

Breath Watching Practices - Fred Gordon

Breath watching is very ancient and found in all schools. **Breath is Life.** Judaism = Ruach = Breath - "The Spirit of God that infuses Creation." Buddha = Prana. The vehicle of the breath/ mind, it is Prana that makes our mind move. Thus, you calm the mind by working with the breath. Breath watching is a simple and effective method of breathing exercise/ meditation. It fosters a state of calm, effortless relaxed and focused functioning. It helps us meld with our self and function at our best, to be "on the mark", centered, cool, calm and collected. Breath watching works wonders yet is so very simple. Basically, it is a more natural, effective method of respiration - breathing through your nostrils - and allowing the breath to penetrate and circulate throughout your entire body - from your head, down to your toes. Imagine the air entering your lungs, entering the blood stream and making it's way to all parts of your body. Then... slowly release the residue, and see it exit the nostrils as a smoky, deoxygenated cloud, rising up to the sky, dissolving into the cosmos. Breathing through your nostrils and allowing the oxygen to filter through your entire body will help you access your inner, calm, centered self, and perform at your peak, while helping you attain an "inner stillness". It can be done standing or sitting or even lying down. Initially, however, learn it as a seated posture, keeping your back naturally upright, your feet planted in front, with legs opened naturally from your hips. Keep the eyes closed to reduce external stimulation in the beginning. When you are practicing, it is important not to get involved in mental commentary, analysis or internal gossip. "Do Not Mistake The Running Commentary In Your Mind For Mindfulness!"

What is important is "Pure Presence":

- 25% of attention on mindfulness of the breath
- 25% devoted to continuous watchful awareness, checking the breath
- 50% on abiding calmly, spaciously.

Now simply follow these steps:

A. *Inhale slowly through nostrils and watch, with your eyes closed, as the "white cloud" fills the lungs completely.*

B. *Watch the clean, pure air travel to all extremities of your body.*

C. *Now exhale and watch the "smoky, deoxygenated cloud" exit the nostrils as carbon dioxide, wafting up into the heavens with all the toxins, tension, and spent energy, being dissolved into the cosmos.*

D. *Releasing the breath and enjoying the emptiness of clean and tension-free lungs.*

E. *Repeat this "breath watching" process ten or more times, allowing the calm relaxation to take over your entire being.*

Rest your attention lightly and mindfully on the breath. As you become more mindful of your breathing, you'll become more 'present' - Now.

Gather all the scattered aspects back into yourself and become whole. Let yourself gradually "identify" with the breath, as if you were becoming the breath. Slowly breathe. The breather and the breathing become one! Once you become comfortable with this technique sitting down, you can begin to practice it standing. After focusing on your breath for ten or so deep inhalations, continue with deep breathing, and begin to visualize your next activity, duty, or task. Now, cease watching your breath, and focus on the task at hand. Realize how centered, strong, and energized you are in this relaxed zone, and begin your activity. Simply start slowly and maintain your breathing, deeply, smoothly, slowly and naturally, for as long as the demands of the physical activity continue. Yes, there are times when you will need to breathe through your mouth. Do so, as necessary, but do so deeply, smoothly, slowly and in a relaxed manner.

Hamsa: White Swan Meditation

This timeless wisdom meditation/ mantra coupled with breathing, belongs to the ancient Vedic spiritual tradition, the Indian Yoga tradition that the Buddha himself practiced. It is deceptively simple. All one need do is breathe In and Out through the nostrils. As we continue to do this, we repeat to ourselves the syllable 'Ham' (Hum) on the In-Breath, and the syllable 'SO' on the Out-Breath. The syllable 'Ham' (Hum) represents and embodies the expansive masculine Yang energy. The syllable 'SO' represents the centripetal Yin, feminine energy. Hamsa means 'White Swan'. The Swan is an ancient symbol of spiritual grace and purity. Hamsa is called White Swan because when the In-Breath and Out-Breath are freed and purified, they are like the wings of a swan, helping our spirits soar. Hamsa helps us in finding the grace within and carries us beyond our own limited concepts. It helps us shed negative feelings and reminds us that we are all graceful and pure swans within. The Hamsa (Hum So) meditation is also known as the "I Am That" meditation. This meditation gives awareness of the connection between the Divinity within each of us and the greater infinite Divinity.

Guidelines:

We can also employ this mantra/ meditation to 'bring down' the blessings from above.

We do this by:

Breathing in, and saying 'Ham' (Hum), (saying it lightly and all but silently to ourselves) as we visualize light streaming down from the infinite source of power above the head.

Watch it travel down through the crown aperture (Bai Hui), instantly descending down the Central Channel

into one's heart chakra, making it blaze brightly with light and higher consciousness.

Breathing Out on the 'SO', we visualize all that love and light radiating out from the heart chakra.

We do this time and again, (at least 108 times per session), with light and consciousness coursing through and purifying everything within and without.

The Hamsa (Hum So) is all-pervasive and dwells within all beings and all forms.

"Hum" on the Inhalation... "So" on the Exhalation become that light...

Celebrating Stillness

Rush, rush, rush. Is your life so busy that sometimes you get lost in all the chaos? Give yourself the gift of still moments so you can better enjoy the rest of your life. Here are 10 simple ways to be still from Richard Mahler's book *Stillness: Daily Gifts of Solitude*.

1. Turn Off the Phone. The telephone can be a tyrant, demanding your undivided attention with its insistent ring—and the implication that you must drop everything to engage in conversation. If you're not dealing with something urgent, a call can wait. Turn off the ringer and use an answering device to take messages.

2. Walk in a Park. Take some time to experience the natural quiet of trees and grass. Even in urban areas, a park is more tranquil than the busy streets that surround it. If there's a fountain or stream, so much the better, since the "white noise" of flowing water screens human-made sounds and soothes the soul.

3. Ignore the Computer. Like the phone, a humming computer begs for attention. Don't give in. Your e-mail, the Internet and unfinished work will still be there when you're ready to return to them. If you have a computer in your bedroom, consider moving it so that it won't intrude on your sleep or relaxation. The same goes for the TV set.

4. Go on a Media Fast. Many of us feel the day hasn't really started until we check the headlines in the newspaper or tune into the TV or radio news. Yet the news is seldom good. Do you really need to know about the latest murder, mayhem or stock market dive? Give yourself a treat by going without news for a full day.

5. Have a Quiet Car. Driving is stressful enough, especially in rush hour traffic. Lower the tension and reduce the distraction by turning off your radio, tape/CD player and cell phone. Roll up the windows to shut out the road noise. Pay attention to your driving, but also to the scenery you're passing and what's going on inside your head and heart.

6. Eat a Meal in Silence. Most of us don't pay much attention to the food we eat. We're too busy talking, reading, watching TV or working. Try cutting out the distractions and let yourself really see, taste, smell and savor your food. Enjoying a delicious meal, particularly in the company of loved ones, can instantly comfort and relax us.

7. Take a Hot Bath. Light a candle; add oils, salts or scents to the water; stretch out against a bathtub pillow; close your eyes and luxuriate in steamy sensuality. Alternatively, take a long, hot shower and let the water wash your cares and woes away.

8. Go to Your Room and Close the Door. Do what's needed to let go of your stress and recover your psychological balance. This may mean stretching out on the bed, sitting on a meditation pillow or doing some yoga exercises. Maybe you'd like to draw, play an instrument, or listen to some soothing music. Keep the mood simple and tranquil.

9. Find the Quietest Time and Place YOU Can. The world is special at dawn, often the calmest and most beautiful hour of the day. A secluded corner of your garden or home may inspire serenity. Whatever the space and time, find your restful sanctuary and let it fill you with rapture.

10. Turn Off the TV. We use the television to relax, inform and entertain. But sometimes it can drain our energy or add to our tension. Let the TV set know whose boss. You may find that you're much more refreshed and relaxed if you sit for an hour without TV's stimulation than if you let a program suck you in.

Eight Extraordinary Vessels/ Channels (Chi Jing Ba Mai)

The Eight Extraordinary Vessels are so called because they differ in energetic function from the Twelve Primary Channels. These eight, the Chi Jing Ba Mai, have an extraordinary ability to regulate the "Deeper" energetic reservoirs of the body. They functionally connect to the Twelve Primary Channels' and circulate the 'Jing Chi' (Essence Energy) throughout the body. The Eight Extraordinary Vessels have neither a direct connection nor an internal/external relationship with the internal organs. These Eight Channels are also reservoirs that regulate the distribution/ circulation of Jing and Chi inside the body. They are the foundation of the body's energy. When the Eight Vessels serve as reservoirs of Chi, and when full, the energy 'overflows' into the center channel (Chong Mai). The Eight Vessels have five main functions: - to serve as reservoirs of Chi: ~ store and circulate Jing Chi (draw from the kidneys); ~ circulate the WEI Chi (Protective energy); ~ regulate the body's life cycles; and ~ integrate the six primary Yang Organs with the six Extraordinary Organs with the kidneys. (i.e. brain, uterus, blood vessels, gall bladder, marrow and bones, and the body's internal energy flow). The brain is regulated by the Governing Vessel, (Du), and the Yin and Yang Heel vessels. The Thrusting and Conception vessels regulate the uterus. (Thrusting Vessels - also called 'chong vessels', are five energy vessels which originate from the center of the body and internally transverse the legs and torso.)

Eight Vessels also have energetic functions.

1. *The Conception, Governing and Thrusting Vessels are considered the SOURCE of all the other Extraordinary Vessels, and affect our energy at a deep constitutional level.*
2. *The Yin and Yang Heel Vessels are complementary in that they both flow 'from' the legs, into the eyes (controlling the eye's muscles).*
3. *The Yin-Yang Linking Vessels complement each other by linking the body's Yin/ Yang channels.*
4. *The Belt Vessel (Dai Mai) is the only horizontal vessel in the body, encircling the man channels. Its energetic influence is in its ability to affect the circulation of energy in the body, especially the legs.*

The Eight Extraordinary Channels link all of the Yin and Yang channels in the body and regulate the flow of energy in these channels to maintain a state of energetic balance. Medical Chi Gung exercises (Chi Gung) and meditations aim to maximize health and to take the individual beyond mere physical health, to spiritual enlightenment, whereas, the goal of Chinese acupuncture is to restore sick people to health. The energetic points treated by the acupuncturist must be along the superficial channels, so that acupuncture needles can activate them. In medical Chi Gung training, of which Dragon/ Tiger is perhaps the oldest and most efficient, the channels and points can be deep within the body, since the energy is guided by the mind or by postures/ movements, rather than needles.

Chan Buddhist Chi Gathering Chi Gung

Relax your mind, relax and dissolve your body.

Step#1:

Stand - comfortably with your feet about shoulders width apart, knees unlocked and slightly bent, sitting into our Kwa.

Relax your shoulders and do not raise them through entire exercise.

Raise your arms/palms in a circular movement out- to-the sides and up and over your head (in a circular manner) and bring palms together overhead into a praying posture; while at the same time vocalizing the sound Om. Lower hands down the frontline of your body down to your throat and vocalize the sound Ah.

Continue lowering your praying palms until you reach your chest, and here vocalize the sound Hum.

Step #2:

After your chest ceases to resonate, point your hands/fingers down the centerline of your body while separating your hands with the palms still facing each other, in front of your body.

Lift both arms, palms still facing each other, with elbows slightly bent.

Next, lift/raise elbows back and upwards, while naturally lowering your forearms until your palms are facing backwards (Scarecrow Stance).

Bend your knees slightly, (as low as you feel comfortable - with your feet pointing 'in' slightly, or forward if you wish).

Move your elbows and wrists towards the back, until your fingers are pointing towards your waist, palms facing somewhat upwards, but not touching your waist. Hold this position for about 5 seconds.

Step #3.

Squeeze your elbows back towards each other, as you point your fingers forward, palms up. Hold for a few seconds.

Next, relax your shoulders and allow the relaxation of your back muscles to push your arms forward, until your elbows clear your torso. Then rotate your wrists until your palms are facing down.

Step #4.

Relax your fingers and form them into a Stair pattern, the thumb presses "in" slightly at its base, and your index finger is higher than the other three fingers.

Remain in this 'Jan Jong' standing posture for at least ten (10) minutes. The longer you stay in the posture, the stronger your Chi sensation will be.

Step #5. Closing

Slowly lift both palms up next to your collarbones, and transform your palms into fists (not clenched tightly).

Inhale and simultaneously straighten your legs (but don't lock your knees).

Exhale slowly as you open your fists and push your downward facing palms down the body, to your Tan Tien, in a natural standing position. If You Are Going To Practice Other Training After This 'Chi Building Practice', Do Not Perform The Closing Yet. Perform the closing only after you have completed your entire session.

Background Notes:

During this practice, breathe as usual, from your diaphragm, not paying attention to any specific areas. When raising your palms to overhead and you vocalize the sound Om, Visualize pure Chi entering your body through the crown point of your head (Bai Hue). Then continuing the downward palm movement to your mouth/throat area, vocalize Ah sound, bringing the pure essence to your throat. Continue this downward movement to your chest, resonating the sound Hum, dispersing the Chi into the rest of your body. When you squeeze your elbows back toward each other – this stimulates the 12 Channels in your body and smoothes out your Chi flow. As your fingers face your waist/girdle vessel, (belt meridian or Dai

Mai), you also stimulate your conception and governing vessels or meridians, the micro-cosmic orbit. It also interacts closely with the three Yin and three Yang channels in your legs. This influence interacts with and increases the Chi flow between the upper and lower parts of your body. The Pigeon Toe Stance can increase the Emitting force of your Chi, 'more' than if your toes remain pointing forward. Coupled with the Squeezing of your arms/elbows, which Condenses the Chi and blood, and when released, a strong force of Chi will flow out through your arms/hands/ fingers, also increasing the flow of Chi in the three Yin and three Yang channels in your arms. When this Chi flow increases in your palms and fingers, you will feel a warm, swelling and tingling sensation. Maintaining this posture will enhance your blood/ Chi flow as long as you wish. Standing Postures (Jan Jong) practices can help you achieve smooth flowing Chi, to attain healing and vibrant health.

Turtle Thoughts

"What you do not know, you will fear: What one fears, one destroys..." Chief Dan George

Keynotes: Turtles denote mother hood, longevity, and the awareness of opportunity.

Turtles are more ancient than any other vertebrate animal, and there are over 250 kinds of them. More than 48 species inhabit the United States. The shell of the Turtle is the symbol of Heaven and the square underside, the symbol of Earth. Thus, the Turtle's magic helps us unite the blessings of Heaven and Earth in our own lives. Turtles are shore animals, using both land and water — depicting balance. All shore areas are known as doorways to the other realm (magical) and the Doors know Turtles". The Markings and Sections on some turtles' backs total 13. In the Lunar calendar, there are 13 Full Moons or 13 New Moons. Thus, turtles are the symbol of Primal Mother, of female energy, life cycles, etc. Because of it's great age (150 years) and slow metabolism, the Turtle is also associated with longevity. Long life and grounding, within life is part of the Turtle's power/ magic. It doesn't move fast - as if - on some level - the Turtle knows It Has Time Enough! Turtle medicine can teach us new perceptions about **Time** and our relationship to it. Turtles have amazing survival skills and strategies. They hear well they can also Distinguish Colors and they have a sense of Smell.

The Turtle Totems hold the mystery of awakening the senses – both physical and spiritual:

- of Hearing what is Meant or left Unsaid.

- of Seeing with external as well as internal Vision.

- of tending to heightened senses of Smell and Higher Discrimination (e.g. "I smell a rat...")

Turtles cause us to honestly ask ourselves some questions:

1. Are we not seeing what we should?

2. Are we not hearing what we should?

3. Are we not using discrimination in our decision-making?

Interestingly, Turtles vary in type, size and characteristics, just as we do. Every Turtle has at least one characteristic that makes it stand out, and which usually has great symbolic significance.

A **Snapping Turtle** - may indicate the ability to "grab" and/or use the mouth (voice/sound/digestion) in new ways, or even to defend oneself (physically/ culturally/ verbally/ spiritually).

A **Box Turtle** - has hinge-like openings in both the front and back, that it can retreat into - perhaps teaching us how to protect ourselves more solidly (physically/culturally) by things we avoid (situations/indulgences).

A **Painted Turtle** - may be able to teach us the power and use of Color... discriminating shades of truth and reality.

A **Sea Turtle** - is fully aquatic...the symbol of water - and element that we should all reflect upon. It is wet, pliable, yielding - yet it persists and conquers all; soft, yet giving - and so very powerful. It seeks it's own level and is so very vital, supporting.

Turtles travel through this life without excess baggage. They carry their homes on their backs, and never leave their shells, which are actually their ribs and backbones. If a Turtle is flipped onto it's back by the vicissitudes of life – it always rights itself - it never gives up! It uses it's strong neck and head to flip itself upright once again. This behavior serves as a reminder for each of us to USE our own head/knowledge to Right Ourselves when our world goes topsy-turvy to keep a sense of up-rightness about us always. Turtles are omnivorous, showing balance in diet and habits. They eat insects, plants, fish, amphibians, and even small mammals on occasion. Turtles are Opportunistic, teaching and reminding us to pay attention or we will miss opportunities in our daily lives. To the Native American, the Turtle is the symbol of Mother Earth, and serves to remind us that Mother Earth provides for all our Needs. Sometimes we can't see the Forest for the Trees (we are too close or lack objectivity). The Turtle can serve to Slow Us Down and allow us to see Opportunities, Beauty and the Magic of Mother Nature.

Turtles do have a slow metabolism, which also serves as a reminder for us to step Back And Ask:

- Is Life Becoming Too Hectic, Too Full? - Are-We Not Taking Time For Ourselves?

- Are We Not Treating Ourselves Well? - Are We Too Busy To See What's Really Going On? ... Or...

-Are We Going Perhaps Too Slow In A Certain Area/ Facet Of Our Lives.

And Maybe We Need To Pick Up The Pace A Little - Carpe Diem - Seize The Day In That Part Of Our Lives...

Turtles can help us decide. Remember the link Turtles have between Land and Water? The water is the

symbol of the great creative source that we can draw upon and live in but we also have to come Out of it and Apply our knowledge/creativity, etc. The Wisdom we have accumulated thus far, within our physical world, on land, in our lives - making our lives more productive and our lives/our world a better place. It's magic hints at needing to think things through, then acting with a positive outlook. Turtle magic teaches us to go within our selves - to take time and savor life, and let the natural flow work for us. Too much, too soon can upset the balance. Make a way for yourself inside yourself! Turtles teach us - that the way (Tao) is by going deep within ourselves.

Stages of Disease: Wellness, Energetic and Functional Imbalance, Organic Disturbance, Death Human Energy Field:

It is suggested that the physical body is merely the densest level of energetic matter that exists within a frequency range that makes it both tangible and visible. There are "other" levels of energetic matter surrounding the physical with increasingly subtle frequency distributions. The various levels that are believed to exist are: Physical, Etheric, Astral, Mental (containing instinctive, intellectual and spiritual sublevels) and Causal or pure spirit. It has been suggested that these energy levels cannot be considered to have distinct divisions, hence, each level interacts with its neighbor, and the development and organization of the physical body are preceded by stimulation of the other, higher frequency bodies. In other words, the organizational field commences at the pure spirit or Causal level, our outermost "shell", as it were, which then creates an organizational matrix at the mental level. The mental level in turn causes the same to happen the Astral level, then the Etheric level, and finally the matrices manifest in physical form - the human body. Further, it seems that "Chi flow" in the body and meridian/channel networks that carry it, operate at the cusp between the physical and the non-tangible energetic systems. Thus, as the Etheric body is seen as the closest to the physical system (the body), the meridians may be seen as forming what Richard Gerber calls the "physical-etheric interface", The Chi energy of the Universe enters the body through the etheric energy level, accessing the body through the major and minor acupuncture points and flowing to the cellular structures by way of the energy gradients and concentrations that we term the meridian system. Thus, when a disharmony appears in the body, it has first manifested itself at the etheric level Physical illness comes at the end of a chain of energetic processes.

Taoist Alternate Nostril Breathing (For Gathering/Circulation of Chi)

This is a complete Taoist meditation on it's own and can be practiced at any time, for however long you wish. Before we start, take a moment to Imagine/Visualize three energy meridians, three energy lines/veins in the body. It is important to have a clear image of these three veins or rivers-of-energy, as it will make the meditation more effective. The First meridian is the line of energy that connects the crown of the head with the tailbone. Some people imagine this chi vein in the center of the body, perhaps moving along the spine itself. (The interesting thing about Chi Gung, is that we can "feel" the energy wherever it is in "our" bodies, for it is not a set course or route) Just imagine a line of energy connecting your crown to your tailbone. Now, there are two other energy meridians, that Bow-Out from each nostril, along the sides of the spine, connecting at the tailbone, also. One meridian or river of energy, flows from the Left Nostril, moving through the body, towards the back or rear of the body, making a bow- like shape or an arc that runs parallel to the spine, connecting at the tailbone. There is also the same symmetrical meridian on the other, 4 sides, starting at the Right Nostril, bowing out, yet running along the center or spine. Once again, it is wherever you feel it (for it is not a given distance from the spine), bowing out from the spine and joining at the tailbone. So, at the tailbone, three meridians come together; the central one, the one starting at the Left Nostril and the one that starts at the Right Nostril.

Now we can begin the Chi Circulation Exercise

Take your Right hand and form it into a fist. Then open your thumb and little finger. Take your thumb and close the Right Nostril. As you slowly inhale through the Left Nostril, imagine that you are drawing healing/energizing chi through the Left Nostril, along that left meridian which runs down the left side of the spine, gently bowing out in an arc, and joining the base of the spine at the tailbone (that place where the three meridians meet). Make sure you take a deep, slow inhalation. Now, as you hold the breath by gently pinching both nostrils closed with your thumb and little finger, imagine/feel that the Internal Breath - The Chi, is continuing in motion, drawing up the Central Channel, all the way to the crown of the head. Still holding the breath, the Chi now descends from the crown all the way back down the Central Channel to the tailbone. Now, as you need to Exhale, keep the Left Nostril closed and open the Right Nostril, so the thumb is open, and send the breath out the Right Channel. (Remember as you follow these protocols to follow "your own pace of the breath". You may need to pause differently during the practice. Breathe Naturally When You Need To.) Continuing; We have just Exhaled through the Right Nostril, and now we Inhale through that same Right Nostril, drawing the breath slowly, smoothly and deeply down the Right side, that Right parallel meridian. As you once again pinch both nostrils gently shut, the breath is held, but the Inner Chi is imagined as rising up the Central Channel, all the way to the crown. Still holding the breath, it drops down the Central Channel (the spine) from the crown to the tailbone. So, during the period of retaining the breath, we have "washed" the Central Channel. Now, we open the little finger, keeping the Right Nostril closed, and Exhale out the Left Nostril, the Left Channel. This completes the one round of the breath! Now

we inhale once again, through the Left channel' a deep inhalation, visualizing it, pinching both nostrils closed. As you hold the breath, it rises up to the crown. Still holding the breath, it drops down to the tailbone. And we open the Right Nostril, it ascends, exiting the Right Channel via the Right Nostril and we then inhale deeply through the Right Nostril, watching it drop, descending the Right Channel to the tailbone. We then close both nostrils, holding the breath, visualizing the Inner Chi Breath rise up the Center to the crown. It then drops down the Center to the tailbone. We then open the Left Nostril, letting the breath exit the Left Channel. This completes our Second Round of the Breath. You can practice this meditation/exercise for whatever is a comfortable length of time for you. There is no fixed amount of time to practice. This meditation/exercise has the benefits of Moving The Chi and opening obstructions/stagnations, as well as balancing the Yin and Yang energies of the body in a general way. Once you have finished this practice, return to the non-focused, basic awareness. Notice if the breath is moving easier, any less obstructed. Find out if there is a different quality the breath (i.e. longer-deeper-finer - more tranquil). Now, even letting that go, simply be aware in a general way no object, just being.

Fang Song Kung: (Active Relaxation)

Fang = Doing/ Releasing; Song/Sung = relaxation...the absence of unnecessary tension Kung = Work

Golden Rule of Chi Kung = Be alert, pay attention, be present Chi Kung actually is a 5 stage process:

- 1. Meditation - self-awareness*
- 2. Cleansing - purification*
- 3. Strengthening - recharging*
- 4. Circulating chi - moving it throughout entire body*
- 5. Dispersing stagnation - self-massage (An Mo)*

Minimum Effort Creates Optimum Health:

Remember that chi cannot flow through a tense, knotted muscle or a locked joint. Nor can it flow through a limp wrist or a flaccid belly. True relaxation is compared to water: soft, supple, alive and powerful. As the body relaxes, the mind becomes tranquil, aware, and alert. Physiologically, the body is in a state of balance/ homeostasis; psychologically, the relaxed mind is "kung", empty, free of rigid beliefs about oneself or others. (Holding a grudge is poor chi gung.) This Kung or emptiness creates a centrifugal force, drawing one back to the point of tranquility and balance. Relaxation creates deep abdominal respiration, resulting in efficient and more complete oxygenation of the blood. Relaxation helps to dilate blood vessels and lower blood pressure; and it affects blood chemistry, including normalization of the acid-base/pH balance. When standing - "Do not stand on your own two feet." but rather stand on the ground. Sink your Chi! External signs of sinking are: faces release their lines and worries/ the eyes and jaw loosened and relax/ the shoulders which may have been raised, sink on the torso/ the breath sinks and moves more freely in the lower abdomen.

How To: "Relaxation is a matter of effortlessness with intent." Thus, trying to relax is counter-productive! To relax, we need to pay attention to what we are doing, setting aside worries and thoughts. "Regard relaxation as a process of surrendering to a deeper wisdom." Let Go! Before beginning, meditate and perform a body scan. Become aware of you! Ask yourself - "How do I feel today?" "How am I breathing?" "Where am I comfortable?" "Where am I tense?" Simply observe - innocently accepting and appreciating what your body tells you.

Sequential Relaxation And Sinking - Relax And Release

You are tense because you have lost or never fully developed the ability to differentiate parts of your body that are tense. Thus, it is best to proceed systematically through the body, and in the, process discover where you are working at odds with yourself.

Steps:

- Stand or Sit
- Starting at the Crown of your head, and working downward, become aware of and "Ask" each part of the body to relax and sink (neuropeptides).
 1. Head; Relax the crown, scalp, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, temples cheeks, jaw, gums, ears. all facial muscles to relax and release tension downward.
 2. Neck: Become aware of your neck - relax the front, sides and back of neck.
 3. Shoulders: Relax them, letting them sit on the Torso. Sink them straight down.
 4. Arms/Hands: Allow relaxation to spread downward through arms, elbows, wrists and hands, and the tension to DRIP off fingers into the earth.
 5. Bones: Relax your collarbone, shoulder blades, ribs, and breastbone and let the chi descend into the earth.
 6. Chest: Relax/Release the chest muscles
 7. Back: Relax and Release the muscles of the upper back, mid and lower back and along the entire spine and tailbone.
 8. Torso: Relax and Release the Entire torso, especially the internal organs, Solar Plexus, Diaphragm And

Abdomen. Let the belly hang out.

"Don't Worry About How You Look...Rather, Be Concerned About How You Feel!" Relax!!

9. Hips; relax the inguinal area and the groin. Relax the buttocks and the anal sphincter, your crotch and genitalia.

10. Thighs: Release the thigh muscles in front and on the sides, and the hamstrings on the back.

11. Knees: Release the knees and open the "bocks of the knees".

12. Calves: Release and relax the calves and shins.

13. Ankles: Relax and release the ankles, feet and soles of the feet.

14. Relax Your Spine

15. Mind: Relax Your Mind - Sink And Enjoy!

Imagine that the ground is a wonderful, buoyant lake that easily supports your body. Enjoy the sensation of floating - relaxed and carefree. **Closing:** Perform a body scan once again. What has changed? Do you feel different? How? You see, the body, like the mind, learns through appreciating differences. Be aware of the contrasts. Don't re-enter the busy world right off. Relax; walk around, stretch. Take a few deep, cleansing breaths. Re-enter the world -- Smiling! (at least grinning, so the world will wonder what you've been up to!)

Healing the Emotions - Meditation

Sit in Chi Gung posture for a few minutes; eyes lightly closed. Make sure you are relaxed and breathing naturally (diaphragmatically. incorporating the six qualities of the breath: slow, long, deep, fine, even and tranquil.) Bring your mind to the Lungs. Use your inner senses to feel the lungs. As you inhale, draw integrity and dignity into your lungs. As you exhale, let the breath carry away all worries, anxiety and grief. Repeat several times...

Inhale integrity — exhale anxiety.

Inhale dignity — exhale grief.

Inhale righteousness — exhale sorrow allowing that to fade-

Now focus on the Kidneys. Let the inhalations fill the kidneys with wisdom, with the confidence of inner knowing - exhale all fears.

Inhale clear perception — exhale uncertainty.

Inhale self-understanding — exhale fears allowing that to fade.

Locate the Liver with your awareness. As you inhale, draw in kindness, filling the liver completely. As you exhale, release and let go of anger.

Inhale human-heartedness — exhale anger.

Inhale self-acceptance — exhale that which makes you angry allowing that to fade.

Bring your mind now to the Heart. Inhale, filling your heart, all its chambers, valves, the heart muscle itself with peace and calm. Exhale, releasing excitement zealously, emotional excesses of any feelings of any kind.

Inhale orderliness, exhale excitableness.

Inhale peacefulness. Exhale unsettledness allowing that to fade.

Now find your Spleen. Locate and feel it on your left side. As you exhale, let go of pensiveness.

Inhale faith and honesty, exhale intellectual nit-pickiness.

Inhale confidence, exhale doubt.

Let go of excess empathy, so you can be rooted in yourself and again inhale trust allowing that to fade.

Finally bring your mind to the Center-Of-Your-Being, to the Stillness And Silence of quiet abdominal breathing. Let all images and thoughts disappear. "Stay" with this feeling of "pure being...hanging out with yourself" for as long as you wish. Close with this Inner-Nourishing Chi Gung for emotional healing. As you quietly breath, think of a healing phrase - for example "My Emotions Are Balanced And Calm".

Inhale, gently expanding the lower abdomen - thinking:

"My Emotions Are."

Exhale -letting the abdomen relax - thinking"

"...Balanced And Calm". (Repeat for up to five minutes.)

With regard to the Spleen, we are pensive when we are preoccupied with ourselves; and we are overly empathetic when we are preoccupied with others. It is this preoccupied state of being that harms our Spleen. It ungrounded, unbalances us. Remember the key idea of Chi Gung is to "Be Present" when you do Chi Gung. In Chinese medicine the harmful emotions are anxiety, sorrow, fear, anger, joy, rumination, and empathy. Each of these, when excessive or fixed (preoccupying the mind) harms an internal organ and disturbs the Chi in specific ways. What the Chinese mean by Joy is excitability, a tendency towards giddiness, talkativeness, lavishness and general excess.

Meditating to Reduce Stress

"Who has time to worry about stress? If we had time to manage our stress, we would not be stressed in the first place! "This retort, unfortunately, is often our first response to the subject of stress. Yet no matter how busy we become in our dally routines, we cannot afford to ignore our reactions to stressful circumstances. Stress has been linked to cardio-vascular disease, diabetes, immune system disorders, certain cancers, alcoholism, obesity and more. In fact, recent research has strengthened the link to heart disease,

suggesting that the way we handle stress may be a factor in whether we develop injured blood vessels or blocked arteries, two conditions that lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Stepping Back from your Stress

You cannot be in a state of stress and State of relaxation at the same time. So can control how your Body responds to stressful situations by adopting relaxation practices, such as meditation. To date, more than 1,300 Studies have documented the effectiveness of meditation as a health practice. Meditation can lower heart rate, muscle tension, stress hormone secretion and resting blood pressure. Many hospitals and medical clinics use medication in stress management and other health promotion programs.

Though many forms of meditation exist, they generally produce the same healthful benefits. Meditation costs nothing, requires no special equipment and demands only a small investment of time. Research has shown that just 15 to 20 minutes of medication twice a day is enough to produce beneficial results, and some experts believe even shorter sessions can be effective. What matters most is consistency—medicate every day, if possible. How does meditation work? Learning to observe your thoughts and feelings as they happen allows you to step back from them and control your responses, rather than automatically reacting and getting caught up in the constant activity of your mind. Just as you train your body through a program of exercise, you train your mind through a consistent practice of medication.

Easy Ways to Get Started

Michele Hebert, international mind-body health and fitness presenter and owner of Higher Health and Fitness in La Jolla, California, offers the following three tips for beginning your own meditation program:

1. Seek a Quiet Environment.

Find your own space where you feel calm, such as a secluded room, a park or a place of worship.

2. Sit With Your Spine Erect. Be seated in a chair or in a simple cross-legged position on the floor or a pillow.

3. Let Go of Control. Instead of restricting your meditation experience, try to maintain a receptive attitude. Once you become oriented, Hebert suggests the following three commonly used techniques to focus your medication:

1. Watching Your Breath. With this technique, you simply observe your breath as you sit quietly. Follow your breath as it flows in and out, and notice the space between the in breath and the out breath. When your mind wanders, which is natural, bring it back to your breath. Approach this process as a calm observer.

2. Object Concentration. Focus your gaze on an object—such as a flower or candle flame—or a favorite setting. The goal is to bring your mind to one point of focus in the present moment.

3. Mantra Meditation. Repeat a word or series of words to yourself to gain control of your restless mind. Your mantra does not have to be of foreign origin; use words that represent health and serenity to you, such as "joy," "peace" and "harmony." Once again, as your mind naturally wanders bring it back to your mantra.

At first, you may have difficulty meditating for very long. Do not give up. Setting aside your thoughts, however brief, may be one of the most important things you do for your health today.

Basics of Health Guidelines

"Truly, if one uses the 'Way' as one's instrument, the results will be like the 'Way' ... to those who have conformed themselves to (it's) power, the power readily lends more power. While to those who conform themselves to inefficacy, inefficacy readily lends it's ineffectiveness." Lao Tzu #23

The Tao Te Ching tells us to follow the seasons: the problem is that the seasons are half over when we think they are just starting. The TCM practitioner believes that;

Spring begins the first of February

Summer begins the first of May

Fall begins the first of August

Winter begins the first of November.

Watch for the "signs of Nature":

Spring and Summer are Yang seasons - Activity.

Fall and Winter are Yin seasons, time for rest and recuperation, cultivation.

To nourish life, we must practice harmony and moderation in all things. The keys to longevity;

Regulating daily activities - (Predictability)

Getting adequate rest

Getting adequate exercise (aerobic/anaerobic/flexibility)

Having the right amount of sex. (Energy levels)

Getting early treatment when we are ill.