



Wuji

EIGHTEEN RULES FOR PROPER STRUCTURE

The most important basic techniques of Qigong training are guided by eighteen rules of proper form and structure. The main point of Postural Dao Yin training is to relax and seek calmness while in the various postures. Tension in any area of the body restricts the whole structural system, since the body seeks to balance its structure naturally by shifting its energy and weight. The general function of the muscles is to guide the flow of energy through the channels or meridians.

The following is a list of the Eighteen Rules for proper standing posture:

1. Stand with the Feet Flat and Straight
2. Bend the Knees
3. Relax the Hips
4. Round the Perineal Area
5. Close the Sphincter Muscle
6. Pull in the Stomach
7. Relax the Waist
8. Sink the Chest
9. Stretch the Upper Back
10. Relax the Shoulders
11. Sink the Elbows
12. Hollow the Armpits
13. Relax the Wrists
14. Suspend the Head
15. Tuck the Chin
16. Soften the Eyes for Inner Vision
17. Close the Mouth, Open the Nose, Stop the Ears
18. Touch the Tongue to the Upper Palate (Fire Position)

Each of these eighteen rules described in detail as follows.

Rule 1 – Stand with Feet Flat

Stand with the feet flat, parallel to the outside of the shoulders. Weight should be distributed evenly on both feet about an inch and a half inward (anterior) from the heels, and perpendicular to the tibia. Focus on dropping the weight down behind the legs, not down the front. This action takes the pressure away from the knees and places it in the center of the feet (Figure 15.13). Stretch the feet and let the toes softly grasp the ground to keep the body firmly rooted as you tuck in the sacrum. Relaxing is important. Rigid, contracted feet disrupt the flow of energy from the Earth into the body. The Kidney



Figure 15.13. Stack the bones on top of each other from the bottom of the feet to the skull.

energy flowing within the bone can be accessed by shifting the weight onto the heels. The Heart energy can be accessed by shifting the weight onto the balls of the feet. The weight in the center of the feet accesses the Taiji Pole (Figure 15.14). While training, the feet may vibrate or feel hot, as if on fire. This is a normal reaction to correct postural training and is beneficial because it dissolves the calcium deposits stored within the extremities of the feet.

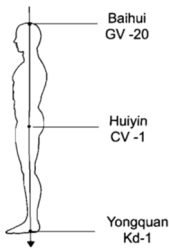


Figure 15.14. The three points (Baihui, Huiyin, and Yongquan) can be connected by a straight line.

Rule 2 – Bend the Knees

The knees should be relaxed, slightly bent and facing the same direction as the feet. The knee caps should be directly aligned and extended no further than the tips of the middle toes. Do not allow the knees to twist inward. To secure the structure, imagine holding a large beach ball between the knees. If pressure is felt on the sides or

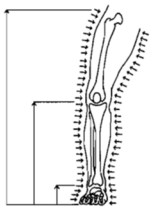


Figure 15.15. Keep the center of the body's weight aligned to the center of the knees, to relax the connective tissue surrounding the knees.

front of the knees, check the positioning (Figure 15.15). Knees that are unable to point in the direction of the toes are most often the result of tight hip joints. If the energy in the legs is tightly constricted around the knee area, Qi flow will be severely limited. A relaxed knee-joint, on the other hand, will increase the Qi and Blood flowing through the legs, making it easier to relax the hips and round the perineal area. Relaxing the knees also permits free flow of energy



Figure 15.16. Relaxing the knees also permits the free flow of energy through the ascending Yin channels and descending Yang channels of the legs.

through the three descending Yang channels on the outside of the leg and the three ascending Yin channels on the inside of the leg (Figure 15.16).

The techniques for relaxing the knees will vary according to the emotional and structural pattern of each individual, as emotions have a tendency to gather and pool behind the knees.

Rule 3 – Relax the Hips

Drop the buttocks slightly and relax the hips while sinking the Qi from the upper torso into the Lower Dantian. Keep the hips facing forward. The buttocks should be gently tucked under the body to facilitate straightening of the spine. Imagine a weight of a thousand pounds hanging from the coccyx (Figure 15.17). As the weight pulls down, tilt the sacrum under the body. When the hip-joints are relaxed, the lower limbs will be able to move freely.



Figure 15.17. Imagine a 1000-pound weight hanging from the coccyx and a heavenly cord suspending the head.

Rule 4 – Round the Perineal Area

There are three parts to rounding the perineal area. First, set the knees apart, turning them both outward. This allows the groin and hips to shift to an anterior tilt. Second, bring the knees back together and turn them inward, while also relaxing the hips. This allows the groin and hips to shift to a posterior tilt. Third, slightly drop down and relax the perineal area to allow the perineum area to expand. This allows the groin and hips to come to a center balance and to sink. Rounding the perineal area keeps the perineum free from pressure, yet sealed. This ensures better functional activities of the Qi, and allows the "lower door" (the anus) to remain closed to avoid leakage of vital energy.

Rule 5 – Close the Sphincter Muscle

The anus is called the Lower Bridge and it is where the Yang and Yin channels meet and combine. The anus is considered the door of the Seven Corporeal Souls (Po). Although the anal sphincter is held closed, it is important that the perineum remain relaxed. There are three stages in controlling the anal sphincter:

1. In the first stage, the anus is contracted with slight muscle control, and the energy is directed into different energy centers along the Microcosmic Orbit. When first beginning, inhale and expand the abdomen while imagining that the anus is connected to the navel and is pulling up towards it. On the exhalation, contract the abdomen and draw the energy from the navel back down towards the anus. Next, inhale and create a connection between the anus and the Mingmen. On the exhalation, draw the energy from the Mingmen back down towards the anus. It is important to synchronize the drawing up of the anus towards the navel and Mingmen area with the expansion and contraction of inhalation and exhalation. This will facilitate a sacral-cranial rhythm throughout the body.

2. In the next stage of training, the constriction of the anus is used to lead the energy up the Governing Vessel in the Microcosmic Orbit (Figure 15.18). Upon inhalation, draw the mind's intention from the navel towards the anus and then down to the tip of the spine (the coccyx), allowing the Qi to flow up the spinal column towards the Mingmen, past the Shendao to the base of the skull. Upon exhalation, roll the eyes back into the head and use the intention to meet the energy at the base of the skull. Next, lead the energy over the Baihui at the top of the head and down the Conception Vessel and back down to the navel.

3. At the third stage, imagine twisting the energy of the anal sphincter, spiraling the Qi up the center of the body to connect with the Baihui area at the top of the head. Close the anal muscle gently, inhale and imagine the energy vibrating and spiraling in a counterclockwise direction up the body's Taiji Pole. This connects the Lower, Middle, and Upper Dantians through the Taiji Pole. Upon exhalation, lead the vibrating Qi down the Taiji Pole in a clockwise spiral ending within the Lower Dantian area. Continue this meditation until the entire body pulses with the rhythm of the Taiji Pole.

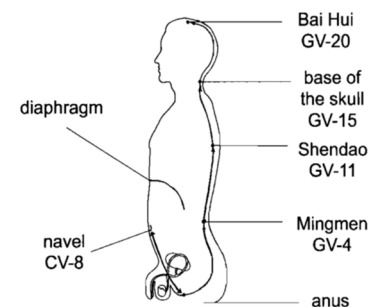


Figure 15.18. The anus is used to draw the Qi from the navel into the Lower Dantian and lead the Qi up the Governing Vessel.

Rule 6 – Pull in the Stomach

Pull the stomach in above the pubic bone, and avoid tensing of the abdominal muscles while slightly pushing the Mingmen back (between L2-L3). This helps to restrain the Yuan Qi, thereby increasing the internal pressure and promoting the flow of internal Qi throughout the whole body.

Rule 7 – Relax the Waist

If the waist is not relaxed the Qi cannot sink back to the Lower Dantian. Relax the waist by relaxing the hips and bending the knees. When the waist is relaxed, the spine will stand upright, yet remain relaxed.

The waist and the abdomen are two important areas in training and guiding Qi. The abdomen is considered to be the furnace for refining Qi. The waist is the residence of the Kidneys and Mingmen Fire and is an important junction for Qi and Blood circulation. The waist is considered the master of the body and must be kept sunken and relaxed (Figure 15.27). As the buttocks tuck under and the waist sinks, small pockets should form on the inner thighs where the pelvic bones meet the femur bones of the legs. Most people usually keep the pelvis area tight and immobile, as it is associated with shock, fear, and sexual trauma (when this area becomes loosened, such emotions are often released).

The specific actions to relax the waist are as follows: lift both shoulders in order to stretch the back, then release them downward immediately as you exhale, relaxing the waist. To achieve genuine waist relaxation, you must also relax and tuck the sacrum, this action opens the sacrum. When the sacrum is opened, the Lower Dantian will expand and the storehouse of Yuan Qi will be enlarged. Be sure that the waist and hips face forward in the same direction as the knees and feet.

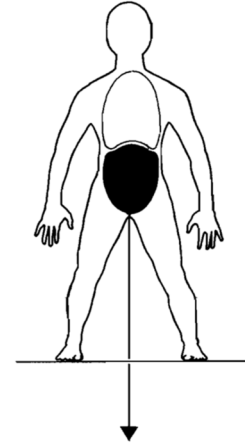


Figure 15.27. Relax and sink the waist, allowing the hips to drop.

Rule 8 – Sink the Chest

The chest should relax inward so that air flows freely and the Qi sinks down into the Lower Dantian. Fill the abdomen with air while relaxing the chest inward. The back should be open and expanded. Relax the scapulae and allow them to sink to their lowest point, this will help the shoulders to sink. Rounding the scapulae (pushing to the sides and forward) will help open and expand the back. Do not thrust the shoulders inward, nor intentionally close the thoracic cavity. The intentional tucking in of the vertebral area requires the outward opening of the ribs and expansion of the intercostal muscles. The action of opening the chest outward, then tucking the chest inward, helps to relax the thoracic cavity and avoids tension in the thoracic muscles.

Rule 9 – Stretch the Upper Back

The key point to stretching the back is to hang the shoulders and "open the scapulae." When the two shoulders drop evenly, the lumbar vertebrae straighten out. The function of tucking the chest and stretching the back calms the Heart and Lungs. The Heart controls mental and emotional activities, and also directs Blood circulation. When the thoracic cavity is spacious and the back is upright, the heart and mind will be calm, and the lungs will be clear and free from heat. Tucking the chest and stretching the back allows the chest and back to relax, permitting the Conception and Governing Vessels to communicate with each other and improve energy circulation. Imagine a weight hanging from the coccyx and a rope pulling up on the crown point of the head. Feel the elongation of the spine with each inhalation and exhalation. Remain relaxed (Figure 15.28), do not hold yourself unnaturally erect and avoid contracting the abdomen to straighten the lower back. The abdomen must remain relaxed. When sinking the body's weight, try to feel the spine press into the heels of the feet.

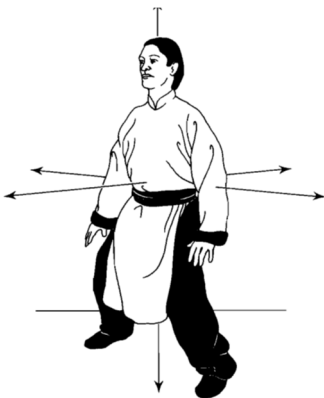


Figure 15.28. By imagining a rope pulling on the head and coccyx, the spine is allowed to naturally stretch, expanding the body's Qi in all directions.

Rule 10 – Relax the Shoulders

If you relax the shoulder joints and let them hang naturally, the shoulders and neck will relax. If you elevate your shoulders when you are standing or sitting, the energy will not sink and you will begin to feel tired, the shoulders will be stressed, and the flow of Blood and Qi will become blocked. When the shoulders are encouraged to relax and are allowed to drop and roll forward, this action facilitates the hollowing of the chest and the expanding and opening of the back, allowing the energy to flow into the arms (Figure 15.29). Try to feel your arms link up with the scapulae as the clavicles press downward. Your shoulders should remain very loose and free.



Figure 15.29. When the shoulder (here viewed from above) relaxes, the Qi flow into the arm increases.

Rule 11 – Sink the Elbows

When practicing the Immortal Post posture and the hands are positioned by the Heart, it is important to bend the elbows slightly at the elbow joint, holding them lower than the hands. While in a Wuji posture, imagine that a weight is hanging from the elbows, or a sensation of compression will be felt at the shoulder and elbow joints. The elbows should be slightly bent and relaxed, remaining structurally correct and not weak. This helps to roll the shoulders forward and open the back. If the elbows are not bent, there will be decreased Qi flow (Figure 15.30).

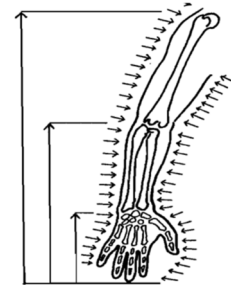


Figure 15.30. Allow the bones in the arms to feel heavy, naturally stretching the tissues and increasing Qi flow to the extremities.

Rule 12 – Hollow the Armpits

Hollow the armpits as if each one is holding an egg, this allows the Qi and Blood to flow freely in the upper limbs. To relax the shoulders, move the tips of the elbows outward to the left and right. Avoid sloping or squaring the shoulders. When practicing the Immortal Post Posture, the arms must embrace inward as if holding a large ball or barrel. Do not push the elbows out so far that you lose the curve in your arm, this is of extreme importance. Your arms should not bend inward more than 45 degrees. The energy flowing in your arms is like water running through a hose. If you bend it too sharply, much of the supply will be cut off.

Rule 13 – Relax the Wrists

This includes hollowing the palm, and the comfortable curling of the fingers. Relaxation of the wrist allows the Shu-Stream points in the wrist to communicate with the fingers (see the Five Antique Shu Points in Chapter 8). Hollowing the palm and curling the fingers allows for the natural stretching and curving of the hand, which prevents the Qi from diffusing. It is important to avoid being rigid and purposefully bending the fingers, as all hand postures effects the brain and the body's Qi flow.

Relaxing the wrists helps to regulate the three Yang and three Yin channels of the hands so that Qi and Blood can flow freely. The wrist must form a line with the shoulders. Do not bend the wrists, but hold them straight so that the middle finger forms a line with the forearm, allowing the hands and fingers to hang relaxed but not limp.

Rule 14 – Suspend the Head

The classics say that "the head is held aloft not by force, but as if it were placed there by a ruling power." Hold the head as if it were suspended, keeping the Baihui point pointed to Heaven (Figure 15.31). This produces space in the body by elongating the spine. When suspended, the head must be kept upright, positioned in the middle of the chest and shoulders. This helps to set the whole body in the upright position, and also directs the Qi and Blood to flow upward to nourish the brain and the mind. The Shen will be reinforced while the Jing and the Qi will be invigorated (it is the Shen which controls all the physical activities). An effective visualization is to imagine your head lifting high into space, your waist positioned in the clouds, and your feet sunk deep into the Earth.

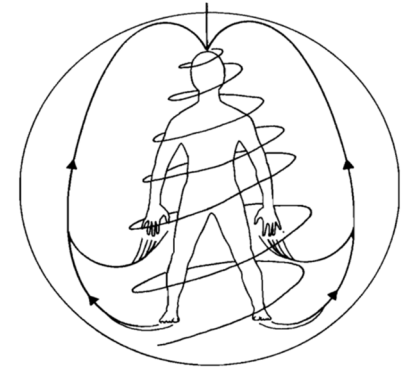


Figure 15.31. Suspending the head allows the body to become sensitive to the surrounding environment and external fields of Qi.

Rule 15 – Tuck the Chin

The head cannot be properly suspended if the chin is not tucked in. Only then can the Baihui Point on the top of the head be correctly positioned and the nasal respiration kept free. Tuck the chin and slightly lean forward to stretch and straighten the spine. You should feel the stretch all the way down into the coccyx. Next, slowly shift the weight backwards, stacking each vertebra on top of the next, starting from the bottom of the coccyx and sacrum and moving upwards.

Rule 16 – Soften the Eyes for Inner Vision

The Chinese have a saying: "close the curtain." This refers to dropping the eyelids to facilitate inner-vision, and focusing on any specific areas where Qi is being trained or circulated. The eyes are of great importance in Qigong exercises. It is said that the functional activities of Qi are determined by the eyes, and that the eyes are the messengers of the mind, and the mind is the residence of the Shen. Completely closed eyes induce an absolute Yin state which is generally used in meditations for tonifying any Deficiencies. However, when used excessively (with all Yin and no Yang energy) the Qi can become too inactive. Completely open eyes induce an absolute Yang state which is generally used in meditations for dispersing any excesses. However, if overused, or if the person has an Excess Yang condition, this type of meditation can make the practitioner too restless.

When the goal is to regulate the body's energy, slightly open the eyes in order to leave a small thread of light inside the eyes. This will keep the Yang (light) within the Yin (dark), so that the Qi will be more balanced. Because energy leaves the body through the eyes, after performing various Qigong exercises, or prescriptions, allow your eyes to close halfway to continue the cultivation of life-force energy. Tightly shutting the eyes causes tension in the upper and lower eyelids. Closing the eyelids gently, however, will restrain the vision, which helps to calm the Shen and the mind. When meditating, if the eyes look to the distant horizon, they should not be focused but stare into infinity, this technique is also called the One Thousand Yard Stare, and it helps in regulating the venous pressure in the cranial cavity. Strive for balance. Each eye has its own specific responsibility and energetic function.

- The right eye is generally used to project intention and extend emotion, energy, and spirit out from the body. The right eye relates to Water, Kidneys, Qi, Moon, Yin, Earth, Metal, and the Po.
- The left eye is generally used to receive, drawing in images, emotion, energy, and spirit into the body. The left eye relates to Fire, Heart, Shen, Sun, Yang, Heaven, Wood, and the Hun.
- If both eyes look upwards towards the Upper Dantian, the body's energy will draw up into the infinite space of the Wuji and merge with the divine.
- If both eyes look towards the tip of the nose, the Middle and Lower Dantians are linked together for transforming Yuan Qi.
- Crossing the eyes results in the union of the Wood and Metal, the elements of alchemic transition, for increasing the development of psychic energy. This intensification of psychic development is due to the union of the Hun and Po within the body, and is said to connect the meditator with his or her Yuan Shen.
- After meditation, store the Qi of the eyes behind the posterior orbital surface of the eyeballs themselves. This prevents the eyes from overheating and drying out.

Rule 17 – Close the Mouth, Open the Nose, Stop the Ears

In order to enhance the Yang during Medical Qigong exercises, close the lips with the teeth gently touching. Closing the lips will prevent the internal Qi from flowing out. The Chinese use the expression: "Stopping the ears," which means to focus the hearing inward so as to be free from outside interference.

Rule 18 – Touch the Tongue to the Upper Palate (Fire Position)

When the tongue touches the upper palate, it forms what is called the Bird's Bridge. The connection of the tongue links both the Governing Vessel (which ends at the nose and upper palate) and the Conception Vessel (which ends in the mouth). As the tongue touches the upper palate, the body's field of Wei Qi expands. This can help to eliminate diseases and prolong life. The belief is that when someone has a disease, the Governing and Conception Vessels are to some extent disconnected. Some Qigong doctors test their patients' progress by having them meditate with their tongue suspended in their mouth. Upon command, they connect the tongue to the upper palate. The suddenly increased expansion and strength of the patients' Wei Qi, observed by the doctor, indicates the degree of their progress. The technique called "Gathering the Saliva," begins when the tongue touches the upper palate, causing the saliva secretion to be increased. Saliva contains many enzymes, which not only aid digestion, but also benefit physiology. In ancient China, this practice was called Gathering the Immortal's Water or the Juice of Jade to create the Immortal Pill. There is an exchange of Yin and Yang energy within the saliva, as Heaven Qi and Earth Qi are gathered within man's Fluid Essence in order to create the Immortal Pill. Before swallowing the saliva, it is important to tilt the head slightly forward (after inhaling). Swallow the saliva three times with three big gulps, using the breath as a cork to enclose the saliva. Send the Immortal Pill, i.e., the combined saliva and air down the Conception Vessel, bathing the Five Yin Organs, and ending at the Lower Dantian. Next, draw the energy up the Governing Vessel into the brain to replenish and nurture the Upper Dantian. There are Five Elemental Tongue Positions. Each tongue position is related to one of the Five Yin Organs and can be used to direct the Qi to that specific organ. Sometimes, while practicing Medical Qigong prescriptions, if too much Heat is created, the patient will be instructed to "change the tongue position" as well as meditation.

The Elemental tongue positions:

- A. The **Earth** (Spleen) position requires that the tongue be placed on the bottom of the jaw at the base of the lower palate, beneath the teeth and gum line (Figure 15.32).
- B. The **Metal** (Lungs) position requires that the tongue be placed between the maxilla and mandible bones, suspended, behind the teeth (Figure 15.33).
- C. The **Fire** (Heart) position requires that the tongue be placed on the hard palate, at the front of the upper palate, behind the teeth and gum line (Figure 15.34).
- D. The **Wood** (Liver) position requires that the tongue be placed on the hard palate, at the middle of the upper palate at the center of the roof of the mouth (Figure 15.35).
- E. The **Water** (Kidneys) position requires that tongue be placed on the soft palate, at the back of the upper palate (Figure 15.36).

The 5 elemental tongue positions



Figure 15.32. For the Earth position, which is related to the Spleen, the tongue is placed on the bottom of the jaw at the base of the lower palate, beneath the teeth and gum line.



Figure 15.33. For the Metal position, which is related to the Lungs, the tongue is placed between the maxilla and mandible bones, suspended, behind the teeth.



Figure 15.34. For the Fire position, which is related to the Heart, the tongue is placed on the front of the upper palate, behind the teeth and gum line.

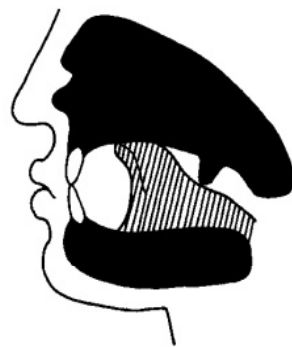


Figure 15.35. For the Wood position, which is related to the Liver, the tongue is placed on the middle of the upper palate at the center of the roof of the mouth.



Figure 15.36. For the Water position, which is related to the Kidneys, the tongue is placed on the soft palate at the back of the upper palate.