

## MOVEMENT AWARENESS PRINCIPLES

To function as one in a group, follow the leader. Please stand in back if you do something different, so others can learn by observing.

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

These moving meditation principles are often helpful in standing, walking, and daily activities. Many help in sitting as well. For specifics, see “Mindful Movement Series” at [www.zencentersandiego.org](http://www.zencentersandiego.org).

Guidelines move from the feet to the head, for maximum balance and presence.

1. FEET: Basic stance and start: feet are a shoulder-width apart, with inner edges parallel.
2. STANCE AND BALANCE: Stand on flat ground if possible, with feet planted firmly on the earth, forming a stable base.
3. KNEES: Unlocked, flexible.
4. LEGS AND LOWER TORSO: Give the body’s weight to the ground, feeling the gravitational pull, the groundedness, that roots the body to the earth.
5. WEIGHT UNDERSIDE: Feel the weight on the lower side of the limbs, shoulders, feet and buttocks.
6. ABDOMEN\*: (Japanese *hara*, Chinese *dantien*): **Feel the breathing primarily in this area**, and throughout torso. Optional: feel the **perineum**, at the base of the hara area.
7. HEAD AND UPPER TORSO: Sense the head and upper body gravitating upward, buoyantly, as if the head contains a helium-filled balloon.
8. TONGUE: The **tip of the tongue rests gently on the hard palate**, behind the upper front teeth.
9. EYES: Unfocused and soft, slightly lowered, as if seeing *through* the world, rather than looking at something. Head remains erect as eyes are lowered – not falling forward.
10. BREATHING\*: Breathe quietly through the nose. Feel the inflations and deflations of the entire torso, **centered in the hara (lower abdomen)**.
11. IMPERCEPTIBLE FLUCTUATION: Feel the invisible flow, as the body moves in and out of balance, like underwater seaweed -- a countermeasure to becoming rigid, tense or slack. .
12. WHEN ATTENTION WANDERS: Awareness returns to the predominant movements and sensations, the hands, **hara breath**, and environmental ambience.
13. SURROUNDINGS: My qigong teachers have emphasized the value of practicing in nature when possible, near greenery and water, often parks or beaches – to experience firsthand the interplay of body-earth-sky chi.

\* BREATHING: In many chi kung movements, inhales occur on upward or expansive movements, and exhales on downward or contracting movements. Practicing as a group, we follow the leader, unifying our movements (and breath if possible) to function as one. Practicing alone, the natural breathing tempo guides the slower movements.

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