higher level.*
- 11. Do not believe in quick easy shortcuts*
- 12. Do not give thought to personal gains or losses, nor be too concerned about trifles. Be calm.*
- 13. Do not remain undecided and of two minds when learning qigong. Qigong is a process, not a miracle.*
- 14. Do not follow any sounds or pictures that come into the mind as you practice qigong. There is no need to be alarmed by these visions, but you must keep calm and be detached. Do not try to figure out what they mean. Think instead that they have nothing to do with you. Do not wish that you could see or hear them again.*
- 15. Do not be in a hurry to use the power you have gained. Use the power as little as you can. It costs you your energy to use it. When you are able to use it, do so in small amounts so you will not feel tired afterwards, so you do not exhaust your energy. Only when you have learned to protect and conserve yourself will you be able to help others.*
- 16. Do not give up when you feel impatient or irritable. When you feel it, stop and wait until you calm down. It indicates your body has problems and is in the process of healing. But also it might be a time when you are gaining some Special power. Do some deep breathing, make some movements, and make some sounds. When you are calm, continue the exercise. If you are unable to become calm, end the exercise. Impatience within the family may pass on to you and you may pass it on to the group. When one member of the family exercises it can benefit the entire family.*
- 17. It is normal to feel some pain. It may be you are healing yourself or you are healing someone in your family. This may happen to the very sensitive exercises. When you feel anger and want to cry or yell, do not control these feelings. Do not encourage them; rather, let your self release them naturally.*
- 18. Do not worry if you sleep less than usual, or have times of sleeplessness, as long as you continue to feel energetic. Keep exercising. However, if you must sleep, focus your mind on the bottom of your feet. Visualize lights circling at the bottom of your feet, from 36 to 49 times. Or imagine the light circling your navel. This will help you sleep. To be sleepless and still energetic is a sign of health and is a result of practicing qigong. To become tired as a result of sleeplessness may indicate sickness.*
- 19. When doing standing meditation spontaneous movements may happen, especially to those who have health problems. Do not be alarmed by large scale, spontaneous movements. They are a good sign that the chi is working on a blockage inside your body. Do not try to control them. Thinking of a good thought such as, "My lungs will get stronger." Then let it go and relax. And to start with a pleasant thought before you start doing meditation can avoid violent movement. However, doing it for too long of a time and with too more than an hour. It will help if you tell yourself that your movements are going to be gentle before you start.*
- 20. Do not panic if you cannot stop your spontaneous movements should they become violent, think of yourself and the safety of others, such as "Do not hurt myself or other people, nor damage property." Change your gestures, sit or lie down. and concentrate on guiding the movements gently, and little by little so they slow down. Others may use words to slow the exerciser's movements Before you begin exercising tell yourself that you are a good person and able to do anything you really want to do It will help to avoid violent movements.*

21. After practicing qigong for a long time, some things may begin to change. You may not want to eat. If you are still energetic it is fine and may be considered a good sign. Do not force yourself to eat. Eat when you are hungry; drink when you are thirsty.

22. Do not seek out more complicated forms of qigong. More complex types are not necessarily better. It can be as simple as this: during the day focus your mind on the navel; after dusk focus the top of the head (but not when you are too hungry or too full); rub your palms until they are hot, then put them over the navel; at night put your tongue on the upper maxilla. These simple things are qigong, too.

23. Do not disrupt your biological clock. For example, the ability of the liver to remove toxins is lower in summer and higher in winter. So be more careful about what you eat in summer. Live your life with regularity.

24. Do not sleep or attempt to perform sitting meditation on a soft bed.

25. Keep the air fresh when you exercise qigong inside the house. But do not let air blow directly on your body; keep at least three feet away from open windows.

26. All diseases relate to the organs; organs relate to the moods and conversely moods affect the organs. Too much worry, anger, upset, grief, or nervousness can interfere with the smooth flow of chi and blood and in this way unbalance the functioning of the organs. Try always to maintain a peaceful mood.

27. Do not make any noise breathing in and out while doing meditation. Do not breathe in a broken way; keep it smooth, continuous and soft.

28. Do not focus the mind on one position all the time while meditating. For example, do not focus only on the upper body. A single focus might result in a trance like or depressed state. If the mind focuses on the lower body parts for extremely long periods of time, one might feel body-heavy or one may even faint.

29. Do not delay treatment if the wrong exercise causes trouble. First find (the cause, then treat it with proper breathing. If the trouble is caused by an improper sitting posture, it may be sending chi into the top of the head. Treat this by sending chi down along the spine, pausing at each joint, and gradually sending chi down into the tail joint. Repeat several times to resolve the problem. If breathing causes the trouble, first correct your method of breathing. Then, after chi is breathed in, hold it for a while, visualizing chi from the top of the head spreading into the entire body, into the four limbs, and spreading out to cover the skin. This exercise, continued for a long time, will make your skin smooth and your joints dexterous and quick. Breathe out long and breathe in short ten times.

30. If a problem is caused by breathing in and out too quickly, first relax the mind; if you are feeling top heavy, fix the mind on the navel; if the opposite, fix the mind on the top of the nose, or in the middle between the eyebrows.

31. If the problem is a headache, breathe in through the nose and slowly out through the mouth. At the same time imagine the headache is gone.

32. When doing sitting meditation, if the mind is at the lower tan tien and you begin to feel the qi, then the mind should not focus on the lower tan tien and let the Chi move by itself. Forget yourself and the world. If your mind is on another point, after you feel the movement of the Chi, let it go naturally; do not follow after it; instead forget the world and yourself.

33. When practicing sitting meditation, spontaneous movement better not happen. If it happens, tell your body, "Spontaneous movement is not appropriate in meditation," and thereby control yourself. If this does not stop the movement, end the meditation. Perform qigong exercises until the channels are cleared; then return to the meditation.

34. As you go to sleep, breathing in and visualizing chi entering the bottom of your feet will benefit your health. Breathe deeply through the nose often, sending chi throughout the whole body, then slowly close the mouth and move the qi from the top of the head and progressing downward. This also benefits health.

35. When you go to the bathroom to eliminate waste, focus on sending any bad Chi out with it. This is also good for treating diseases.

36. Do not tell others what you see during meditation or what improvements you have made.

37. When meditating, sometimes your sexual desire may suddenly become strong. To release may result in emission and you would lose what you have gained from the meditation. One of the best ways is to focus on the meditation and try to let the desire go naturally, if you can.

38. Remain in harmony with the four seasons In the spring, get up early and do not eat too much sour food. Sour food can harm the spleen. Increase your outdoor exercise, but not in the wind. While facing south tap the teeth together three times.  
In summer, sleep well at night and get up early. Do not lie in a damp place. Keep your clothing dry. Do not eat too much cold food; instead, add some spicy food to your diet. Avoid winds.  
In autumn, go to bed early and get up early. Eat less spicy food and more sour food. Sesame is good. Avoid cold drinks; avoid damp clothing.  
In winter, go to bed early and get up late. Do not wear clothing that is too warm. Do not stand close to the fire too often. Drink a little wine each day. Reduce the amount of sour food and add some bitter food to your diet. Face north when you meditate. Imagine that the North Star is giving out black chi directly into your mouth and sending it directly to the kidneys.

39. Do not eat at irregular times or eat food that is too hot or too cold, or too greasy. Do not eat too much at one meal. This may harm the organs.

40. Qigong exercisers should be very selective about what they eat.

41. One of the most difficult things to master is the degree of focus of the mind. You must learn from experience. Too many disturbing thoughts make it difficult to focus the mind on the tan tien. Too strong a focus may cause a headache and nervousness. You must decide upon the degree of focus for yourself.  
Your mind may begin to focus slowly at first, gradually, from light to strong. Continue until you feel comfortable, as if the mind is on the point. In the beginning, the mind may focus a little more strongly in order to get used to the meditation. Also, the degree may differ each time in order to adjust to new situations and conditions.

42. It is normal to occasionally feel some mild itching, sour stomach, pain, cold, hot, or a puffy or swollen feeling while exercising qigong. If any of these sensations become really strong and make you feel restless, then they would be considered problematic. In such cases, remain calm. Continue doing qigong, relax and see if the symptoms go away. If not, and your life becomes affected, stop exercising and get some treatment from a qigong master who is really experienced and good.

43. Do not attempt to treat others when you feel you have gained some power if you have no knowledge of Chinese medicine.

44. Any kind of the spontaneous movements can only benefit you. If you are losing control of the movements, such as you were going to run, change the gesture. If standing, sit down; if sitting, lie down. Mentally guide yourself to slow down and adjust them. Breathing out slowly can calm the movements. Generally if a good teacher guides you there should be no such problems except, of course, for those with mental disease. It is also possible to help patients who are mentally diseased, but this should be done only under (the guidance of experienced teachers.

45. No matter what type, it is important to learn directly from a teacher — a teacher of good moral character. Choose a teacher according to your own needs and purpose.

46. Only by cultivating your own good moral character can you learn qigong and improve. The elements of good character include honesty, courage, enthusiasm, service, faith, hope and love.

47. The best time to practice qigong is after midnight and before noon, as the chi will be easier to adjust.

48. Only those who have practiced qigong for a long time can exercise different kinds of qigong at the same time, and one must schedule them well. This is not for beginners.

49. While exercising one may listen to music of the right kind, listening to it as if you were not listening. The volume should be low and unobtrusive.

50. Usually women who are menstruating can practice qigong. Some may experience an increase in the amount of flow; some periods may be lengthened or shortened. To avoid problems, reduce the focus on the tan tien and focus instead on good thoughts or shift the focus of the mind to another spot such as the yang quan. One may reduce the length of the exercise or stop entirely during the time of the period. It is not good to have spontaneous movements during this time. There is no need to become nervous; it is all-normal. Should it worsen, however, see a physician or an acupuncturist.

51. It does not matter whether you keep your eyes open or closed while doing qigong. It depends upon the person and the situation. The objective is to remain calm, peaceful, and relaxed.

52. The chi and the body work together. The key point is to follow the chi's flowing movement, and not guide it when it is moving.

53. Avoiding the wind is as important as avoiding being shot by an arrow. When exercising, all your pores are open. Even a gentle wind can harm the channels. You should stop exercising when there is strong wind. Close the window if there is a breeze. Even the sound of wind is not good for the exerciser.

54. To avoid problems:

- a.) Follow the rules strictly for the type of qigong you are practicing.
- b.) Maintain a correct, relaxed posture, and smile. Relax all parts of the body and especially the forehead.
- c.) Breathe naturally, slowly, and softly.
- d.) Do not seek any particular desire or feeling.
- e.) Do not be frightened by sudden shocks or sounds; either continue or slowly end the form.

55. Ending the form correctly will bring greater benefits. Ending the form incorrectly can cause some problems. After meditation always place your palms over the lower tan tien for a while to finish the standing meditation, always lift both arms above the head, straighten the legs, turn the palms upward and breathe in. Then with your palms facing downward, push down slowly and then turn palms to face your lower tan tien and send the chi into the lower tan tien. Do this three to five times. Then rub the palms together and massage the face and head.

56. Treat yourself with your own energy, to open your own channels, to kill germs or to reduce and stop pain.

57. If you experience problems while exercising qigong first contact your teacher, Problems are usually of two kinds

- a.) You are over-anxious for quick results; your mind works too hard and causes the chi to become stuck, or
- b.) You guide the mind in a disorderly fashion, causing the chi to fail to return to the tan tien, thus causing the Chi to become scattered. With the help of your teacher, these problems can be quickly solved.

58. The essence of a type of qigong is often passed on individually, directly by the Grand Master. It is difficult to learn only from a book. Also, a master would avoid teaching the wrong person. To teach the essence, the teacher finds the student. Usually the student does not find the teacher. The master knows what kind of person he wants. A saying is, it takes much longer time for a qigong master to find the right student than a student to find the right teacher.

59. Some who only exercise sitting meditation with legs folded (or only practice the hard qigong of the stomach) may get a little large tummy, some may not. Those who do both moving forms and meditation will usually get rid of their big tummy. That is because qigong will improve digestion and sleep. If they are not doing the right form or following the steps correctly, their big tummy might not go away. Someone may wonder "what about Buddha?" In fact, all those big tummy Buddha statues and pictures were from people with their overactive imaginations.

60. Can a person do qigong and other physical exercise at the same time? Yes. They are not in conflict. Physical exercise strengthens the muscles, while qigong strengthens the moving of the inner channels and the Chi. Meditation does not seem like moving. Yet it is like exercise for the inside of the body. But you should wait until you calm down to start the qigong exercise. The best result is to do qigong last or before going to bed.