

# QIGONG SELF-MASSAGE

## 自我按摩導引養生功

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## ***Preparatory Exercises***

### **Quiet Sitting and Dan Tian Breathing *Bi Mu Jing Zuo* 閉目靜坐**

Prepare for a session of self-massage by choosing a quiet place to sit. The location should be comfortable and warm, so as to facilitate relaxation. The actual seated posture can be chosen based on personal preference, such as sitting cross legged, sitting in half lotus or similar posture, or sitting on a chair or other piece of furniture.

Start by taking deep abdominal breaths, visualizing that each breath moves down into the lower abdomen. Simultaneously, visualize a warm ball of light in the lower abdomen in the area of the *dan tian* (丹田), a spot located in the center of the lower abdomen below the height of the navel. Every breath taken should be like a bellows, making the *dan tian* warmer and brighter. Hold this posture and breathing visualization for 5 to 10 minutes, or as long as possible and desired.

### **Warming the Hands**

Place hands together about the height of the solar plexus. Take a medium depth breath in and hold gently. While holding the breath close the eyes and vigorously rub palms together, visualizing *qi* (氣/炁) moving into the center of the palms. Continue to rub for as long as needed to make the hands feel comfortably warm. Hold the breath only for as long as is comfortable; if needed, exhale and repeat the in-breath and hold.

## ***Techniques for the Head***

### **Eye Exercises**

Gently close the eyes and cover them with the warmed palms. Feel the warm from the hands penetrating and surrounding the eyeballs. Hold this position for several seconds. With the hands over the eyes slowly rotate the eyes 9x clockwise and then 9x counterclockwise. If the hands feel cold, re-warm them by rubbing together as described previously.

After circling the eyes use the fingertip of the first and middle fingers to press and hold Zan Zhu (BL-2), Yu Yao (M-HN-6), and Si Zhu Kong (SJ-23). Alternately these points can be pinched. Repeat several times.

Finish eye exercises by warming the hands and rubbing over the eyes gently with the heels of the palms.



### **Clicking the Teeth**

Slowly and rhythmically click the teeth together 36 times. Be careful to click gently so as not to damage teeth.

### **Massaging the Gums**

Use the tongue to massage around the front and back of the teeth along the gum line. Repeat several times allowing saliva to collect in the mouth. Alternately (or additionally), with the mouth closed, tap around the gum line with the fingertips.

### **Swallow Saliva**

As saliva accumulates in the mouth swallow, swish around and between the teeth and swallow down with a gulp. When swallowing, visualize that the saliva goes all the way down to the lower abdomen.

### **Rub the Nose and Face**

Warm the hands again as necessary. Use the index and middle fingers to rub up and down the sides of the nose. Then, use the palms of the hands to rub and warm the entire face, focusing on rubbing in and upwards direction.

### **Combing The Head/Scalp**

Stimulating the scalp by combing the scalp hair (or head if there is no hair) is a traditional therapy known as *shu fa* (梳法) in Chinese. The scalp is a microsystem that represents the entire body, and thus, the entire body can be treated by its stimulation. After rubbing the nose use the curved fingers like combs to comb the scalp several times from front to back.

Alternately, combing therapy can be done on its own. To apply Combing Therapy comb the hair (or scalp) daily, 100 times each sitting. This can be done either in the morning upon waking or in the evening before bed. The traditional recommendation is to use a comb of either bone or wood. That said, simply combing with the fingers is even more effective since the fingers actually contain Qi (which bone and wood do not).

### **Ear Exercises**

Warm the hands again as necessary and cover both ears with the palms. Feel the warmth of the hands penetrate into the ears, relaxing and warming them. Then, place the index finger behind the ear and the middle finger in front of the ear. Rub up and down warming the area on the side of the head around the ear.

After warming the ear gently pull and stretch the ear, and especially the earlobe. Repeat several times, being cautious not to pull so hard as to hurt the ears.

## **Beating the Heavenly Drum 鳴天鼓**

Beating the Heavenly Drum (*ming tian gu* 鳴天鼓) is an exercise that stimulates and clears the brain. Place both hands over the ears as if to muffle sound. Place the middle fingers down at the occiput, then place the index fingers over the middle fingers and snap them down to hit the back of the head. When done properly, there will be a thud sound heard inside the head. Strike 24 times.

## ***Techniques for the Neck and Shoulders***

### **Hands Hold Kun Lun 手把崑崙**

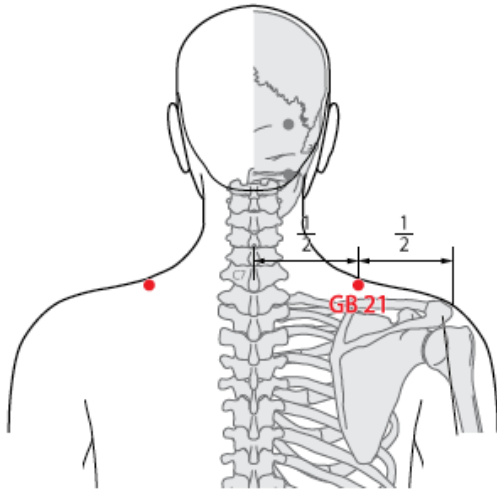
Reach both hands around the back of the neck and interlace the fingers. While breathing in, gently pull the hands forward while pushing the head and upper back backwards. Exhale and relax. This will straighten the spine and stretch the entire back to circulate Qi in the Bladder channel and the Du Mai. Thus, it can relax the back and neck to treat pain and stiffness.

### **Massage the Neck**

Staying in the same position as the previous exercise, gently squeeze and massage the muscles on the back on the neck. Alternately this can be done with one hand.

### **Beat and Massage Shoulder-Well**

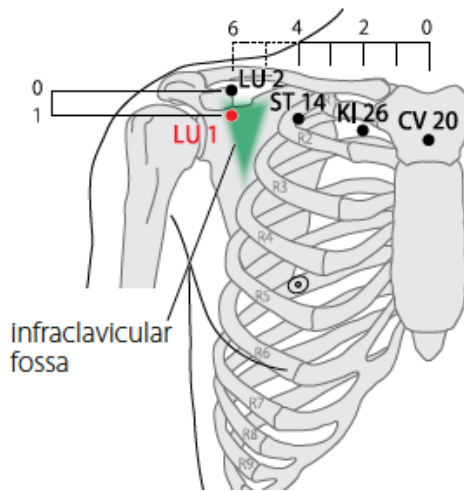
Shoulder-Well GB-21 (Jian Jing 肩井穴) is an acupuncture point on the top of the shoulder located in the upper trapezius muscle. Reach across the body with a loose fist and gently beat down on Shoulder-Well. Repeat on the other side. After beating squeeze and pull up on the trapezius at the location of Shoulder-Well.



## ***Techniques for the Chest***

### **Press Zhong Fu 中府穴**

Zhong Fu LU-1 is an acupuncture point located in the depression of the chest next to the shoulder. Reach across the body with the opposite hand and press into the area, massaging the tender spot. Repeat on the other side. Zhong Fu treats coughing, wheezing or other difficulty breathing.



## **Press and Massage the Sternum**

Using the knuckle of one or two fingers, press and knead the sternum from top to bottom. Spend more time on any area that is tender or painful. Repeat several times.

## ***Techniques for the Upper Extremities***

### **Massage the Arms**

Massage the arms from the shoulder and upper arm down to the hands, repeating several times.

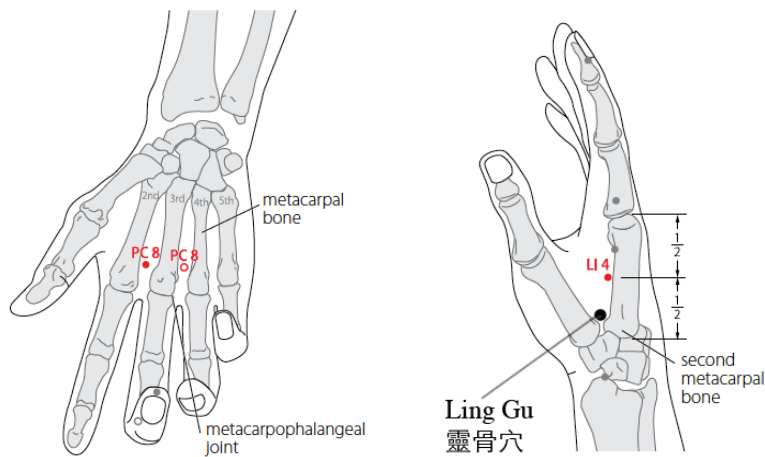
### **Press and Beat Qu Chi 曲池穴**

Qu Chi LI-11 (曲池穴) is located on the outside of the elbow, at the end of the crease when the elbow is bent. It is a major acupuncture point that controls circulation of Qi in the upper extremities. Press deeply into Qu Chi and hold for several seconds until a numb sensation is felt (which may travel down the arm). Alternately, knead deeply into this point. Follow by gently beating the point. Stimulating Qu Chi treats pain, numbness or other dysfunction of the arms. It also treats fevers associated with conditions such as the common cold.



## Massage the Hands, Press Lao Gong 勞宮穴 and Ling Gu 靈骨穴

Massage the fingers one at a time as all the channels in the upper extremities either start or end on the fingers. Then, press into Lao Gong PC-8 (勞宮穴) on the palm until sore. Also press into Ling Gu (靈骨穴) on the back of the hand between the thumb and first fingers. Alternately, knead deeply into these points. Lao Gong and Ling Gu both open Qi circulation through the upper extremities. Ling Gu is also effective to treat a variety of pain conditions from headache to menstrual cramps.



## *Techniques for the Waist and Lower Back*

### **Extend the Arms**

Make hands into loose fists with thumb inside fingers, and place on the side of the hip. While inhaling extend one arm forward while turning the waist. While doing this keep the rear hand at the hip but point elbow straight behind you so that the arms are in a straight line front and back. Look to the rear. Exhale while relaxing back to normal seated position. Repeat several times on both sides.



This exercise stretches and increases circulation in the trunk, but especially the lower back. It also stretches the shoulders thus increasing flexibility and treating pain of these areas.

### **Rotate the Waist 轉腰**

Place hands on the knees or upper legs and rotate the waist in a large circle. Try to keep the upper body in a straight line, turning only from the waist and lower back. After several rotations, reverse the circle the other direction. Rotating the waist this way increases circulation in the channels of the lower abdomen and lower back and can treat stiffness or pain in the back and hips.

### **Warm and Beat the Lower Back**

Just as in the preparatory exercises warm the hands. Reach around the waist and rub the lower back to warm the area. Following this by gently beating the area of the lower back, moving up and down the side of the spine along the Bladder channel. Warm the hands again and rub to warm the sacrum.

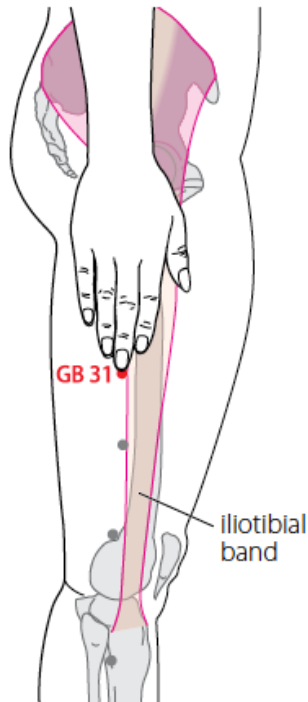
The area of the lower back is related to the Kidney Zang (organ). In Chinese medicine the Kidney is said to store vital essence (*jing* 精) and it governs the strength of the body. Stimulating the lower back can treat pain and stiffness in the back as well as general fatigue. This exercise by itself can be done through the day whenever tired.

## ***Techniques for the Lower Extremities***

### **Massage and Beat Feng Shi 風市穴**

Massage down the sides of the legs along the Gallbladder channel. Spend more time at the sensitive area around Feng Shi GB-31 (風市穴). Then, gently beat the area of Feng Shi, or alternately beat down the channel from the hips down toward the knees.

Feng Shi treats a wide variety of pain and motor conditions. Use this technique to treat low back pain and sciatica, as well as general pain or stiffness of the legs. Stimulating this area of the channel daily is an essential health maintenance exercise as it helps circulate the channels in all areas of the body.



### **Massage the Knees**

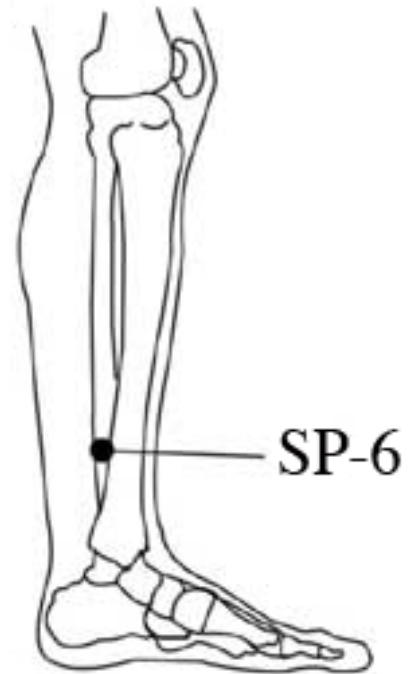
Warm the hands again and rub the knees to warm them. Then use the thumbs or heels of the palms to massage around the tops of the kneecaps and the inside of the knees. This exercise strengthens the knees and treats stiffness or pain of the joint.

### **Rotate Ankles**

Straighten legs out and gently rotate the ankles in both directions. This exercise stretches the legs and treats pain or stiffness in the lower legs, ankles, or feet.

### **Press and Massage San Yin Jiao 三陰交穴**

San Yin Jiao SP-6 (三陰交穴) is the meeting point of the Kidney, Spleen and Liver channels, and is located one handbreadth above the inner ankle. Press into this area to find the tender spot, and then massage the area until a numb sensation is felt that may radiate to the foot. Repeat on both sides. This point is an important one for treating all kinds of pain or dysfunction of the lower extremities. It also treats menstrual pain, urinary difficulty, and all sorts of gynecological conditions.



### **Press and Massage Yong Quan 湧泉穴**

Yong Quan KD-1 (湧泉穴) is located on the bottom of the foot behind the ball of the foot. Press deeply into the area of the point and massage the bottom of the foot. You may also warm the hands as in the preparatory exercises and warm the bottom of the foot.

Yong Quan calms the mind and thus this exercise can be done at night to ensure better sleep. It also treats hypertension and headache.



## ***Concluding Exercises***

### **Collecting the Qi**

Place both hands over the navel (left hand over right for men, and right hand over left for women). Rub in circles spiraling outwards (i.e., larger) for 9, 18 or 36 rotations. Then, reverse hand position and rub the opposite direction in circles spiraling back inwards, smaller and smaller, for the same number of circles. Men should start with counterclockwise circles and women with clockwise.

After finishing the circles sit in quiet silence noticing the breath moving in and out for several minutes.