

3 CENTERS QIGONG

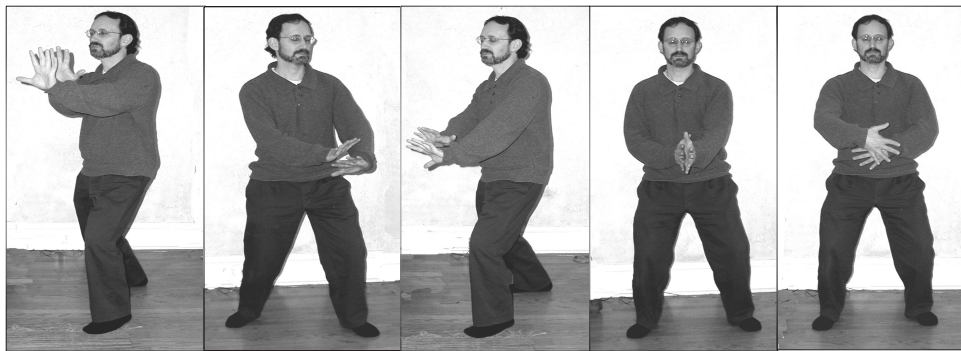
by Malvin Finkelstein, O.M.D.

Over the last 25 years, I have spent numerous hours studying Qigong and martial arts with a variety of teachers. Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine has been my profession for the past 22 years.

During a practice session of Qigong, my body started directing me to move in new and creative ways. As I listened and attuned to the inner messages that my body was giving me, a whole series of movements started arising. In the intervening 8 years, these movements have refined themselves and continued to develop into the form that is now called 3 Centers Qigong.

The underlying basis of this form focuses on the energy of the 3 Centers - the 3 Dan Tians. The 3 Dan Tian theory is one of the Taoist and acupuncture theories of organizing energy in the body. The lower Dan Tian, the more well known Dan Tian is centered in the lower abdomen below the navel. This is the center of the physical Qi of the body and is the first area of development in many Qigong styles. The middle Dan Tian is centered in the chest and deals with emotional Qi or Shen and compassion and corresponds with the heart chakra in the Hindu energetic system. The upper Dan Tian is centered in the forehead, corresponds with the 3rd eye and crown chakras and deals with mental function, inner vision and bringing in energy from above - from the sky, sun, moon, and stars.

Through my practice of acupuncture, I have noticed that many people have either an under or over development of one or more of the 3 centers. People who do lots of mental or visual work may not be very grounded and may have a tendency to lose things. These people are prone to an over development of the upper Dan Tian



and a reduced development in the lower Dan Tian. People who are very physically strong, devoting all of their attention to fighting and the martial arts may not have developed softness or compassion. These people may be very harsh and militaristic and could be deficient in the middle Dan Tian. (The ideal of the martial artist is to have balance in all 3 Dan Tians). One method of rectifying these imbalances is to clear blockages from excess Dan Tians and to charge and vitalize deficient or under-developed Dan Tians.

According to the theory of Chinese medicine and many other non-allopathic medical traditions, one of the fundamental causes of disease and pain is blockage of energy. Where there is no movement, there can be no life. The process of clearing stuck energy from the Dan Tians and charging and revitalizing them is a fundamental method for enhancing health and building vitality. Once we have health and vitality, we can utilize this energy for meditation, martial arts or external Qi healing.

Over the years, the core set has expanded to 3 additional sets. Energy has a tendency to get stuck in the joints of the body. As many of you who have done Tai Chi or Qigong know, many styles work with joint rotation exercises. Set 1 of 3 Centers Qigong progresses systematically through all of the joints in the body from the toes and ankles up through the spine using either circular motions or linear motions utilizing the 3 planes of movement - flexion-extension, rotation and abduction/adduction.

3 Centers Qigong utilizes visualization and imagery. We encourage the mind to lead the breath through the body and where the mind and the breath lead, the energy will follow. The lower Dan Tian gets its energy

from the earth through the channels that come up the legs and by direct connection to the bottom of the lower Dan Tian, located in the perineal region (between the tail bone and the bottom of the pubic bone). The 2nd set enhances our balance and grounding by shifting the weight between the left and right feet and breathing the energy of the earth into the feet. This culminates in a series of Qigong walks.

In the third set, we first draw earth energy into the palms to solidify the root of the lower Dan Tian (root chakra-perineum), then we clear excess or stuck Qi from the lower Dan Tian and then charge and revitalize it. We draw in energy from the trees into the palms to clear and revitalize the middle Dan Tian. For the upper Dan Tian, we draw in energy from above (sun, moon, stars, heaven) to clear and revitalize it and to reconnect ourselves to our upper source. We then bring earth energy up the channels to above our crown, bring heaven energy down the channels to below our feet and tree energy from all around us into our center pole (Taiji pole). We conclude with condensing this back into the lower Dan Tian.

The fourth set is a Dao-yin or Do-in set that circulates the Qi into our physical body with percussive tapping. This progresses from our face down to our toes.

The final phase is a yin one in which we sit, stand or lie still and let the energy circulate through us. This final stage is extremely important since it is a balance to all the yang activity that we have been doing. We need to allow time and space for the energy of our bodies to react to the concentrated action of the 4 sets.

Malvin can be contacted at:
malvin@rio.com