

Introduction to Medical Qigong and Its Applications in Stress Management



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OUTLINE



- Introduction to concept of Qigong
- Major qigong traditions
- Medical Qigong – Internal (self practice) vs. external qigong therapy
- Clinical applications of Qigong for stress management
- The known mechanisms
- Happy Fisher Qigong (Practice)

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What Is Qigong? -- the Term



- Pronounced as “Chi Kung”
- Qi = vital energy, breath of life.
- Gong = skill or achievement.
- A general term for various Chinese mind-body exercises and therapies.
- The practice has a history of 3,000+ years
- Many other names in the history

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Other Names of Qigong

- *Tu-na* (吐纳) - exhalation and inhalation,
- *Dao-yin* (导引) – guiding-conducting exercise
- *Xiu-lian* (修炼) - cultivating and refining
- *Jing-zuo* (静坐) - tranquil sitting, sit meditation
- *Yang-sheng* (养生) – nurturing life
- *Cun-si* (存思) - mind-visualization
- *Guan-xiang* (观想) - observing-imagination
- *Xing-qi* (行气) - circulating Qi

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Example Relics of Qigong

- Left: a painted pottery jar with a sculpture in human shape on a standing meditation post, and gulping Qi... (around 3000 B.C.)



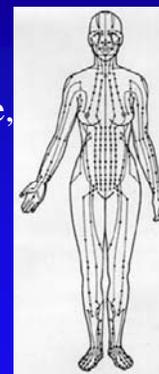
- Right: A jade pendant describes special technique of qi meditation & possible reactions (around 600 B.C.)



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Concept of Qi in TCM

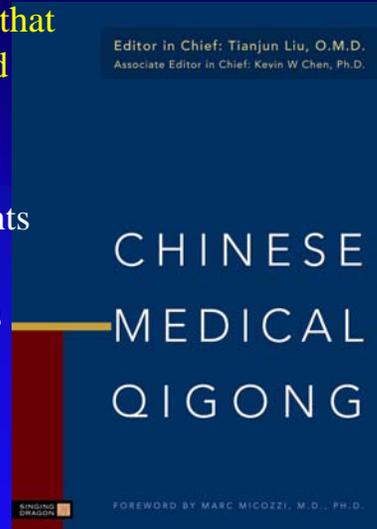
- TCM posits the existence of a subtle energy (*Qi*) circulating throughout human body.
- Good health = free-flow, well-balanced *qi*; sickness or pain = result of *qi* blockage or unbalanced *qi*.
- All TCM therapies, herb, cupping, acupuncture, massage & Qigong, based on this perspective.
- The same concept can be found in other cultures: Ki (Japan), Prana (India), Mana (Hawaii & Philippines), and OD (German).



Definition of Qigong

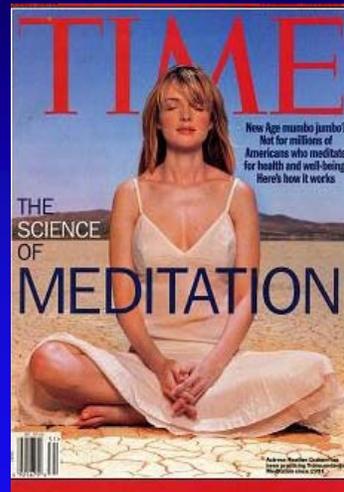
“The skill of body-mind exercises that integrate body, breath and mind adjustments into one.”

1. Contents: 3 adjustments
2. Purpose: Integrate 3 adjustments into one
3. Classification of discipline: It's body-mind exercise – both physiology and psychology
4. Category of knowledge: operational skill or technique



Qigong and Meditation

- *All meditations could be called “Qigong” in China*
- **Qigong ≠ meditation**
(many dynamic forms)
- Some call qigong **moving meditation**



Zen -- One of Qigong Forms



- Zen (Chan) is one of the three major Buddhist qigong traditions in China
- Zen is the base for mindfulness meditation.

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Reiki and Qigong



- Reiki was known from Japan; but really originated from one of medical qigong traditions – 灵气
- Thousands of other forms of qigong existed in the history....

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Major Qigong Traditions

Thousands of different qigong forms can be classified into 5 categories or traditions:

- Confucian Qigong
- Buddhist Qigong
- Daoism (Taoist) Qigong
- Medical Qigong
- Martial-Arts Qigong



Medical Qigong 医

- Emphasize how to use vital energy (qi) to help take control of illnesses/diseases, and how to prevent them.
- Influenced by Daoism philosophy but developed independently mostly by TCM practitioners.
- Historically, most famous TCM doctors were also good qigong practitioners (examples, Hua Tuo; Bian Jue, Li Shizhen).
- Guide medical practitioners to use inner qi for diagnosing, healing and preventing diseases.
- Concept qi & qigong techniques--foundation of TCM

Ancient Medical Qigong Books

- *General Treatise on Etiology and Symptomology of Various Diseases* (诸病源候论)-- 610 A.D.
- The oldest specialized medical text to explore etiology & pathogenesis.
- 50 volumes cover 67 subjects and 1739 items/entries..
- Also record 213 various 'Daiyin movements' (Qigong) for 110 different symptoms or diseases!



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Other Classifications

- (Preventive) health qigong vs. (healing) medical qigong
- Spiritual (Confucian & Buddhism), healing (medical) and martial-art qigong...

Important Note:

All Qigong are NOT the same!



Qigong in the U.S. (NHIS)

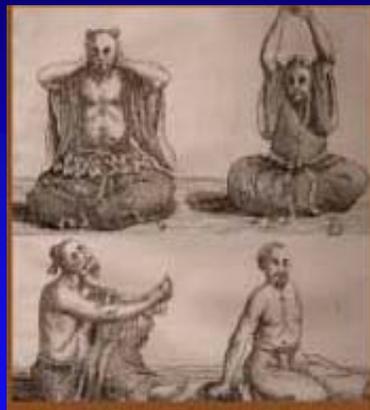
How Many American Adults (18+) Are Practicing Qigong?

Type \	2002		2007		Change
	# in 1,000	%	# in 1,000	%	# in 1,000 (%)
Qigong in Narrow Sense					
Qigong 气功	527	0.3%	625	0.3%	+98 (18.6%)
Tai Chi 太极拳	2,565	1.3%	2,267	1.0%	-298 (-11.6%)*
Energy healing/Reiki 灵气	1,080	0.5%	1,216	0.5%	+136 (12.6%)
Qigong in Broad Sense					
Breathing exercise 吐纳	23,457	11.6%	27,794	12.7%	+4,337 (18.5%)*
Yoga 瑜伽功	10,386	5.1%	13,172	6.0%	+2,786 (26.8%)*
Meditation 静坐	15,336	7.6%	20,541	9.4%	+5,205 (33.9%)*
Guided Imagery 观想	4,194	2.1%	4,866	2.2%	+672 (16.0%)*
Any mind-body therapies		16.9%		19.2%	13.6%

* $p < 0.01$
 Source: Barnes PM et al.(2007). Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use among Adults and Children: United States, 2007. CDC, National Health Statistics Reports, No.12, Dec 10, 2008.

Comment Qigong Components

- Three adjustments:
 - Adjust body posture (stand, sit or lie down)
 - Adjust breathing (e.g. deep, even, slow and abdominal breathing)
 - Adjust mind status (focus on one thing or nothing)
 - Integrate three into Oneness – advanced qigong state



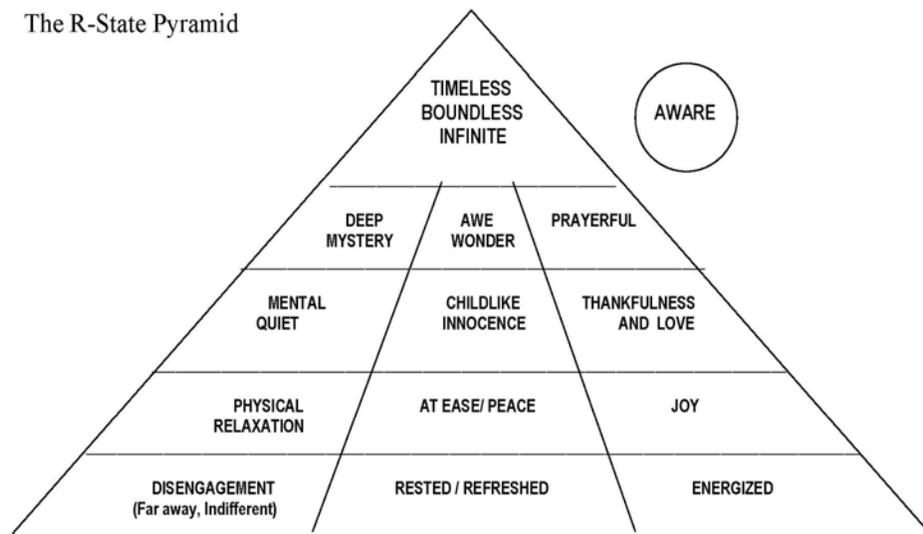
Keys to Qigong Meditation

Three essential points during practice:

- o **Relaxation** (both physically and mentally)
 - o **Tranquility** (focused, quiet, not disturbed)
 - o **Naturalness** (follow the natural way physically and emotionally – whatever comes, let it come and let it go...)
- 松、静、自然



The R-State Pyramid



From: Smith (2005). *Psychology of Relaxation*



Variation in Medical Qigong

- Although Qigong is a self-training method (see definition), the Qi emission (or external Qi) has always been part of medical qigong practice.
- Need to distinguish between
 - **Internal qigong training** and
 - **External Qi therapy**

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Internal Qigong Practice

- Self practice to achieve mind-body-breathing integration.
- Major part of *Qigong* therapy.
- Involve guided imagery, breathing skills, relaxation, inward attention, body posture, mindfulness training through three adjustments.
- Three basic forms: dynamic, static, and standing post.



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External Qi Therapy

- EQT -- *Qigong* practitioner direct or emit his *Qi* energy, intention, or bio-info to help other regain health.
- Practiced through use of *Qi* (vital energy), or *Yi* (intention or mind) therapy, or a combination of the two.
- Most schools of medical *Qigong* teach both techniques.



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Study of External Qi

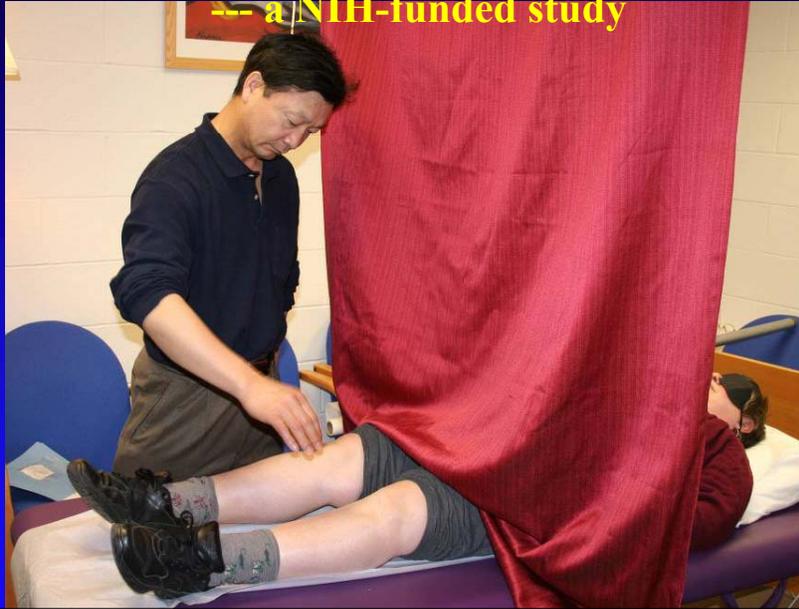
- The physical nature of *Qi* remains as unproven,
- Many intriguing reports suggest physical, biophysical or biochemical alterations induced by EQT or “*Qi*-emission.”
- Chen (2004) “Analytic review of measuring external qi in China”...
- There is a small but growing body of scientific evidence that suggests the physical existence of *Qi*, and the healing power of *Qigong* therapy

Chen (2004), *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, 10(4): 38-50

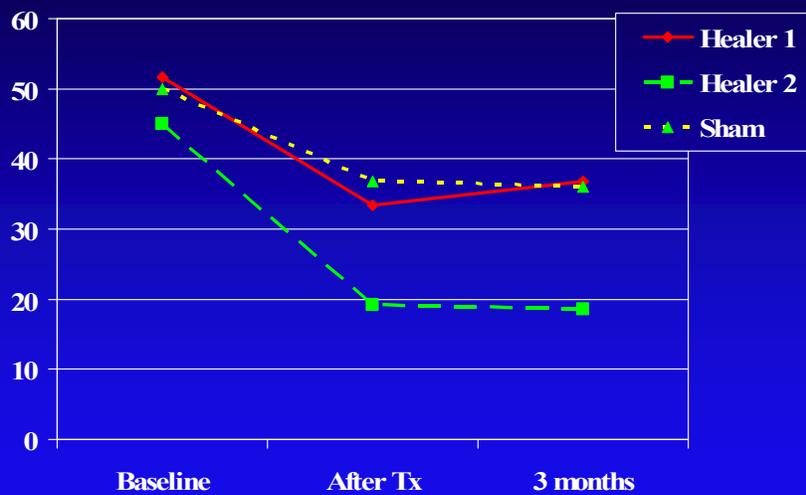
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Qigong for OA at Knees

--- a NIH-funded study



Changes in WOMAC Pain Scores



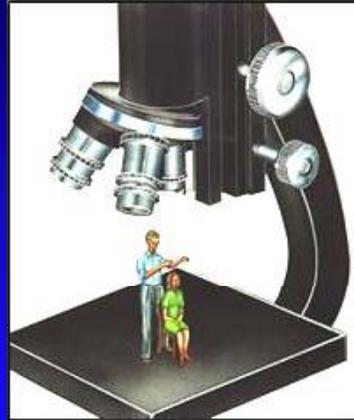
Chen et al. (2008) *Clinical Rheumatology*. 27(12):1497-1505

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What is found in external qi?

Studies suggest 3 components in “external qi” healing process:

1. Matter – such as mm microwave, VLF electromagnetic field, photon, particle, etc.
2. Energy – Gamma ray, far-infrared,
3. Information – bi-directional effect on bacteria growth



Chen (2004), *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, 10(4): 38-50

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General Benefits of Qi Meditation

Practitioners credit their qigong practice with improving daily life & health in many ways:

- A more relaxed, harmonious state of mind /body
- A noticeable reduction in prior ailments and a reduction in feelings of stress
- An increased resistance to illness through a stronger immune system
- A heightened sensitivity to the body’s internal organs, with a developed ability to regulate their own health and vitality.

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Stress -- #1 Health Issue in U.S.

- Many visits to the physician are prompted by somatic symptoms, resulting from stress
- Research: 70-80% of patients in a primary care have evidence of significant psychosocial distress, or problems related to stress.
- The usual medical focus of identifying and treating organic causes of disease results in an inappropriate response to illness & suffering...

Sobel DS, 1995. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. 57(3) 234

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Qigong for Stress Management

- Huge literature (many in Chinese).
- Most reports on the stress-related symptoms or illnesses (e.g. hypertension, headache, asthma, allege, pain, heart disease....)
- Improved heart rate variability & increased brain alpha activities.
- Most qigong apply relaxation, breathing work, inward attention, guided imagery, biofeedback, meditation & mindfulness into one exercise

Lee et al. *J hypertension*. 2007; 25(8): 1525-32

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More than just stress management

- Stroke and mortality rates decreased with Qigong practice (a 30 years follow-up study)
- Documented effectiveness in treating asthma, allergy, headache, arthritis & insomnia
- Cases of spontaneous remission of multiple symptoms (Chen & Turner, 2004)
- After reviewing qigong literature, Sancier (1996) concluded: "Qigong enables the body to heal itself."

Sancier KM. 1996. *Alternative Therapies in Health & Medicine*, 2(1): 40-45.

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Explore the Mechanisms

<u>Stress Response/Effect</u>	<u>Meditation Effects</u>
↑ Heart rate to supply more blood quickly	↓ heart rate, ↑ HRV balanced blood supply (Ng & Tsang. 2009)
↓ Immune system, ↓ WBC count	↑ NK activity, ↑ WBC count, ↑ lymphocytes, ↑ antibody (Ng & Tsang. 2009; Yang et al. 2008)
↑ Blood pressure to supply blood efficiently	↓ Blood pressure with adjusted autonomic nervous system (Paul-Labrodor et al. 2006)
↑ Respiratory rate to get more oxygen	↓ Respiratory rate -- calm down the entire body (Ng & Tsang. 2009)

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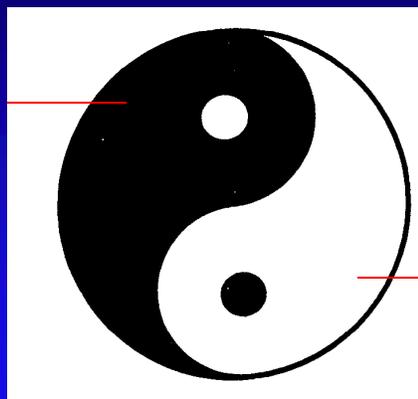
Explore Mechanisms (con't)

<u>Stress Response/Effect</u>	<u>Meditation Effects</u>
↑ Adrenaline and cortisol (hormone response)	↓ cortisol, ↑ melatonin (Lee et al. 2001; Guo 1996)
Deficient production of insulin, ↑ risk of obesity	↓ Insulin resistance (Paul-Labrador 2006) ↓ total cholesterol (Ng & Tsang, 2009)
↑ Interleukin (IL-6) indicator of Inflammation	↓ Interleukin (IL-6) (Pace et al. 2009)
↑ Negative mood/affect	↓ Anxiety and depression (Ng & Tsang, 2009; Li et al. 2002)

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Yin-Yang Perspective of the World & Diseases

Mind/ Psyche
(Anti-matter)



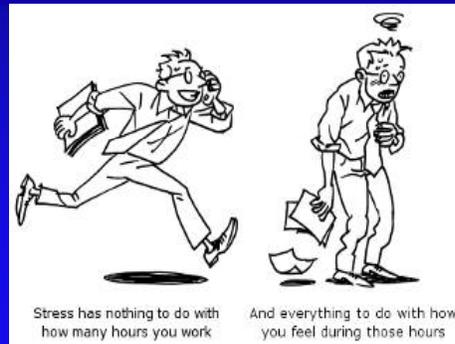
Physical Body
(Matter)

Energy Channels -- the "S" Line

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Qigong Meditation for Stress – Quiet the Mind

- More than just relaxing, but quieting your mind – less worry and less attachment....
- “No-action” means less attached to things around that stress you...
- An attitude change...
- An natural and peaceful life-style



Qigong -- an Optimal Method for Stress Management

- When breath-mind-body integrated into “one”, one will breathe at near “resonant-frequency” – optimal state
- “Qi” goes with “Yi” – when meditation with inward attention, one can gain energy, and recover more rapidly....

Resources of Qigong

- Center for Integrative Medicine at UMB
<http://www.compmed.umm.edu>
- National Qigong Association (www.NQA.org)
- Qigong Institute (qigonginstitute.org)
- International Forum on Qi Research:
<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/qiresearch>
- Weekly Qigong Class:
 - Wednesday 5:15—6:30pm Kernan Hospital, 2nd floor at the Clinic Library

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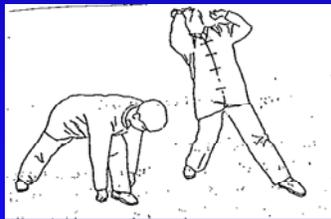
Ancient Wisdom on Life-Nurturing

“ Remain detached and empty-minded
Genuine qi would flow easily
Keep essence-spirit within
How could illness arise? ”

恬淡虚无，真气从之，精神内守，病安从来？
(*Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic, Pain Questions*)



Let's Do It...



- Abdominal breathing
- Resonant frequency (download EZ-Air from www.bfe.org)
- Count breathing when-ever possible -- 3, 4, ... 10 prior meditation
- Happy Fisher Qigong

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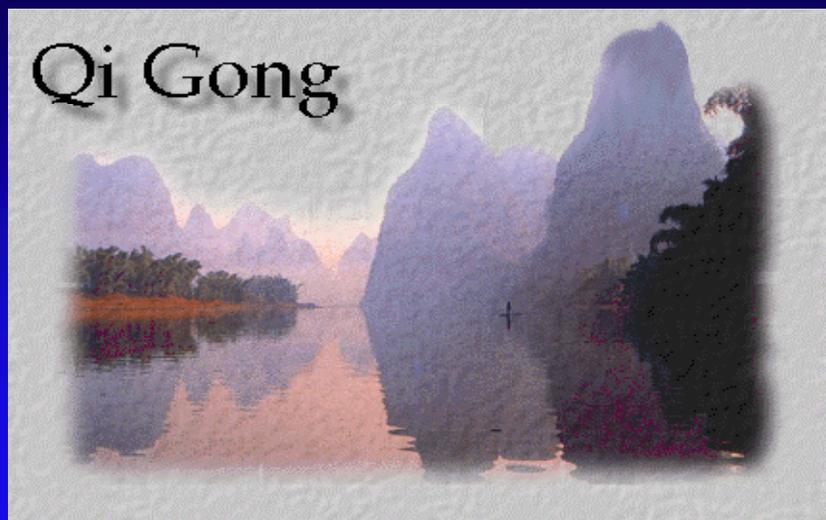
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Is Qigong Right for You?



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