

5 Elements QiGong

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Exercise 1 – WOOD

The wood exercise evokes the picture of a tree. Beginning with the hands at ground level, the tree grows, building a trunk, forming leaves, branches and a crown. Leaves are falling to both sides in autumn, when its energy goes back down. Over the winter, the tree gathers new energy while at the same time being deeply rooted in the earth. Then the cycle repeats itself with the tree growing stronger each year.

Instruction Exercise 1 – Element Wood

1. Begin with feet parallel and about shoulder width apart, the arms are slightly opened sideways.
2. Sinking downwards, bend the knees, so that the movement stays relaxed and fluffy, the hands move in front of the body, fingertips pointing downwards, the backs of the hands touch each other.
3. The body straightens up, the hands follow this movement, turning at the level of the middle Dantian (i.e. at breast level). The finger tips now point upwards and turn a second time at the level of the upper Dantian (i.e. at head level), palms now touching each other, and move high above the head.
4. The arms open sideways and sink, shoulders and elbows relax; at shoulder level the palms are turned downwards.

Exercise 2 – FIRE

The fire exercise imitates a burning fire in slow motion. – Flames are burning in the wind, at times growing larger before returning to their origin, flickering.

Instructions Exercise 2 – Element Fire

1. Stand with feet parallel, lift your hands in front of the body to breast level, arms rounded.
2. Turn the body leftwards with the foot, and open the hands shoulder wide with a forward pushing movement.
3. Take the whole movement back, move the arms back into the starting position and turn the foot back into parallel stance.
4. Turn the body leftwards with the foot, and open the hands shoulder wide with a forward pushing movement.
5. Take the whole movement back, move the arms back into the starting position and turn the foot back into parallel stance.
6. Push forwards again and open your arms to the sides, then let them sink sideways.

Exercise 3 – EARTH

The earth exercise focuses on connection to the ground. The relatively small movements should thus be measured and centered, as if slowly lifting something precious and then returning it gently to the earth, smoothing out the surface in the end.

Instructions Exercise 3 – Element Earth

1. In parallel stance, cross the arms while letting them hang downwards, then lift the crossed arms to stomach level.
2. Turn hands, the upper palm now lays on the back of the lower hand; then let the hands sink and open up sideways.

Repeat with crossing the hands the other way round.

Exercise 4 – METAL

The metal exercise reminds of the high density of metal compared to the other two solid elements earth and wood. A great amount of substance – symbolized by the big opening movement – is pulled together and concentrated in a small space.

Instructions Exercise 4 – Element Metal

1. Lift the arms diagonally in front of the left side of the body, the backs of the hands facing each other, until way above the head level, the right heel is also lifted.
2. Let the hands sink down in front of the middle line of the body in a “cutting” movement, palms facing each other, while shifting the weight back to the middle.
3. Lift the arms diagonally in front of the right side of the body, the backs of the hands facing each other, until way above the head level, the left heel is also lifted.
4. Let the hands sink down in front of the middle line of the body in a “cutting” movement, palms facing each other, while shifting the weight back to the middle.

Exercise 5 – WATER

The water exercise challenges you to be like water. Visualize a softly bubbling spring, a small playful stream, a big heavy river or the waves of the ocean ceaselessly washing the shores.

Instructions Exercise 5 – Element Water

1. While the body is sinking the arms effortlessly move upwards in a soft, flowing movement.
2. While the body straightens up again, the arms sink downwards.