



Improving Your Qi with Qi Gong and Tai Chi

By Danielle Ross

What exactly is [Qi](#)? In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), qi means “energy” and it is believed that we are made of [universal Qi](#), which consists of the constant interaction of the five elements earth, air, fire, water, and metal. There are several different types of qi. The one we are born with is called universal qi or life force. Qi Gong and tai chi work with *Hou tain qi*. Energy flows through meridians in our body and when qi flows properly, we are healthier and have an overall sense of well-being. However, our qi can become imbalanced and stagnant when we are overwhelmed with stress, not eating proper nutrition, not getting enough sleep, or lack of inactivity. The good news is it is possible to reverse this with proper nutrition, exercise, sleep, TCM meridian work. Types of meridian work can include acupuncture, acupressure, Shiatsu massage, and martial arts practices like qi gong or tai chi.

Benefits of Qi Gong & Tai Chi

- Balance and increase qi
- Increased immunity
- Decrease stress/anxiety
- Increase focus
- Increase circulation
- Decrease hypertension

Increase stability/balance
Decrease risk of falling
Increase range of motion
Improve COPD/asthma breathing
Decrease arthritis side effects
Decrease Parkinson side effects
Improve cognitive function/capacity
Decrease signs of depression
Increase confidence
Increase cardiac function
Improve quality of life
Decrease pain
Increase quality of sleep

[Qi Gong](#) is a gentle exercise to naturally move energy through meridians with slow fluid movements combined with mindful meditation and breathwork. It has been around for [over 7,000 years](#) and was first recorded in the Book of Changes which was the first book to discuss the concept of energy. Today, there are over 3,000 different forms of qi gong. Qi Gong can be done at any age and for as little as 5 minutes or longer. You can find a book to learn more or you can look for classes at your local gym and on Youtube there are several free videos to watch. Here are a few I liked:

Qigong Full 20-Minute Daily Routine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwlvTcWR3Gs>

Qi Gong Routine for Stress, Anxiety, & Energy w/ Jeff Chand

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCicH-iz1oU>

Eight Pieces of Brocade

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=445Fz8AQvX8>

Tai Chi is [derived from qi gong](#) and has been around for 2,500 years. It was originally used more for defense but today is one of the most popular forms of qi gong. There are three main types of tai chi; yang, wu, and tai chi chih. In tai chi like qi gong, you use slow

movements to natural move energy through your meridians while focusing on mindful meditation and breathwork. Your knees remain bent while holding your stance and staying balanced. Tai chi can be practiced at any age and can be done for as long as 5 or more minutes. There are books you read for more information, check out your local gym, or watch a Youtube video on how to practice tai chi. Below are a few I liked:

Tai Chi with Helen Liang

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apIffYvzuS0>

5 minute “Follow Me” Tai Chi – Great For Beginners

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

Tai Chi Free Lesson /20 minute Tai Chi Routine/ Daily Taiji Practice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0j5dSjme-Y>

Additional Sources:

Health benefits of tai chi. What is the evidence?

<https://www.cfp.ca/content/62/11/881.long>

A Comprehensive Review of Health Benefits of Qigong and Tai Chi

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3085832/>

Mind–Body Exercise for Anxiety and Depression in COPD Patients: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6981896/>

Complementary and alternative medicine approaches to blood pressure reduction

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2592323/>

Benefits of Qigong as an integrative and complementary practice for health

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7365612/>