

CHA DAO & QIGONG

Solala Towler

Diet and Movement are parts of the Eight Bowls we practice in a life of Tea. How the Qi circulates through your body definitely influences your Tea brewing, especially gongfu Tea. Here, Solala teaches us a simple Qi Gong exercise for Tea practitioners.

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The Way of Tea, and the Way of Qigong are actually very similar. For followers of the Cha Dao, Tea is a way to connect with the depths of our being and our relationship to Source, to Dao. When we sit at the tea table, if brewing gongfu tea, or just with a bowl of steaming, tea-infused water, we are aligning ourselves with all the masters and students of Tea down through the generations.

Drinking tea with others in a state of joyful sharing and meditation can be a very healing and uplifting experience. Another way to experience this flow of energy between us and Dao is the practice of Qigong.

The term Qigong means “working/playing with Qi or vital life force.” There are literally hundreds of styles of Qigong, with new ones being created all the time. The one we will be featuring here is from Wudang Mountain, which has been sacred to the Daoists for thousands of years.

We are surrounded by a sea of Qi at all times. Living beings, including humans, animals, trees, water and even stones, all have/are Qi. The art of Qigong is to access the Qi that surrounds us and bring it into our bodies, circulating and finally storing it there.

The problem many of us have is that we have shut down our Qi body for various reasons such as stress, emotional turmoil, toxic environments, etc. What happens when we shut down our Qi body is that we get sick or injured. Our Qi travels in special pathways throughout our bodies, called meridians in Traditional Chinese Medicine. Qigong healers, as well as acupuncturists, use these meridians as well as very specific points on those meridians to open up the pathways in our body so that the Qi can flow more smoothly and strongly. Qigong can free up stuck Qi so that it can move more freely throughout our system.

The Qigong we will be learning here is called “Great Spiraling Dragon Qigong”. Here we are using the image of the spiraling dragon to pull healing Qi from the moon, sun, the deep sea, the Earth and the Heavens. The movements are all done very slowly and gracefully...

Begin with your feet as wide apart as your shoulders. Stand with your spine straight and your weight evenly spread on your feet, hands down to your sides. With your mind, send roots down into the Earth, at least three times the length of your body. This will stabilize you and allow you to pull healing energy up

into your body from deep in the Earth. At the balls of our feet is a point called “Bubbling Wells”, which is the beginning of the kidney channel. You can also energetically open your *bai hui* or crown chakra at this time to receive healing Yang energy from the sun and stars.

To begin, raise your hands, palms up, to the level of your waist. Palms come forward a little bit. Then do a mid-sized circle out to your sides and over your head. This is called Embracing the Moon. The moon is considered a strong Yin influence. Picture a bright full moon filling your body with the cool Yin energy. Then do a larger circle to Embrace the Sun. The sun is considered to be strong Yang. Feel the warm healing energy of the sun entering your body.

After Embracing the Sun, let your arms come down to your sides. Then, bring energy up from the Earth through the bottoms of your feet up to your hands. Raise your hands to waist level, fingers pointing in, charging up your Belt Channel, a very important pathway of Qi that circles your waist. Let your hands go around your waist to your lower back and then come together, palm over palm, resting on the point in your lower back called “*ming men*”. The *ming men* is called the “Gate of Vital

Force” and is a very important point that is related to the Lower *dan tien* (Field of Elixir), located in the lower abdomen. This is the energetic foundation of our bodies. (There are two more *dan tien*, the Middle *dan tien*, located in our heart center, and the Upper *dan tien*, located in our third eye area.)

Send Qi from your palms into your *ming men* point for at least three deep breaths. Then bring your hands back to the front and Embrace the Moon as before, followed by Embrace the Sun, hands coming down to your sides again.

Again draw energy from the Earth up from the bottom of your feet into your hands and pull them gently up and form a Lotus Flower in front of your Upper *dan tien* (third eye). Look into the lotus flower, breathing in the wonderful fragrance for at least three deep, slow breaths. Now, your hands go up over your head as they glide back and forth as the Dragon Ascends to Heaven with its tail whipping back and forth.

Stretch your hands over your head, giving your spine a good stretch. With your palms facing up, gather star and sun Qi into your palms for three deep breaths. Turn your palms over and allow the star and sun Qi to flow down through the top of your head (*bai hui* point) down into your body, filling it with healing light. Turn your palms up again and gather more Qi and then turn them over once more to allow the Qi to flow into your body.

Next, the Dragon Descends to the Bottom of the Sea. Your palms come down along the sides of your head, neck, chest and down the outside your legs to your feet. Palms circle around your feet and come up the insides of your legs up to your lower abdomen. The palms then come up and rest on the lower *dan tien*, palm over palm. For women the left palm is on the top and for men the right palm is on top.

Now do the Embrace the Moon one more time. Pivot your body to the right, with weight on right leg, left palm up and right palm behind you facing down. Take three

deep breaths, then pivot to the left with right palm up and left palm down. Pivot to the right one more time and then to the left one more time.

Do one more big Embracing the Sun, ending with the palms over the lower *dan tien*. Take nine deep slow breaths to allow the Qi to flow throughout your whole body. Finish by circling your palms over your lower *dan tien*, sealing the Qi you have gathered from the Earth, the

moon, the sun and stars there. Do this nine times counter clockwise followed by nine times clockwise.

You can watch a nice little video of a teacher in Wudang Mountain leading his students through this form:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sdw-QEI7OU4>

If you have more questions feel free to contact me at:

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Great Spiraling Dragon Qigong Form

As taught by Solala Towler



1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Root deeply into the Earth for at least nine breaths.
3. Open the *bai hui* for at least nine breaths.



4. Embrace the Moon (small circle)



5. Embrace the Sun (big circle).



6. Hands come up to the waist and go around the belt channel, fingers pointing in.



7. Hands come together over the *ming men* point (center of the lower back). Hands come down.
8. Embrace the Moon.
9. Embrace the Sun.



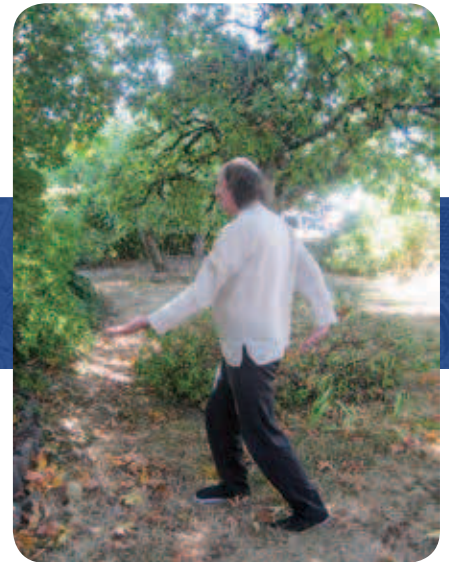
10. Hands come up to eye level and do Lotus Blooming From the Pond. Breathe in the Blooming Lotus at least three times.



11. Spiraling Dragon Ascends to Heaven.
12. Palms turn up to receive Qi from the Heavens.
13. Palms face down to pour Qi into the *bai hui* for three breaths.
14. Repeat palms up, receiving Qi from the Heavens.
15. Repeat palms face down to pour Qi into the *bai hui*.



16. Dragon Descends into the Sea. (Palms come down the sides of your body.)
17. Circle palms around the feet and guide them up the insides of your legs to the lower *dan tien*.
18. Hold palms over the *dan tien* and breathe at least three times. (Men, right palm over left; and women, left palm over right.)
19. Embrace the Moon.



20. Pivot your body to the right with the left palm up and right palm down.



21. Pivot to the left with the right palm up and left palm down.
22. Repeat the last two moves once more.
23. Turn back to the center and Embrace the Sun.



24. Gather Qi into the lower *dan tien* and breathe slowly and deeply at least nine times.
25. Palms circle the *dan tien* nine times counter-clockwise then nine times clockwise.

Doing this exercise once a day in the morning will influence the flow of Qi through your body, affecting the way you make Tea, especially gongfu. More fluidity in the flow of subtle energies throughout the body is a powerful way to improve your tea brewing and overall health.

A tea practice must include all areas of life, as a Way of communicating with Spirit. Follow these instructions and try it out!