

Qigong is a fun and easy exercise that has been used for thousands of years by martial artists, nobility, and retirees in parks to maintain health and mobility into “old age.” Qigong is an exercise in which the body moves in gentle, often circular movements to offer many benefits to the practitioners. The movements guide energy through the acupuncture meridians of the body to strengthen the organs and their corresponding energy.

The movements also move the fluids of the body in ways that allow stagnant water to be re-integrated into the digestion and excretion processes of the body. The circulatory system has the heart to move blood through the veins, arteries, and capillaries. However, the lymphatic system does not have a pump to move its fluids, so it relies on the movement of the body. Qigong movements provide the mechanism to move the lymphatic waters, by gently opening and closing the hips, shoulders, knees, ankles, elbows and wrists.

According to the Qigong Institute, “Qigong is moving meditation. “Moving” means either physical movement or movement of energy internally, even if no muscular-skeletal movement is occurring. The integration of interception, proprioception, and mindfulness is a key component of the practice. You learn to create moments of peace within activity. All of this comes on a foundation of breathing.”

<https://www.qigonginstitute.org/>

For more information, here is a video of simple qigong movements:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zq8Sb7n62P0&t=26s>

Tai Chi is a simple and effective form of moving meditation that, with regular practice, can lead to more vigor and flexibility, better balance and mobility, and an enhanced sense of well-being. Tai Chi can be compared to a yoga routine, except the Tai Chi ‘player’ is standing throughout the routine. Or, Tai Chi can be compared to a dance routine, except the tai chi player is moving in slow motion.

Tai Chi practice provides a sense of presence, strengthens one’s ability to concentrate, and helps individuals feel stable in their emotions. Regular practice of Tai Chi causes one to slow down their mental activity and, thus, their response to stimulus. Tai Chi movements twist and spiral the torso and limbs in gentle ways that compress and expand cells, tissues, and organs to provide a simple detoxification of heat, cold, toxins, and even stuck emotional patterns.

According to The Harvard Medical School Guide to Tai Chi, “Tai Chi improves balance and, according to some studies, reduces falls. Proprioception — the ability to sense the position of one’s body in space — declines with age. Tai chi helps train this sense, which is a function of sensory neurons in the inner ear and stretch receptors in the muscles and ligaments. Tai chi also improves muscle strength and flexibility, which makes it easier to recover from a stumble. Fear of falling can make you more likely to fall; some studies have found that tai chi training helps reduce that fear.”

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-health-benefits-of-tai-chi>

For more information, here is a short video demonstrating a simple Tai Chi form:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WdEgQrH0mac&t=1s>