

Relaxation

Relaxation is one of the major keys to success in Chi Kung. You should remember that **ONLY WHEN YOU ARE RELAXED WILL ALL YOUR CHI CHANNELS BE OPEN**. In order to be relaxed, your Yi [mind] must first be relaxed and calm. When this Yi coordinates with your breathing, your body will be able to relax.

In Chi Kung practice there are three levels of relaxation. The first level is the external physical relaxation, or postural relaxation. This a very superficial level, and almost anyone can reach it. It consists of adopting a comfortable stance and avoiding unnecessary strain in how you stand and move. The second level is the relaxation of the muscles and tendons. 'To do this your Yi must be directed deep into the muscles and tendons. This relaxation will help open your Chi channels, and will allow the Chi to sink and accumulate in the Dan Tien.

The final stage is the relaxation which reaches the internal organs and the bone marrow. Remember, **ONLY IF YOU CAN RELAX DEEP INTO YOUR BODY WILL YOUR MIND BE ABLE TO LEAD THE CHI THERE**. Only at this stage will the Chi be able to reach everywhere. Then you will feel transparent - as if your whole body had disappeared. If you can reach this level of relaxation, you will be able to communicate with your organs and use Chi Kung to adjust or regulate the Chi disorders which are giving you problems. You will also be able to protect your organs more effectively, and therefore slow down their degeneration.

Rooting

In all Chi Kung practice it is very important to be rooted. Being rooted means to be stable and in firm contact with the ground. If you want to push a car, you have to be rooted so the force you exert into the car will be balanced by a force into the ground. If you are not rooted, when you push the car you will only push yourself away, and not move the car. Your root is made up of your body's root, center, and balance.

Before you can develop your root, you must first relax and let your body "settle: **AS** you relax, the tension in the various parts of your body will dissolve, and you will find a comfortable way to stand. You will stop fighting the ground to keep your body up, and will learn to rely on your body's structure to support itself. **This** lets the muscles relax even more. Since your body isn't struggling to stand up, your Yi won't be pushing upward, and your body, mind, and Chi will all be able

to sink. If you let dirty water sit quietly, the impurities will gradually settle down to the bottom, leaving the water above it clear. In the same way, if you relax your body enough to let it settle, your Chi will sink to your Dan Tien and the Bubbling Wells in your feet, and your mind will become clear. Then you can begin to develop your root. To root your body you must imitate a tree and grow an invisible root under your feet. This will give you a firm root to keep you stable in your training.

YOUR ROOT MUST BE WIDE AS WELL AS DEEP.

Naturally, your Yi must grow first, because it is the Yi which leads the Chi. Your Yi must be able to lead the Chi to your feet, and be able to communicate with the ground. Only then your Yi can communicate with the ground will your Chi be able to grow beyond your feet and enter the ground to build the root. The Bubbling Well cavity is the gate which enables your Chi to communicate with the ground

Regulating the Breath (Tyau Shyi)

Regulating the breath means to regulate your breathing until it is calm, smooth, and peaceful. Only when you have reached this point will you be able to make the breathing deep, slower, long, and soft, which is required for successful Chi Kung practice.

In correct breathing, you inhale and exhale to about 70% or 80% of capacity, so that your lungs stay relaxed.

Remember **WHEREVER THE YI IS, THERE IS THE CHI. IF THE YI STOPS IN ONE SPOT, THE CHI WILL BE STAGNANT.**

IT IS THE YI WHICH LEADS THE CHI AND MAKES IT MOVE.

Regulating the Mind (Tyau Hsin)

It is said in Taoist society that: -(When) large Tao is taught, first stop thought; when thought is not stopped, (the lessons are) in vain." This means that when you first practice Chi Kung, the most difficult training is to stop your thinking. The final goal for your mind is "the thought of no thought." Your mind does not think of the past, the present, or the future. Your mind is completely separated from influences of the present such as worry, happiness, and sadness. Then your mind can be calm and steady, and can finally gain peace.

Only when you are in the state of "the thought of no thought" will you be relaxed and able to sense calmly and accurately.

Regulating your mind means using your consciousness to stop the activity in your mind in order to set it free from the bondage of

ideas, emotion, and conscious thought. When you reach this level your mind will be calm, peaceful, empty, and light. Then your mind has really reached the goal of relaxation. Only when you reach this stage will you be able to relax deep into your marrow and internal organs. Only then will your mind be clear enough to see (feel) the internal Chi circulation and to communicate with your Chi and organs. In Taoist society it is called "Nei Shyh Kung Fu" which means the Kung Fu of internal vision.

When you reach this real relaxation you may **be** able to sense the different elements which make up your body: solid matter, liquids, gases, energy, and spirit.

excerpts from the book "The Essence Of Tai Chi Chi Kung" by Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming