



# Seven Gateways Qigong

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## Introduction

Traditional Chinese Qigong refers to five Gateways through which Qi can enter the body: the soles of the 2 feet, the palms of the 2 hands, and the crown. Qigong practices often access Qi through these Gateways to augment the Qi that is naturally in the body, and replace 'stagnant Qi' in the body with 'clean Qi' from outside. A second perspective is that the human body is always energetically connected to its surroundings, and requires both a constant flow of Qi internally **and** a constant exchange of Qi with the external environment, to maintain health.

There is one gateway that is sometimes overlooked: this is the breath, or lungs. Yogis particularly emphasize 'Prana' through the breath as a means to affect the energy in the body. In this Qigong, we acknowledge that the breath is a sixth Gateway for Qi. Finally, the Gateway to the Soul is considered to be the Heart – so we open the Heart to open the seventh Gateway.

This Qigong can be used on a daily basis, and especially when you feel out-of-balance.

## Preparation

This Qigong is usually performed from the standing position.

## First Movement

Fold the palms over the lower abdomen. Breathe deeply so that the lower abdomen expands during inhale, and relaxes during exhale. Feel the in/out movement of the lower abdomen with the hands. Repeat many times.

## Second Movement

Continue to breathe as in First Movement, and keep the hands in the same position at the lower abdomen. Begin to bend the knees slightly during inhale, and straighten the knees during exhale. As the knees slowly bend during inhale, imagine that Qi is sinking downward into the earth. As the knees slowly straighten during exhale, imagine that Qi flows from the earth up into the feet, legs, and torso. Repeat many times.

## Third Movement

While continuing to breathe and bend the knees as in First and Second movements, move the hands to the sides, so that palms are flat and face the earth, with fingers pointing



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forward. Imagine a constant flow of Qi between the palms of the hands and the earth. Keeping the hands in this position, repeat the breath and knee movement many times.

## Fourth Movement

Move the hands in front of the lower abdomen, palms facing inward about head-width apart or slightly less. Continue breath and body movement from First and Second movement as you add the following: during inhale, move hands a bit further apart – waist-width or less. During exhale, return palms to head-width apart. Repeat hand movement in concert with breath and body movement, imagining constant flow of Qi between palms. Repeat many times.

## Fifth Movement

*Breath changes in relation to body movement.* During inhale, extend arms outward and upwards above the head, bring palms together, and straighten the legs. During exhale, move hands slightly downward toward crown, and bend the knees slightly. On the inhale, extend arms upward, palms still together, and straighten the knees. Repeat upward and downward movement of hands and knees in time with breath. Repeat three to nine times.

## Sixth Movement

During exhale, move the hands down to center of chest, and imagine Qi flowing down to the Heart. During inhale, move the hands outward to sides of chest, palms facing inward, and imagine the Qi of the Heart expanding. During exhale, move hands inward, close to centerline without touching, and imagine the Qi of the Heart getting stronger. Repeat outward and inward movements of hands with breathing. End with palms coming together in front of chest.

## Seventh Movement

Gather Qi! During exhale, move hands down in front of centerline of body, and imagine Qi flowing down to Dantian. You may also bend the knees slightly, and imagine Qi flowing downward into the earth. During inhale, extend hands outward and upward, imagining Qi collecting in palms of hands. You may also straighten the knees, and imagine Qi flowing from earth into legs and torso. Repeat.

## Finish

Relax arms at sides. Continue to breathe deeply while body relaxes in standing position.