



# Crystal T'ai Chi (Forest of Dean)

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## A Simple Static Qi Gong '5 Element'

This simple Qi Gong, known to us as a 'Five Element Qi Gong' is used at the beginning of all my sessions after the warm up to cultivate an internal focus. It is a very intense internal Qi Gong, ideal to both alleviate stress and to move and feel Qi, and can be carried out seated or standing (or even lying down). Practising is not confined to a T'ai Chi session and so it can easily be used on its own at any time you feel the need:

*Stressed at work - do it at your desk.*

*Can't sleep - do it laying in bed.*

*Kids playing up - turn your back.*

*Gridlocked in the car or just waiting - get out if you can, if not, do it as you sit.*

Each movement is accompanied by deep breathing (ideally through the nose with the tongue on the roof of the palette) utilising the full range of your diaphragm to breathe - each 'in' and 'out' breathe moving the lower abdomen. ('Yang Breathing' - *In* expands the stomach - *Out* contracts the stomach.)



Static Qi Gong '5-Element' Carried Out Standing or Seated

## **Five Element Qi Gong Movement Sequence**

*This is used to provide mental relaxation and general well-being. Carry out a posture with 3 or 5 repeats before moving on to the next in order to experience and control Qi. Although shown standing, it can also be practised sitting or lying down.*

### **Commencing**

If standing, adopt the basic standing T'ai Chi posture:

1. Feet apart about shoulder width head up – as if pulled up by an invisible string; chin slightly pulled in; fingers gently curved and slightly apart; tail-bone dropped down; knees as soft if possible (slightly forward , no tension).
2. Breath deeply, cleanse the mind, but think and focus on the movements being done.
3. Ideally use a slow breath count - 'In': 1, 2, 3, 4 - 'Out': 1, 2, 3, 4

### **First Posture (Earth)**



1. Place hands palms over and facing the Dan Tien.
2. Focus on sinking Qi to the Dan Tien.
3. Hold position, breathing slowly and deeply.
4. Each complete breath counts as one exercise.

## **Second Posture (Metal)**



*Here feel the focus on the expansion and contraction of the hands as if pulling and compressing a metal spring.*

1. Lift the hand into a 'praying' position wrists at mid-chest height. Do not touch the hands together.
2. As you breathe in, slowly expand hands, pulling against an imaginary spring (Qi energy).
3. As you breathe out, slowly compress the hands, pushing against an imaginary spring.
4. Each complete breath counts as one exercise.

*Try not to move the hands beyond shoulder width on the expansion or touch them together on the compression. This movement is the one that usually first introduces beginners to Qi as their hands start to feel warm and fingers tingle.*

## **Third Posture (Water)**



*Imagine there is a helium filled balloon (or a water fountain) under your hands.*

1. Turn the hands palm downwards and lower them so that the wrists are just below the Dan Tien.

2. As you breathe in, slowly lift hands palms down until at or just below shoulder height. Lead with the wrists so that fingers droop. Simultaneously straighten knees a little if you can (but don't lock them).

*The balloon (or water fountain) lifts the hands.*

3. As you breathe out, slowly bring hands back down whilst simultaneously bending knees back to the original soft position. Again lead with the wrists so that now the fingers will point at an upward angle. (For a more intense Qi Gong if possible bend the knees to go a little lower but don't push the knees out beyond the toe line.)

*Feel the resistance of the balloon (or water fountain) when pushing down.*

4. Each complete breath counts as one exercise.

*This movement will introduce beginners to Qi sensitivity and control, balancing lightness of yin movement (upward) with the effortless force of yang movement (downward).*

### **Fourth Posture (Wood)**



*During this posture concentrate on growing the Qi.*

1. Turn the palms upward, finger tips around Dan Tien height.

2. As you breathe in, lift arms in an outward curving circular motion describing a circle as if rolling around a large sphere and finishing with the fingers and wrists around shoulder height, palm facing down. Again let the wrists lead.

3. As you breathe out, retrace the circle, wrists leading down, to return the arms to the start position again describing a circle finishing palms upward.

4. Each complete breath counts as one exercise.

## ***Fifth Posture (Fire)***



*Fire is said to relate to the kidneys and is repeated to left and right sides. Fire will eventually introduce you to spiral energy movement from leg to left/right side.*

1. Rotate hands around, palms facing as if holding a 15 cm (6") ball at the top and bottom, right hand below left, elbows in a 'v' slightly below each hand.
2. Sinking the Kua a little (softening the left knee to pivot at the hip), allow the hands to move over the left hip.
3. As you breathe in, slowly expand the hands apart, pulling against an imaginary vertical spring (Qi).
4. As you breathe out, slowly compress the hands, pushing against the vertical spring. Do not touch the hands together.
5. Each complete breath counts as one exercise.
6. After completing several breaths, transfer back to a neutral stance carrying the ball, rotate the hands so that left hand is on the bottom and carry out the movement on the right side.
7. Breathing in and out, expand and compress the hands vertically as before.
8. Each complete breath counts as one exercise.
9. After completing several breaths, transfer back to a neutral stance carrying the ball, rotate the hands so that they are vertical, then place them to the Dan Tien.

## ***Finishing***

1. Gather Qi in the palms of your hands, lift slightly then invert the palms and push Qi down the legs, lowering the hands down to your sides.
2. Straighten the knees and stand up.
3. Step the legs in together and 'bounce' and flex the legs and feet. Walk around to release the build up of Qi.

## ***Five Element Qi Gong As A Simple Form***

The five movements described previously can be singularly joined together as a complete sequence (or form) and repeated at least 3 times to provide a gentle static exercise sequence. As a short introductory 'form', this will not only bring awareness and control of Qi, but will start to generate an awareness of smooth movement and demonstrate the philosophy of Yin & Yang.

*Carry out the 5 movements as a continuous flowing sequence of single passes. If you tire with the static stance or your back hurts because your posture is tensing then straighten the legs and stay in this position until refreshed (or even stop and walk around), and then return to the soft knee posture when able.*

1. Assume the Earth Movement.
2. Carry out the Metal Movement.
3. Carry out the Water Movement.
4. Carry out the Wood Movement.
5. Carry out the Fire Movement on both sides.

*Repeat as many times as you want, then to finish:*

6. Gather Qi in the palms of your hands, lift slightly then invert the palms and push Qi down the legs, lowering the hands down to your sides.
7. Straighten the knees and stand up.
8. Step the legs in together and 'bounce' and flex the legs and feet. Walk around to release the built up Qi.