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Chi Kung Exercises

Master Wasentha Young

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Chi Kung, as a health art, has woven together textures of movement, coordinations, imagery, balance, and health that can benefit people of all abilities. As a form of exercise it is a Chinese style of yoga. It can consist of stretches, imagery, and movement with coordinated breathing. Practitioner have found chi kung techniques useful in the loosening of joints, energy movement, and general balance. Hopefully upon completion of this 15 minute chi kung routine, you will feel a sense of physical and mental relaxation.

Master Wasentha Young

Before You Begin

Before beginning these exercises, please consult with your physician to rule out any potential health risks. Chi Kung exercises are safe, but if you feel any symptoms such as light-headedness, nausea, shortness of breath or pains in your chest, stop exercising immediately. Don't exercise to the point of over-exertion, which could aggravate a health condition you may have.

Stretching is important; however, don't force a stretch. Visit the 'soft side' of your pain. If you say "Ow" or feel a sharp pain, you've gone too far. Give yourself enough time to recuperate between exercise sessions so you don't overwork or strain your muscles. Only you know exactly what you are feeling, so monitor your abilities wisely.

Note: If you have multiple sclerosis, any exercise can cause problems if you overheat your muscles.

Before you start, it is important to have a sense of your range of motion (ROM), which can help you prevent injuries. For example, if you have cervical vertebrae concerns and shouldn't move your head in extreme positions, modify the exercises that involve the neck.

To assess your "active" ROM—which is the range through which you can move your joints using their own muscle power — observe your movements. Start from the neck and systematically work your way down to the toes, watching for the threshold of pain and any abnormal movements. Assessing your ROM potential will also help you gauge your improvement over time.

Purpose

Chi Kung exercises can offer a variety of benefits:

- Increase or maintain joint function
- Stretch and strengthen muscles
- Mobilize nerves by freeing the tissue around the nerve
- Stabilize regions of the spinal column
- Stimulate the action of the lymph system
- Increase circulation.

In addition to improving your physical health, these exercises can also ease stress and enhance your overall sense of well-being.

How to use this booklet

Each exercise page has specific information. The upper right-hand section of the page describes the role of the exercise, and may include the principal affected meridians (see resource list), respective organs, and physiological areas of the body, any precautions, and modifications.

All exercises can be done from a seated position.

Along with the written description of the exercise is a corresponding column to its left indicating the breathing technique for each step. In most cases, there are photos that correspond to the steps to offer a visual reference.

It is hard to learn any type of movement from a book. We've tried to make the booklet simple and easy to follow, but give yourself time to learn. At the beginning, remember to visit the soft side of your pain, stretch from the inside out, and don't push yourself too much.

You can repeat a specific Chi Kung exercise one to three times, whatever is most comfortable. If repetitive movement aggravates a condition, perform each exercise once. Then, if you feel you can do more, repeat the entire set of exercises again.

What you will need

You'll need very little equipment for these Chi Kung exercises:

1. A stable chair without arms. Make sure that it is a good height for your legs. You should be able to rest your feet completely flat on the floor, with your knees bent at no less than a 90 degree angle.
2. Have a music stand or something to set your booklet on to keep it visible and handy.
3. Enough space around you so that you can extend your arms out to the sides and in front of you.

How to start

1. Don't eat a heavy meal just before you exercise: allow at least 40 minutes to an hour after your meal. If you practice in the morning before breakfast, have some warm water and a piece of toast before you start to do the CK exercises.
2. Set aside at least 20 minutes. Turn off your phone, close the door and dedicate this time to your health.
3. Put on comfortable, loose clothing like sweats.
4. Find a place that will be private. (If you do not have a private space, ask for some quiet time in a place where you won't be interrupted for the next 20 minutes.)
5. If you'd like, turn on some relaxing or flowing music while you exercise.
6. Open a window and open the drapes. Make sure the room has good ventilation.
7. Clip the booklet open at the appropriate page and set it on the stand at a comfortable distance, at least an arm's distance away.
8. Read the instructions and begin moving!

Exercise 1 Exercises 1 through 9 are for the lymphatic system.

LOOSENING THE NECK

Role of the exercise: This exercise loosens the cervical spinal muscles.

Precaution: Do not use force. If you have serious neck or cervical spinal-related injuries, visit the soft side of your pain or use the following modification.

Modification: Use your eyes. Instead of bending or rotating your head, move your eyes in the direction indicated for the head movement.

Unless otherwise noted, all breathing in this section is in and out through the nose. Inhale as if you are inhaling the essence of a flower, filling the body with vital energy. Exhale to relax and release your tensions. If you find it difficult to inhale or exhale at any point during a step in an exercise, breathe naturally. Do not hold your breath nor completely fill or empty your lungs.

Breathing:	Description:
Inhale/exhale	1. Rest your head forward.
Inhale/exhale	2. Look up at the ceiling.
Inhale/exhale	3. Rest your head right.
Inhale/exhale	4. Rest your head left.
Inhale/exhale	5. Center your head then turn your head to the right.
Inhale/exhale	6. Turn your head to the left.
Inhale/exhale	7. Return to beginning posture.



Exercise 2

BEND AT THE WAIST

Role of the exercise: This exercise mobilizes the sciatic nerve and loosens the sacroiliac joints and lumbar para spinal muscles.

Precaution: Do not over stretch. Only bend to your comfort zone. You do not need to touch your toes.

Modification: If you cannot bend, extend your arms and stretch your fingers toward your knees.

Breathing:

Description:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Inhale | 1. Shift your weight to the left and turn your right foot out. |
| Exhale | 2. Bend forward on the right side, keeping your weight on the left foot. Let your head hang. |
| Inhale | 3. Slowly roll your body up until you are upright (your head is upright last). |
| Exhale | 4. Turn in your right foot and equalize your weight—letting your arms hang at your sides. Check to see if your shoulders are relaxed. Flex your knees and let your arms float out to the sides, slightly opening the shoulders and extending your fingers.* |
| Breathe naturally | 5. Return to the starting posture. Repeat on the other side. You can do this set 1-3 times. |

*When opening the shoulders in step 4 of this exercise, imagine that you are supporting eggs under your armpits to avoid using too much muscle force.



Exercise 3

CIRCLING THE ARMS #1

Role of the exercise: This exercise loosens the shoulders and stretches the arms.

Precaution: Do not over stretch. If you have limited extension of the arms in attempting to circle or stretch them above your head, follow the modification below.

Modification: If you have limited extension of the arms in attempting to circle or stretch them above your head, make your extension more in front of the body and make your circle smaller.

Breathing:

Description:

Breathe naturally

1. Cross your wrists. This is done by overlapping your wrists.

Inhale

2. Extend your arms out in front of you, with the wrists crossed, and lift them above your head. Separate them out to the sides, palms facing up, and about shoulder height.

Exhale

3. Slightly flex your knees and make a round shape with your arms, as if they are around a tree, finger tips pointing at each other, palms facing your chest about one foot away. Check to see if your shoulders are relaxed.

Inhale

4. Straighten your legs without locking them and rotate your palms down and out, extend out and raise the arms above your head, with your palms up and fingers pointing in.

Exhale

5. Slowly let your arms float down in front, elbows bent, until waist height. Repeat 1-3 times.



Exercise 4

LIFT THE FOOT ("BALANCING")

Role of the exercise: This exercise strengthens the abdominal muscles, stabilizes the lumbar region and improves balance.

Precaution: Do not lift the foot too high. If you have difficulty balancing while lifting the foot, use the modification below.

Modification:

If you have difficulty balancing while lifting the foot, touch the back of a chair for support.

Breathing: Breathe naturally

Description:

1. With the weight on your left, turn slightly to your right and lift your right foot about 2" off the ground for about 5 seconds, then place it down.
2. Shift to the right, turn slightly to the left and lift your left foot about 2" off the ground for about 5 seconds, then place it down.
3. Repeat 1-3 sets.



Exercise 5

SWINGING THE ARMS

Role of the exercise: This exercise continues loosening the shoulders and also loosens the arm joints and the thoracic and lumbar spine muscles.

Precaution: Do not over turn. If you have limited turning mobility of your spine, use the modification below.

Modification: If you have limited turning mobility of your spine, touch your left thigh with your right hand, and your left buttock with the back of your left hand, and so on.

Breathing: Breathe naturally throughout exercise.

- Description:**
1. Start by gently turning your waist right and left (six sets), letting your arms hang loose.
 2. Shift your weight to the left, turn to the right and pivot on the heel of your right foot, simultaneously swinging your left hand to your right shoulder and the back of your right hand swings to the left side of your back.
 3. Continue by turning in your right foot, shift to the right and turn to the left, pivoting on your left heel. Simultaneously swing your right hand to your left shoulder and the back of your left hand to the right side of your back.
 4. Repeat for five more sets at a moderate speed.
 5. Return to the starting position.

Exercise 7



Exercise 6

ROLLING THE SHOULDERS / OPENING THE STERNUM AND BACK

Breathing: Breathe naturally throughout exercise.

- Description:**
1. Roll your shoulders back three times.
 2. Roll your shoulders forward three times.
 3. Shake them out and let your arms hang for a moment.

Exercise 7

OPENING THE STERNUM AND BACK

Breathing:

Description:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Inhale | 1. Fold your fingers in front of you, rotate your palms down and out, extend your arms straight out in front, and fill your back with breath. |
| Exhale | 2. Relax your chest and unfold your fingers. |
| Inhale | 3. Fold your fingers behind you, bring your shoulders back, lift your chest slightly, and fill your chest with breath. |
| Breathe naturally | 4. Unfold your fingers and relax your back. |

Exercise 8

ROTATE THE FOOT

Breathing: Breathe naturally throughout exercise.

- Description:**
1. Turn your left foot out to a 45 degree angle and place the weight on it. Lift your right foot about 3 inches off the ground and make ten circles with your toes in one direction and then ten circles in the other direction. Then place the foot down.
 2. Turn your right foot out to a 45 degree angle and place the weight on it. Lift your left foot about 3 inches off the ground and make ten circles with your toes in one direction and then ten circles in the other direction. Then place the foot down.

Exercise 9

WARM THE KNEES

Role of the exercise: This exercise brings warmth to and soothes the knee joint.

Modification: If you have difficulty reaching your knees, sit in a chair and lightly tap your knees with spread fingertips ten to twenty times. If you cannot reach your knees, use imagery, and imagine warmth around your knees.

Breathing: Breathe naturally

- Description:**
1. Rub your hands together for a while (about 15 sec.)
 2. Place your palms on your right knee for a moment, then make circles on the knee, front and back, inside and out.
 3. Repeat for the left knee.

Exercises 10-14

In addition to muscles and nerves, the following are also specific to meridians (energy pathways) used in acupuncture and acupressure and the corresponding organs.



Exercise 10

BOW AND ARROW

Role of the exercise: This exercise stretches the pectorals and the forearm muscles, in addition to mobilizing the median nerve. As it relates to the meridians and organs, this CK exercise is for the lungs and large intestine.

Precaution: Do not over stretch. If you have limited shoulder range and extension of your arms, do not try to raise your elbow as high as your shoulder and extend your arm out to the side of your body. Follow the modification below.

Modification: If you have limited shoulder range and extension of your arms, lift the elbow in front of the body and to a lesser degree as you extend your other arm out in front of the body to your potential.

Breathing:

Description:

Breathe naturally

1. Make two light fists and place them, mouth of the fist up, in front of your sternum.

Inhale

2. Straighten your legs (without locking the knees), make an L with your left thumb and first finger, pointing the first finger upward. Extend and stretch your left arm out to your left side (keep the first finger pointing upward) and look in that direction. Simultaneously, lift your right elbow up on the right side of your body as high as the right shoulder (keep the mouth of the fist facing up), and slightly lift your chest. Your shoulders should remain as relaxed as possible.

Exhale

3. Flex your knees, bring your hands back to position 1 as you relax your chest, shoulders and back.

4. Repeat the exercise on the other side, this time with the right hand making the L and the left elbow raising. You can continue to repeat the sequence for as many as three sets.



Exercise 11

CIRCLE THE ARMS #2

Role of the exercise: This exercise loosens the shoulders and is a stretch for the arm's latissimus dorsi muscle. As it relates to the meridians and organs, this exercise is for the small intestine and the heart.

Precaution: Do not over stretch. If you have limited extension of the arms in attempting to circle or stretch them above your head, follow the modification below.

Modification: If you have limited extension of the arms in attempting to circle or stretch them above your head, make your extension in front of the body and make your circle smaller.

Breathing:	Description:
Breathe naturally	1. Fold your fingers together at sternum height with the palms facing your body.
Inhale	2. Moving your hands downward - then outward, rotate your palms down and out and extend your arms up above your head (keeping the fingers folded).
Exhale	3. Release your fingers, let your arms float out to the side and circle them back to step 1.
Breathe naturally	4. Return to the beginning posture.
	Repeat 1-3 times.



Exercise 12

BEND FORWARD/LOOK UP

Role of the exercise: This exercise mobilizes the sciatic nerve, loosens the sacroiliac joints, and counter-bends the lumbar para spinal muscles. As it relates to meridians and organs, this CK exercise is for the kidneys, spleen, liver, stomach, gall bladder and bladder.

Precaution: Do not over stretch. Only bend to your comfort zone. If you cannot touch your toes or bend back, use the modification below.

Modification: If you cannot touch your toes, touch your thighs, knees or shins. If bending is out of your range, from the starting position, extend your arms and stretch your fingers toward your toes. If you cannot bend back, use your eyes to look up.

Breathing:	Description:
Inhale	1. Place the palms of your hands on either side of your lower abdominal area.
Exhale	2. Using very light pressure, run your palms down the inside of your legs, down to your ankles, out to your big toe, around the toes to your heels.
Inhale	3. As you slowly straighten, run your palms up the outside and back of your legs, over your buttocks, to your lower back area.
Exhale	4. Supporting your lower back with a light pressure, look up or lean back slightly.
Inhale	5. Bring your palms over the hip joint back to step 1.
Breathe naturally	



Exercise 13

SNAKE CREEPS DOWN / BIRDS FLY AWAY AND RETURN TO THE FOREST

Role of the exercise: To mobilize the sciatic nerve, loosens the sacroiliac joints, and stretch the teres major and minor muscles. Principle meridian and organ - spleen.

Modification: If touching your toe is out of your comfort range, extend your arm and stretch your fingers down the inside of the leg as far as comfortable. If you cannot bring your hand to your back, bring it to the outer side of your thigh or buttocks.

Breathing:

Description:

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Breathe naturally | 1. Turn your right foot out to a 45 degree angle. Move your left foot just to the outside of your right heel and forward. |
| Inhale | 2. Place the back of your left hand on the inside of your left thigh with the fingers pointing down the leg. |
| Exhale | 3. Bend forward, moving your left hand down the inside of the leg all the way to the big toe (100% of your weight on the right foot). |
| Inhale | 4. As you straighten your body, keep your arm extended out until the fingers point up. |
| Exhale | 5. Make a beak with your left hand, and bring it down past your nose, under your armpit, and around to your lower back. |
| Inhale | 6. Keeping your left hand at your back, switch the position of your feet and bring the back of your right hand to your right inner thigh. |

Repeat steps 3-5 with the right hand.



Exercise 14

LOOKING FOR THE SNAKE IN THE GRASS

Role of the exercise: This exercise mobilizes the thoracic spine, loosens the sacroiliac joints, and stretches the teres major and minor muscles. As it relates to the meridians, this CK exercise is primarily for the bladder, kidneys and the source points of the small intestine, heart, pericardium, triple heater, large intestine and lung located around the wrists.

Precaution: Do not over stretch. Only bend to your comfort zone. If you cannot bend forward, use the modification below.

Modification: If you cannot bend from the starting position, extend your arm forward. If you cannot bring your hand to your back, bring it to the outer side of your thigh or buttocks.

Breathing:

Description:

- | | |
|--------|---|
| Inhale | 1. Starting from the previous final posture, switch your feet so the left foot is forward. |
| Exhale | 2. Bend your waist so that your torso is parallel to the ground and over your right thigh. Simultaneously, extend your left arm out parallel to the ground (keeping your right hand at your back), with your left palm facing out and the fingers spread. |
| | 3. Move your torso to the left while your left arm circles around to the left. When your arm is straight out to your side, begin making a beak with your fingers, straighten up, and bring the beak to your lower back area. |
| Inhale | 4. Switch feet. |
| Exhale | 5. Repeat steps 2-3 with the right foot and arm forward. |

RESOURCES

The Anatomy Coloring Book

Wynn Kapit and Lawrence M. Elson

Anatomy of Movement

Blandine C. Germain

Intermediate and Advanced Acupressure Course Booklet

Distributed by the Acupressure Institute, Berkeley, CA

Relaxation and Visualization Audio Tape

Distributed by Master Wasentha Young

Wild Goose Chi Kung Video

Performed and distributed by Master Wasentha Young

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PRINCIPLE MUSCLE AND JOINTS AFFECTED BY CK EXERCISES

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