

Benefits of Qigong

It is estimated that in China 200 million people practice qigong everyday. It is also one of the most broadly applicable systems of self-care in the world, which can be used by the healthy as well as the severely ill. Qigong combines movement, meditation, and breath regulation to enhance the flow of vital energy in the body, improve blood circulation, and enhance immune function.

Qigong (also referred to as chi-kung) is an ancient Chinese exercise that stimulates and balances the flow of qi (vital life energy), along the acupuncture meridians (energy pathways). Like acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine, the qigong tradition emphasizes the importance of teaching the patient how to remain well. In China, the various methods of qigong form the nucleus of a national self-care system of health maintenance and personal development. Qigong cultivates inner strength, calms the mind, and restores the body to its natural state of health by maintaining the optimum functioning of the body's self-regulating systems.

Recent medical studies in both China and the United States show that qigong can reduce stress, increase circulation, and provide resistance to disease. Today, most hospitals in China include qigong as part of their health care programs, with certain hospitals devoted solely to its study and practice. Thousands of qigong institutes also provide qigong instruction, while major centers in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzho train qigong teachers and carry out government-supported research.

Qigong can help resolve digestive problems, asthma, arthritis, insomnia, pain, depression, and anxiety, as well as cancer, coronary heart disease, and cases of HIV/AIDS. According to Wong Chongxing, M.D., Director of Research at the Rei Jin Hospital in Shanghai, China, several thousand hypertensive patients had been instructed in basic qigong exercises and experienced dramatic improvement. His studies suggest that daily qigong practice lowers blood pressure, pulse rates, metabolic rates, and oxygen demand. David Eisenberg, M.D., a clinical research fellow at Harvard Medical School, says these studies also indicate that qigong triggers the body's relaxation response by reducing the level of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that controls neurological activity.

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