

WuLi Taiji—Patterns of Organic Energy

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Qigong Training



General Yue Fei

The Eight Pieces of Brocade

The Warrior Set

What is Qigong?

Qigong (chee-gung) is the Mandarin Chinese term used to describe various Chinese systems of physical and mental training for health, martial arts, and self-enlightenment. It literally means, “breath work.” By concentrating on the breath qigong engages the mind to train the body to relax.

The Eight Pieces of Brocade (*ba duan jin*) is a simple set of qigong exercises created by General Yue Fei in the 12th century to help maintain the energy, flexibility and health of his soldiers. These exercises are still practiced today by everyone from Shaolin Warriors to little old ladies getting over a cold.

Flexibility, combined with a state of alert relaxation, allows the body to perform at optimum levels, reducing stress and injury; and, when the body has been injured, qigong assists in the healing process.

Practice Points

- Touch the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth behind your front teeth, and close your lips lightly. This is important for correct qi flow through the conception channel.
- Breathe slowly and deeply, but naturally.
- Relax your whole body during practice, and perform all moves as if you moving through water, feeling the resistance. Effortless effort.
- **Reps:** Each “rep” is a right/left or up/down set. 12 reps of each of the exercises from Preparation through the 8 named exercises is the usual “prescription.”

Wuji Stance

Stand straight, feet shoulder width apart, arms hanging at the sides. Bend the knees slightly and tuck the tailbone under so that the spine is straight from butt to head, like an axis for the torso to turn on. Imagine the head is suspended, hanging from the sky by an unbreakable thread. Balance your weight evenly on your feet, imagining that they are growing roots deep into the ground.

Ma Bu (Horse Stance)

Same upper body position as wuji, with feet placed two shoulder-widths apart, toes pointing slightly outwards. Bend the knees as deeply as you can up to the point the thighs are parallel to the floor. Keep toes over knees!

Preparation: Willow in the Wind — Wuji Stance

Imagine that the wind blows from behind you catching your palms blowing your arms up to shoulder height. When the wind subsides, your arms float back down to your sides. *Inhale as the arms float up; exhale as they float down.*

The Eight Pieces of Brocade

1 Two Hands Hold up the Heavens — Wuji Stance

Turn your palms up and bring your fingertips together. Raise hands slowly up, and when they reach chin height, turn them over and continue to extend your arms until your palms are “pushing up the sky.” Rise up on your toes, balancing evenly on the toes, not allowing the feet to roll outwards. Tilt your upper body slowly from the waist, left, then right. Return to center and lower arms, turning hands over at the chin point, and settling onto your heels as hands return to starting position. *Exhale as you rise up; inhale as you come down. Exhale as you lean left or right; inhale as you return to center.*

2 Drawing the Bow to Shoot the Hawk — Ma Bu (horse stance)

Make light fists and bring them together, knuckles touching, at chest height. Turn your waist so the upper body is facing left. Stretch out your left arm and look the fist as you turn your torso back to the center, pulling your right elbow back as if drawing a bow. Turn torso to the left again and bring fists together, and turn back to center. Repeat on right. *Inhale as you turn to the side, exhale as you draw the bow. Inhale as you bring fists together; exhale as you return to center.*

3 Separate Heaven and Earth — Wuji Stance

Turn palms up and touch fingertips together. Raise hands to waist. Raise left arm up the center of the body turning palm up to “push the sky;” turn right hand palm down to “press the earth.” Bring hands back to center position, change hands. *Exhale as hands move apart; inhale as they come together.*

4 Wise Owl Looks Back — Wuji Stance

1) Turn head to the left and look back. Return to center. Turn head to right.
2) Place palms on your back, above the waist. Do head turns. 3) Bring arms up to chest height, fingertips touching, as if holding a large ball. Look left and right. *Exhale as you look back; inhale as you return to center.*

5 Sway the Head and Shake the Tail — Ma Bu (horse stance)

Place hands on knees, thumbs on the outer thigh. Keep your spine straight. Shift your weight to the left and look left. Shift your weight to the right and look to the right. *Exhale as you shift to the side; inhale as you return to center.*

6 Two Hands Hold the Feet — Wuji Stance

Raise hands to “push the heavens” position. Keep them in position as you drop your head and bend your body forward, vertebra by vertebra, until the top of your head is pointing directly at the ground Grasp your ankles and gently pull in to stretch the back of the legs. Let go, and let your arms dangle as you roll up, vertebra by vertebra, to wuji position. *Exhale as you raise your arms; inhale as you bend forward. Exhale as your pull your ankles; inhale as you return to wuji.*

7 Punch with Fiery Eyes — Ma Bu (horse stance)

Make fists and hold them, palm up, at either side of the waist. Turn waist to the left, and punch with the right fist, turning it palm down. Return to center, retracting fist. Turn right, punch with left. **Variation:** From wuji stance, alternately punch forward to center. You can also kick with same or opposite side foot. *Exhale as you punch; inhale as you return to center. Be sure to glare at your imaginary opponent—but remain relaxed!*

8 Prime the Pump for the Bubbling Well — Wuji Stance

1) Rise up on your toes about an inch to put your weight on your “bubbling wells,” the points on the soles centered behind the balls of the feet. Hold for a moment, then drop onto your heels heavily, giving yourself a comfortable “jarring.” 2) Place palms on your back, above the waist. Rise and drop. 3) Bring arms up to chest height, fingertips touching, as if holding a large ball. Rise and drop. *Exhale as you rise; inhale as you drop.*

Closing Form — Wuji Stance

Place hands on belly, one on top of the other, just below your waist. Breathe naturally and feel the qi flowing through your body. Feel the top of your head connecting to the sky... feel your feet growing roots into the ground.

Breathe deeply but gently. After 12 breaths, allow your hands to drop and refocus your awareness. Return to normal activity.