

# The Five Element Qigong Practice

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Welcome to the Five Element Qigong Practice, a powerful method rooted in the Chinese five elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water. This practice is designed to promote balance and well-being by harmonizing these elements within us.

## 1. First Element: Wood

\*Let's begin with wood, as it starts the five-element cycle and associates with spring. Kindness is the quality of wood in balance and releasing out an emotion such as anger or frustration.

Begin by finding your center, standing with your feet about hip-width apart. As you step them together, feel the grounding energy of the earth beneath you. Wood begins by tracing the inner lines of the thighs with the fingers as you inhale, a gentle, flowing movement. Exhale, press the heels of the hands down through the organs, then float the arms up as you breathe in, a graceful, upward motion. Exhale, feet together, hands down, returning to your starting position with a sense of calm and balance.

Start again, fingers tracing the liver, Meridian. Exhale and press down, arms float up, feet together, step together. Exhale and repeat this, continuing just with the breath and the movement, and allow the hands to continue to move alongside the organs of the gallbladder in the liver, especially when they come into contact along the sides of the waist. Complete this by taking the feet apart, wide as the hips or wider, and then drawing the hands out and into a clearing just to release anything that you might want to let go of your hands floating down.

Repeat.

## 2. Second Element: Fire

\* The fire element is associated with summer and the heart and its many helpers of the heart protector, the pericardium, and the small intestine.

Step to the side. The inner edges of the pinkies come together overhead, and then the backs of the hands draw down. Inhale, the arms out to the side. Exhale, step the feet back together again. Step with the other foot. Inhale, the inner edges of the pinkies, come up. Exhale, the backs of the hands and the fingers point down. Inhale, the arms out to the side and exhale the feet step together.

Repeat.

### **3. Third Element: Earth**

\*Earth is associated with the period of late summer. The earth represents a sense of balance, of steadiness, of really holding everything together. Sometimes it's considered the very center of all the five elements.

Step out to the left. The arms come up overhead, and then they slide around, twisting in the other direction. The top arm sweeps down towards the earth and out to the side. Then you finish with the arms down and feet together. Sweep out to the right. Lift the hands towards the ceiling, then the front arm, palm up, and the back hand, palm down. The top arm sweeps down, arms out, and you exhale the feet together.

Repeat.

### **4. Fourth Element: Metal**

\*Metal element is associated with the autumn season. Autumn is a time of year when things start to let go. The earth quiets down. The leaves fall off of trees, and the metal element is really associated with that process of thinning back, letting go, starting to slow down.

Step to the side. The arms come up overhead. Then exhale. The arms come from behind the lungs and press forward with the palms. Inhale, the palms soft. Exhale, let them down. Step to the other side. Inhale. You sweep the arms out overhead, and then from behind the lungs you press forward with the palms, sitting the hips down a bit. Inhale them up. Exhale down.

Repeat.

### **5. Fifth Element: Water**

\* Water is associated with the season of winter, and with the organs of the kidneys and the urinary bladder. The kidneys have a lot to do with our energy and how we use our energy.

With the feet together you begin by stepping the left foot out. The arms sweep back behind you as though you're doing a back bend. The arms then come overhead and fold down. The fingers trace along the backs of your legs, which is the urinary bladder Meridian. Make fists and lightly tap the kidneys, then exhale and trace back down along the backs of the legs, then inside the inner legs to the groin. Exhale the feet together. Inhale, step out with the other foot, and open the arms up. Exhale, folding down again. The fingers trace along the backs of the legs. Then, you tap on and exhale lightly to the kidneys. Take a breath in. Exhale, fold, and trace along the backs of the legs with the fingers, then inhale along the inner legs to the groin. Exhale, release, feet together.

Repeat.