

MINDFUL MOVEMENT SERIES - CHI KUNG

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCAf0GBmyx4>

Most of these movements, which form the Zen Center San Diego Mindful Movement Series, are from Bodhidharma, Hakuin, and meridian chi kung. Their relative slowness makes them useful in cultivating mindful movement, and as a prelude to meditative awareness in faster activities. The adjacent “Movement Principles” file gives basics.

REPEATS: Most movements are done 5 times (or 10 if movement goes in both directions). It’s fine to use only portions of the series; however, it helps to begin with some movements from the *chi loosening* section, so that any existing bodily kinks aren’t exacerbated.

Be sure to listen to the body, and adapt movements as needed.
Note: upper body remains erect throughout, with one exception (Leg Tracing).

CHI LOOSENING: (Opening areas of habitual constriction):

VERTICAL BOUNCES (10): With knees loose and arms at sides, let the arms fly forward and upward, as the heels lift slightly off the ground. The arms float momentarily above the head, and then swing back down to the sides. The upper body remains erect throughout.

HORIZONTAL SWINGS (10): Feet wider than usual (about 2’ apart), arms fully extended at sides, parallel to the ground. Turn the entire torso, so that the arms circle and flop against opposite sides of body. Arms then return to full extension, and circle again in the opposite direction, flopping against opposite sides of body. Weight shifts from foot to foot, as arms rotate to the opposite sides. After 5 swings in each direction, the hands can begin flopping lightly against the lung and kidney areas (left hand to right lung or kidney, and vice versa). To end, let arms “run down” and return to sides.

STAGNATION CLEARING:

FIST TAPPING: Starting over the kidneys in back, let the fists tap both sides of the body simultaneously, moving from the waist down the buttocks and back up to waist, moving farther out each time. Then proceed tapping down outside of legs, to ankle, and back up the inside, to the top of the legs, moving to the sides, and up to the armpit, one side at a time. Tap from top of arm over the lung area several times, then continue down the inside of the extended arm and back up the outside to the neck. Reverse. Now, both fists

tap from the base of the neck, up the back of the head, over the top to the eyebrows, and back down. Do several times, moving closer to outside of head each time, and ending at the base of the neck.

JOINT LOOSENING: For each of these, 5 movements in each direction, before reversing:

KNEES AND ANKLES: Feet together, hands on knees. Rotate knees & ankles.

HIPS: Hands on hips; rotate hips as if cleaning inside of barrel (or hula hoop).

SHOULDERS: Rotate shoulders in opposite directions, hands making circles on thighs.

SHOULDERS AND ELBOWS: Hold “beach ball” over head, rotating it in large circles around the head.

HEAD AND NECK: Let head flop around circling neck (not too far to the back – half circles are good).

CROSS CRAWLS: Feet closed, arms forming half circle in front, parallel to ground. Knee and opposite arm move opposite directions, horizontally, as if screwing a lid (the arms) off and on a jar (the opposite knee); it’s a little like doing the twist. Arms & legs go in opposite directions, with the left knee crossing the body midline to the opposite side of body (like the Can Can, but without the kicks), as arms cross the midline in the opposite direction. Head stays straight.

PICKING PEACHES(10): As right hand stretches high to pick a peach, and right leg simultaneously extends fully (as in a full stretch), let the left knee lift, as if the right hand is pulling it forward and up. Do the same with the opposite arm and leg. Be as loose as a cat, letting the whole body soften and lengthen fully. Note: the foot on the ground stays on the ground.

FINISH WITH 10 MORE CROSS CRAWLS.

CHI GENERATING: (basic stance, 5 moves each direction):

BODHIDHARMA CIRCLES: Feel pull of gravity, as if the body is moving through water. Start with the torso erect, and arms lowered, as if holding a beach ball in front of the thighs. Bring the ball up to eye level, as if raising it through water, with palms up; at eye level, turn hands palms down, and let the ball be pushed back down through the “water” to the starting point.

Proceed directly to the next exercise:

INFLATING AND DEFLATING BALL: As hands rise to waist level, let hands move wider apart, as if ball is “inflating” to a width of about 2’. Then

let it deflate (so that fingers almost touch). This movement proceeds directly into:

EMBRACING HEAVEN AND EARTH: let hands drop and palms meet in front of knees. Hands and arms rise up center of body, to full extension over head. Then, palms up, let the arms open fully, coming outward and downward in semicircles, back to the starting point (the palms turn downward when arms reach shoulder level. Palms again come together to start the next cycle.

CHI MOVING:

DRAWING THE BOW AND ARROW (Large Intestine meridian): Wider stance (“horse/kidney” stance), about 2 feet apart. Arms crossed, as if hugging a backpack to the chest. (Reverse breathing): Begin with inhale, then exhale as knees bend and body sinks straight down, while arms move into “arrow shooting” position: first to the left, as the right arm pulls the “bow string” back, as the left arm points left, with index finger & thumb forming an “L” (index finger faces straight up). Reverse by inhaling as arms return to the “hug” position, and legs straighten. Reverse, without stopping. Eyes, unfocused, follow the index finger.

LEG TRACING (Gall bladder meridian): Feet together, hands on hips (thumbs to back). Exhale as the blade of the left thumb traces across waist and continues down the outside of the right leg. Fingertips lightly trace the toes; inhale as thumb blade rises while tracing outside of left leg, ending at waist. Reverse.

BEAR HUGS TREE: (Liver meridian): Hands in semicircle, fingertips 2” apart. Inhale: left arm “opens” to the left to form ¼ circle; exhale as fingers return to the center and close the circle (to about 2 inches between hands). Reverse. Eyes, unfocused, follow the moving fingers.

CHI STORING: **ENGULFING THE UNIVERSE:** To finish, put the hands over lower abdomen (Chinese *dantien*, Japanese *hara*), with hands in the “sitting meditation” position (thumbs touching, other fingers overlapped) forming a half circle, just below the navel. Feel the “water balloon” in the abdomen inflating and deflating on several rounds of breathing, while simultaneously sensing the total environment.

CONNECTEDNESS: BOW to complete the series.

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