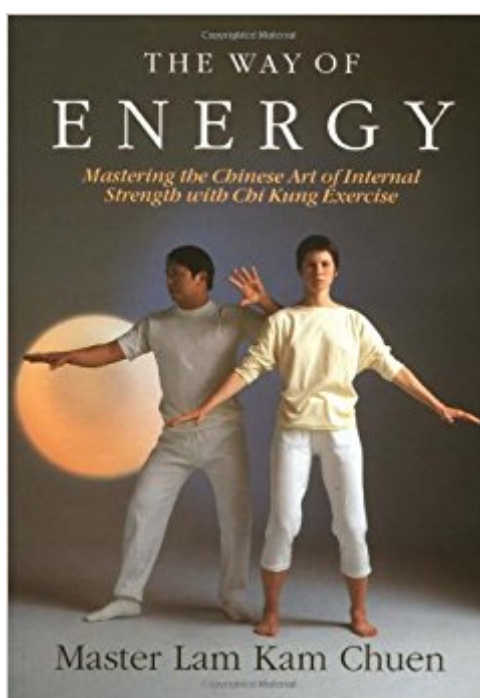


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The Way Of Energy: Mastering The Chinese Art Of Internal Strength With Chi Kung Exercise (A Gaia Original)



Synopsis

For centuries, the Chinese exercise system called Chi Kung has been shrouded in secrecy. The Way of Energy is the first comprehensive guide to the most powerful form of Chi Kung ever developed. "standing like a tree." A gentle, yet profoundly beneficial form of exercise, which requires very little movement, this form of Chi Kung unlocks deep reserves of energy builds internal stamina, strengthens immunity, relieves chronic illness, and promotes the natural regeneration of the nervous system. Using step-by-step instructions and more than 100 drawings and full-color photographs, The Way of Energy tells how to: -perform the entire sequence of rejuvenating positions -combat stress by practicing Chi Kung while standing, sitting, working, playing, and even sleeping -prevent and treat a wide range of common ailments Continuing our best-selling series of books for mind and body which includes The Sivananda Companion to Yoga, The Dance Workshop, and The Book of Stress Survival, The Way of Energy will help you achieve physical fitness, mental clarity, and a profound inner strength and vitality.

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Customer Reviews

Master Lam Kam Chuen is a specialist in Chi Kung, a recognized master of Tai Chi Chuan, and a practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine.

CHAPTER 1 LEARNING TO STAND The Zhan Zhuang system begins with two basic standing exercises. These start to build up and release the natural flow of energy inside you. The first

position, a simple standing posture (pp. 28-29), enables you to relax your body in preparation for the other exercises. The second position, "Holding the Balloon" (pp. 34-35), is the key position in the whole system. It is essential to become thoroughly comfortable in both these positions before moving on to the exercises in Part Two, the intermediate level. The simple warm up routines on the following pages prepare your body for the internal changes that take place during the Zhan Zhuang exercises. They are essential for beginners, because although the standing positions do not look strenuous, if you do them properly the resulting activity inside your body is enormous, and affects your whole system. During the exercises in this chapter you may feel a little weak, start to tremble, or begin to tense up. But don't move: breathe naturally and relax. Use the time to notice all the remarkable changes and sensations in your body. Remember: standing still is not doing nothing, it is the exercise. When you are familiar with the first two standing exercises, you will need to learn how to breathe and relax, as described in Chapter 2. This will give you the experience of simultaneous exertion and relaxation during the standing postures, which is fundamental to this exercise system. The curious sensations you are likely to experience when you begin the exercises are described in Chapter 3. Start by doing the standing exercises for five minutes a day. After three weeks, increase this to ten minutes. Three weeks later, aim for 15 minutes, and 20 minutes after a further three weeks. You can stand for longer if you wish, but 20 minutes will refresh your whole system. Follow the step-by-step advice, practising a little every day. Do not skip ahead: developing self-control is part of the training.

Warming up As with all exercise routines, the warm up is essential. It helps your body become flexible and helps open up the internal channels along which your energy flows. The two largest and most important joints are the knees and shoulders. So by loosening these up first you are most likely to get the rich benefits of the later Zhan Zhuang exercises. As a beginner, it is important to do these warm up exercises every time you start your Zhan Zhuang practice. They will take you about six or seven minutes. Regularly practised, they give long-term protection against arthritis and other painful ailments that reduce the original flexibility of the body. If you are an advanced student (for example, if you have practised Tai Chi Chuan for several years), you can warm up instead with the Ba Duan Jin system described in Chapter 4.

Wu Chi - the first position Ali Zhan Zhuang training begins with this position, which is profoundly important. Even at extraordinarily advanced levels of exercise, we begin with a period of quiet standing in the Wu Chi position - the position of primal energy. The Wu Chi position involves simply standing still. It is an opportunity to pay careful attention to the tensions in your body and its nervous system. At the same time it becomes a moment of powerful, deep relaxation in your day. Simple as it may seem, this opening position, correctly practised, holds the key to unlock the storehouse of your great internal

energy reserves. It is a good idea to go to the toilet before starting, to ensure that you do not have to interrupt your stationary exercise. Try to do your training outside, with your back toward the sun. If you can stand near a large tree with the sun on your back, this is the best location of all. Don't stand in the rain or fog. If you're indoors, you can either use a quiet room or create a tranquil environment by playing a recording of softly flowing instrumental music.

Aligning mind and body

When you stand still in the first position, with your body correctly aligned, you are drawing energy (Chi) from the earth, and accelerating its flow through your body. This practice of standing still is an ancient discipline. The first known reference to it dates back to the oldest and most influential book in the history of world medicine, *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine* (Huang Ti Nei Ching), thought to have been written about 4,000 years ago. In the opening section, the Emperor tells the court physician: I have heard that in ancient times there were the so-called Spiritual Beings: They stood between Heaven and Earth, connecting the Universe; They understood and were able to control both Yin and Yang, the two fundamental principles of nature; They inhaled the vital essence of life; They remained unmoving in their spirit; Their muscles and flesh were as one - This is the Tao, the Way you are looking for.

Adjusting your position

When you become comfortable in this position, think about the points below. Quietly adjust your body to correct your balance and position.

A FIELD OF ENERGY

The Chinese like to exercise in the presence of trees, whose Chi is wonderful. Trees are totally exposed to the elements and draw their power from everything around them. They reach deep into the soil with their roots. They reach upward toward the light. Their fibrous trunks are filled with the flow of life. They take strength from the earth, from water and rain, from the sun, from the air, and from the space that surrounds them. This is what we have in mind when we say "stand like a tree". You are a field of energy. You are nourished by everything around you, like a tree standing in the midst of all the elements.

The Tree in Winter

This is the time of hidden regeneration. Mist hangs above the ground. Frost forms on open fields. The tree is still. It stands alone and quiet. In the darkness of the early morning, nature is asleep. There is no movement in the air, no hint of trembling in the branches. The tree is silent in the darkness like a stone - a pillar in the courtyard of an empty temple. A distant sound breaks through the stillness. The day's first light advances on the earth. The shadow of the tree moves with the dawn, but the tree is motionless. The ground beneath the tree is frozen hard. Above the ground, the bark is cold, the limbs are stiff. A passer-by might wonder if the tree will live in spring. But underneath the ground the earth is warm. The weight of all the tree sinks to its roots. They are indifferent to the frozen soil, they grow toward the centre of the earth. The tree is not afraid. It was a seed: it knows the earth is holding it. Within its core, a vital ring is being formed. Around its spine, new life is rising from the earth, while flakes of snow are settling

on the silent and unmoving tree. Holding the balloon - the second position

The next step in Zhan Zhuang training is to start "Holding the Balloon". This position forms the basis for many of the more advanced exercises, and speeds the inner circulation of energy through your feet, up through your entire body, and to your hands and head. Try holding the second position for up to five minutes. You will probably experience considerable pain from the tension in your shoulders, arms, and knees. This is partly muscle fatigue, partly the reaction of your nervous system. Be patient. Nothing you are doing is harmful. You are returning to an original state of being. Your journey will take discipline and diligence. As you hold this position, imagine that you are resting on a series of other balloons that take your full weight (see right). To begin with, as you stand quietly holding the imaginary balloon, review all the guidelines for this position (see right).

The Tree in Blossom

The season changes imperceptibly. The early morning light is pale. Clouds drift on the horizon. In the distance nothing moves. The dawn is still. The tree remains unmoving, but is changed. The morning air is warm, the grass is moist. The tiny creatures of the soil are moving in the ground. The tree's roots stretch their new growth in the earth - alive to countless changes' in their dark and humid world. Their slender filaments draw in the silent dew that glistens in the soil. The earth is rising through the tree. Inside its mighty trunk, life trembles and awakens. Immense, alone, the tree is giving birth. New shoots are opening in the air. Curled leaves emerge in miniature - the work of winter's still and solitary months. The tree is utterly consumed in growth. Its bark is stretched. Innumerable cells are giving birth. The morning winds sweep through the spreading tree. On every branch the buds and blossoms tremble in the breeze. The growing leaves reach out to every sunbeam. The leaves' open pores are breathing and their veins are full. The tree is wreathed in silence like a waterfall. It stands transfixed; poised motionless between the mighty pull of all its tiny root hairs and the fragrant, evanescent petals on its boughs.

This is probably one of the best English language books on basic qigong. Written by Master Lam Kam Chuen, the book does not waste time on lengthy introductions to concepts that are unfamiliar to most Westerners. Zhan Zhuang is all about standing. Maintaining certain positions, literally standing like a tree, energy flows through the body to strengthen it. Incredulous as it may seem, it works, as many who have tried it will readily attest. After demonstrating the basic Zhan Zhuang positions, the book goes on to introduce Ba Duan Jin, 8 movements/positions that further strengthen one's Qi. More positions are introduced; the reader goes through "circles". The author also touches on the mental aspect of qigong, tapping into the energy fields of trees. For all the busy people out there, Master Lam gives pointers on how qigong can be practised at home, at work or

during leisure activities. The book finishes off by recommending health maintenance and self treatment for various ailments. Quite helpful, but do read the disclaimer on the copyright page.

OK I just got this today. No I haven't read it. I have looked thru it and skimmed some of it. This deals with zhan Zhuang--a form of qi gong that deals with building up your internal strength based mostly on learning stand like a tree. It may sound silly but I know it is not. It is a discipline. I have been chronically ill for 5 yrs and have become very weak and deconditioned. This is exactly what I need. I just want to add it is written in a straight forward manner..easy to follow. Also it is a quite beautiful book. Lovely photos, exerpts from tcm masters/books, poems. Put together very lovely.

The book is clear, and covers quite a bit. It's focus is standing postures. While this more Yin approach does have it's benefits, I find it does not satisfy me. If you are uber disciplined and can stand for long periods of time in one form, than this would prove useful to you. I had already done that for some time when I got this book, and I was ready for different types of movements -- More yang. Still, a good book, and very well written.

I watched a TV series called the way of energy several years ago. Loved it and bought the book and tape. I sent a copy to my son more recently and he loves it too. The exercises have great health benefits. I now have a neurological disability which affects balance and co-ordination, and the exercises are a tremendous help,

I've been doing Qigong exercises for the past several years, so I've noticed it's benefits on my mental, physical and spiritual well-being. I recently got this book and so far I am very impressed with the sensations and increased energy from just doing the Zhan Zhuang a five minutes per day. I'm probably more sensitive to its initial effects due to prior experience with Qigong. This book is a jewel for anyone who is a serious student of Qigong, or anyone who wants to feel more energy and vitality in daily life.

A very in-depth, yet easy to read book on Zhan Zhuang. I do the 10 day Youtube videos of this technique and this book helps me to understand more fully the "hows and whys" of each pose. It's very powerful stuff and this book will help anyone learn to do it, even without the Youtube videos. I highly recommend it and am so glad I was able to get it!

Wonderful book. Lots of pictures.....I'd buy this again. GREAT reference and tool for furthered good health as a person ages (which we all do).Thank you.

Not quite what I was expecting. Guess I prefer a different method of qigong than this. Book comes in excellent condition.

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