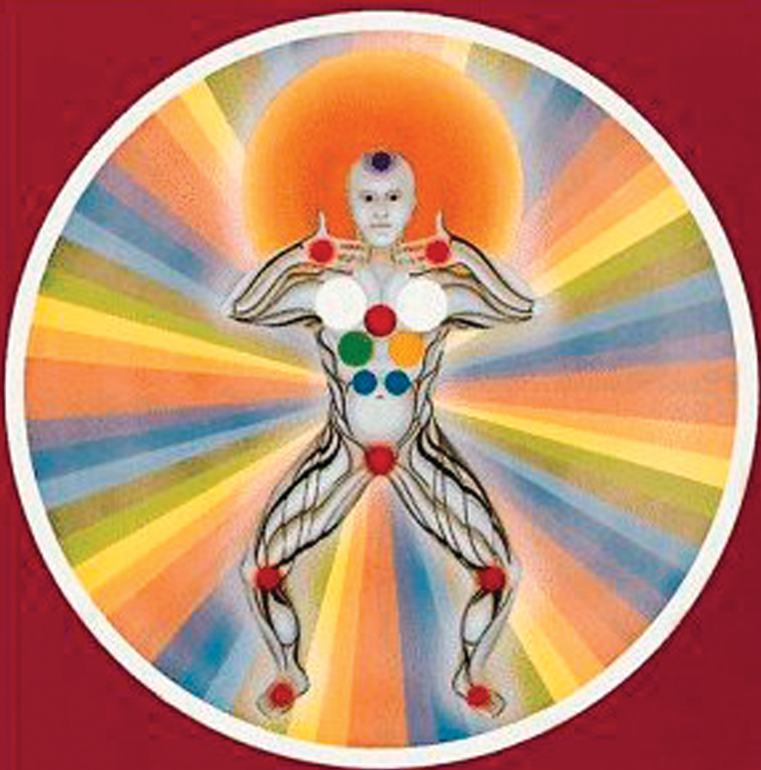


IRON SHIRT CHI KUNG I

*Once a Martial Art, Now the Practice
that Strengthens the Internal Organs,
Roots Oneself Solidly, and Unifies
Physical, Mental and Spiritual Health*

MANTAK CHIA



Iron Shirt Chi Kung I

***Once a Martial Art, Now the Practice
that strengthens the Internal Or-
gans, Roots Oneself Solidly, and
unifies Physical, Mental and Spiri-
tual Health***

Mantak Chia

Edited by:

Judith Stein

Editor: Judith Stein

Contributing Writers: Chuck Soupios, Michael Winn,
Mackenzie Stewart, Valerie Meszaros

Illustrator: Juan Li

Cartoonist: Don Wilson

Cover Illustrator: Ivan Salgado

Graphics: Max Chia

Revised Design and Production: Saniem Chaisarn,
Siriporn Chaimongkol

Revised Editing: Jean Chilton

Copyright © 1986 Mantak and Maneewan Chia

Universal Tao Centeer

274/1 Moo 7, Luang Nua,
Doi Saket, Chiang Mai, 50220 Thailand
Fax (66) (53) 495-853
Email: universaltao@universal-tao.com

ISBN: 0-935621-02-4

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 85-52427

Manufactured in Thailand
Fourteenth Printing, 2002

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission from the author except for brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

I have come upon Master Chia's Taoist practice in my old age and find it the most satisfying and enriching practice of all those I have encountered in a long life of seeking and practicing.

Felix Morrow, Senior Publisher

Contents

Acknowledgments.....	vii
About of Author	viii
How to use this Book	xi
Words of Caution.....	xii

1.General Introduction..... 1

A. Universal Tao System and Iron Shirt Chi Kung.....	1
1. Iron Shirt Chi Kung, an Ancient Kung Fu Practice.....	5
a. Bolin Period (the Time of Kung Fu Fighters).....	5
b. Iron Shirt Helps to Perfect Mental Faculties	6
c. Age of Gunpowder.....	6
2. Creating Chi (Life-Force) Pressure.....	7
a. Breath of Life, Chi Pressure	7
b. Origin of Iron Shirt Breathing	8
B. Why Put on Your Iron Shirt?.....	9
1. Internal Management	9
a. Chi, the Fasciae Organs and Bones.....	10
(1) Fasciae	10
(2) Iron Shirt Strengthens and Protects the Organs.....	12
(3) Burn Out Fat and Store Chi in the Organs.....	14
(4) Structure of the Bones.....	14
b. Chi Pressure and Meditation Increases Circulation while Reducing the Heart's work.....	15
c. Preventing Energy Leakage	16
2. Iron Shirt Prolongs Life	18
3. Summary of the Benefits of Iron Shirt Chi Kung Training	19
C. Iron Shirt Chi Kung Exercises	20
D. Three Levels of Iron Shirt	22

2. Initial Preparations

A. Iron Shirt Breathing and Relaxation	23
1. Abdominal and Reverse Breathing (Energizer Breathing)	23
2. Pelvic and Urogenital Diaphragms.....	28

3. Iron Shirt Packing Process Breathing (Chi Pressure) ..	30
4. Points to Remember in Practicing the Breathing Exercises	37
5. Preliminary Exercises.....	37
a. Check the Diaphragm	37
b. Massage the Diaphragm	37
c. Abdominal Breathing in a Lying Position.....	38
d. Abdominal Breathing on a Slant Board.....	39
e. Strengthening though Counter Pressure.....	39
f. Abdominal Breathing in a Standing Position.....	40
g. Getting Energy to the Abdomen by Training the Mind to Direct It	43
h. Practice—Development of Iron Shirt Protection	43
B. Summary of Iron Shirt Breathing.....	45
1. Exercises to Improve Abdominal Breathing.....	45
2. Iron Shirt Chi Kung Packing Process Breathing	46
a. Abdominal Breathing	46
b. Lower the Diaphragm	46
c. Reverse Abdominal Breathing	46
d. Slightly Contract the Pelvic and Urogenital Diaphragm	46
e. Packing Process Breathing.....	47
f. Pack the Organs with Chi	47
g. Exhale and Relax	47
C. Cranial, Respiratory and Sacral Pump Functions.....	47
1. Sacral Pump.....	47
2. Cranial Pump	48
D. Microcosmic Orbit Meditation.....	50
1. Circulate Your Chi in the Microcosmic Orbit.....	50
2. Importance of the Microcosmic Orbit.....	52
E. Perineum Power	53
1. Anus is Connected to Organ Energy.....	53
2. Anus Region is Divided into Five Parts	53
F. Precautions	59
3. Practice of Postures.....	60
I. Developing the Iron Shirt Horse Stance Using a Wall.....	60
A. Sequence of Practice in Using a Wall to Develop the Iron Shirt Horse Stance.....	61

1. Distance between Feet.....	61
2. Foot Alignment	62
3. Distance from the Wall	63
4. Rooting with the Feet	63
5. Knees	63
6. Pelvis	63
7. Pelvic Tilt	63
8. Middle Back	64
9. Head/Neck/UpperBack	64
10. T-11 Thrust	64
11. Shoulders	65
12. Head/Neck (C-7, Base of the Skull)	66
13. "Locking" the Structure	66
B. Summary of Practice for Using a Wall to Develop Iron Shirt Horse Stance Basic Alignment.....	68
II. Starting Position for all Exercises:	
Embracing the Tree.....	69
A. Embracing the Tree (Explanation of Procedure).....	69
1. Correct Stance	69
2. Rooting of the Feet	72
3. Elongation of the Spine	77
4. Three Chi Circles	79
5. Eyes Can Help to Direct Chi	90
6. Begin with Energizer Breathing (Abdominal and Reverse Breathing)	92
7. First Stage	93
8. Second Stage	107
9. Third Stage	114
10. Bone Breathing Process	128
11. Power Exercise.....	132
B. Embracing The Tree Stance (practical Procedure).....	137
1. Exercise.....	137
C. Summary of Embracing the Tree.....	
142	
III. Rooting, Collecting Chi Energy	
Illustrations of Postures.....	144

A. Rooting Practice	144
1. Stance	146
2. Chi Belt	147
3. Principle of Rooting.....	147
4. Practice of Rooting.....	149
5. Strengthening the Sacral Pump.....	150
6. Strengthening T-11	150
7. Strengthening G-7.....	152
8. Strengthening the Cranial Pump.....	153
9. Building Up Rootedness.....	155
B. Collecting Chi Energy after Practice.....	162
1. Preventing Side Effects.....	162
2. Sitting and Standing Positions for Collecting Energy.	163
C. Illustrations of Postures.....	164
1. Holding the Golden Urn	164
2. Summary of Holding the Golden Urn.....	173
3. Golden Turtle and the Water Buffalo	174
4. Summaries of the Golden Turtle and the Water Buffalo.....	186
5. Golden Phoenix Washes its Feathers.....	186
6. Summary of the Golden Phoenix Washes its Feathers.....	196
7. Iron Bridge	197
8. Summary of the Iron Bridge.....	202
9. Iron Bar.....	205
10. Summary of the Iron Bar.....	208
 4. Breath Alignment by Terry Goss	 209
A. Structural Alignment and Taoist Yoga.....	209
B. Applying Structural Alignment Principles to Iron Shirt Chi Kung Practice.....	210
1. Relaxation	211
2. Structural Training Position Against Wall.....	215
3. How to Practice Spinal Elongation Breathing.....	219
4. Head/Neck Alignment as the Basis for Spinal Elongation and Upright Structure.....	220
5. Door Hanging.....	223
6. The Psoas Muscles.....	225
7. Standing Pelvic Alignment.....	228

8. Sitting Posture.....	228
9. Shoulder Widening Exercise.....	229
10. Backbend.....	231
11. Warrior Poses 1 and 2.....	234
5. Body Construction and Iron Shirt.....	240
I. Iron Shirt and Chiropractic by Michael Posner.....	240
II. Construction of Fasciae, the Relationship of Fasciae to Bones, Muscles and Tendons, and Muscle-Tendon Meridians.	245
A. Fasciae: Protectors of Your Vital Organs.....	245
1. Fasciae Exist in Three Layers.....	247
2. Iron Shirt Is Concerned with the Fasciae of the Whole Body.....	248
B. Cleansing the Marrow/Changing the Tendons.....	251
1. "Cleansing the Bone Marrow".....	251
2. "Changing the Tendons".....	252
C. Harmony of Fasciae, Tendon and Chi.....	253
D. Muscle-Tendon Meridians.....	255
1. Lung Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	256
2. Large Intestine Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	257
3. Stomach Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	258
4. Spleen Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	259
5. Heart Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	260
6. Small Intestine Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	261
7. Bladder Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	262
8. Kidney Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	262
9. Pericardium Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	264
10. Triple Warmer Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	265
11. Gall Bladder Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	266
12. Liver Muscle-Tendon Meridian.....	267
6. Developing a Daily Routine.....	269
7. Iron Shirt Chi Kung Experience.....	272
A. Testimonials from Advanced Iron Shirt Students.....	272
B. Interview of Iron Shirt Practitioner Michael Winn conducted by John Zielinsky, Instructor.....	273
C. Personal Experiences of Students.....	277
Universal Tao System Overview	Overview 1-64

About the Author



Mantak Chia

Master Mantak Chia

Master Mantak Chia is the creator of the Universal Tao System and is the director of the Universal Tao Center and Tao Garden Health Resort and Training Center in the beautiful northern countryside of Thailand. Since childhood he has been studying the Taoist approach to life. His mastery of this ancient knowledge, enhanced by his study of other disciplines, has resulted in the development of the Universal Tao System which is now being taught throughout the world.

Mantak Chia was born in Thailand to Chinese parents in 1944. When he was six years old, Buddhist monks taught him how to sit and “still the mind.” While still a grammar school student, he learned traditional Thai boxing. He was then taught Tai Chi Chuan by Master Lu, who soon introduced him to Aikido, Yoga and broader levels of Tai Chi.

Years later, when he was a student in Hong Kong excelling in track and field events, a senior classmate named Cheng Sue-Sue introduced him to his first esoteric teacher and Taoist Master, Master Yi Eng (I Yun). At this point, Master Chia began his studies of the Taoist way of life in earnest. He learned how to circulate energy through the Microcosmic Orbit and, through the practice of Fusion of the Five Elements, how to open the other Six Special Channels. As he studied Inner Alchemy further, he learned the Enlightenment of the Kan and Li, Sealing of the Five Senses, Congress of Heaven and Earth and Reunion of Heaven and Man. It was Master Yi Eng who authorized Master Chia to teach and heal.

When Mantak Chia was in his early twenties he studied with Master Meugi in Singapore, who taught him Kundalini, Taoist Yoga and the Buddha Palm. He was soon able to clear blockages to the flow of energy within his own body. He learned to pass the life force energy through his hands also, so that he could heal Master Meugi's patients. He then learned Chi Nei Tsang from Dr. Mui Yimwattana in Thailand.

A while later, he studied with Master Cheng Yao-Lun who taught him the Shao-Lin Method of Internal Power. He learned the closely guarded secret of the organs, glands and bone marrow exercise known as Bone Marrow Nei Kung and the exercise known as Strengthening and Renewal of the Tendons. Master Cheng Yao-Lun's system combined Thai boxing and Kung Fu. Master Chia also studied at this time with Master Pan Yu, whose system combined Taoist, Buddhist and Zen teachings. Master Pan Yu also taught him about the exchange of Yin and Yang power between men and women, and how to develop the Steel Body.

To understand the mechanisms behind healing energy better, Master Chia studied Western anatomy and medical science for two years. While pursuing his studies, he managed the Gestetner Company, a manufacturer of office equipment and became well acquainted with the technology of offset printing and copying machines.

Using his knowledge of Taoism, combined with the other disciplines, Master Chia began teaching the Universal Tao System. He eventually trained other Instructors to communicate this knowledge and he established the Natural Healing Center in Thailand. Five years later, he decided to move to New York, where in 1979, he opened the Universal Tao Center. During his years in America, Master Chia continued his studies in the Wu system of Tai Chi with Edward Yee in New York.

Since then, Master Chia has taught tens of thousands of students throughout the world. He has trained and certified over 1,200 instructors and practitioners from all over the world. Universal Tao Centers and Chi Nei Tsang Institutes have opened in many locations in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

In 1994, Master Chia moved back to Thailand, where he had begun construction of Tao Garden, the Universal Tao Training Center in Chiang Mai.

Master Chia is a warm, friendly and helpful man who views himself primarily as a teacher. He presents the Universal Tao System in a straightforward and practical manner, while always expanding his knowledge and approach to teaching. He uses a laptop computer for writing and is totally at ease with the latest computer technology.

Master Chia estimates that it will take thirty-five books to convey the full Universal Tao System. In June, 1990, at a dinner in San Francisco, Master Chia was honored by the International Congress of Chinese Medicine and Qi Gong (Chi Kung), who named him the Qi gong Master of the Year. He is the first recipient of this annual award.

In December, 2000, the Tao Garden Health Resort and Universal Tao Training Center was completed with two Meditation Halls, two open air Simple Chi Kung Pavilions, indoor Tai Chi, Tao Tao Yin and Chi Nei Tsang Hall, Tai Chi Natural Swimming Pool, Pakua Communications Center with a complete Taoist Library, Internal World Class Weight Lifting Hall and complete 8 Court Recreational Facilities.

In February 2002, the Immortal Tao practices were held at Tao Garden for the first time using the Darkness technology creating a complete environment for the higher level Taoist practices.

Master Mantak Chia has previously written and published these Universal Tao books:

Awaken Healing Energy of the Tao - 1983

Taoist Secrets of Love: Cultivating Male Sexual Energy

co-authored with Michael Winn - 1984.

Taoist Ways to Transform Stress into Vitality -1985

Chi Self-Massage: the Tao of Rejuvenation - 1986

Iron Shirt Chi Kung I - 1986

Healing Love Through the Tao: Cultivating Female Sexual Energy - 1986

Bone Marrow Nei Kung - 1989

Fusion of the Five Elements I - 1990

Chi Nei Tsang: Internal Organ Chi Massage - 1990

Awaken Healing Light of the Tao - 1993

The Inner Structure of Tai Chi co-authored with Juan Li - 1996

Multi-Orgasmic Man co-authored with Douglas Abrams
1996 - published by Harper Collins

Tao Yin - 1999

Chi Nei Tsang II - 2000

Multi-Orgasmic Couple co-authored with Douglas Abrams
2000 - published by Harper Collins

Cosmic Healing I - 2001

Cosmic Healing II co-authored with Dirk Oellibrandt - 2001

Door of All Wonders co-authored with Tao Haung - 2001

Sexual Reflexology co-authored with W. U. Wei - 2002

Elixir Chi Kung - 2002

Tan Tien Chi Kung - 2002

Many of the books above are available in the following foreign languages:

Arabic, Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Malaysian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Spanish, & Turkish editions are available from the Foreign Publishers listed in the Universal Tao Center Overview in the back of this book.

Acknowledgments

I thank foremost those Taoist Masters who were kind enough to share their knowledge with me, never imagining it would eventually be taught to Westerners. I acknowledge special thanks to Roberta Prada and Roderick Kettlewell for encouraging the production of this book, for their input on the original manuscript, and for their editing regarding technical procedures.

I thank the many contributors essential to the book's final form: the artist, Juan Li, for many hours spent drawing, making illustrations of the body's internal functions and for the artwork on the cover of the book; Terry Goss for his chapter on Breath Alignment which helps tremendously in the practice of Iron Shirt; Larry Short for sharing some of the Tibetan Nui Kung Exercises; Michael Brosnahan for helping to clarify the technical points of structure; Dr. Michael Posner for sharing his view of Chiropractic and Iron Shirt; Gunther Weil, Ph.D., Rylin Malone, and many of my students for their feedback; Jo Ann Cutreria, our secretary, for making so many contacts and working endlessly; Daniel Bobek for long hours at the computer; John-Robert Zielinski for setting up the new computer system and for his interview of Michael Winn; Valerie Meszaros for editing the book, organizing, typing, and revising it on the computer, and proofreading; Helen Stites for proofreading; Adam Sacks, our computer consultant, who assisted in solving computer problems as they arose during the final stages of production; Michael Winn for general editing, and Cathy Umphress for design and paste ups. Special thanks are extended to David Miller for overseeing design and production and to Felix Morrow for his valuable advice and help in editing and producing this book and for agreeing to be the publisher of Universal Tao Publications.

Without my son, Max, the book would have been academic; for his gifts, my gratitude and love.

Words of Caution

The practices described in this book have been used successfully for thousands of years by Taoists trained by personal instruction. Readers should not undertake the practice without receiving personal transmission and training from a certified instructor of the Universal Tao, since certain of these practices, if done improperly, may cause injury or result in health problems. This book is intended to supplement individual training by the Universal Tao and to serve as a reference guide for these practices. Anyone who undertakes these practices on the basis of this book alone, does so entirely at his or her own risk.

The meditations, practices and techniques described herein are **not** intended to be used as an alternative or substitute for professional medical treatment and care. If any readers are suffering from illnesses based on mental or emotional disorders, an appropriate professional health care practitioner or therapist should be consulted. Such problems should be corrected before you start training.

Neither the Universal Tao nor its staff and instructors can be responsible for the consequences of any practice or misuse of the information contained in this book. If the reader undertakes any exercise without strictly following the instructions, notes and warnings, the responsibility must lie solely with the reader.

This book does not attempt to give any medical diagnosis, treatment, prescription, or remedial recommendation in relation to any human disease, ailment, suffering or physical condition whatsoever.

The Universal Tao is not and cannot be responsible for the consequences of any practice or misuse of the information in this book. If the reader undertakes any exercise without strictly following the instructions, notes, and warnings, the responsibility must lie solely with the reader.

How to use this Book

In the last pages of this book the reader will find descriptions of the courses and workshops offered by our Universal Tao Centers. This material is also in effect, a comprehensive description of the whole Taoist System. All of my books together will be a composite of this Taoist world view. Each of my books is thus an exposition of one important part of this system. Each sets forth a method of healing and life-enhancement which can be studied and practiced by itself, if the reader so chooses. However, each of these methods implies the others and is best practiced in combination with the others.

The foundation of all practices in the Taoist System, the Micro-cosmic Orbit Meditation, is the way to circulate Chi energy throughout the body and is described in my book, *Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao*. This practice is followed by the meditations of the Inner Smile and the Six Healing Sounds, set forth in my book, *Taoist Ways to Transform Stress into Vitality*. All three meditations are emphasized throughout the Taoist System.

The practices of Iron Shirt Chi Kung are very powerful and therefore very effective. To insure that you carry them out properly, prepare yourself first by learning the Microcosmic Orbit Meditation, the Inner Smile and the Six Healing Sounds. These will enable you to identify and eliminate energy blockages that may occur in your Iron Shirt practice during the learning stages.

Second, learn information contained in the chapter in this book on body alignment.

Third, understand the rooting principles.

Fourth, learn the preliminary exercises until you are proficient at them and comfortable with them. This will give you the conditioning you need to proceed comfortably to the postures.

You can use the complete description of each posture during your learning. The shorter description of each posture is meant as a guide during your practice.

Lastly, we offer to you a suggested practice timetable, although it is not necessary for you to follow it exactly. Use it merely as a guideline for adjusting your own schedule. As you read the information provided in this book and become aware of concepts not contained in Western thought, you will deepen your understanding of the relevancy of these practices to your physical, emotional and spiritual advancement.

Mantak Chia

Chapter 1

General Introduction

A. Universal Tao System and Iron Shirt Chi Kung

In addition to the more popularly known martial arts disciplines of Kung Fu and Tai Chi the Universal Tao System includes health practices, healing arts, the development of a state of mindfulness, and the management of vital energy (Chi). The martial arts aspect of this training, the practice of Iron Shirt, develops a highly refined moral and spiritual awareness.

The goal of the Universal Tao System is to keep our physical bodies in good condition in the physical plane in order to build and store more Chi energy for further use in the higher level of the spiritual plane. (Fig. 1.1)

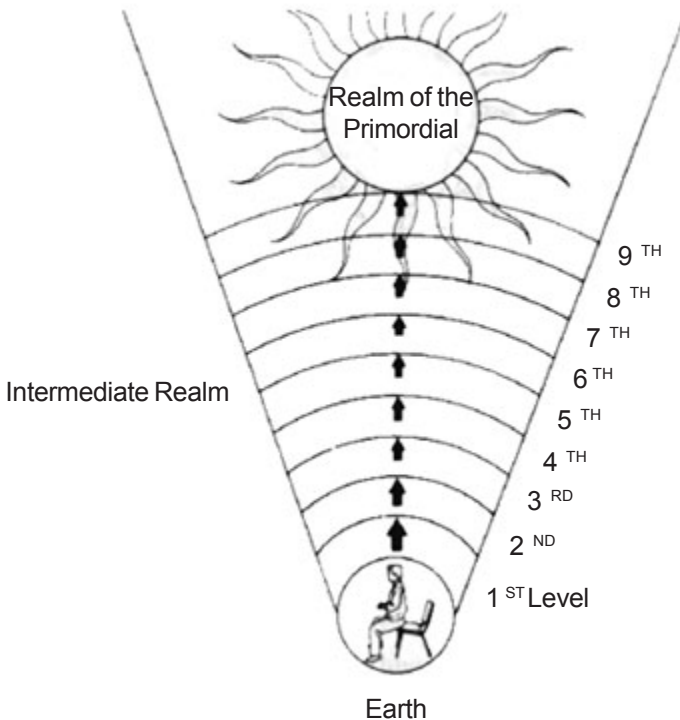


Fig. 1.1 Realm of the Primordial Tao

In the spiritual plane, the aim is to develop the immortal fetus. The immortal fetus is developed in two stages. The first stage is concerned with overcoming reincarnation. The next stage develops and educates the immortal fetus to become a full-grown immortal spirit.

Iron Shirt is one of the most important exercises of the physical plane because through its practice one learns rootedness to Mother Earth energy, a phenomenon intrinsic to the spiritual plane. (Fig. 1.2)

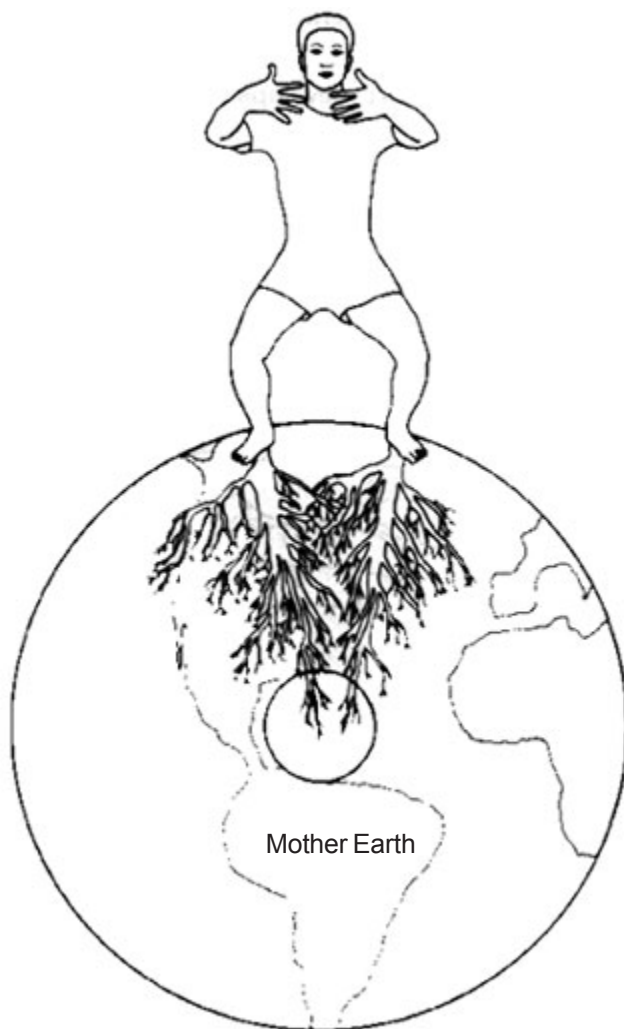


Fig. 1.2 Rootedness to Mother Earth Energy

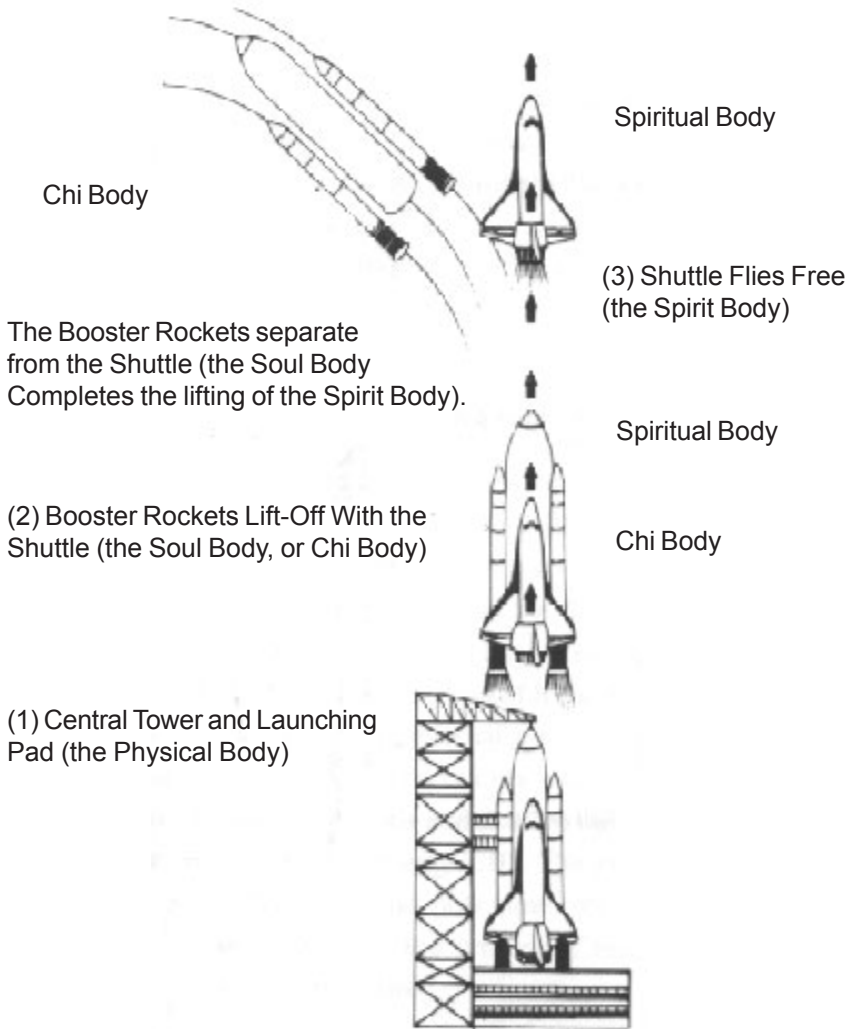


Fig. 1.3 *Launching of the Spiritual Body*

One may compare the foundation, or rootedness, of the physical body to an Earth Control Tower, vital to the travel of a space shuttle in space. (Fig. 1.3) To boost the space shuttle, the spirit, into space the Earth Control Tower requires a booster rocket, the soul or energy body, which is guided by an inner compass and computer, the pineal gland. The Earth Control Tower, in the form of our physical body developed during the practice of Iron Shirt, becomes a storage place for fuel: Chi (our life-force energy) and our creative or sexual,

energy. Here our fuel awaits transformation into another kind of energy: spiritual energy. As we learn how to develop an immortal spirit compass and computer by opening the pineal gland which will guide us back to Earth to complete the unfinished job of development here, we must maintain our foundation, or rootedness, to the Earth. (Fig. 1.4) Thus we are able to return to Earth, refuel and resume our space travel to our destination until, eventually, we are able to discard the earthly base entirely.

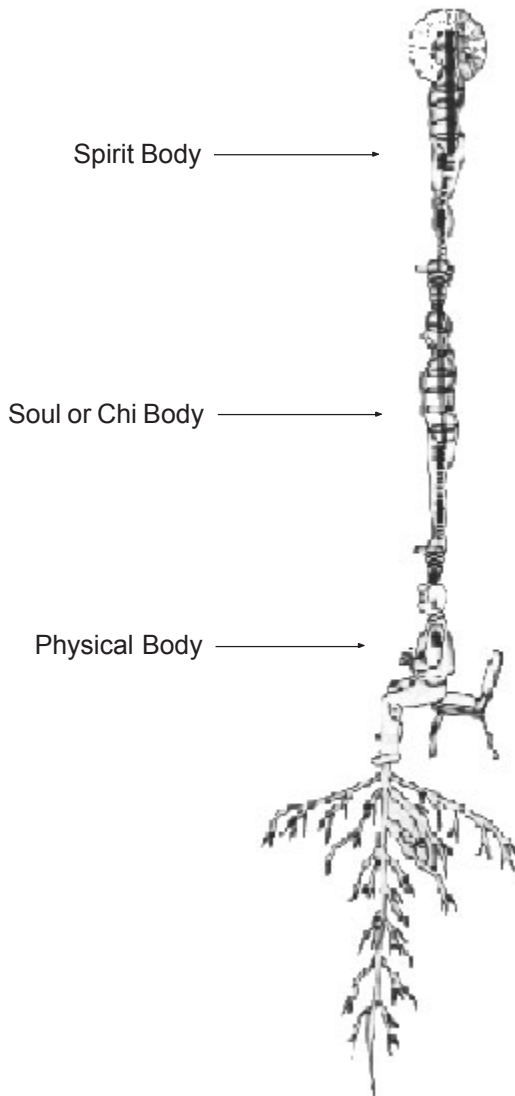


Fig. 1.4 Rootedness

1. Iron Shirt Chi Kung—Ancient Kung Fu Practice

a. Bolin Period (the Time of Kung Fu Fighters)

Kung Fu was used in China long before the advent of firearms. During the Bolin Period, approximately 1000 B.C., training in the various spiritual/martial arts was very intense. It is said that at the time one tenth of the population of China was involved in some sort of Kung Fu.

In ancient Kung Fu practice, training began in very early youth. One first worked to develop internal power (inner strength through organ exercise), a venture that could take as long as ten years. Thereafter, one might have to throw a straight punch 1,000 times a day for a period lasting from three to five years. One might be instructed to strike the top of a water well with the flat of his palm 1,000 times a day for five to ten years, or “until the water leapt out of the well”.

Iron Shirt Chi Kung, a method of Kung Fu, was learned as a protective training, providing internal power by the practice of simple external techniques. The practitioner was guarded against the effects of blows to his vital organs and glands, the primary sources for the production of life-force energy (Chi). The word Chi means air. Kung means discipline: one who puts time into practice. Therefore, Chi Kung means “to practice the process of breathing to increase Chi pressure (life-force pressure)”.

A thousand times a day internal power was cultivated until it could be felt flowing out of the hands. With weights tied to the legs, the practitioner ran and jumped in prescribed ways for over three hours a day until, eventually, he could jump easily to great heights and, at the same time, further develop his internal power. Only after these exercises were mastered were actual fighting techniques taught.

The importance of the development of internal power in martial arts training may be compared to the effect of being struck by a steel rod as opposed to one that is made of soft plastic. The Chi Kung practitioner of old practiced one punch for years until he could feel the power go out of the lower part of his hand, while the rest of his body seemed as though made of steel. There were many other benefits as well, e.g., internal power improved general health and is claimed to have maintained youthfulness.

b. Iron Shirt helps to Perfect Mental Faculties

Chi Kung also helped to perfect mental faculties, enabling the practitioner to have knowledge of many things. One reads that during the Bolin period, there were eight “immortals” who spent most of their lives in such practice and developed extraordinary abilities. They could predict the future and see into the past. They are said to have been capable of space travel and of clairvoyance and clairaudience. It is also said that during that period, many people had at least some such powers, a result of widespread Kung Fu practice. Some sources attempt to explain this by claiming there must have been a general universal reservoir of power, far greater than is now available, from which the more capable practitioners could draw.

c. Age of Gunpowder

After the invention of gunpowder and the subsequent elaboration of firearms, men no longer felt the need to spend a decade or more of their lives learning skills that no longer seemed practical. A man could now defend himself, or cause great damage at a great distance from his objective, with weapons. (Fig. 1.5) Contact fighting became a thing of the past, and much of the associated knowledge that was useful to man was lost with it.



Fig. 1.5 Age of Gunpowder

Today, however with the recent revolt against the depersonalizing and unhealthy effects of a technology of monstrous proportions, there has been a revival of interest in the simpler ways of life. Thus, Kung Fu is again in the limelight. Kung Fu has been called a way of perfecting the inner self.

2. Creating Chi (Life-Force) Pressure

Chi Kung may be thought of as internal aerobics. Chi, as an aerobic energy involving air, steam, and pressure, presses out and circulates to protect the human body. One can compare the internal pressure created by Chi to the force of air in a tire which is sufficient to keep the tire inflated and maintain a cushion between the car and the road. (Fig. 1.6)

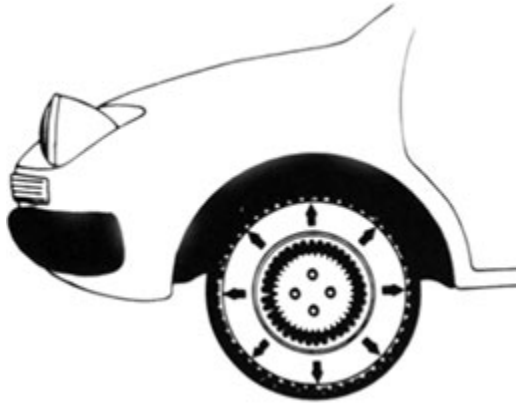


Fig. 1.6 An inflated tire provides cushioning.

a. Breath of Life—Chi Pressure

Breathing is the most important part of our lives. We can go without food for months, or without water for days, but we can go without air for only a few minutes.

In practicing Iron Shirt, we use our breath to maximum advantage. We can actually increase our vital energy, strengthen our organs, and promote self-healing by increasing the Chi pressure (pounds per square inch) in the organs and cavity of the body. The circulatory system, the lymphatic system, the nervous system, and the endocrine glands will be activated, and blood, spinal fluid and hormones will flow more easily so that the heart will not have to work hard.

b. Origin of Iron Shirt Breathing

Taoists believe that while we are in the womb, we use Iron Shirt Packing Breathing. Before birth, the infant does not use the lungs and nose to breathe. The Chi (life-force) enters through the umbilical cord to the navel (Fig. 1.7), down to the perineum, up the sacrum to the spinal cord to the head, forehead, and down the front from the tongue (Taoists believe the fetus always holds the tongue on the palate) to the throat, heart, abdomen and navel centers in the abdominal area where the Chi pressure can be used. You will recognize this as the path of the Microcosmic Orbit (described more fully in Chapter 2).

At birth, we begin to use lung breathing and generate our own energy rather than use the internal source of energy. To begin with, the lungs are not strong. The abdomen, closer to our original source of energy in the navel, has more Chi pressure. It assists the lungs in breathing by pulling down on the diaphragm so that the lower portion of the lungs fills with air; initiating inhalation. In this way, the lungs use less energy, but take in more life-force (oxygen). As children, we still use abdominal Chi pressure energy.



Fig. 1.7 In an unborn infant, the Chi (life-force) enters through the umbilical cord to the navel.

One can see the effects of reduced Chi pressure with age. In older people the prenatal life-force (Chi) is drained out from the navel and kidney areas. Gradually Chi pressure is lost, creating an energy imbalance: when the pressure is low, the fluid flow in the entire system slows down. As a result, at the times when our energy becomes too hot, it will move up and congest the chest and head. Cold energy will move down through the sexual organs and leak out. Gradually, we lose Chi pressure. We begin to lose the habit of abdominal breathing. The lungs are left alone to do chest breathing.

This is inefficient. It requires greater energy to expand the rib cage, which action fills only the upper third of the lungs. Scientists have affirmed that we use only one-third of our vital capacity (lung capacity) for breathing. This method of breathing actually expends more energy than it creates. Yielding to the external pressure, we collapse inside. With abdominal breathing we can expand the amount of pressure exerted on the organs and voluntarily compress them so that they will strengthen upon release.

B. Why put on your Iron Shirt?

1. Internal Management

Many of the physical changes associated with Kung Fu come through management of the internal organs and endocrine glands.

In Kung Fu, a person's life-force is said to depend primarily upon the endocrine glands, or sexual hormones. It is very likely that this was deduced from the following observations.

Consider what happens when someone is deprived of a fully functional endocrine system. A male is radically altered when his testes, part of the endocrine system in males, are eliminated, and more so when this is done before puberty. Such characteristics as weak musculature and feminine fat distribution develop. Depending upon the time in life in which he was so mutilated, he might also lack such secondary male characteristics as a deep voice, facial hair and sexual drive. Male and female castrates have been well documented to have shortened life spans.

With Iron Shirt Chi Kung, one is able to increase the flow of hormones produced by the endocrine glands, building up the immune system and giving a general sense of well-being. The sexual (creative) energy produced as a result is another source of Chi energy which may later be transformed into spiritual energy.

Integral to Iron Shirt are the organs' exercises which clean and strengthen the organs. Strong, detoxified organs are important to modern life. Iron Shirt practice will strengthen; help to clean out the toxins, waste materials and sediment in the organs; and convert the fat stored in layers or sheaths of connective tissue (fasciae) in the body into Chi energy. The Chi is subsequently stored in the fasciae layers where it works like a cushion to protect the organs. As previously mentioned, this process may be compared to a tire which, when inflated with air, can sustain tremendous weight. Chi which has been stored in such a way then becomes available for transformation to a higher quality energy that can nourish the soul and spirit.

In the practice of Iron Shirt, we put more emphasis on the fasciae connective tissues, organs, tendons, bones and bone marrow and less emphasis on muscle development.

a. Chi, the Fasciae, Organs and Bones

The body may be conceived as consisting of three layers: (a) the innermost which is made up of the internal organs that produce Chi; (b) a layer consisting of fasciae, bones and tendons; and (c) the muscles, which constitute the bulk of the body. Chi, after being developed in the internal organs, is then distributed throughout the fasciae. It is with the fasciae that Iron Shirt I is primarily concerned.

(1) Fasciae

Each organ has a fascia layer covering it. (Fig. 1.8) In the heart this layer is called the pericardium; in the lung it is called the pleura. The fasciae which cover the stomach, liver and kidneys have protective, connective, regenerative and nourishing properties. They act as energizing chambers for the organs.

In Heller work and Rolfing massaging techniques, the fasciae are dealt with from the outside in. The art of Rolfing involves the freeing of areas of fasciae that have become stuck together through trauma, infection or chronic muscular tensions. Iron Shirt works from the inner layer of fascia out. (Fig. 1.9) The intent is to allow for a free flowing energy in the body and to enable psychological insight into events long harbored in restricted musculature.

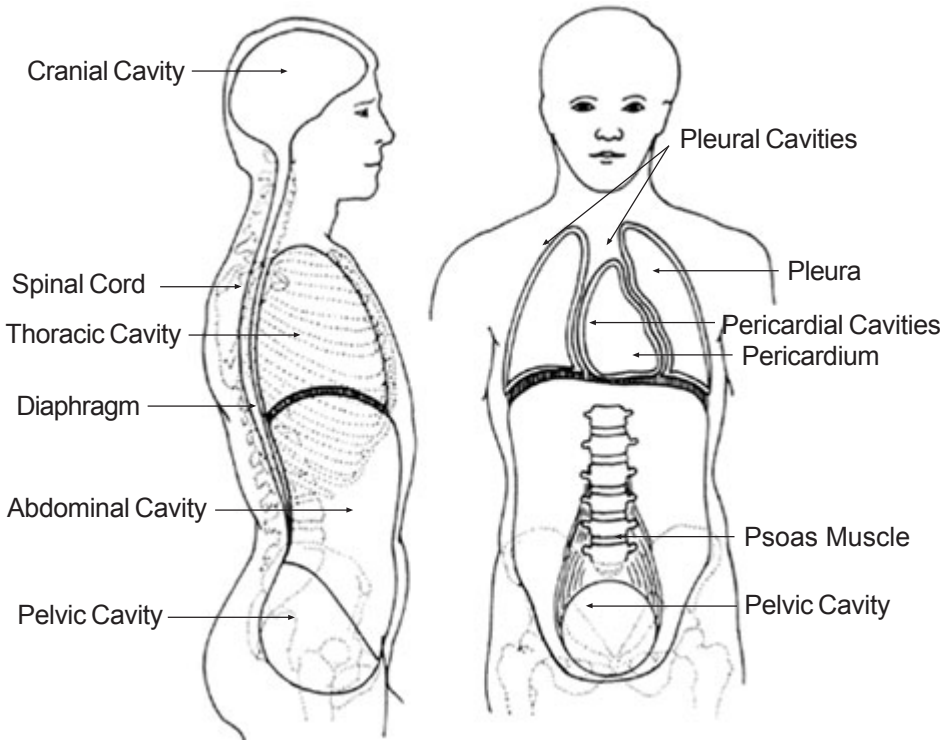


Fig. 1.8 Each organ has a fascia layer covering its cavity.

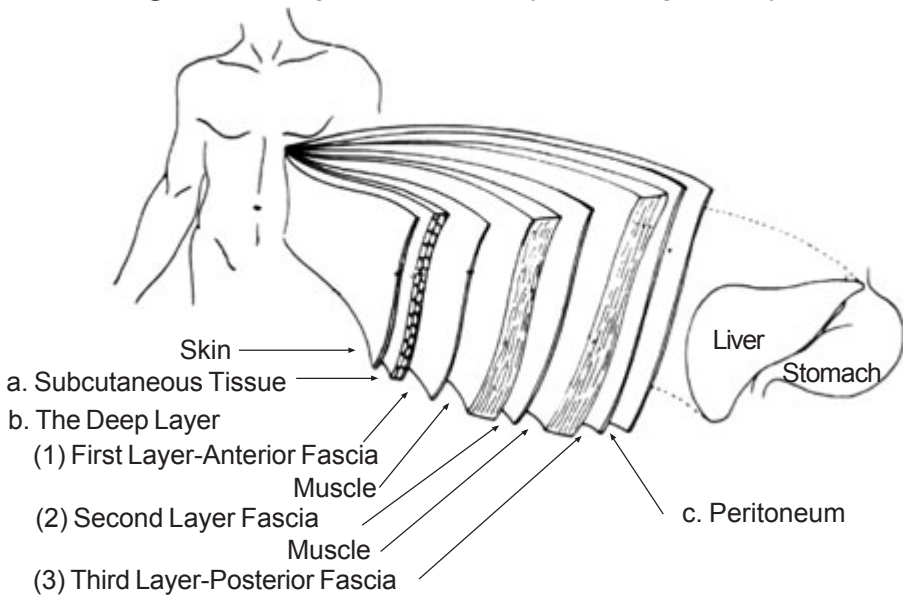


Fig. 1.9 Fasciae Layers

The fasciae are extremely important in the practice of Iron Shirt because, as the most pervasive tissues in the body, they are believed to be the means whereby Chi is distributed along acupuncture routes. Research has shown that the least resistance to the flow of bioelectric energy in the body occurs between the fascial sheaths, and that when these routes have been charted, they have been found to correspond to the classical acupuncture channels.

(2) Iron Shirt Strengthens and Protects the Organs

When we pack and wrap the organs with Chi pressure, we start to strengthen the organs. The fasciae layers covering the organs, when filled with Chi pressure, will act as energizers to the organs. Extra Chi pressure will escape to the abdominal fascia layer fill the abdominal cavity with Chi pressure, act as a protector to the organs and permit the Chi to flow more easily. When the abdominal cavity fills with Chi pressure, the Chi pressure will start to fill in the deep fasciae and, finally, fill in the outer layer, acting as a triple layer or cushion of Chi pressure to pack and protect all of the organs, muscles and vital glands.

To better understand how Chi, the fasciae and the organs relate to one another, picture an egg residing inside a balloon filled with air residing inside another air-filled balloon, both of which reside inside one more air-filled balloon. (Fig. 1.10) An egg is normally quite vulnerable, but inside a blown-up balloon, it is cushioned against blows. Inside a triple layer of balloons, we see that the egg has even greater protection. You can throw and kick these three layers of balloons and the egg will remain unharmed. Chi and the fasciae act in the same way to protect the fragile organs. The fasciae are elastic and protective like balloons, and the Chi, expanding as the air expands within the balloons, creates pressure (Fig. 1.11)

When Chi pressure is reduced by sickness or a weakened state the organs become cramped because they yield and become compressed by pressures external to them.

Most people, when hit in the abdomen will fall down, or if they are so unlucky as to have the vital organs hit, are seriously injured in the vital organs. When the vital organs are injured, life can be endangered. With this practice of building layers of protection, you will greatly reduce the risk of unexpected injury and in many instances might help to save your life.

From the fasciae, Iron Shirt extends to involve the bones and tendons and, finally the muscles.

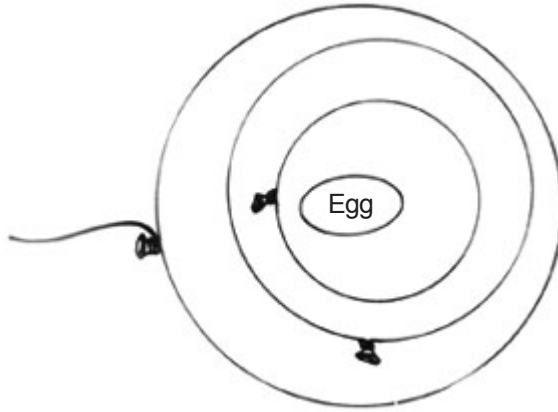


Fig. 1.10 *Balloons containing an Egg*

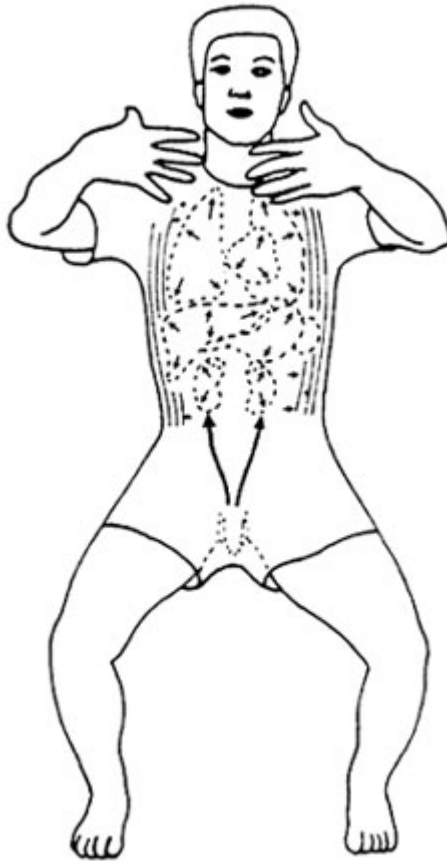


Fig. 1.11 *Pack the Chi into the organs and fasciae layers to protect the organs.*

(3) Burn Out Fat and Store Chi in the Organs

Food (nutrition) that is taken into the body but is not required by the body is turned into fat and stored in the outer layers of fasciae. This fat will greatly reduce the flow of Chi. The Iron Shirt Packing Process will help to pack and squeeze the fat, transforming it into energy to be stored in the fascial covers of the organs for use whenever needed. When Chi pressure occupies the fascial layers, the fat cannot be stored there. Therefore, the body becomes trained to convert fat into Chi energy for storage in the fascial layers.

(4) Structure of the Bones

When the fasciae are filled with Chi, the tendons are strengthened and the bones hold together as one structural piece. When the fasciae are weak, the muscles are weakened and the bone structure will not hold together. Similarly, when the muscles are weak, both the fasciae and the tendons are weak. When muscles are not used, they diminish in size and strength as do the fasciae which contain them and the tendons upon which they pull when activated.

There is a constant turnover of most of the cells of the body and replacements are governed by ongoing needs. It has been demonstrated that during prolonged periods of weightlessness in outer space, the constitution of bones is not as dense as it is on the surface of the Earth where the greater stresses of gravity signal heavier bone growth. When we are young, our bones are filled with marrow. (Fig. 1.12) When we become adults, the bones gradually hollow out, filling with fat and producing less blood cells, until they become brittle and susceptible to fracture. Iron Shirt Chi Kung is primarily designed to gradually reabsorb the Chi life-force back into the bones, which can be transformed into bone marrow to strengthen the bone structure.

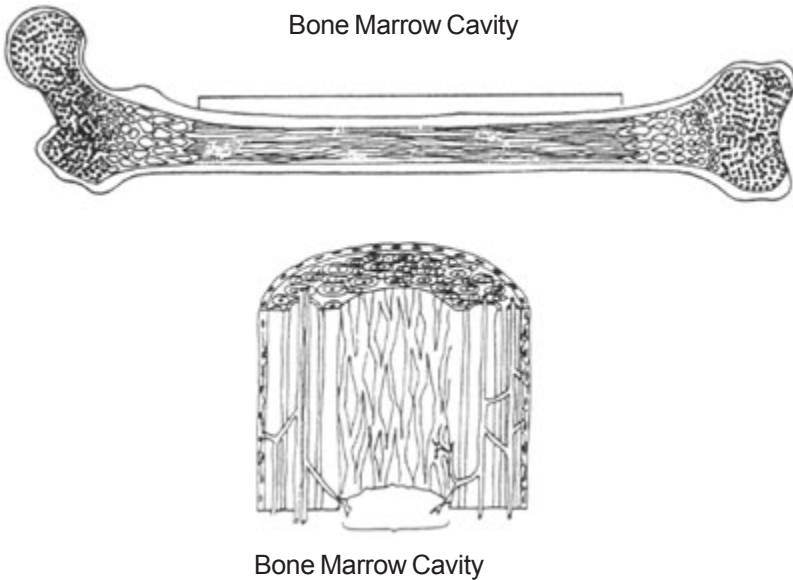


Fig. 1.12 When we are young, our bones are filled with red marrow.

b. Chi Pressure and Meditationi increase Circulation while Reducing the Heart's Work

As mentioned, we must learn again to use the abdomen to aid in breathing and to help increase the circulation. The abdominal area accounts for two-thirds of the blood supply that flows through the liver, kidneys, stomach and spleen. When one knows how to pack and release, the abdomen will act like the most efficient heart you could ever have. In Iron Shirt Chi Kung Packing Process Breathing, by limiting the space of the abdomen and increasing the pounds of pressure per square inch, all the organs in the abdominal area will be packed in a very small space. This will expel all the toxins and sediment which have accumulated in these organs. The diaphragm will pull down to create a vacuum in the lower part of the lungs, filling the lower lobes first, and extending to the whole lungs. This gives a longer deeper breath which will furnish sufficient time and quantity of oxygen to cleanse the body of waste materials, sediment and toxins.

Our systems rely entirely upon Chi pressure to move the fluids. Increased pressure in the abdominal cavity will help to increase

the Chi pressure in order to move Chi, blood and lymph fluids. (Fig. 1.13) When the new blood is released, oxygen and nutrition will enter into the organs. With this practice, you will gradually increase the flow of the circulatory and lymph systems and, in return, will greatly reduce the work of the heart. As you gradually increase your vital capacity by learning how to pack air into the organs, thereby creating the cushion, or Chi pressure, to protect and strengthen them, the heart will have to work with progressively less effort and circulation will increase. The vital energy thus conserved can be used to enrich our spiritual and creative lives.

Our goal, then, is to increase the organ and abdominal pressure so that the Chi presses outward on the fasciae layers from inside. To do this, you will learn Packing Process Breathing to increase the pressure of Chi in the organs and abdomen. When this pressure is released, the fasciae expand, as do the organs.

Chi circulation meditation affords a means of generating and directing far more Chi than would ordinarily be available without causing pressure on the heart. Meditation increases circulation and the production of lymphocytes without affecting blood pressure the way running and western aerobic exercises do. Once you have practiced Chi circulation meditation by learning the Microcosmic Orbit, you will understand that the energy made use of in Iron Shirt travels very much along the same route of the Microcosmic Orbit, but is found to be expressed differently in each of the channels. As the Chi flows more freely throughout the entire body the experience takes on new dimensions.

c. Preventing Energy Leakage

The Taoists believe that Chi can be transformed into anything in our body. Certainly the energy we channel in the body has a generative effect. Therefore, an important function of Iron Shirt is to learn how to create space in the body to store Chi energy and how to prevent energy leakage. Energy is dispersed and scattered in the average person, escaping out daily through various openings in the body. Iron Shirt teaches the practitioner how to seal these openings. A process is then learned to direct this conserved energy to the navel region, there to be packed and condensed into an energy ball (Fig. 1.14) which can be directed to any part of the body or in later practice, to build an energy body to boost the spirit to a higher plane.

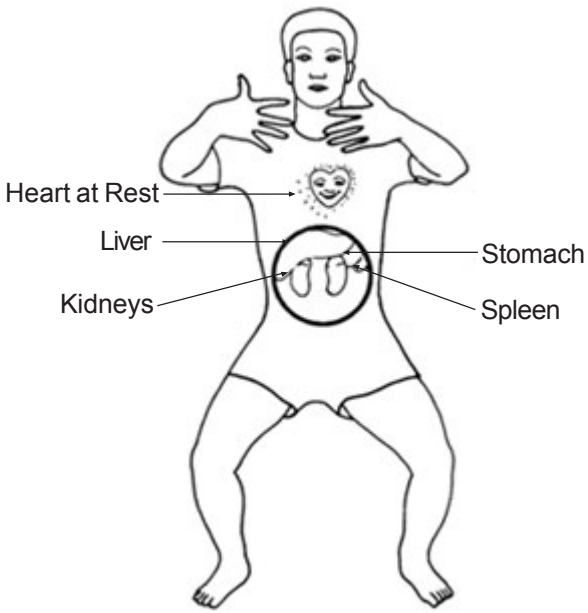


Fig. 1.13 *Compressing the organs, thereby creating a pressure in the abdomen, can cause the abdomen to pump like a heart, moving fluids through the system.*

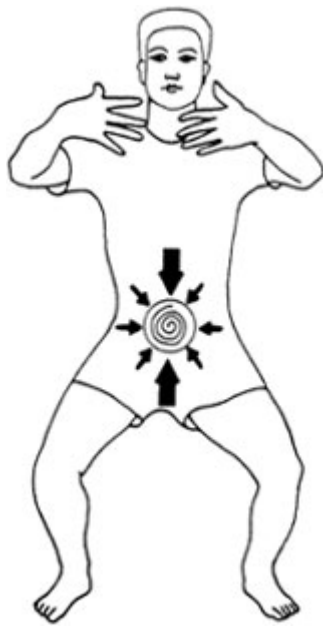


Fig. 1.14 *Concentrating Energy into an Energy Ball.*

2. Iron Shirt prolongs Life

Long life and happiness have been pursued by people for centuries, and the search still continues. However, even with the added impetus of all that modern science and technology can offer, little, if any real progress has been made that is in the common domain. It is currently believed by many here in the West that daily physical exercise helps to stave off aging. However, statistically, athletes do not live longer nor seem to be appreciably healthier for their efforts. In fact, as the effects of aging impede them more and more, many of them become subject to depression. They are no longer able to compete successfully. In order to do more strenuous exercises, parts of the body must be changed. Also, there seems to be some basis for thinking that certain situations, such as the stress of competitive athletics or the use of drugs, may contribute to premature aging (discounting injuries that are sustained in more violent pursuits). A Taoist might comment that this is so because in accenting the physical, the spiritual was neglected, as well as the mind, the nervous system and the internal vital circuits.

Man's life span has been prolonged by science and technology. However, more often than not, the added life span can be of a low enough quality not to seem to be of great benefit.

The old Taoist sages say that in ancient times, men lived from 500 to 1,000 years. Modern society emphasizes material aspects of life whereas the ancient Taoists sought a balance of the material with the spiritual. The Taoist and Yogic approaches describe an "inner world" which man can develop and cultivate that is reflected in his "outer world". There is an old Taoist saying, "Living one hundred years is common. Life is in my hands, not in the hands of a Universal Being." It might be that this positive statement is derived from a genuine knowledge of how to prolong life in such a way that it is also vital and satisfying.

The Taoist System is very precise in the matter of building Chi, guiding it and finally developing skills to make the best use of it. To attempt to hasten the process by skipping steps is to end with nothing or to create complications such as irregular heartbeat, chest congestion, headache, pain in the heart, chest or back, which result from not knowing how to guide the energy.

3. Summary of the Benefits of Iron Shirt Chi Kung Training

In summary, Iron Shirt Chi Kung I training is divided into three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual.

a. On the physical level, one learns how to (1) align structurally to strengthen and alter a weak structure into a strong structure so that Chi can flow easily throughout the body and provide room for organs to grow within the body's structure; (2) develop a Chi Belt, the major connection of the upper and lower energy channels, without which proper structural alignment and Chi energy will be lost; (3) detoxify and exercise the organs and glands in order to charge and pack the Chi in them, to serve as cushioning to surround and protect them, and to fill the cavity of the body with Chi pressure; (4) increase Chi storage between the fasciae sheets; open the fasciae to serve as Chi storage areas of the body replacing fat previously stored there; understand the function of the fasciae layers as cushions around the body which protect the vital organs; (5) root down to the earth, sink down and become one with the earth, to be able to pass the outside force down to earth through the structure without obstruction, and to pump the earth force up into the structure and counteract outside forces with the assistance of the earth; (6) generate an easily flowing Chi through the meridians of the body and transform Chi to a higher "octane" to serve as the nourishment of the soul and spirit body.

b. On the emotional level, or soul level, one learns how to (1) condense the Chi into a controllable mass of energy, transforming and moving the Chi by changing negative energy into positive energy; (2) condense life-force Chi into a ball. This is one of the most important functions of the Iron Shirt Chi Kung practice since it enables one to control his Chi so that the Chi will not scatter around the body and leak out of the system. Condensed Chi will stay together and have more condensed power to be used as a person desires. When you are well trained in condensing the Chi energy into a ball, by physically moving the abdomen up and down, or left and right, you will be able to move the ball. In later practice, you will be able to use your mind to move the ball and direct it through channels in your body, always returning it to the navel. In the higher level, the condensed Chi becomes a light ball, like a glowing pearl, which develops into the energy body, serving as a booster rocket to boost the spirit or space body into orbit.

c. On the spiritual level, Iron Shirt Chi Kung condenses, strengthens and creates more Chi, thereby laying the groundwork for a spiritual foundation (rootedness) which serves the later part of the system. Previously referred to as an Earth Control Tower this foundation will direct the spirit in its journey through space where preparations are made for life after death.

C. Iron Shirt Chi Kung Exercises

The Iron Shirt exercises introduced here are primarily concerned with the fasciae and bone structure as well as with some tendons.

These eight exercises (namely, Embracing the Tree, the Yin and Yang Positions of Holding the Golden Urn, the Golden Turtle Immersing in Water (Yang Position), the Water Buffalo Emerging From the Water (Yin Position), The Golden Phoenix Washes Its Feathers, the Iron Bridge and the Iron Bar), condensed from forty-nine postures, are very precise in developing the most vital energy routes. There are many exercises known that will serve this purpose; however, by doing the eight exercises and the structural alignment exercises described in this book, you will derive as much benefit as you would from a much wider selection of positions and movements. These exercises develop Chi flow and strengthen fasciae, tendons, bones and muscles. In the tradition of Taoist Esoteric Yoga, it is said that (a) Chi moves the blood (and the heart works less); (b) blood moves muscles; (c) muscles move tendons, and (d) tendons move the bones to which they are attached.

Iron Shirt strengthens muscles, tendons and bones by subjecting them directly and gradually to increasing stress. It is a well rounded approach which offers, as an additional benefit, a means of releasing long held areas of tension. This often reflects in a general sense of well-being, of self-assurance and ease, along with better posture.

Many of my students report that Iron Shirt has enabled them to achieve a deep sense of feeling grounded and centered. Others suddenly discover that their hands and feet are no longer cold.

There is another advantage to Iron Shirt. The pneumatic effect joins what would otherwise be separate members of your body into one continuous unit. This produces a tremendous increase in mechanical advantage that increases geometrically as this work progresses.

The Universal Tao System offers many types of practices, many of which can be practiced individually. However, it is most beneficial to the practitioner to realize that all are interrelated and practicing them together will bring the best results. If one attempts to practice Tai Chi Chuan, for example, before having first cultivated internal energy through Iron Shirt, it might be compared to entering high school without having learned the alphabet.

Iron Shirt Chi Kung is the foundation of Tai Chi which uses structural alignment as a basis for exercise. Many people have the wrong idea about Tai Chi. When the energy is felt in the Tai Chi movements, the practitioner wants to move the energy. However, the moving form of Tai Chi occupies the mind with many things other than moving the energy. The more the practitioner moves his form, the busier his mind, making him less aware of the subtle energy that can be felt within himself. In other words, the simpler one keeps the activity of the mind, the better one can feel his inner workings. Iron Shirt uses the mind to guide the Chi flow in a static position. If you train in the methods of Iron Shirt first, you learn well how to move the Chi. Then when you practice Tai Chi, it is easier to move the Chi while practicing the moving forms. In the Universal Tao System, we require students to learn the Microcosmic Orbit, Iron Shirt Chi Kung, and then Tai Chi. Therefore, the structural rooting and energy discharge and control that is learned in Iron Shirt can be transferred into the Tai Chi form. It should also be noted that to practice Tai Chi Chuan properly, it is necessary that your meditation practice take you at least to the levels in the Universal Tao System of Fusion of the Five Elements or to Lesser Enlightenment Kan and Li.

Since the basic approaches of the Microcosmic Orbit, Iron Shirt Chi Kung, Seminal or Ovarian Kung Fu, and Tai Chi Chi Kung deal with some aspect of coaxing energy out of the deepest and outermost reaches of the body, it is wise for the practitioner who is interested in developing fully his physical, emotional and spiritual potential to consider the Universal Tao System in its entirety.

D. Three Levels of Iron Shirt

This first Iron Shirt book is concerned with the first level of Iron Shirt, Iron Shirt Chi Kung I, in which, through internal organs exercises, the fasciae (the connecting tissue which cover the organs and glands) are energized.

The second book, Iron Shirt Chi Kung II, deals with tendon exercises, known since olden times as 'Changing the Tendons'. This practice utilizes the mind and heart to direct, stretch and grow the tendons.

Iron Shirt Chi Kung III, the third book in this series, works on bone structure and increases the bone marrow. This procedure, known by the ancient Taoists as "Cleansing the Marrow", is used to clear out fat stored in the hollow bone and absorb the creative power (sexual energy) into the bone to rebuild the bone marrow. Bones are the major blood builders, including the white blood cells necessary to the body's defense mechanisms.

Chapter 2

Initial Preparations

A. Iron Shirt Breathing and Relaxation

You must not use force in any of these procedures. These exercises depend very much upon mind control and relaxation. In doing the chin press, which is accomplished by pressing the chin down to the chest and pushing out C-7, the chest must remain relaxed if you are not to develop chest pain and congestion and if you are to avoid difficulty in breathing. Practice the relaxation of the Inner Smile and run your Microcosmic Orbit (described briefly in this Chapter and more fully in the book, *Awaken Healing Energy Through the Tao*). If you find yourself shaking and jerking about, just simply let it all happen. It is a refreshing experience.

In a standing or walking position, you can stroke your chest with your palms from top to bottom from nine to eighteen times to relieve any congestion that might have accumulated there. Burp, if the need arises. If you begin to salivate copiously, tighten your neck muscles, press your chin to your chest, 'smile down" through all of your organs and then put your tongue to your palate and, using force, swallow saliva so that you feel as though you have indeed swallowed all the way down to your navel. Concentrate there until you can feel your navel grow warm.

Practice the Iron Shirt Chi Kung breathing twice per day only during your first week of practice and three times per day in the following week. By the second to fourth week, you can increase six to nine times and increase the length of time in Packing Breathing.

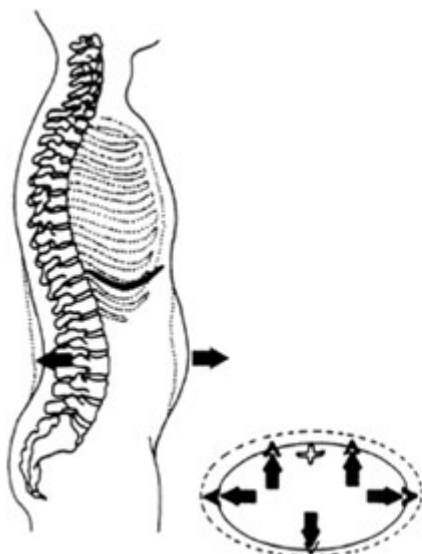
1. Abdominal and Reverse Breathing (Energizer Breathing)

Those who have not been trained in Chi Kung, Yoga or any other breathing exercise will be tense and will use very shallow, short breaths, utilizing only one-third of the lungs. This causes loss of Chi pressure in the abdominal cavity. With practice, proper breathing is accomplished.

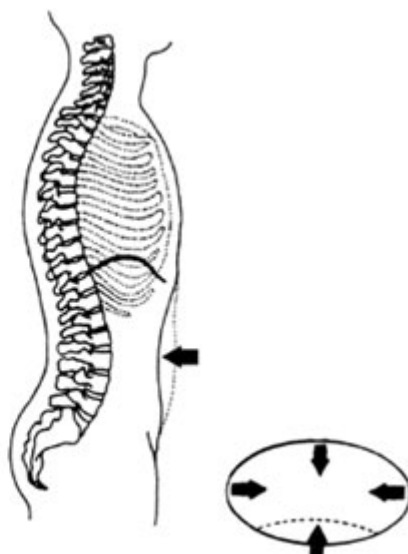
Iron Shirt breathing combines various types of breathing. First, abdominal breathing is practiced to energize and loosen the fascial

layers of the body. When the breath is harmonized, Chi is sent down to the navel. At this time, reverse breathing is initiated. Abdominal and reverse breathing are the two basic ways of breath training. Practiced together they are known as Energizer breathing, but have also been called “Breath of Fire” or “Bellows Breathing”.

Breathe to create a round shape, expanding
not only the stomach but all sides.



Cross-Section of the Abdomen



Cross-Section of the Abdomen

Fig. 2.1 (a) *Abdominal Breathing*

(b) *Reverse Breathing*

Abdominal and reverse breathing are caused by the up and down movement of the thoracic diaphragm. (Fig. 2.1 (a) and (b)) During abdominal breathing, the diaphragm lowers and forces the vital organs, especially the adrenal glands, to compress downward, allowing the lower lobes of the lungs to fill with air, and forcing the abdomen to protrude. The chest and the sternum sink, which presses and activates the thymus gland. Upon exhalation, the stomach returns to a flatter shape and the other vital organs return to their original size and shape. In reverse breathing, on inhalation

we flatten the stomach, push the organs and diaphragm up, and allow air to fill the whole lungs. As your practice develops, you will be able to maintain a lowered diaphragm during reverse breathing, thereby lowering and compressing the organs. Upon exhaling, we fill the abdomen out. The motions thus created massage the vital organs to a certain extent. It is to reverse breathing that "Packing" Breathing is added.

a. Practice Abdominal Breathing (Fig. 2.1 (a))

(1) To practice abdominal breathing, keep the chest very relaxed. This may be difficult at first, but it is important. Begin by breathing in, drawing the air into the abdomen.

(2) Make the chest hollow and drop the diaphragm down. (Fig. 2.2(a)) Pressure is felt inside the abdomen which will begin to protrude on all sides in a rounded shape. Do not expand the stomach only. With the diaphragm lowered and the abdomen filled with air the inches of spacing containing the abdominal organs are minimized. (Fig. 2.2(b))

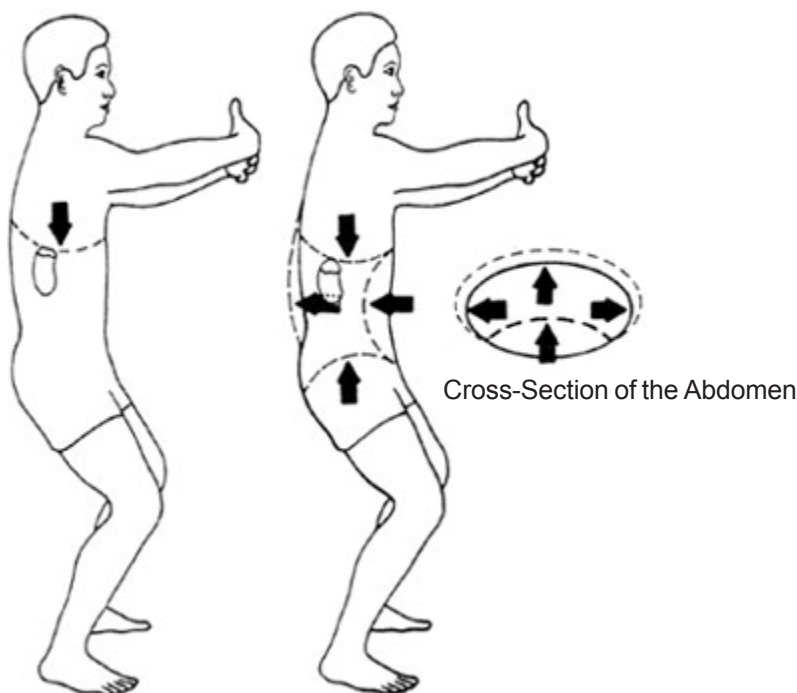


Fig. 2.2 (a) Diaphragm pressing down on the Adrenals and Kidneys.

(3) Hold your breath for a moment and exhale, flatten the stomach to the spine and feel the perineum (the region between the genital organs and the rectum) flood with the pressure. Pull the sexual organs up. The chest and the sternum sink, pressing and activating the thymus gland. (Fig. 2.3) Do not use force. It is enough to feel a slight pull and flattening of the chest.

(4) Inhale and relax, maintaining a dropped diaphragm, and feel the air expand on all sides of the abdomen (not only the front) like a round ball. Exhale and feel the pull of the sexual organs.

(5) With each inhalation and exhalation counting as one set, practice each set nine, eighteen, and then 36 times. Abdominal breathing, as the initiation of what is called “Energizer Breathing”, is used throughout all the exercises as a pre-exercise to Packing Process Breathing. It is also used after packing process breathing to regulate the breath.

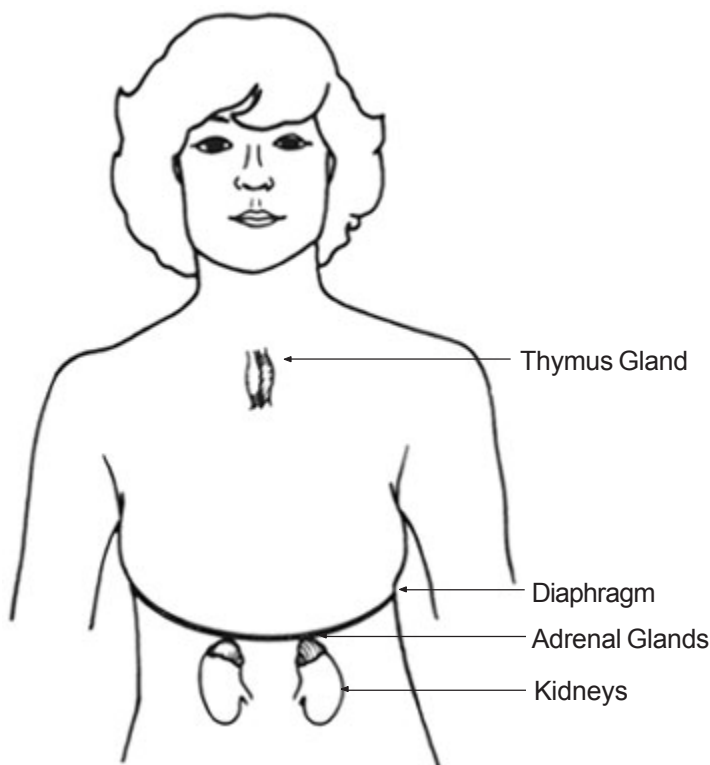


Fig. 2.3 When the diaphragm presses down on the adrenal glands, the sternum sinks. This activates the thymus gland.

(6) If you find that your diaphragm becomes tight and pushed up into the rib cage, rub the diaphragm with both hands using the fingers to gently work the diaphragm so that it will drop down out of the rib area into a relaxed position. (Fig. 2.4) Tightness in the abdominal area is one of the main causes of breathing problems. Abdominal massage will help to relieve the tightness of the diaphragm. Use your fingers to lightly massage the abdomen in the navel area until you feel the tightness ease. This will greatly improve your deep breathing.

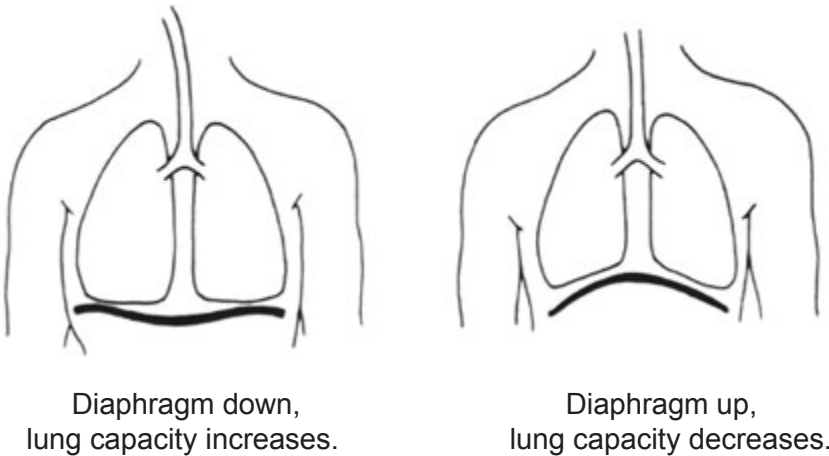


Fig. 2.4 *Front View of the Diaphragm*

b. Practice Reverse Breathing (Fig. 2.1 (b))

Tight muscles in the chest can be a problem, and so it is important to relax. It is not the muscles but this relaxation which holds the Chi packed inside. Moreover using and training the mind to direct and condense the Chi are the ultimate goals of Iron Shirt training.

As you begin to inhale for reverse breathing, the organs and diaphragm are pushed up as the air fills the entire lungs. As your practice develops, you will be able to control the diaphragm and organs, maintaining them in a lowered position.

Reverse breathing, as the preparation for Packing Process Breathing, also takes place in the lower abdomen and should be practiced in conjunction with abdominal breathing. Draw air into the abdomen while contracting the muscles in front of the abdomen.

Begin with abdominal breathing, and follow with reverse breathing.

(1) Practice abdominal breathing six times. Upon the last exhalation, flatten the stomach. Maintain the flattened stomach and begin reverse breathing upon inhalation. Feel the abdomen flatten even more, as if it were approaching the spine and feel the perineum flood with a pressure. Pull the sexual organs up and, at the same time, try to lower the diaphragm so that you are pushing down on the organs. Try not to let the diaphragm push up. Lowering the diaphragm is the hardest part of reverse breathing. It is very important now to practice the relaxing technique of smiling to the diaphragm and the abdomen.

(2) Exhale, releasing the pressure in the perineum and in the sexual organs. Exhale through the lower abdomen, allowing the pressure to protrude from the lower abdomen to all sides and not only the stomach. Relax, letting the fasciae expand while releasing and relaxing the chest totally. Smile down. Relax.

(3) Counting each inhalation and exhalation together as one, practice reverse breathing six, nine, and then eighteen times. Practice until you are able to control the diaphragm with your mind, commanding it to lower down or rise up.

2. Pelvic and Urogenital Diaphragms

The body also contains a pelvic diaphragm and a urogenital diaphragm which are exceedingly important in transmitting energy in Iron Shirt. (Fig. 2.5) The pelvic diaphragm is a muscular wall that extends across the lower part of the torso, suspended concavely downward from the level of the symphysis pubis (the joint of the pubic bones) in front and the sacrum (the back of the pelvis) in back. There are several organs that penetrate this muscular partition that lies between the pelvic cavity and the perineum. These are the urethra, the vagina and the rectum, and they are supported by the pelvic diaphragm. In fact, the pelvic diaphragm is the floor of the pelvic cavity which contains the large intestine, small intestine, bladder, kidneys, liver spleen, and pancreas. It is the pelvic diaphragm that lifts up and maintains the shapes of the vital organs.

Below the pelvic diaphragm and above the perineum is another muscular diaphragm called the urogenital diaphragm. (Fig. 2.6) This is penetrated by the urethra, while its underside is the attachment site of the root of the penis or vagina. The pudendal

nerve connects the muscles of the urogenital diaphragm, the penis or vagina and the anus. There is a membranous superficial fascia that attaches to the back of this lowermost diaphragm that comes forward to engulf the scrotum or vagina (which also contains muscle) and joins with the abdominal wall. The importance of these anatomical structures will become apparent as you progress in your work in Taoist Yoga, especially in Iron Shirt I, II and III and in Taoist Secrets of Love (Seminal and Ovarian Kung Fu). These two diaphragms serve to assist the flow of pressure to the vital organs and glands, and help tremendously to increase Chi pressure in the organs and the abdomen. Knowing how to utilize and control these diaphragms will improve your capabilities in all levels of the Universal Tao practice.

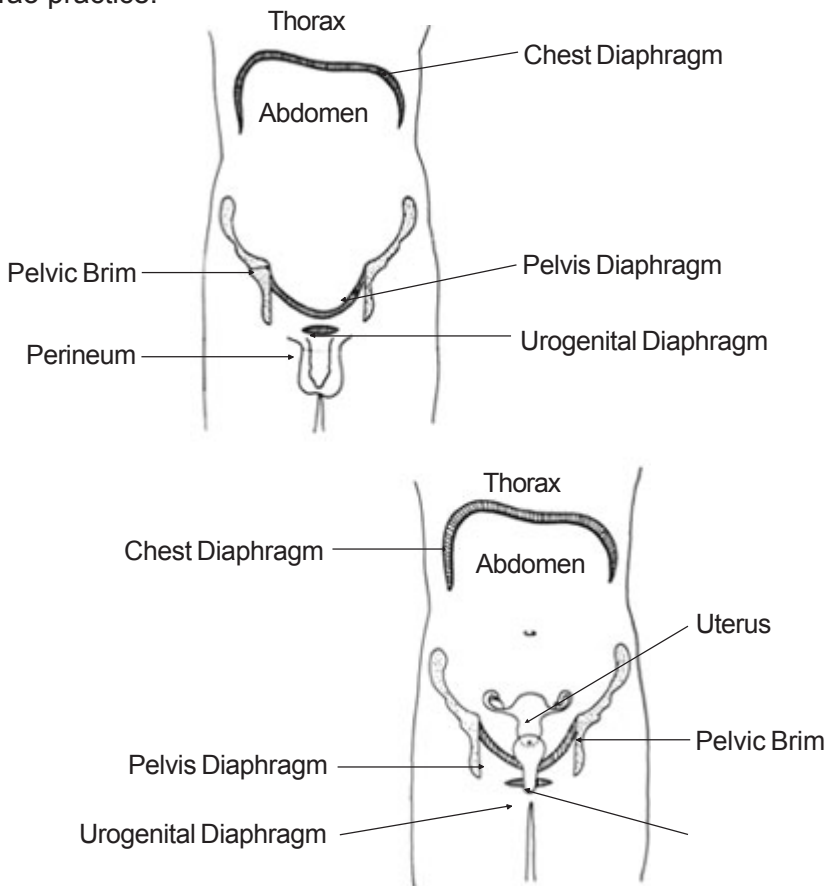


Fig. 2.5 Pelvic and urogenital diaphragms are the major lower seals which prevent vital energy from leaking out the lower openings.

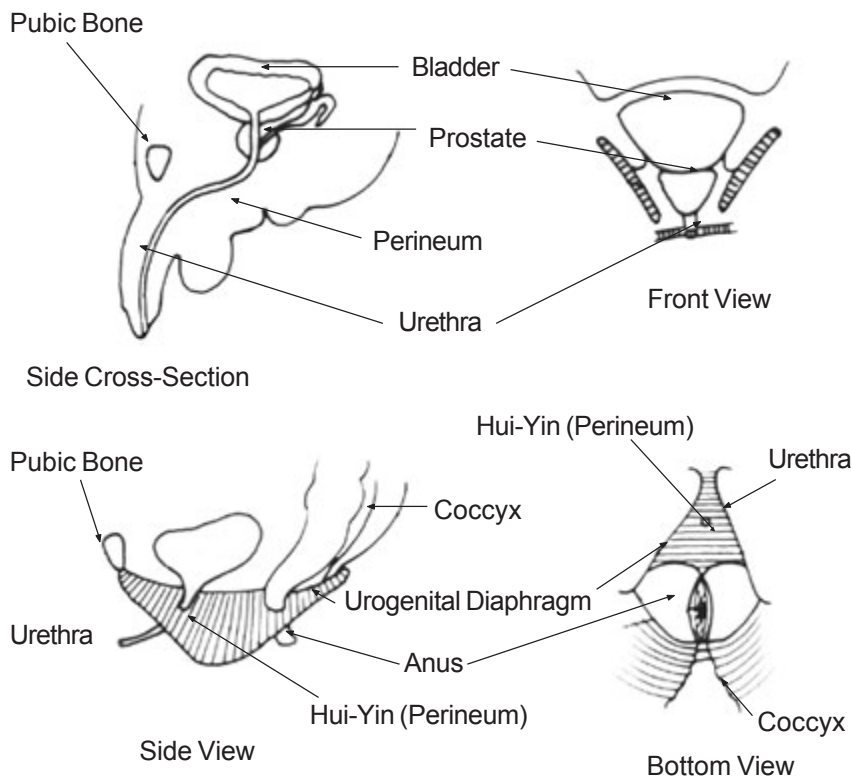


Fig. 2.6 A closer view of the urogenital diaphragm in the male

3. Iron Shirt Packing Process Breathing (Chi Pressure)

Packing Process Breathing is the most important breathing technique to master in the practice of Iron Shirt. It is used in all of the Iron Shirt postures and practicing it well will be a great aid in benefitting from the postures.

The Packing Process creates air pressure in a small space so that the body can have more pounds of pressure per square inch (psi). The importance of not only expanding the abdomen out in the front but allowing it to protrude on all sides has been stressed in the description of abdominal and reverse breathing. The same is true of Packing Breathing. The expansion of the front, back and sides occurs proportionately until the abdominal area becomes round like a ball. (Fig. 2.7) Watch a child breathe and you will notice

that his/her abdomen is round. In Chapter 1, we compared this phenomena to a tire which inflates to a certain number of pounds of air pressure (psi) in order to lift and support a car. By utilizing this process, the human body can store air pressure (energy) in various parts of the body. When the pressure (Chi) drops, all the organs will drop and stack on each other dropping down and giving a greater burden to the pelvic and urogenital diaphragms. Chi pressure will help the organs hold their shape and uplift the organs into their own positions so that energy can flow easily. Thus, the Chi pressure serves as an energy charger of the organs.

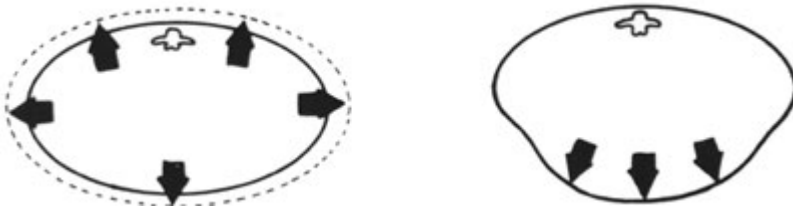


Fig. 2.7 *Abdomen during Packing Process Breathing become rounded like a ball.*

The Taoists believe that the body has many openings: one front door the sexual organ; one back door the anus; and the seven openings of its windows, two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and one mouth. It is through these openings that energy can enter or leak from the body. In the practice of Iron Shirt, we learn to seal our bodies to prevent energy leakage and the loss of Chi pressure, enabling us to pack, condense and store energy in our bodies and organs. Pulling up the pelvic and urogenital diaphragms helps to seal the sexual organ and anus doors. Turning the attention of your senses down to the navel area will also help to seal the energy.

a. Preparation Using Abdominal and Reverse Breathing (Energizer Breathing)

Sit at the front edge of your chair (the best position for practicing the Microcosmic Orbit also). Place your tongue at the roof of your mouth to seal the leakage of tongue and heart energy. Listen inwardly to your kidneys and breathe inwardly to the lungs. Look inwardly to the liver, and all of the other organs as well, to seal the senses from the inside.

(1) Start with the first stage of Energizer Breathing; that is, abdominal breathing. (Fig. 2.8(a)) Inhale slowly but strongly. Keep the chest relaxed and feel the area of the lower abdomen below the navel and perineum bulge. (Remember abdominal and reverse breathing originates from the lower abdomen, approximately one and one-half inches below the navel.) Then, forcefully, exhale. Notice that when you exhale, the belly flattens toward the spine. (Fig. 2.8(b)) Feel the sexual organs pull up. The perineal bulge diminishes. Learn to keep the stomach flat after exhaling. Inhale slowly again and allow the perineum to bulge as you do so. Repeat in multiples of eighteen to 36. The purpose is to energize the Chi and is also called "Fanning the Fire".

(2) When you are ready and feel that you have sunk the Chi downwards towards the navel, exhale so that the abdomen flattens towards the spine. The chest and sternum sink down, pressing and activating the thymus gland. Exhale once more and lower the diaphragm down. (Fig. 2.8(c)) Hold for a while and then, using reverse abdominal breathing, inhale ten percent of your full capacity to the navel (ten percent means a short, little breath) while keeping the belly flat (Fig. 2.8(d)), then relax the chest and belly. Try to keep the diaphragm low.

b. Building Chi Pressure

(3) Inhale about ten percent while contracting the pelvic and urogenital diaphragms. (Fig. 2.8 (e)) Pull up the sexual organs and tighten the anus to seal in your energy. Compress the abdominal organs in three directions: above from the lowered diaphragm, below from the sexual organs, and in front from the abdominal wall. The ribs and spine hold from behind. (Fig. 2.2(b)) Inhale ten percent. Contract the left side of the anus, thereby bringing the Chi to the left kidney. Pack and wrap the energy around the left kidney and the adrenal glands. At the same time, pull in more of the left stomach towards the spine. Pull up the right anus and bring the Chi to the right kidney. At the same time, pull more on the right side of the abdomen wall, flattening it towards the spine. Pack and wrap the energy around the right and left kidneys. (Fig. 2.8(f)) Hold this position for as long as you can.

Remember if the diaphragm becomes tight and pushed up, rub it with both hands to gently work the diaphragm so that it will drop down into a relaxed position. (Fig. 2.4)

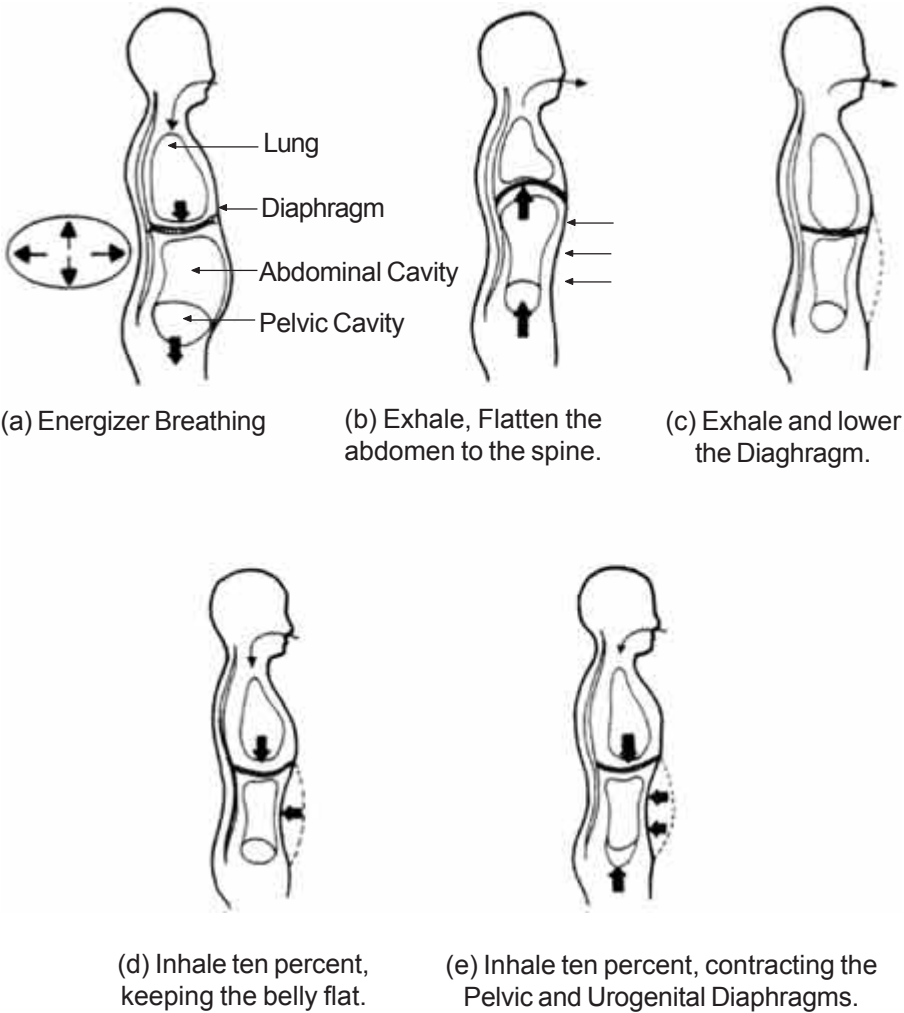
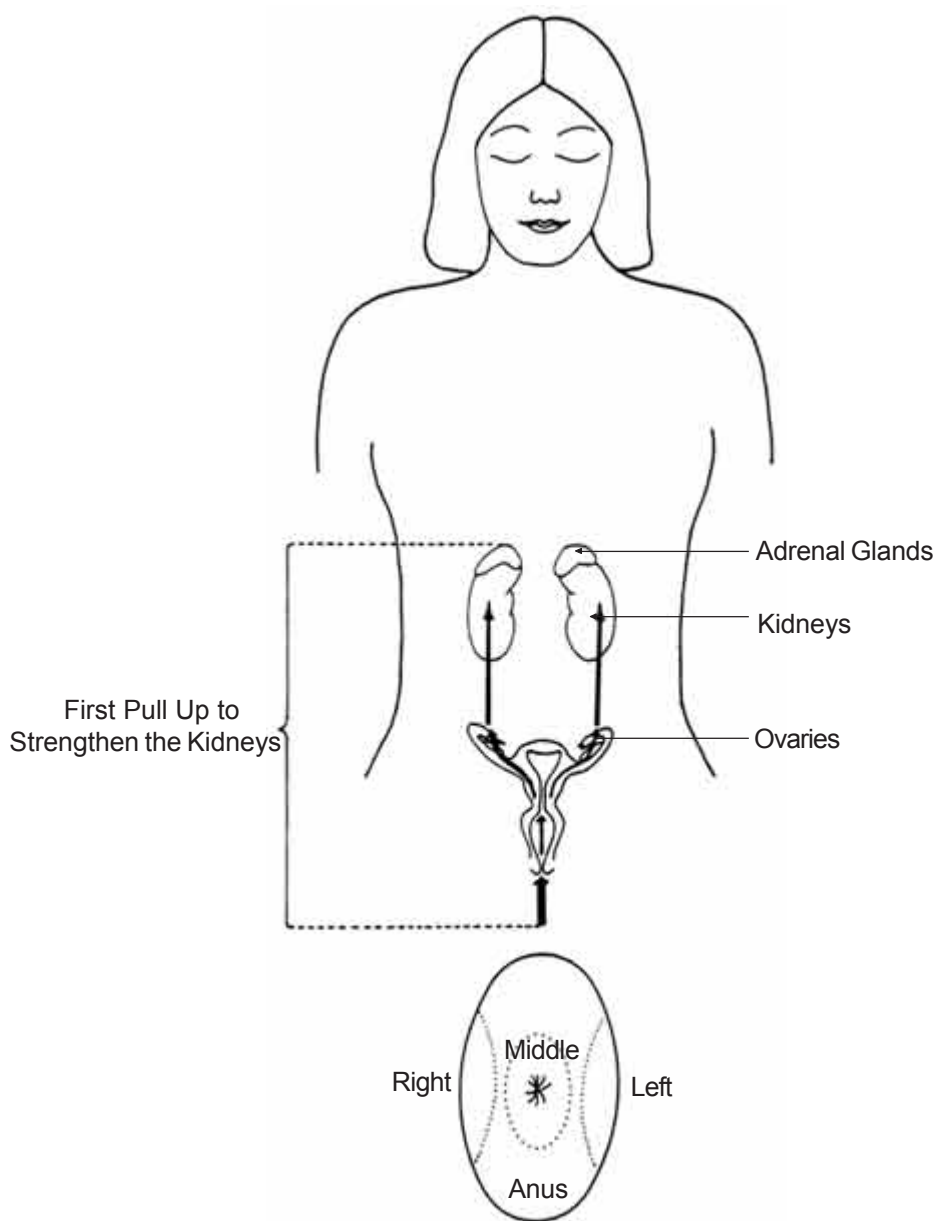


Fig. 2.8 Packing Process Breathing



(f) Inhale ten percent. Contract the left and right anus. Bring Chi to the left and right kidneys. Pack and wrap the kidneys.

Fig. 2.8 Packing Process Breathing

(4) When you can no longer hold your breath, inhale ten percent more air on top of the air that you already have inhaled. Contract the perineum more tightly especially the sex organs. You can jerk a little, in order to pack the energy in the lower abdomen. Seal and limit the energy to a small area. You must maintain a relaxed chest and sink the sternum so that the diaphragm will stay soft and lowered. The stomach is flat and held in. Feel the pressure extend to the area of the sperm palace/ovary palace. (Fig. 2.8(g)) Pull the sex organs and the anus up again and seal them so that no energy can leak out.

(5) Inhale ten percent more air. (You can exhale a little in order to inhale more air). Contract the pelvic area and lower part of the abdomen, and hold this position for as long as possible. (Fig. 2.8(h))

(6) Inhale ten percent more. Repeat. Feel the pressure build in the perineum. (Fig. 2.8(i))

(7) By this time, it may seem that you cannot accommodate any more air, but if you exhale a little bit, bend forward slowly and direct your attention to the kidneys, feeling them expand on both sides and backwards, relaxing and trusting that the air will have room there, you will be able to inhale the last ten percent of your full capacity to that area in the back. (Fig. 2.8(j)) Hold as long as possible. This will help to open the sides and back.

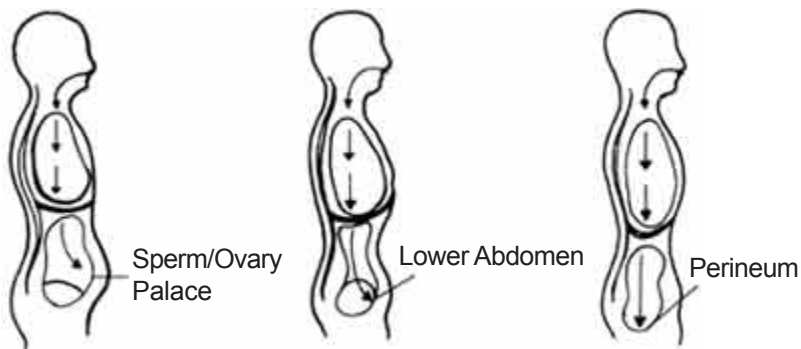
(8) Exhale. Sit up straight.

(9) Normalize breathing by using abdominal breathing.

When you exhale and relax at the end of such a session, you will immediately experience heat or feel the energy run all around the body. Put the tongue to the palate. At this point you should meditate and circulate the Microcosmic Orbit for a few rounds. Collect the energy in the navel when you have finished. (Fig. 2.8(k))

Using this breathing method, the organs are packed, compressed and strongly massaged. When you inhale, blood and energy (Chi) will rush in with great force to clear the organs out, making them progressively stronger and healthier.

If you feel energy stuck in the heart area, use both hands to brush the chest in a downward motion. In addition, you may want to do the Healing Sound for the heart (see the method described in the book, *Taoist Ways to Transform Stress into Vitality*) and walk around, shaking out the arms and legs.



- (g) Inhale ten percent down to the lower abdomen. (h) Inhale ten percent down to the pelvic area and lower abdomen. (i) Inhale ten percent down to the perineum.



- (j) Bend forward to accommodate more air.



- (k) Collect the energy at the navel.

Fig. 2.8 Packing Process Breathing

4. Points To Remember in Practicing the Breathing Exercises

- a. Always remember: ***Do not use force***. Relax the chest so that the chest, sternum and diaphragm can sink down.
- b. When packing, stay soft inside, not tense, at least for a good deal of the time. Soft energy is said to be unlimited.
- c. Do no more than three cycles of packing per day for the first week. Gradually increase to six, nine and eighteen cycles per day. This exercise is much more strenuous than you might imagine. Energy, wrapped around the organs and pushed into the fasciae by opposing pressure, eventually increases the amount of energy stored in the fasciae and organs, protecting you against blows or unexpected injuries.

5. Preliminary Exercises

Here are some exercises which will be very helpful to you in the practice of Iron Shirt Chi Kung. All exercises should be performed as often as the body finds necessary in multiples of three.

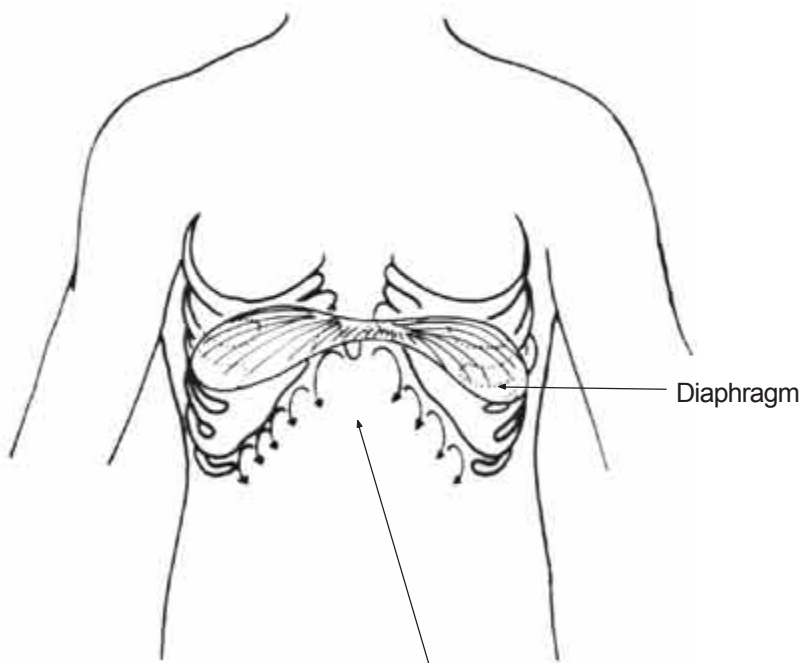
a. Check the Diaphragm

The following is a procedure to check that the diaphragm is lowered. First, press deeply on the stomach with the fingers of one hand directly below the sternum. You will feel a sharp pain that will tell you that you have pressed on the stomach. Next, inhale, allowing the abdomen to balloon out. Touch the diaphragm under the rib cage near the sternum, above the stomach. You will feel a pain which is quite different from stomach pains. Make sure you are relaxed so that the diaphragm lowers. This is the most important part of Iron Shirt practice. Keep the diaphragm lowered at all times while using the packing process. This will prevent the Chi from congesting the lungs and heart and allow it to continue its course downward to the navel.

b. Massage the Diaphragm

Many people have a very tight, stiff diaphragm which sticks to the rib cage. To release the diaphragm, you can massage above the rib cage: (a) massage along the rib cage from top to bottom; (b)

use the index, third and fourth fingers to push downward from the rib cage, and feel the stretch of the diaphragm. (Fig. 2.9) When the diaphragm is stretched, you will feel breathing to be easier and deeper. This can easily be accomplished in the morning when you rise.



Press in and down all along the edge of the rib cage.

Fig.2.9 *Releasing Tension in the Diaphragm*

c. Abdominal Breathing in a Lying Position

Your greatest reservoir of Chi is in the area of the navel. Concentrating on this area can increase Chi pressure and stimulate its flow. Your Chi always travels to where your attention and activity is centered. When you breathe high in the chest, your Chi goes there and, because Chi cannot be stored there, you will begin to feel distress. Abdominal breathing will avoid this problem.

This exercise will help you accomplish abdominal breathing in a lying position easily.

Lie flat on your back with the legs flat on the floor or with the feet on the floor and the knees raised just enough to allow the lower back to flatten against the floor. Place one hand on the sternum and the other hand on the lower abdomen. When you inhale, allow

the belly to swell enough to raise the hand that you have resting on it, while the chest remains comparatively still. Do this to the count of nine, and then put the arms at the sides. Exhale. Breathe in for nine more such cycles. Breathe abdominally without using the hands. Then place the hands on the chest and lower the abdomen again and repeat the exercise. Be alert to this breathing process and not to how you feel. Put the hands at the sides of the body again, and realize what you have learned.

Repeat this exercise lying on one side and then the other. To give you stability in this position, bend the knees in front of you so that if someone were to look at you from above, you would look as if you were seated in a chair. When breathing, gradually feel the air expand from the lower lungs to the middle, the left, the right side and up, until the chest feels like a cylinder.

d. Abdominal Breathing on a Slant Board

This exercise will greatly increase the pressure and strength of the abdomen and strengthen the diaphragm.

Lie on a slant board with the head towards the floor while doing this same exercise. Using a weight on the lower abdomen while lying flat, breathe in so that the weight is raised as the diaphragm lowers. Exhale. The diaphragm goes back to its normal position and allows the belly to flatten and lower the weight. Practice this daily, increasing the weight once a week and you will soon acquire a great control in directing Chi to the lower abdomen while strengthening the abdominal muscles. By putting the board higher up on the wall, you can increase the demands made on the abdomen and diaphragm. This approach allows you to discover various ways of adapting to a new position and gain greater control. Always repeat in multiples of three to 36 times.

When you are proficient at abdominal breathing, you may go on to the next exercise.

e. Strengthening through Counter Pressure

For this exercise you will need a partner who will exert pressure on specific points of your body using a fist. Your partner should coordinate with you to determine the correct amount of pressure required for you to respond.

(1) Have your partner hold a fist against your solar plexus. (Fig. 2.10) Inhale, directing your attention and your diaphragm to the

point of contact, and produce a counter pressure. Practice this six times only, resting after each time, and you will see how quickly you have learned to respond.

(2) Your partner should hold a fist against your navel area. (Fig. 2.11) Inhale, direct your attention and your diaphragm to the point of contact, and produce a counter pressure. Practice at this spot six times, resting after each time.

(3) Now, have your partner hold a fist against the lower abdominal area. Inhale and direct your attention and your diaphragm to this area, producing a counter pressure. Practice this exercise six times also, again resting after each time.

(4) Finally, ask your partner to hold a fist against each side separately, a little towards the back in the kidneys' areas (vulnerable areas which are easily hurt by a blow). (Fig. 2.12) Inhale, direct your attention to the spot and produce a counter pressure. Do this six times, remembering to rest after each time. This exercise will begin to strengthen the kidneys' areas.

(5) Change places with your partner and repeat (1) through (4). The effects of this simple exercise are widespread. It is invigorating, will mobilize an otherwise lax abdomen and can help you complete the Microcosmic Orbit quickly. If you cannot do it with a partner use a wooden dowel affixed to a flat board. The dowel should be about one and one-half inches in diameter. Simply place the flat surface against a wall and lean against the dowel so that it presses against those places described above.

f. Abdominal Breathing in a Standing Position

Standing positions are mostly used in the Iron Shirt practice. It is harder to accomplish abdominal breathing in a standing position, thus you need to be more relaxed.

As your abdominal breathing in a lying position improves, you will more easily control it in a standing position. While standing, the fasciae have tension to hold the muscles and the organs. This exercise is to strengthen the abdominal fasciae. This is a means of acquainting you with the way the mind and body work together and of learning how to bring energy to a fascial area. Stand with the feet a shoulders' width apart. Relax the entire body and make sure the diaphragm is lowered. Take a deep abdominal breath, swelling out the belly. Hold it as long as you can comfortably. Exhale. When you feel the need, inhale. Repeat this cycle in multiples of three.



Fig. 2.10 *Your partner with his fist against your solar plexus.*



Fig 2.11 *Your partner with his fist against your navel.*



Fig. 2.12 *Your partner pressing with his fist against your side, towards the back, in the kidney area.*



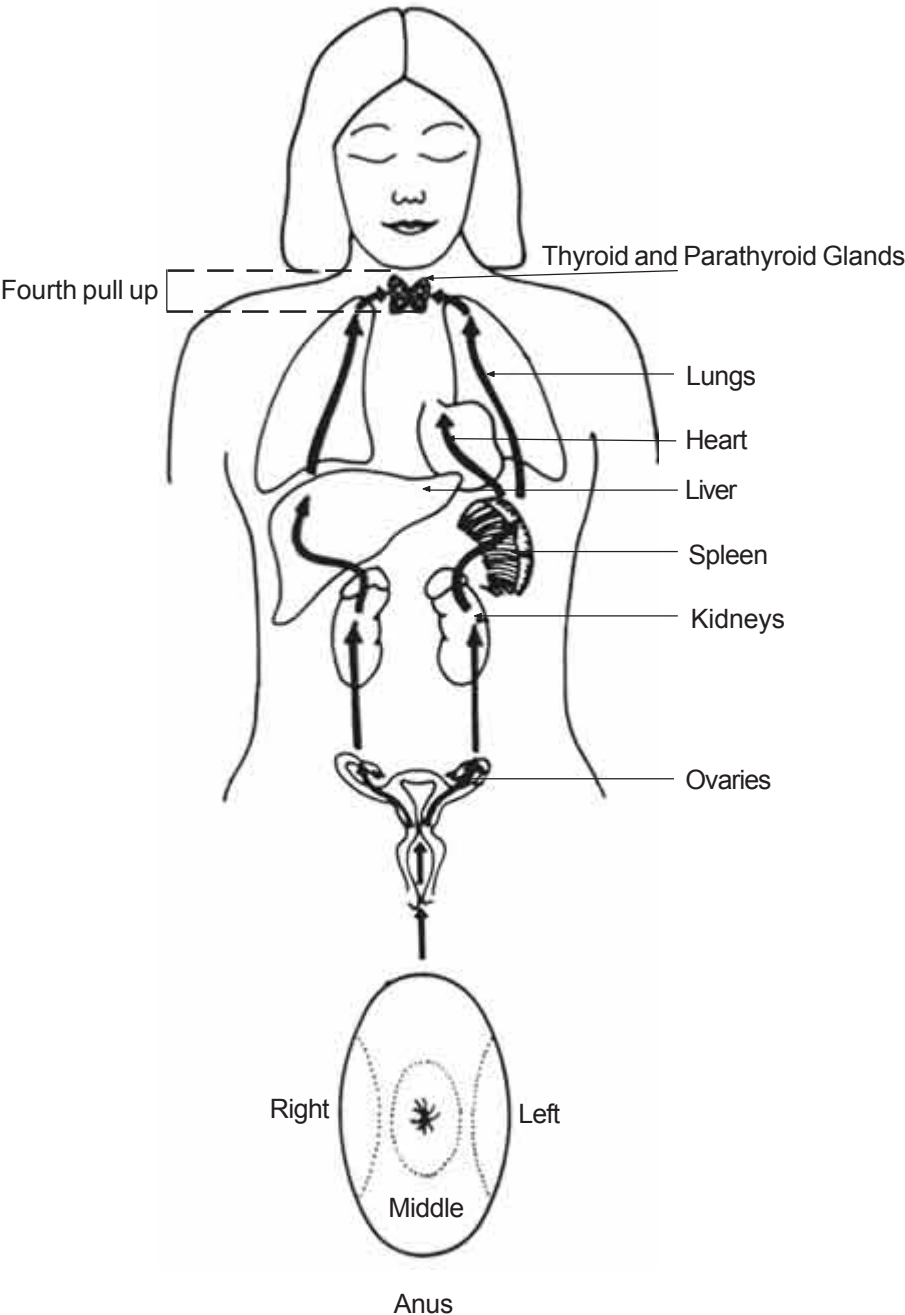


Fig. 2.13 Train the mind to direct Chi to the organs and glands.

g. Getting Energy to Abdomen by training the Mind to direct it.

After you have learned Iron Shirt Breathing, you can practice sending energy to the abdomen. With this exercise, you will gradually train your mind to direct and increase the Chi pressure at will to the upper middle and lower abdominal areas, or to the left or right kidneys, packing, wrapping and energizing them, to the adrenal glands, the liver, the spleen, the pancreas, the lungs, the heart, the thymus gland, or the thyroid and parathyroid glands. (Fig. 2.13) (In the advanced level, you will learn to direct Chi to other parts of the body as well.)

h. Practice: Development of Iron Shirt Protection

Make your left hand into a fist, with the inside edge of the fist facing inward as if it were holding a knife, and hold it over the abdominal area. Inhale. Imagine that Chi is filling the lower abdomen and that the edge of the fist is exerting 100 pounds of pressure against the abdomen. (Fig. 2.14) Resist. Now relax. Inhale. Do not force the energy in any way. When you feel comfortable with this pressure, gradually increase it so that the body will be able to handle it. This prepares you so that if you were hit without any warning anywhere on the body, you could send Chi to those points to cushion the body and vital organs from harm.

Most people cannot take a punch to the stomach, which is located at the level of the solar plexus. With this training, you would be able to do just that. However in the Taoist practice we do not encourage people to show off by taking a punch.

You must make sure you are relaxed throughout this exercise. begin by “filling the abdomen with air”. You can achieve this by concentrating on the area around and below the navel. The area from the navel to the sternum is divided into four parts. (Fig. 2.15) Wherever you direct your attention, Chi appears and protects the area like an inflated rubber tire. Use no force at any time in this practice. Simply breathe into the area you want to cushion, and concentrate on it while gradually pushing your palm into it. Do this systematically so that you cover all the body surfaces that you can reach.

Once you develop energy in the region between the sternum and the navel sufficient to protect you against unexpected injury, the rest of the abdomen is more easily protected. The counterpressure that is created drives Chi into the fasciae. When the deep fasciae fill with Chi pressure, the Chi pressure will spread out to the second layer of the fasciae. (For more detailed information regarding fasciae, see Chapter 4.) Soon, as you increase pressure in the abdomen, you will be able to move the Chi pressure around the abdominal area. Practice this constantly in conjunction with all of the Iron Shirt exercises.

Once you have become proficient with the hand, you can use a short stick. Press the stick in the abdominal area and push in as you bring the Chi pressure to the area to counteract the stick.

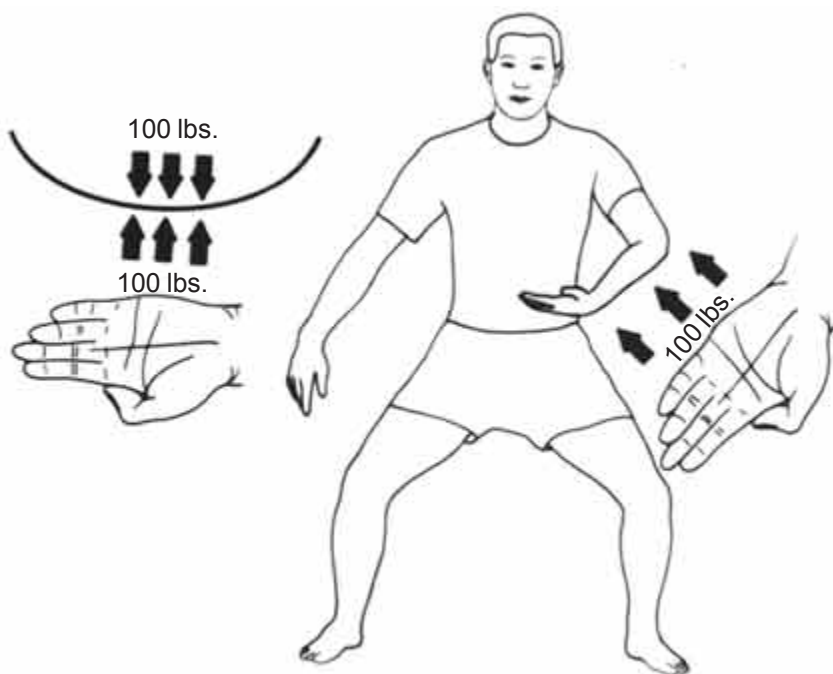


Fig. 2.14 *Imagine exerting 100 pounds of pressure against the abdomen.*

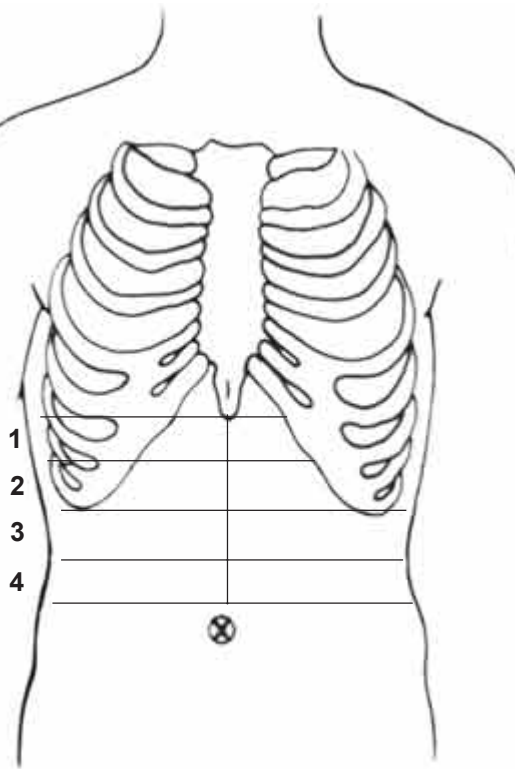


Fig. 2.15 *Four Divisions of the Abdomen below the Sternum.*

B. Summary of Iron Shirt Breathing

The breathing processes explained in this Chapter may seem to be numerous but, in fact, all relate and lead to Iron Shirt breathing.

1. Exercises to Improve Abdominal Breathing

a. Abdominal Breathing in a Lying Position

(1) Lie supine, legs flexed or extended, hands on belly. Inhale nine counts. Raise hands. Exhale. Repeat nine times with your hands at your sides.

(2) Lie supine, legs flexed or extended, hands on chest and lower abdomen. Inhale nine counts, allowing the belly to rise. Exhale. Repeat nine times with your hands at your sides.

(3) Repeat (1) and (2) on each side with knees flexed.

b. Abdominal Breathing on a Slant Board

(1) On a slant board, using a weight on the belly, inhale, raising the weight. Hold. Exhale.

(2) Lower the weight. Repeat, adding to the weight on a weekly basis. Repeat in multiples of three, nine, eighteen and 36.

c. Strengthening Through Counter Pressure

Use mind and body to direct pressure from within against an outside force, concentrating Chi in a particular area of fascia.

d. Abdominal Breathing in a Standing Position

(1) Stand with feet a shoulders' width apart. Inhale and hold as long as comfortable. Exhale. Repeat in multiples of three.

2. Iron Shirt Chi Kung Packing Process Breathing

a. Abdominal Breathing

Begin with abdominal breathing, expanding the lower abdomen.

b. Lower the Diaphragm

Lower the diaphragm upon inhalation while keeping the chest relaxed. Exhale, flattening the stomach, and feel the pull of the pelvic and urogenital diaphragms and sexual organs.

c. Reverse Abdominal Breathing

When you have brought the energy down to the navel, begin reverse breathing with an exhalation, flattening down the stomach. When inhaling, relax the chest and maintain a flattened stomach.

d. Slightly Contract the Pelvic and Urogenital Diaphragm

Contract the pelvic and urogenital diaphragm and, at the same time, slightly pull up the anus, and pull up the testicles or contract the vagina.

e. Packing Process Breathing

Begin Packing Process Breathing with an inhalation. Using the packing process, seal and limit the energy to a small area. The diaphragm is lowered. The stomach is flattened and held in. Pull up the sexual organs and anus and seal them so that no energy can leak out of these three areas.

f. Pack the Organs with Chi

The energy goes back, filling out and packing the kidneys' areas.

g. Exhale and Relax

Exhale and let the Chi out. Relax.

C. Cranial, Respiratory and Sacral Pump Functions

Contained and protected within your spinal column and skull is the very “heart” of your nervous system. Cushioning it is the cerebrospinal fluid, cerebro for the head and spinal for the vertebrae. This fluid, as described by the Taoists in ancient times, is circulated by two pumps. One is in the sacrum and is known as the sacral pump. The other is in the region of your upper neck and head and is known as the cranial pump. Many people who have been able to feel these pumps working have reported feeling a “big bubble” of energy travel up their spine during Packing Breathing.

1. Sacral Pump

The sacrum consists of five pieces of bone when we are young; when we grow up these five bones fuse into one piece. Taoists regard the sacrum as a pump which will help to hold the sexual energy coming from the sperm/ovaries and perineum and transform the energy, at the same time giving it an upward thrust. It is similar to a way station, refining the sperm/ovaries' energy as it circulates in the body. In the Iron Shirt practice we tilt the sacrum to the back, or against a wall, exerting force to straighten the sacrum. This helps to activate the sacral pump to pump the spinal cord fluid up.

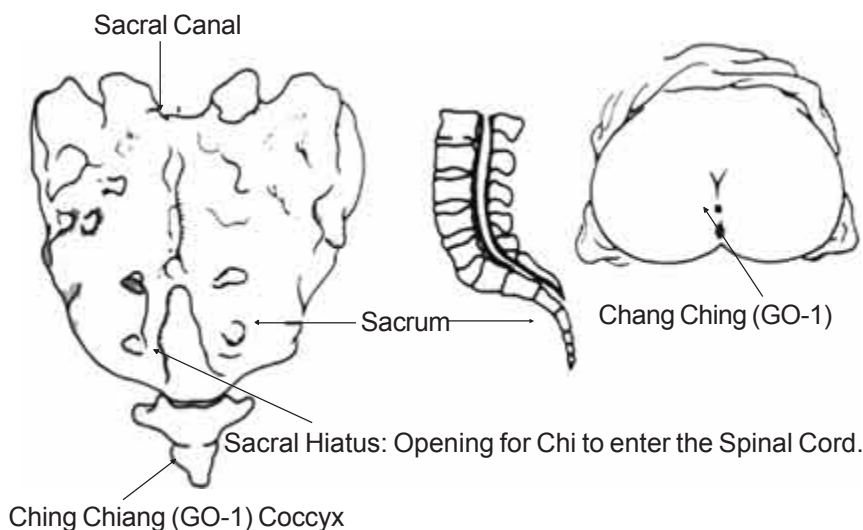


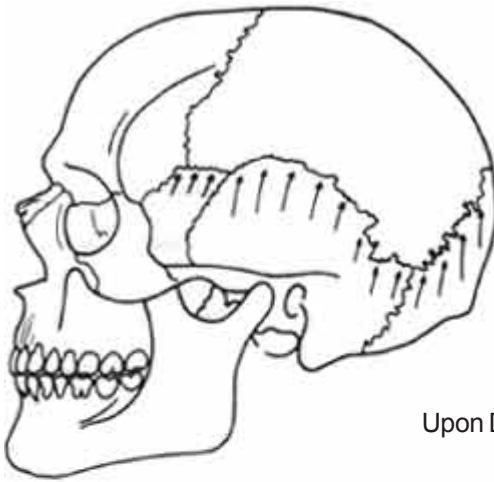
Fig. 2.16 *Sacral Pump*

2. Cranial Pump

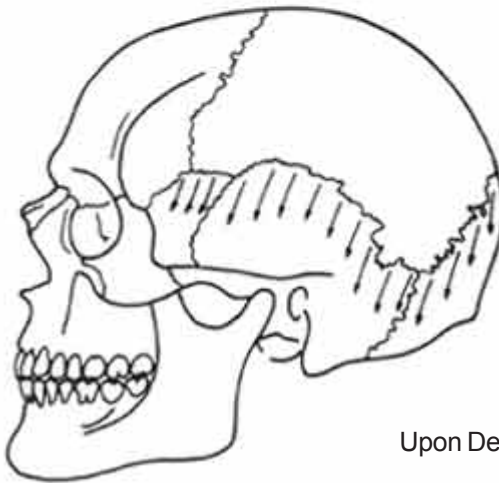
The cranium of the skull has long been regarded by Taoists as a major pump for the circulation of energy from the lower centers to the higher centers. Medical research has recently confirmed that minute movements of the joints of the eight cranial bones occur during breathing. (Fig. 2.17) Cranial movement is responsible for the production and function of the cerebrospinal fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord, which fluid is necessary for normal brain, nerve and energy patterns in the entire body.

Improper cranial respiratory function develops for many reasons. It may have been present from birth. At this time the skull is soft and moveable and the trip down the birth canal could jam a baby's skull, or it may be the result of a difficult birth in which forceps were used. It may also occur later in life. A bump on the head coming from a certain direction while the person is breathing in the specific manner that allows the bone to move can cause improper cranial respiratory function. Auto accidents causing whiplash very often are the cause of cranial faults. Since cranial faults affect the flow of the fluid and the brain, nerve and energy patterns of the entire body, symptoms can develop anywhere. Strengthening the cranial joints can increase energy and alleviate symptoms, such as headaches, sinus problems, visual disturbances and neck problems.

In Taoism, cultivation of the movement of the pelvis, perineum, urogenital diaphragm, anus, and the sacrum and cranial pumps is very important in helping to move the life-force and sexual energy up to the higher center. The Iron Shirt Chi Kung Packing Process activates these pumps using various methods, e.g. mind control, muscle action, clenching of the teeth and tightening of the neck, and pressing the tongue to the palate. All of these methods will help to activate the eight pieces of cranial bone.



Upon Deep Inhalation



Upon Deep Exhalation

Fig. 2.17 *Micromovement of Cranial Bones*

D. Microcosmic Orbit Meditation

1. Circulate your Chi in the Microcosmic Orbit

In the preceding breathing exercises, you have been asked at certain points to circulate the Microcosmic Orbit. Your life-force energy thus must be circulated through specific pathways in the body efficiently and safely to be used for healing and growth. The Microcosmic Orbit circulation uses the power of the mind to help activate the sacral and cranial pumps into pumping the life-force energy throughout the body.

It is much easier to cultivate your energy if you first understand the major paths of energy circulation in the body. The nervous system in humans is very complex and is capable of directing energy wherever it is needed. The ancient Taoist Masters discovered that there are many channels of energy flow. However, two energy channels carry an especially strong current.

One channel is called the “Functional” or “Yin” Channel. It begins at the perineum, the point located at the base of the trunk, midway between the testicles/vagina and the anus. It goes up the front of the body past the sex organ, stomach, organs, heart, and throat and ends at the tip of the tongue. The second channel, called the “Governor” or “Yang” channel, also starts at the perineum but goes up the back of the body. It flows from the perineum upwards into the tailbone and the sacral pump and then up through the spine into the brain and the cranial pump, finally flowing back down to the roof of the mouth.

The tongue is like a switch that connects these two currents—when it is touched to the roof of the mouth just behind the front teeth, the energy can flow in a circle up the spine and back down the front. The two channels form a single circuit that energy loops around. This vital current of energy circulates past the major organs and nervous systems of the body in a loop, giving cells the juice created from organ energy and smiling energy that is necessary to grow heal, and function, and spreading vitality throughout the body. This circulating energy is the Microcosmic Orbit, and forms the basis of acupuncture. Western medical research has already acknowledged acupuncture as being clinically effective, although scientists admit they cannot explain why the system works. The Taoists, on the other hand, have been studying the subtle energy points in the body for thousands of years and have verified in detail the importance of each channel.

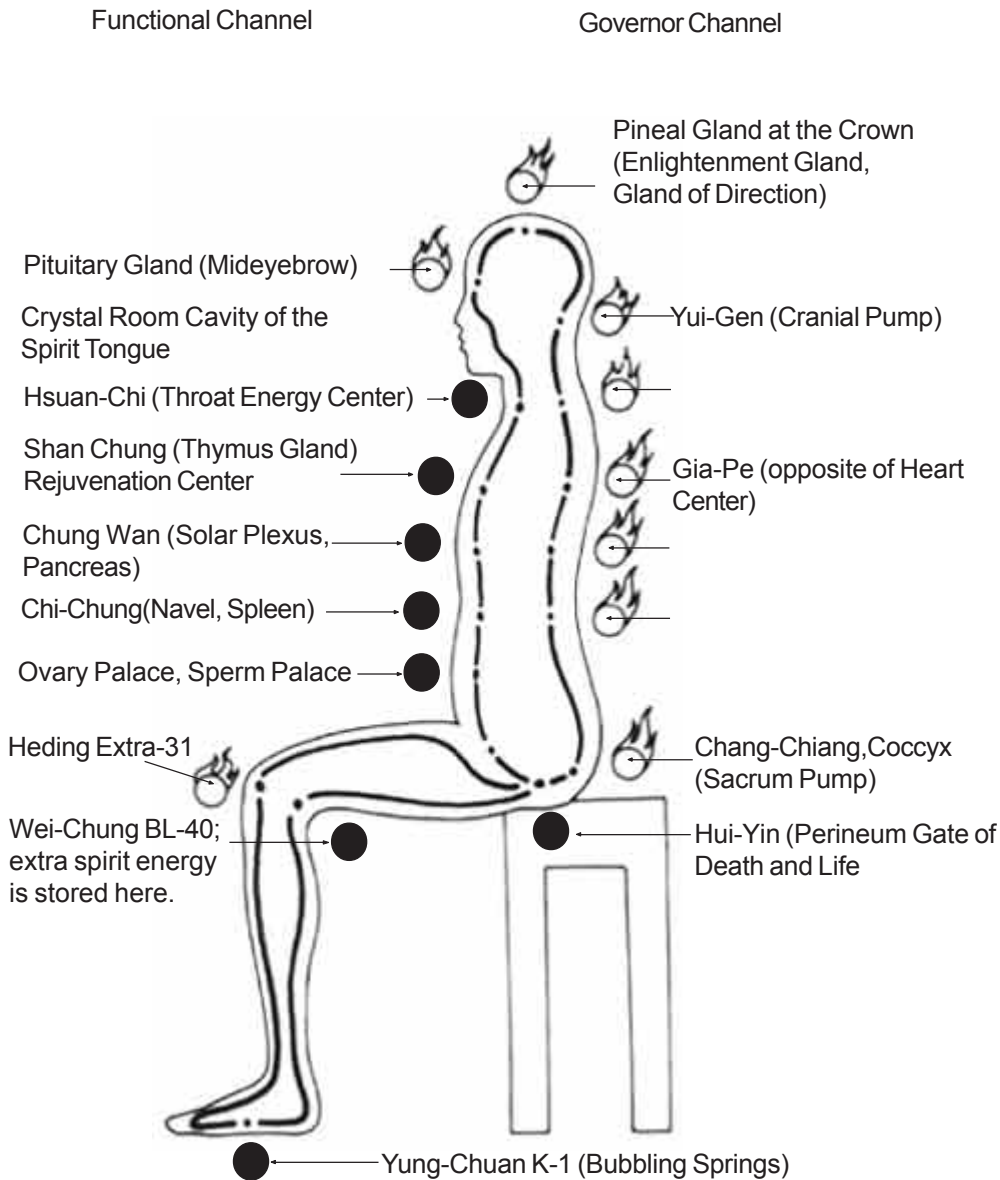


Fig. 2.18 Learn to circulate your Chi in the Microcosmic Orbit. Tongue touches the roof of the palate to complete the circuit of the Governor and Functional Channels.

2. Importance of the Microcosmic Orbit

By opening up this Microcosmic Orbit and keeping it clear of physical or mental blockages, it is possible to pump the life-force energy up the spine. If this channel is blocked by tension, then learning to circulate the Microcosmic Orbit is an important step to opening up the blocks in the body to circulate and revitalize all parts of the mind and body. Otherwise, when intense pressure builds in the head, taking such forms as headaches, hallucinations, and insomnia, much of the life-force energy escapes through the eyes, ears, nose and mouth and is lost. This is like trying to heat a room while all the windows are open.

The way to open the Microcosmic Orbit is by sitting in meditation for a few minutes each morning as you practice the Inner Smile. An essential Taoist technique, described in detail in *Taoist Ways to Transform Stress into Vitality*, the Inner Smile is a means of connecting visual relaxation and the ability to concentrate. Allow your energy to complete the loop by letting your mind flow along with it. Start in the eyes, and mentally circulate with the energy as it goes down the front through your tongue, throat, chest and navel and then up the tailbone and spine to the head.

At first it may feel as though nothing is happening, but eventually the current will begin to feel warm in some places as it loops around. The key is simply to relax and try to bring your mind directly into the part of the loop being focused on. This is different from visualizing an image inside your head of what that part of the body looks like or is feeling. Do not use your mind as if it were a television picture. Experience the actual Chi flow. Relax and let your mind flow with the Chi in the physical body along a natural circuit to any desired point, e.g. the navel, perineum, etc.

Study of the Microcosmic Orbit is recommended to all students who truly seek to master the techniques of Iron Shirt. Progress to the higher levels of transforming Chi and our creative energy to spiritual energy, without first learning the Microcosmic Orbit, is very difficult. Some people may already be “open” in these channels or relaxed when they are close to nature. The benefits of the Microcosmic Orbit extend beyond facilitating the flow of life-force energy and include prevention of aging and the healing of many illnesses, ranging from high blood pressure, insomnia and headaches to arthritis.

E. Perineum Power

In Iron Shirt practice, we will utilize “Perineum Power” to direct Chi to the areas, organs and glands that you wish to energize in order to pack and increase the Chi in that region. “Perineum Power” will be used in all Iron Shirt positions.

1. Anus is connected to Organ Energy.

The perineum (Hui-yin) region includes the anus and sexual organs. The various sections of the anus region are closely linked with the organs’ Chi. The Chinese term Hui-yin (perineum) means the collection point of all the Yin energy, or the lowest abdominal energy collection point. It is also known as the Gate of Death and Life. This point lies between the two main gates. One, called the front gate, is the sexual organ which is the big life-force opening. Here the life-force energy can easily leak out and deplete the organ’s function. The second gate, or back gate, is the anus. This gate can also easily lose life-force when not sealed or closed tightly through muscular toning. In the Tao practices, especially in the Tao Secrets of Love and Iron Shirt, the perineum’s power to tighten, close and draw the life-force back up the spine is an important practice. Otherwise, our life-force and sexual energy can become a “river of no return.”

2. Anus Region is divided into Five Parts.

The anus is divided into five regions: (a) middle. (b) front, (c) back, (d) left, and (e) right. (Fig. 2.19)

a. Middle Part

The middle of the anus Chi is connected with the organs as follows: the vagina-uterus, the aorta and vena cava, stomach, heart, thyroid and parathyroids, pituitary gland, pineal and top of the head. (Fig. 2.20)

b. Front Part

The front of the anus Chi is connected with the following organs: the prostate gland, bladder, small intestine, stomach, thymus gland, and front part of the brain. (Fig. 2.21 (a) and (b))

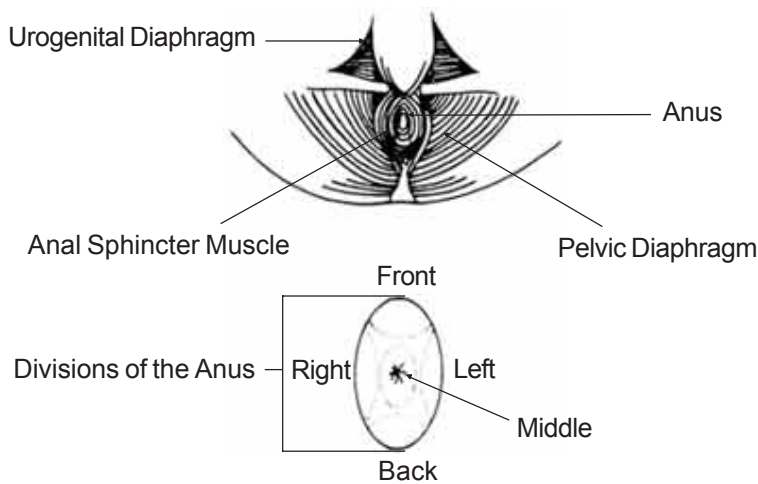


Fig. 2.19 The anus is divided into five regions

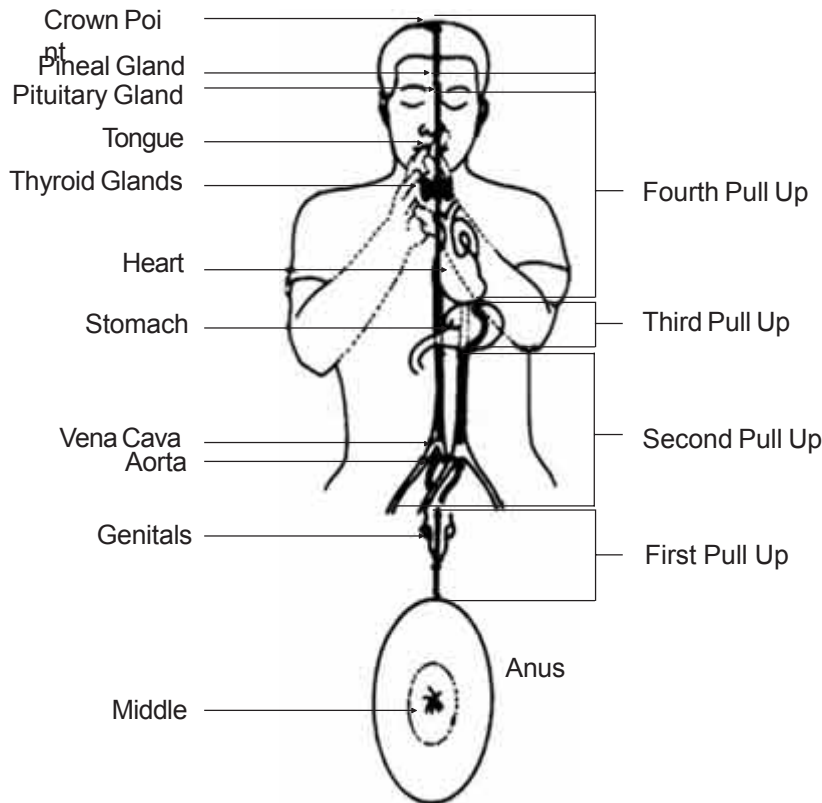
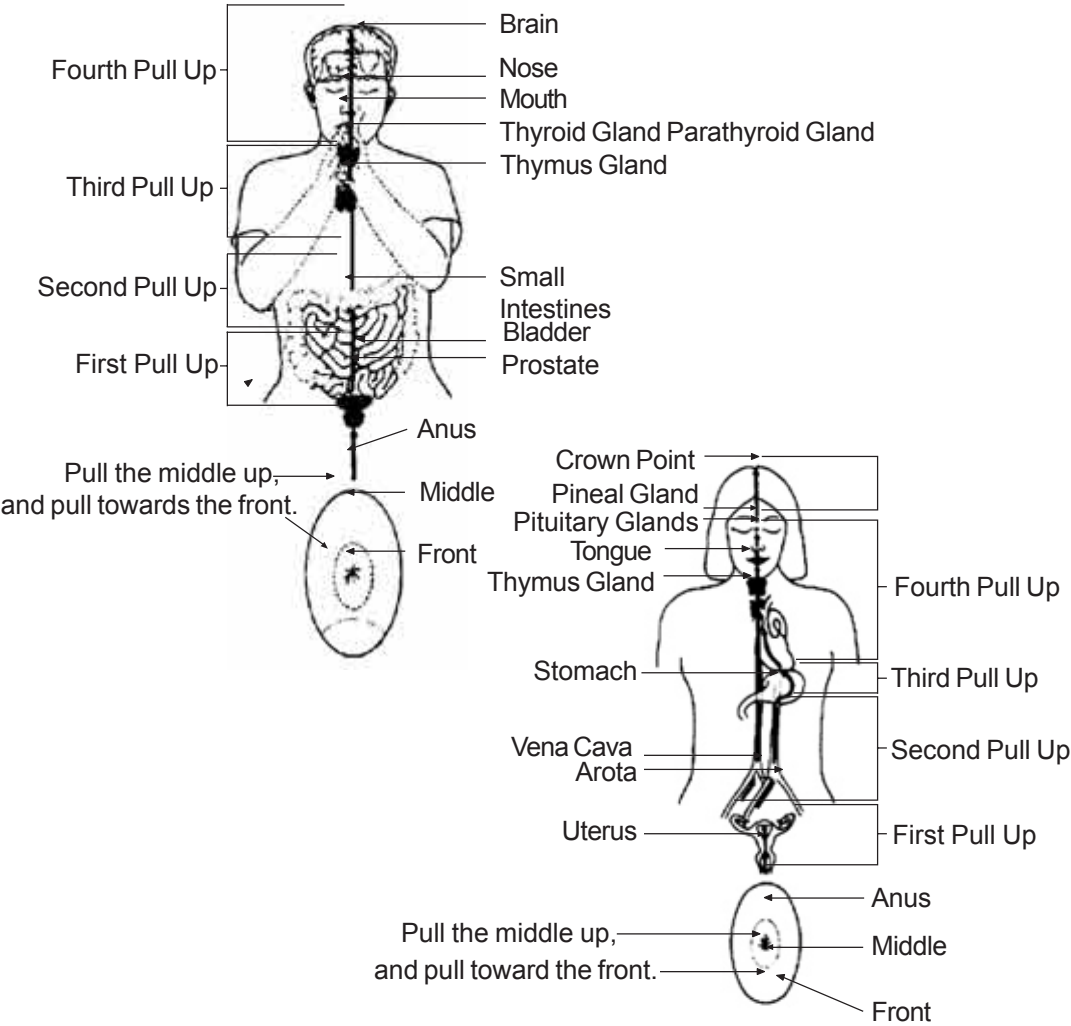


Fig. 2.20 Middle Part

(a) Front Part in the Male



(b) Front Part in the Female

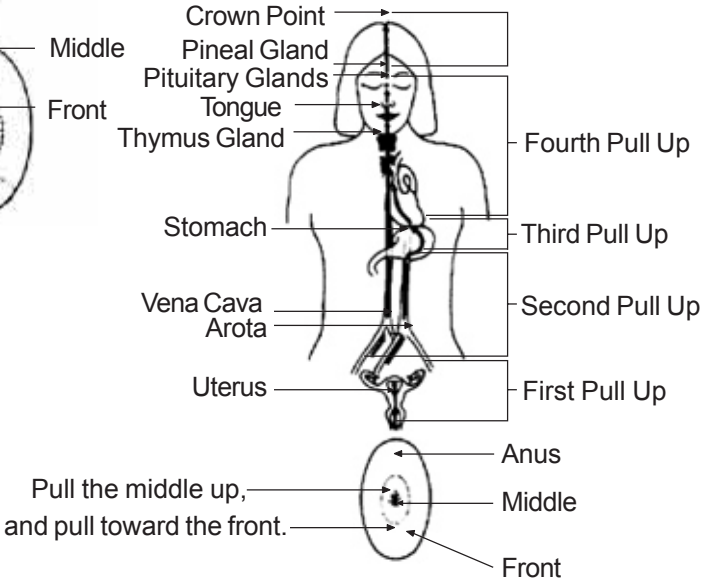


Fig. 2.21 Front Part

c. Back Part

The back part of the anus Chi is connected with the organ energies of the sacrum, lower lumbar, twelve thoracic vertebrae, seven cervical vertebrae, and small brain (cerebellum). (Fig. 2.22)

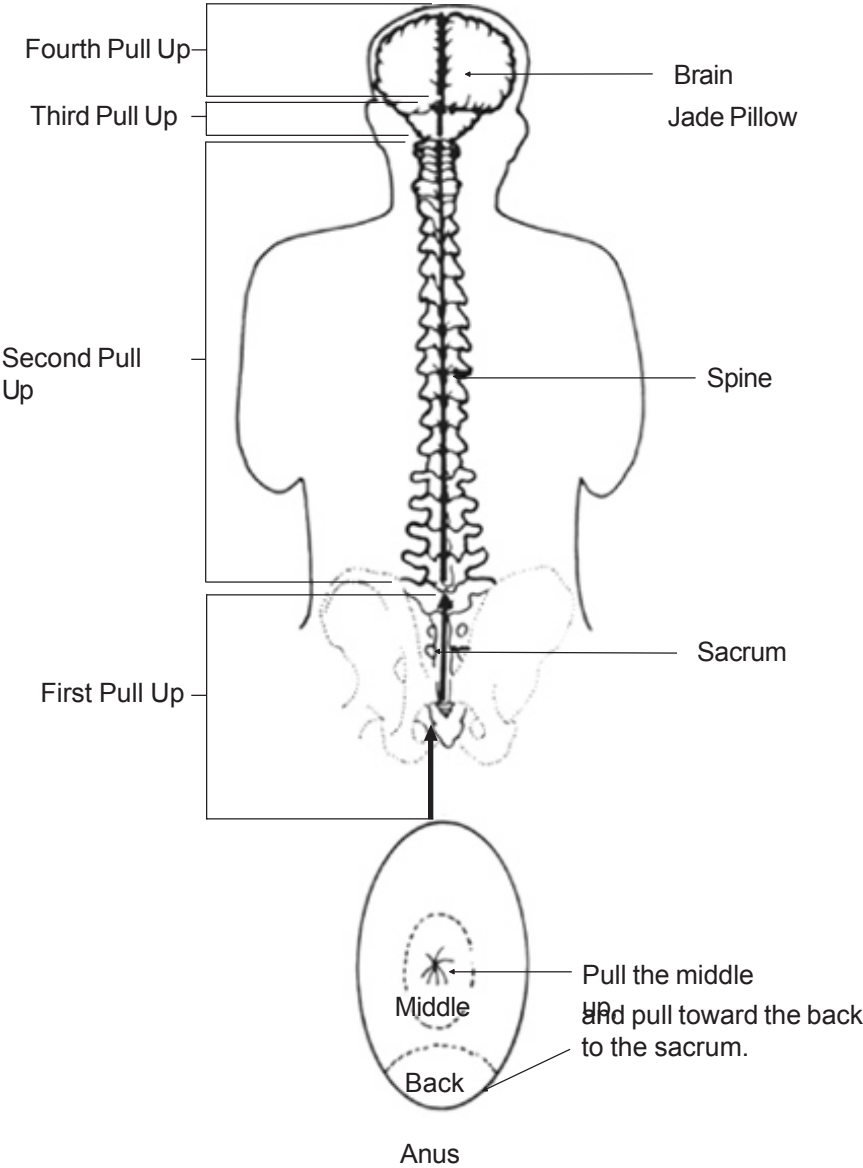
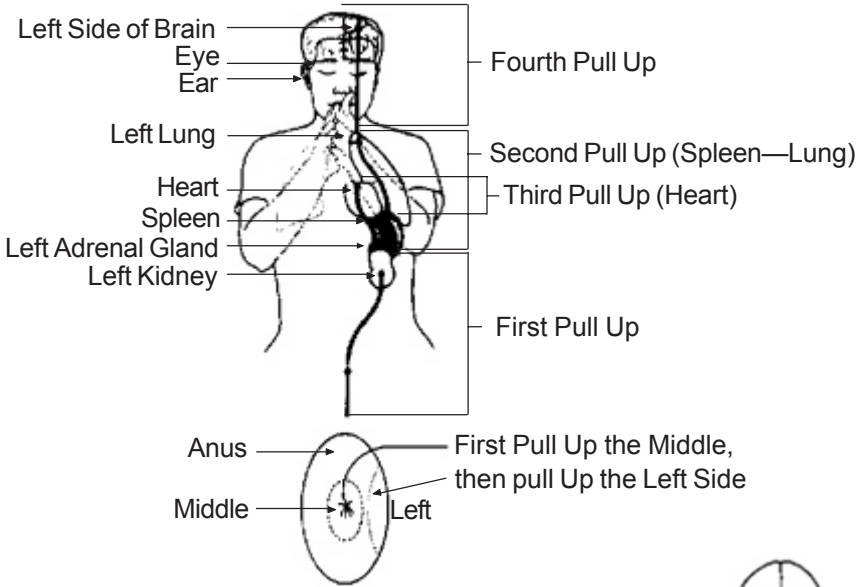


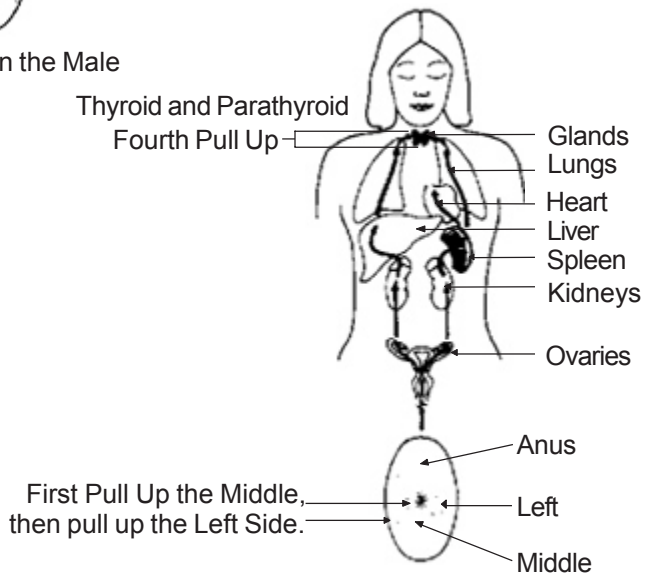
Fig. 2.22 Back Part

d. Left Part

The left part of the anus Chi is connected with the organ energies of the left ovary, the large intestine, left kidney, left adrenal gland, spleen, left lung and left hemisphere of the brain. (Fig. 2.23 (a) and (b))



(a) Left Part in the Male



(b) Left Part in the Female

Fig. 2.23 Left Part

c. Right Part

The right part of the anus Chi is connected with the organ energies as follows: the right ovary, the large intestine, right kidney, adrenal gland, liver, gall bladder, right lung and right hemisphere of the brain. (Fig. 2.24 (a) and (b))

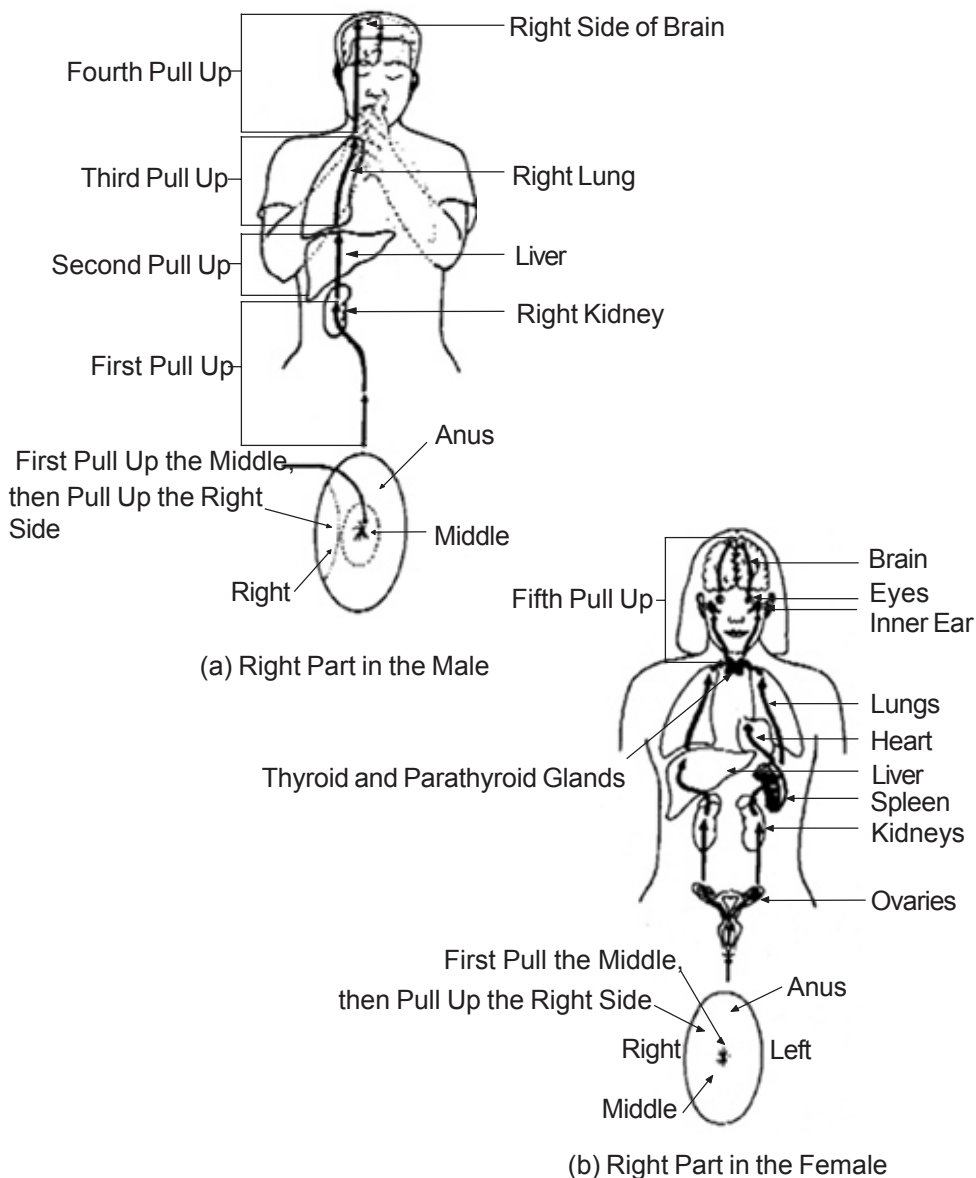


Fig. 2.24 Right Part

By contracting the anus in different parts you can bring more Chi to the organs and glands, and the effects of the massage will increase. (Fig. 2.25)



Fig. 2.25 *Wrap the organs, encircling them with Chi energy.*

F. Precautions

The following is a warning to practitioners with high blood pressure, emotional instability, heart or chest pain, or any acute illness.

1. If you have high blood pressure, check with a doctor before attempting the practice of Iron Shirt. Do not do the exercises and breathing techniques strenuously.

2. Women should not do Iron Shirt breathing during a menstrual cycle, but may practice the structure, standing Chi meditation and Bone Breathing. If pregnant, do not practice Iron Shirt Packing Breathing; use only energizer breathing and standing Chi meditation.

3. Be sure that the diaphragm is lowered while practicing these exercises to avoid accumulating energy in the heart and to facilitate the flow of the Microcosmic Orbit.

4. After practicing the postures, while bringing the energy down, be sure to place the tongue on the roof of the mouth to collect all energy from the head (the Governor Channel). Take the energy down from the head, slow it down in the solar plexus, and then store it in the navel.

Chapter 3

Practice of Postures

There is an integral relationship between strong, unblocked Chi flow and good structural alignment. Proper practice of Iron Shirt, as well as all other Taoist exercises, will lead to a dramatic improvement in structural health, as well as increased Chi flow. A refined understanding of the structural interrelationships of the body is inherent in Iron Shirt.

Because of poor postural habits, many people have developed serious structural distortions and have no natural sense of the body in appropriate alignment. If these distortions are carried over into Iron Shirt practice, much effectiveness is lost and bad habits perpetuated. In effect, one is practicing the very problems that need to be corrected.

I. Iron Shirt Horse Stance using a Wall

The following exercise demonstrates how to use a wall to align yourself perfectly in the Iron Shirt Horse Stance used in Embracing the Tree, Holding the Golden Urn and the Phoenix postures. These postures will be described fully in this chapter.

This wall position is a variation of the Structural Training Position against a Wall which is described in Chapter 4. As your practice continues, you will develop the feeling of proper alignment and will be able to follow the same principles without a wall. Whenever you practice your alignment against the wall, when you feel you can hold the position, step away from it and apply the same principles. After you have learned to adopt the correct stance without the wall, occasionally practice against it again to check yourself. Once you are skilled, occasional use of the wall will allow you greatly to increase your spinal lengthening when you practice.

Use this wall position to practice alignment by itself as well as with the breathing used in Embracing the Tree and the other excersises in which packing is done. Practicing the full exercise with Packing Breathing while against the wall will help to insure that you can maintain the alignment while in the much more dynamic state of packing and energy circulation.

At first, applying some of these details may seem difficult or unclear. However as your body opens up, you will gradually be able to apply each detail easily and naturally. Since these principles represent application of the basic design characteristics of your body structure, you will feel more and more as you practice that your body will naturally fit into these "grooves".

A. Sequence of Practice in Using a Wall to Develop the Iron Shirt Horse Stance

1. Distance Between Feet

Stand with the left foot a few inches away from the wall. The foot should be straight along the second toe, or just slightly turned out at the heel. To measure the proper distance between the feet, touch the knee of the right leg to the heel of the left foot. Place the ball of the right big toe in line with the ball of the left big toe so that both are the same distance away from the wall. Now, as you stand up, rotate the right foot around the ball of the big toe. Both heels will then be the same distance from the wall, and the feet will be the correct distance apart.

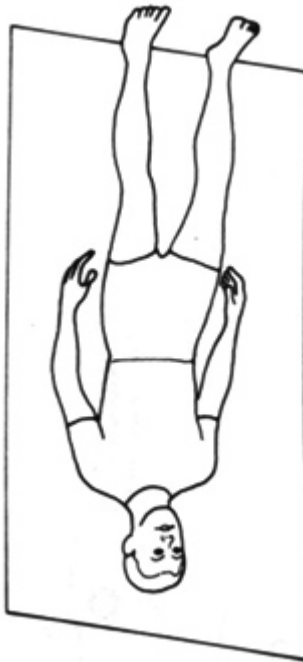


Fig. 3.1 Horse Stance Using a Wall

2. Foot Alignment

First, feel that you firmly contact the ground with the balls of the big toes. Then, spread the toes by widening the feet across the balls. Now equalize the weight over the whole foot by equalizing the weight on the following three points: the ball of the large toe, the ball of the last two toes, and the middle of the heel. (Fig. 3.2) The toes should remain relaxed and not be grasping the floor. Remember that the feet are the foundation of your stance. As these details become natural, your practice will be much stronger, and you will experience greater body-mind integration. Proper foot alignment is the basis of understanding.

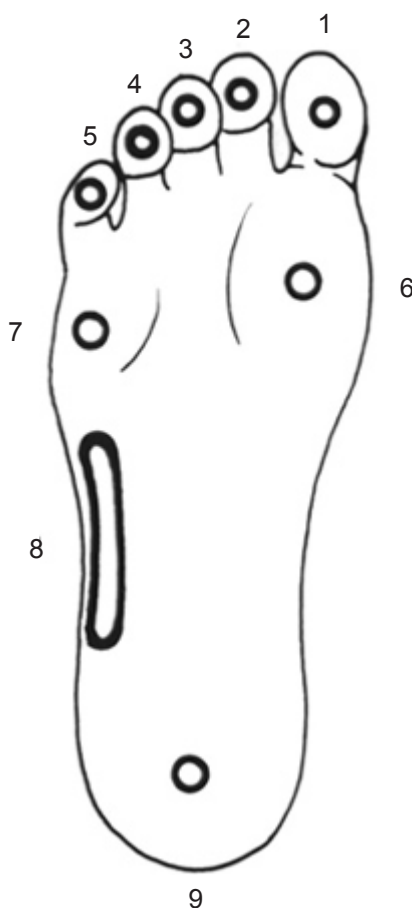


Fig. 3.2 *Nine Points of the Foot*

3. Distance from the Wall

The feet should be the right distance from the wall so that with the spine flattened to the wall, you do not feel like you are leaning back. If the wall were suddenly removed, you would not need to adjust yourself to keep from falling back.

4. Rooting with the Feet

When practicing those parts of Embracing the Tree and Rooting that call for strongly grasping the ground with the toes, feel that this clawing begins at the balls of the feet, not at the toes themselves. Accentuate this grasping at the big toe in particular and there will be much stronger rooting because the foot is used in a more complete and integrated fashion.

5. Knees

Bend the knees so that the kneecaps are directly over the toes. Bend the knees no farther than the ends of the big toes. The knees can be bent less than this, but eventually should be bent this far to insure maximum development of strength.

6. Pelvis

First, allow the lower spine to flatten firmly against the wall for as long as this can be done without discomfort. Then, place your hands on the tops of the thighs at the crease where the thighs connect to the pelvis. With the lower spine flattened to the wall, you will feel that the tendon in the front of the thigh and slightly to the inside is very tight. Now rotate the pelvis slightly so that the lower spine comes away from the wall. You will feel this tendon relax. You should barely be able to place a flat hand between your lower spine and the wall. This will also increase the crease at the junction of the thigh and pelvis. Continue to feel that the sacrum is stretching the spine down.

7. Pelvic Tilt

As your practice of Iron Shirt continues and your attention is focused to the sacral area, the pelvic tilt is used. This is accomplished by strongly pushing against the wall at the sacral area while maintaining the other structural details. As you strongly push back to the wall,

your spine will arch slightly more, and you will feel the muscles around the sacrum become very firm. As this happens, it is very important to feel that you are also stretching the sacrum further down the wall. (Fig. 3.3) If you are doing this properly you will feel a strong force around the sacrum with only a small added arch in the lower spine.

8. Middle Back

To insure that this pelvic aligning does not arch the middle spine, maintain the pelvic tilt position, and push back gently but firmly the back lower ribs, simultaneously lifting them slightly higher up the wall. During this procedure you will feel the middle and lower back lengthen. (Fig. 3.3) This is the work of the psoas muscles.

9. Head/Neck/UpperBack

Remain in the pelvic tilt position and bring as much of the upper spine as flat to the wall as possible without strain. Maintain the head as if it is being gently pushed back from the upper lip and simultaneously lifted by its crown. (Fig. 3.3) Again, for many people the head held in this way will not touch the wall. This is usually because of excessive curvature of the upper spine, which can be eliminated by practice of the Iron Bridge, the Backbend and Door Hanging. (The Iron Bridge is described subsequently in this chapter; see Chapter 4 for descriptions of the Backbend and Door Hanging.)

10. T-11 Thrust

When Chi energy is brought to the adrenal energy center (the T-11 point, located at the top of the kidneys at the point of the adrenal gland, or at the bottom edge of the rib cage at the spine) and packed in the kidney area, it is necessary to lean forward and thrust the T-11 area back. To feel this on the wall, simply keep the T-11 area firmly pressed against the wall and round the rest of the spine above this point away from the wall, while maintaining the other alignment principles. By practicing against the wall in this way, it is possible to feel this thrust very strongly, as when practicing with a partner pushing at that point.



Fig. 3.3 *Pelvic Tilt*

11. Shoulders

Place the arms in any one of the arm positions as described in the first four Iron Shirt exercises in this chapter . Then move the shoulder blades firmly back to the wall so that the whole area of each shoulder blade is in firm contact with the wall. Now round the shoulders forward, feeling the shoulder blades move away from the wall, until just the spine and, if possible, the area between the inner edges of the shoulder blades remain on the wall.

12. Head/Neck (C-7, the Base of the Neck, and C-1, the Base of the Skull)

After rounding the shoulders forward, push back gently, but firmly at C-7, the bone at the base of the neck, and at C-1, the bone at the base of the skull. The chin will tuck in as you do this. When bringing the Chi to these two points, you will drop the chin, bringing it closer to the chest. Even when pushing strongly neither point will touch the wall. Until that point in the exercise is reached, however, push back less strongly (particularly at C-7) to insure that alignment with the upper spine and neck remains correct. (Fig. 3.4) If done properly, pushing back at C-7 after rounding the shoulders forward will increase the rounding of the shoulders, and you will feel that the shoulders have become “locked” in place.

13. “Locking” the Structure

Lock the knees and do not move them. As you concentrate on the knees, they will feel as though they are simultaneously being pushed in and out. Then push the knees outward. You will feel a spiraling effect from the knees to the ground as if your legs were screws being screwed down into the earth. In Embracing the Tree, similarly lock the arms, but do not move them. Feel that the elbows are simultaneously being pushed in and pulled out as if the arms were screws being moved by the spiraling action of the forearm. You can also feel this locking action of the elbows and the knees if you imagine that you are straightening the joint, but without actually doing so. Locking these joints greatly improves strength, stability and Chi flow. Practice the Wall Stance and the Embracing the Tree posture for a while, until you can feel you are able to hold the position.

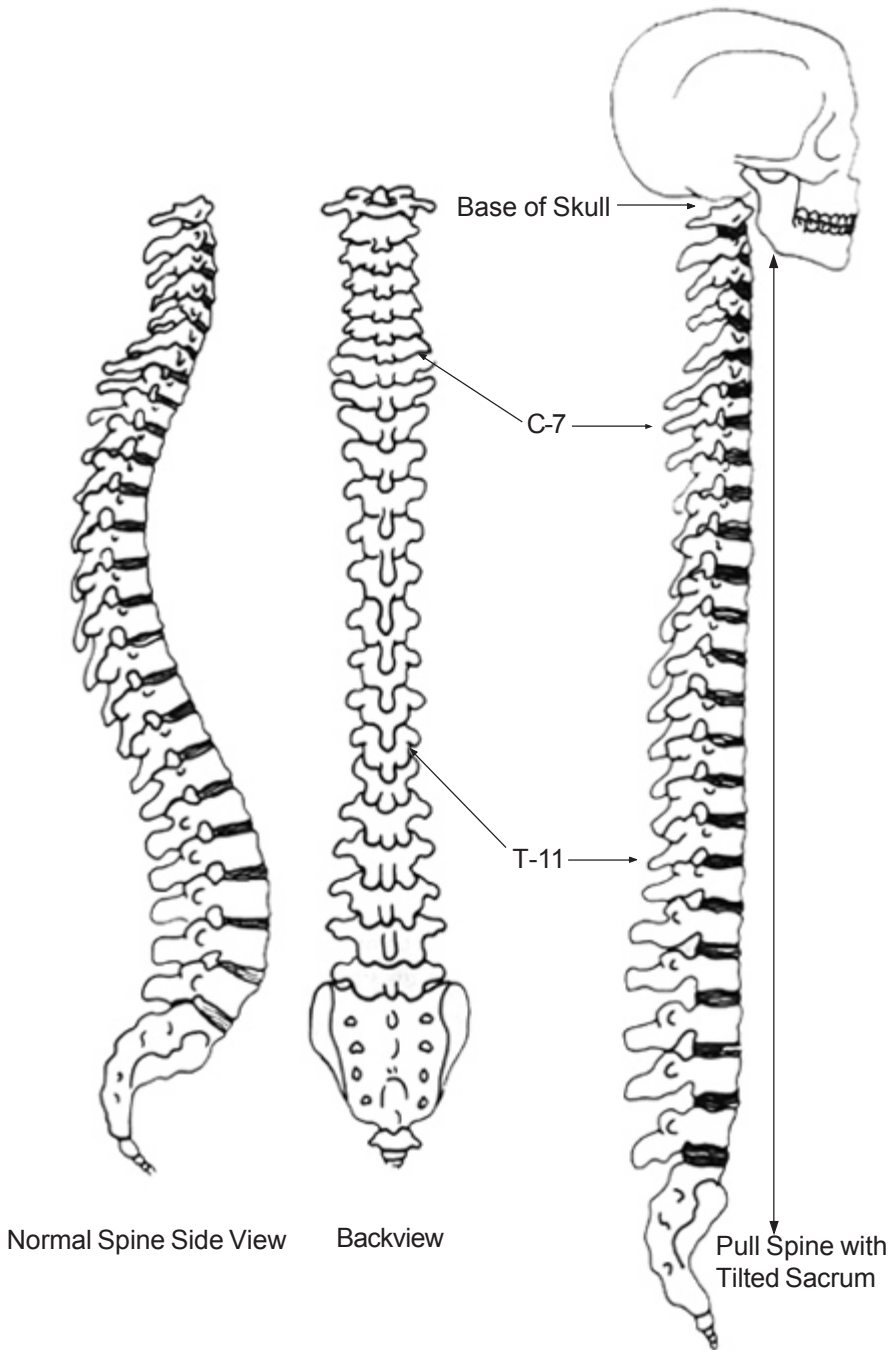


Fig. 3.4 Spinal Alignment

B. Summary of Practice for Using a Wall to Develop Iron Shirt Horse Stance Basic Alignment

1. Feet: Measure the proper distance of the feet from each other and from the wall. Align each foot.

2. Lower Back: Lean against the wall with the lower spine flat, if possible.

3. Head/Neck/Upper Back: Bring as much of the upper spine as possible flat to the wall, with the head held as if it is pushed back from the upper lip and lifted by its crown. The back of the head may or may not touch the wall.

4. Pelvis: Rotate the pelvis back until the thigh tendon is more relaxed. Feel that the sacrum is pulling the spine down.

5. Middle Back: Bring the lower ribs firmly to the back wall, then stretch them up slightly higher on the wall.

6. Arms/Shoulders: Position the arms for one of the first four Iron Shirt exercises. Flatten the shoulder blades to the wall. Round the shoulders forward, feeling the shoulder blades move away from the wall until only the spine and, if possible, the area between the inner edges of the shoulder blades remains on the wall. Lock the elbows and knees.

7. Chest: Check that the chest muscles are relaxed. The chest will be somewhat depressed.

8. Head/Neck: Gently, but firmly, push back at C-7 and at the base of the skull. Extend up from the crown of the head. The back of the head does not touch the wall.

Special Alignment During the Exercises:

9. Rooting with the Feet: "Claw" with the feet by grasping with the balls of the feet first, particularly the balls of the big toes. The toes will then follow in grasping the ground.

10. Pelvic Tilt: Rotate the pelvis back farther as you strongly extend the sacrum down the wall. Feel the muscles around the sacrum firmly push against the wall.

11. T-11 Thrust: Push the T-11 area firmly to the wall as you bring the rest of the upper spine away from the wall,

II. Starting Position for all Exercises: Embracing the Tree

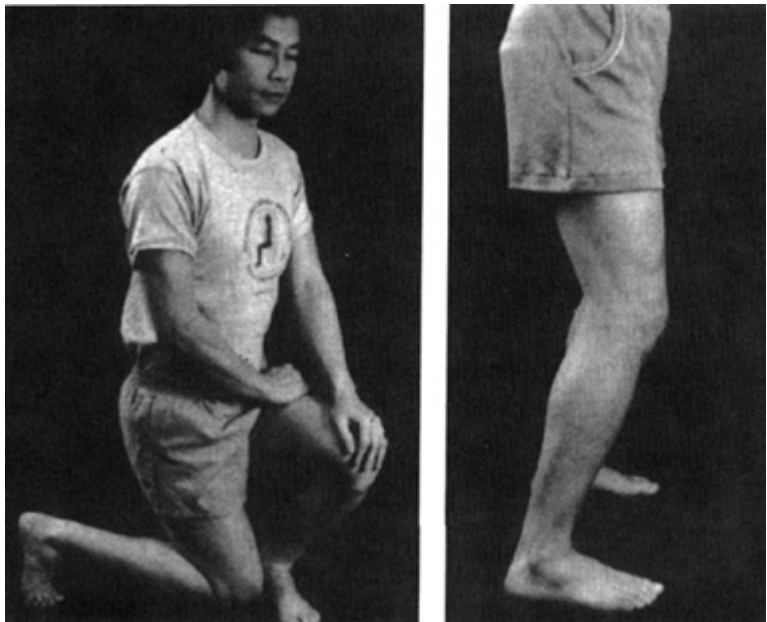
We will describe the positions of Embracing the Tree very carefully in a detailed, step-by-step explanation in Part A below. In Part B, we will give a sequence of practice, which will give you a complete sequential picture to follow without distraction. Practice as you read Part A first. Then, join all the steps together by following Part B. Part C is a summary of the sequence of practice. Utilize the Horse Stance with the assistance of the wall to improve your structure.

A. Embracing the Tree (Explanation of Procedure)

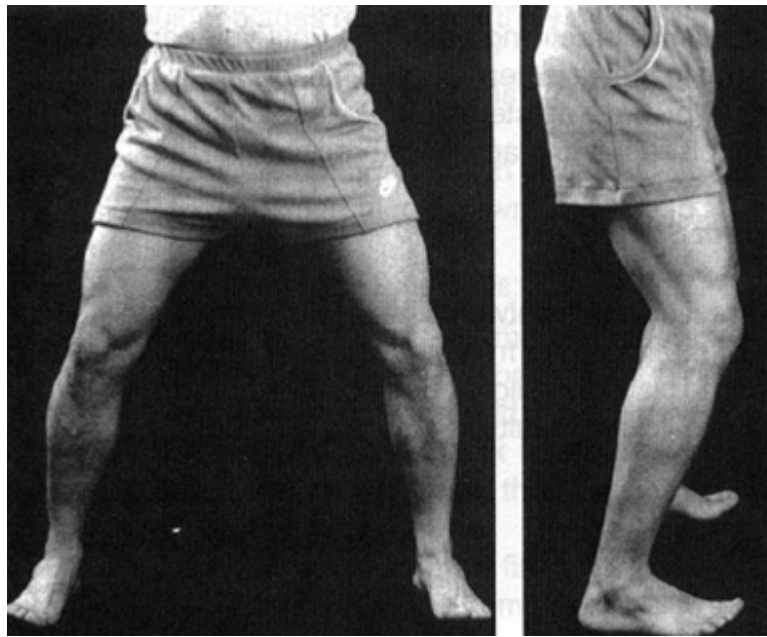
Embracing the Tree is the Master Stance practice. This practice joins many body structures and tendons (Chi channels) together into one system. In the beginning it seems difficult, quite like putting a puzzle together. However if you begin this practice by taking one step at a time, practicing each one until you can master it, then moving on to the next step, you will find this practice much easier to do. Once you have mastered the Horse Stance on the wall, you will find it much easier to practice Embracing the Tree.

1. Correct Stance

The correct distance between the feet in all Iron Shirt stances is the length of the lower leg from knee to toes. (Fig. 3.5(a)) Beginners may wish to place feet slightly farther apart, but the standard position yields the quickest results. (Fig. 3.5(b),(c) and (d))



(a) Finding the Standard Position of the Feet. (b) Rooting the Feet



(c) Incorrect Rooting—Front View (d) Incorrect Rooting—Side View

Fig. 3.5 Embracing the Tree—Rooting



Fig. 3.6 Feeling rooted to the Earth.

2. Rooting of the Feet

As previously discussed, rooting is a very important practice in the Tao System which begins with the physical practice and builds into the higher or spiritual, practice. Like the foundation of a building, the Rooting Practice makes a strong foundation upon which to build, making the structure last longer.

To root is to surrender yourself to the pull of gravity while maintaining a structural skeletal alignment which supports the body in an upright posture.

In beginning the physical part of rooting, the soles of the feet (K-1) are the places where Mother Earth's healing energy enters. When the soles are open, you can feel the soles "sucking" and having a connection with the ground. This healing energy passes into the body through the soles and will nourish the organs and the glands.

Like the roots of a tree, the feet support the entire structure. (Fig.3.6) It is important to distribute your weight solidly and evenly on the whole foot. We divide the foot into nine parts, or nine bases: (1)big toe, (2)second toe, (3)third toe, (4)fourth toe, (5)small toe, (6)big ball, (7)small ball, (8)outer edge, and (9)heel. (Fig.3.7)

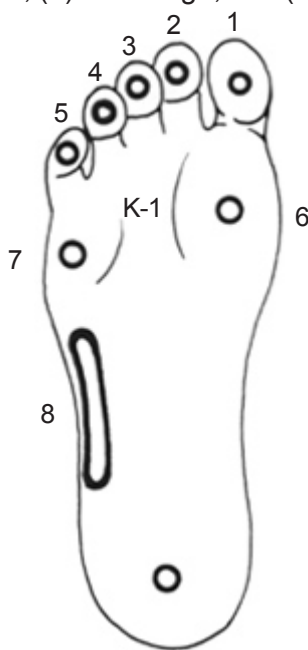


Fig. 3.7 K-1 and the Nine Points of the Foot

You must feel that the nine parts are evenly contacting the ground. Feel and check which parts are too tense or have too much pressure on them. This can cause the body to misalign and the spine to tilt to one side. Over a long period of time, improper alignment can cause spinal cord or disc problems.

The big toe joins with the tendons of the thumb (Fig. 3.8). and the little toe joins with the tendons of the pinky finger (Fig. 3.9); thus, all the tendons of the body are connected, increasing your rooting power. Slightly moving the feet inward, thereby pointing the toes in, will help to make the connection of the big toes and the thumb. In this posture, imagine you have roots extending down into the ground.



Fig. 3.8 *Tendons of little toes join with the tendons of little finger.*

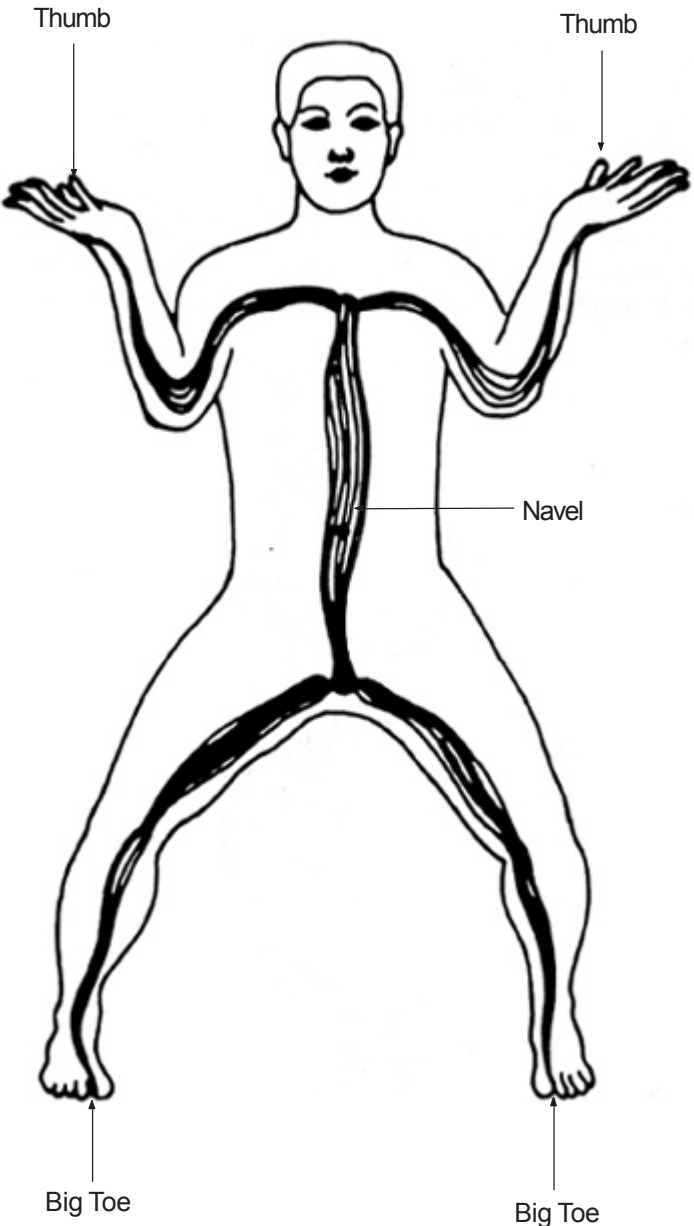


Fig. 3.9 Tendons of the big toes join with the tendons of the thumbs.

Note that if, at this point, the toes and ball of the foot were raised, the practitioner could easily be pushed over.

In the spiritual level of rooting, it is important to know that as there is a Mother Earth, there is a Father Heaven. Many people in the spiritual practice always want to raise themselves to a higher level to be filled with spiritual energy. If you want to go higher, you must take care that the foundation, the rooting, is good. This connection of heaven and earth is most important in the Tao practice. In the higher practice, the ground energy from Mother Earth is equally important to the spiritual energy from Father Heaven.

To assist you at this point with an overall view of the Embracing the Tree posture, see Fig. 3.10(a) through (g).

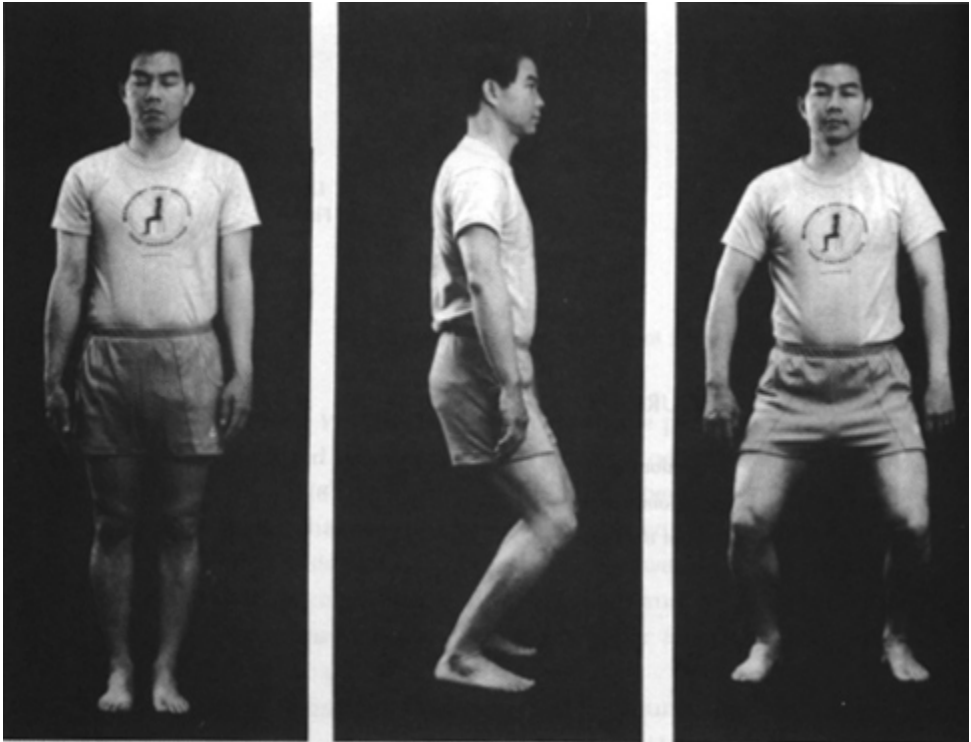


Fig. 3.10 *Embracing the Tree Posture*



(d) Full Embracing the Tree Posture—Front View



(e) Full Embracing the Tree Posture
—Side View



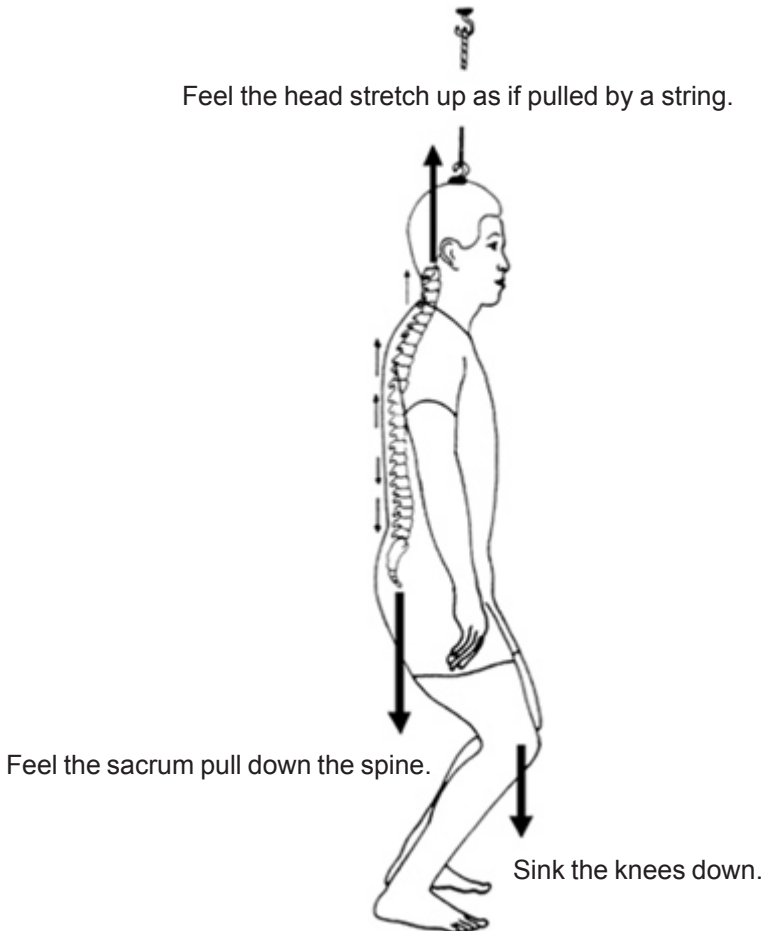
(f) Full Embracing the Tree Posture—Back View



(g) Rounding of the Scapula

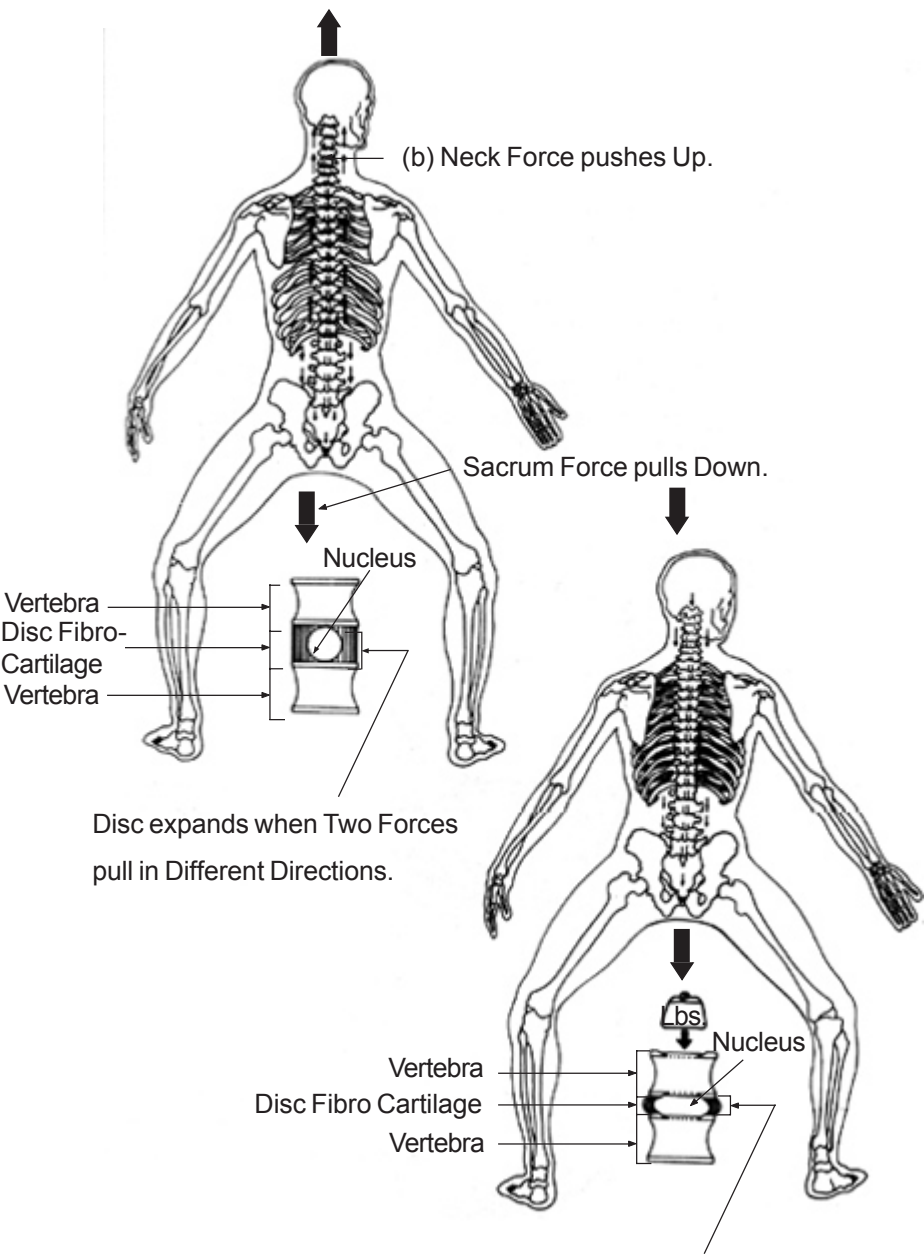
3. Elongation of the Spine (Fig. 3.11(a), (b) and (c))

When you feel the Chi and fullness down below the navel, slowly sink down into the knees and feel the sacrum pulling the spine down and the head stretching upward as if pulled by a string. Keep the spine erect. Feel the spine suspended upward and the sacrum downward in order to help elongate the spine and keep the discs released. Gradually you will become taller. This elongation gives more room for expansion of the nervous system and for spinal fluid and Chi to travel freely. Look straight ahead, and step to the side with the left foot to the standard position.



(a) Elongation of the Spine

Fig.3.11



4. Three Chi Circles

a. Connect the arm with the scapula-the First Circle (Fig. 3.12)

Raise your arms in a circle as if holding a large ball or a tree lightly between the hands and chest. This forms the first circle. Your fingers should be gently separated by holding the fingertips of each hand one to two inches apart from each other. The neck (C-7) is the main juncture where energy and the powerful tendons of the body meet. Gradually you will feel the Chi spread from the C-7 to the outside of the arm, to the middle finger to the palm and feel the Chi jump from the right middle finger to the left middle finger and from the right thumb to the left thumb.

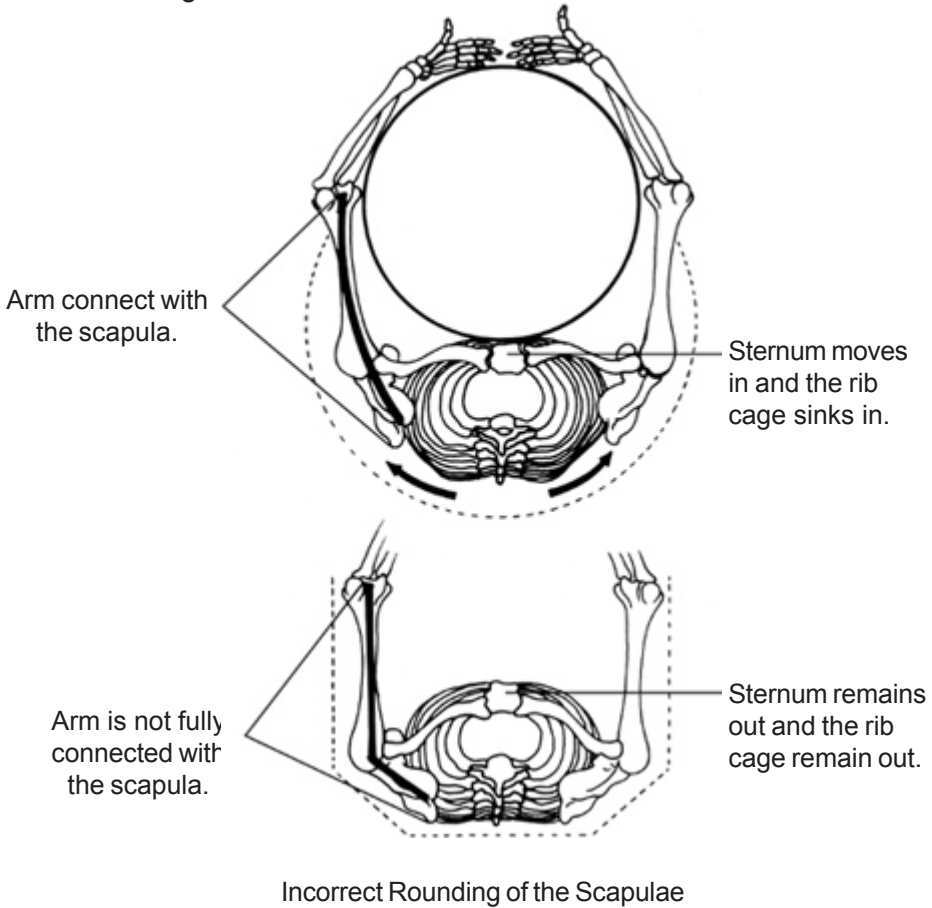


Fig. 3.12 First Circle: Connect the Arms with the Scapulae

Elbows sink down, turning inward, and should feel as if they are maintaining their position by resisting the downward pull. Imagine that someone is pushing you on the outside of your elbows and you, in turn, are pushing outward to maintain the position. Feel the spiral in your forearm as if it were a screw turning clockwise. This will connect the wrist, elbow and arm together. Relax the shoulders. Drop the neck muscles down. The trapezius muscles, connecting the back of the neck with the back of the shoulders, have to be relaxed so that the connection can be transformed down. (Fig. 3.13).

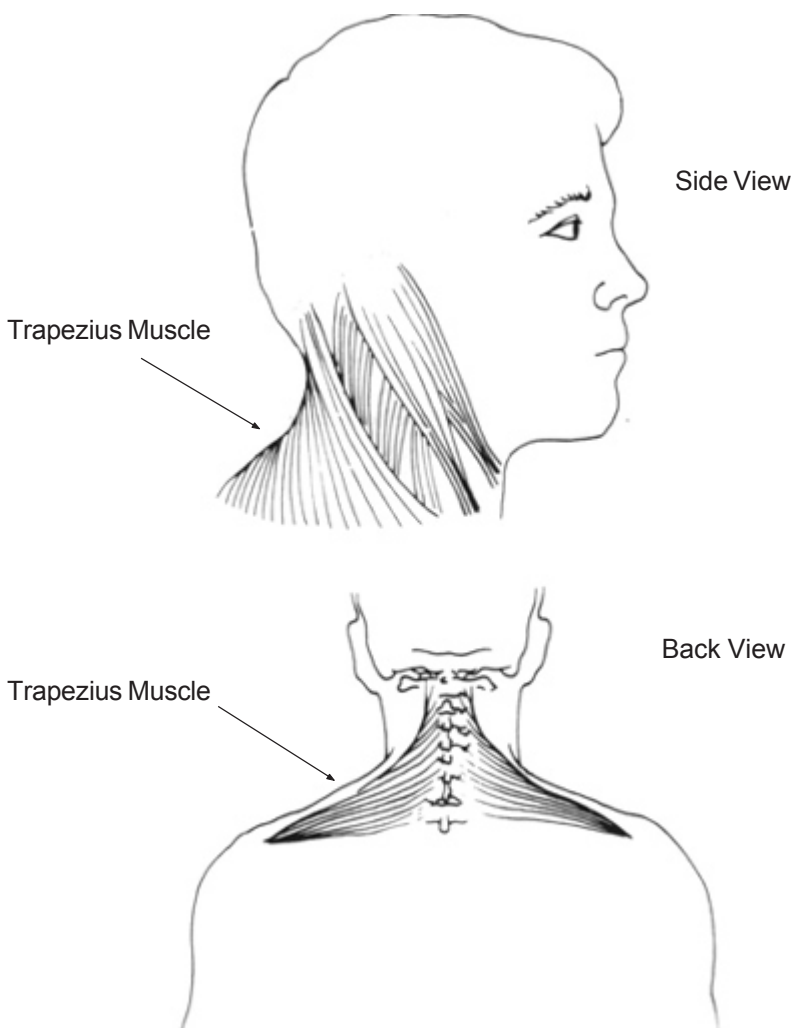


Fig. 3.13 *Trapezius Muscle*

Bring your concentration down the spine, pressing down on your skeletal structure to the sacrum, to the knees, and finally down to the feet and the earth. You are pressing down on the skeletal structure for the body's support, rather than the muscles. The pressure gradually travels down the spine to the sacrum and hips, tightening the legs and feet. Eventually you will feel your bone structure connected down to the ground, rooted as if you had grown into the ground and were all one piece with the earth. (Fig. 3.14)

Stand erect, feet close together and feel the weight distributed evenly on the feet. Relax the neck, the shoulders and the chest. Gradually bring your attention to the navel and send the Chi energy to the navel until you feel a warm fullness there.

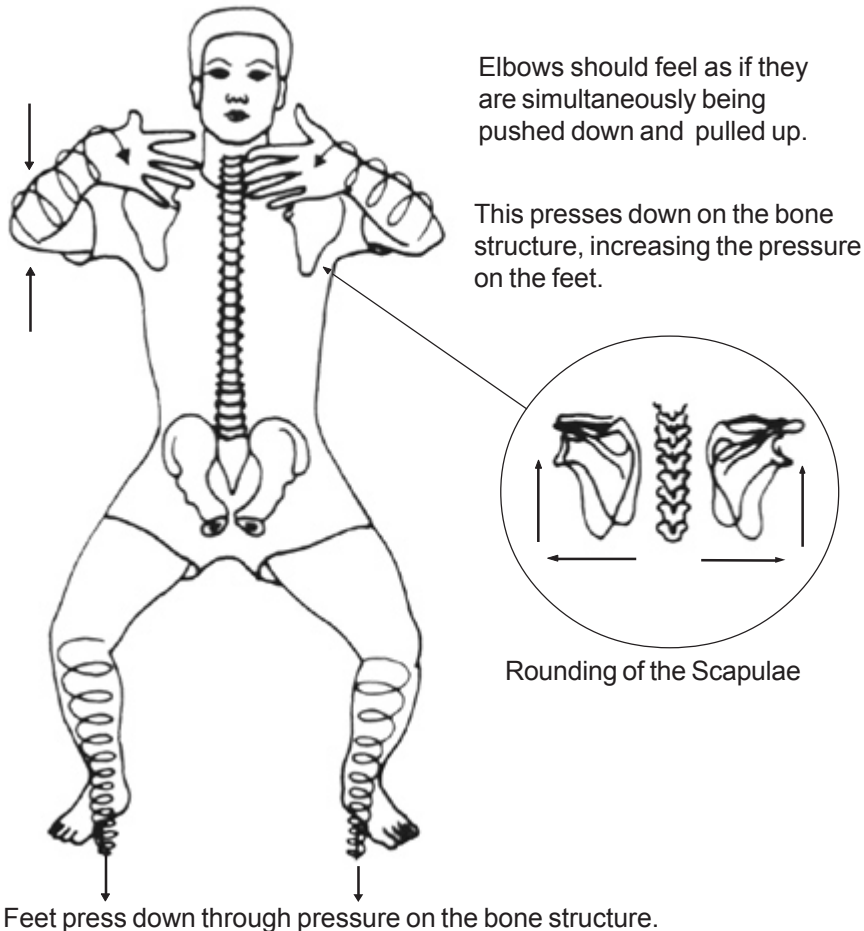
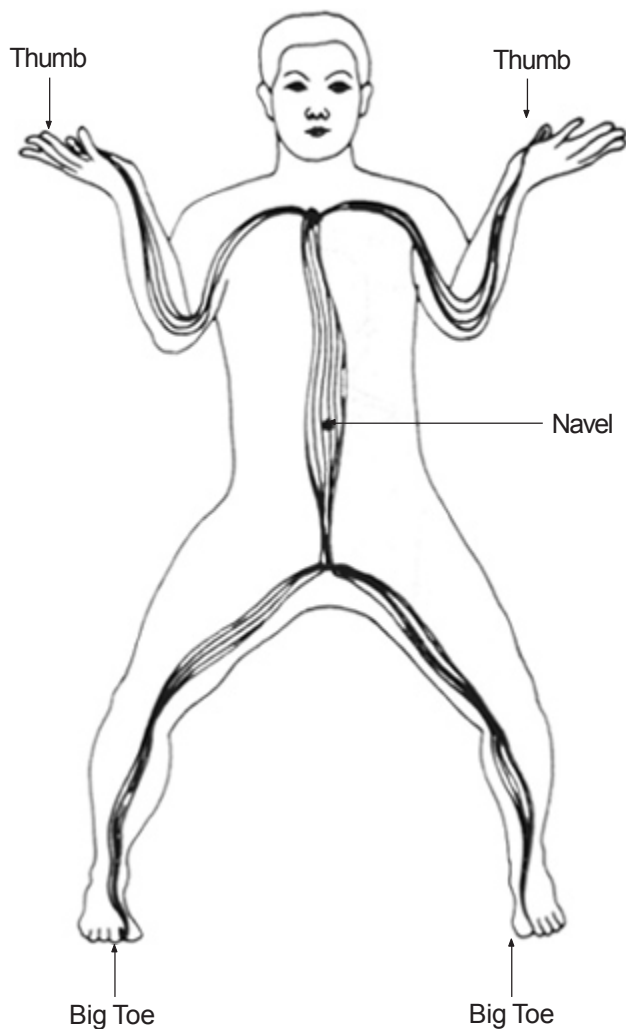


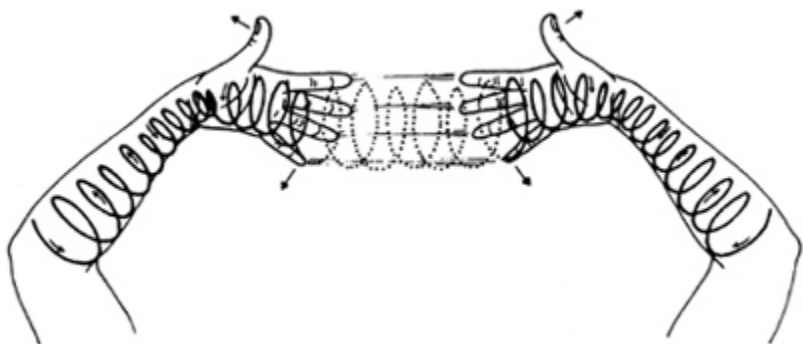
Fig. 3.14 Press down on the bone structure.

b. Connect the scapulae with the spine—the Second Circle (Fig. 3.15 (a), (b) and (c))

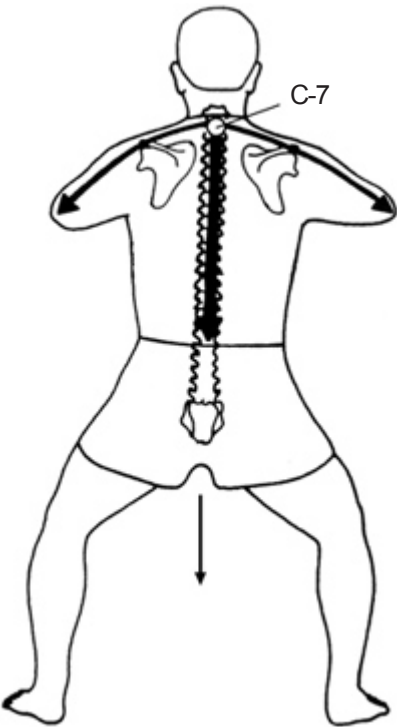
Thumbs point up so that the energy will flow between the two thumbs and the energy will connect with the big toes; thus, the two muscle-tendon meridians join together, and the front structure of bones, tendons, fasciae and muscles tighten the structure together as one. (Fig. 3.15 (a))



(a) The tendons of the big toes' lines connect with the tendon of the thumbs.



(b) Spiral the energy through the arms and out of the fingers.



(c) Stretch like a bow from C-7 to the thumbs, thereby connecting the hands, C-7, scapulae and spine

Fig. 3.15 Second Circle: Connect the Scapulae with the Spine

Attach the hands and fingers to the scapulae, or shoulder blades, and cranial bone by pulling the thumb tendons away from the body and the pinky fingers' tendons towards you. Feel a spiraling action turning in a clockwise circle as you pull the scapulae to the side. (Fig. 3.15(b)) As in using the wall, feel as though the inner edges of the shoulder blades remain on the wall with the shoulder blades sticking to the back of the rib cage. This will allow the transference of force from the shoulder blades to the rib cage, which in turn will transfer to the C-7, or energy junction point, to the spine, the sacrum, the knees and down to the feet. In this way the force can also be transferred from the earth to the feet, to the knees, to the hips, to the sacrum, to the spine, to the shoulder blades and, finally, to the hands. Since the shoulder blades, while near the spine, are not connected to it, there can be no force transferred from one to the other unless you practice the proper stretching.

In practicing this posture, you will feel a stretch of force form like a bow from C-7 to the thumb. When your elbows sink and press inward, you will feel more of the stretching of the bow. By stretching the scapulae and spine tendons and connecting them together (Fig. 3.15 (c)), the back becomes rounded and the chest sinks. Feel the hollowness of the chest. The sternum then sinks down to press the thymus gland, the major gland of rejuvenation and the immune system. (Fig. 3.16) Keeping this gland active will increase Chi flow.

These events will help to activate the cranial pump. (Fig. 3.17) Rest and feel the head start to pulsate. Joining the powerful muscle-tendon meridian down to the navel will connect the Chi energy in the front line and join the bone structure of the rib cage together (Fig. 3.15(a)) In doing so you are helping to sink the energy down. This forms the Second Circle.

Embracing the Tree will strengthen the thumb and toe muscles and tendons along this meridian. The thumb and toes have the principal rooting power.

By strengthening these muscles tendon meridians which join at the navel, all the muscles, tendons, bones and fasciae (connective tissues) will become tied together greatly improving the bone structure and holding a good posture.

Bad posture is caused by weak tendons, muscles and fasciae, which cause bones to fall easily out of alignment.

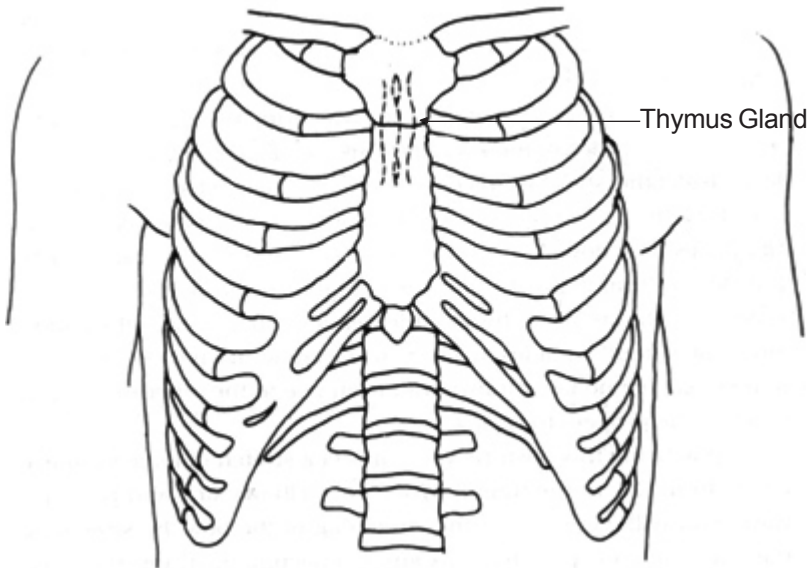
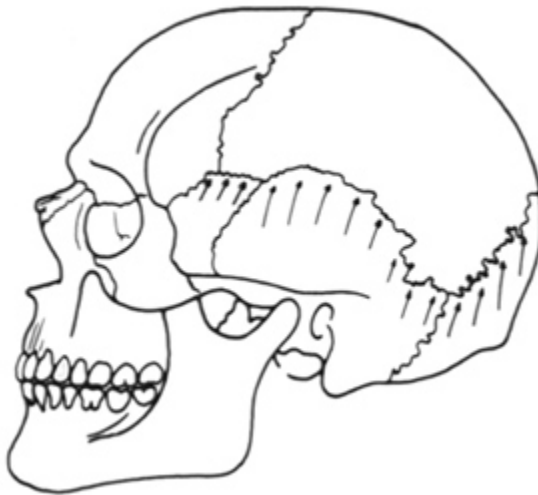


Fig. 3.16 *Thymus Gland is the major gland of rejuvenation and the immune system.*



Cranial Pump becomes activated during the Second Circle when, upon deep inhalation, there is a micromovement of the Cranial Bones.

Fig. 3.17 *Cranial Pump*

c. Connect the hand, scapulae and spine to the sacrum—the Third Circle (Fig. 3.18)

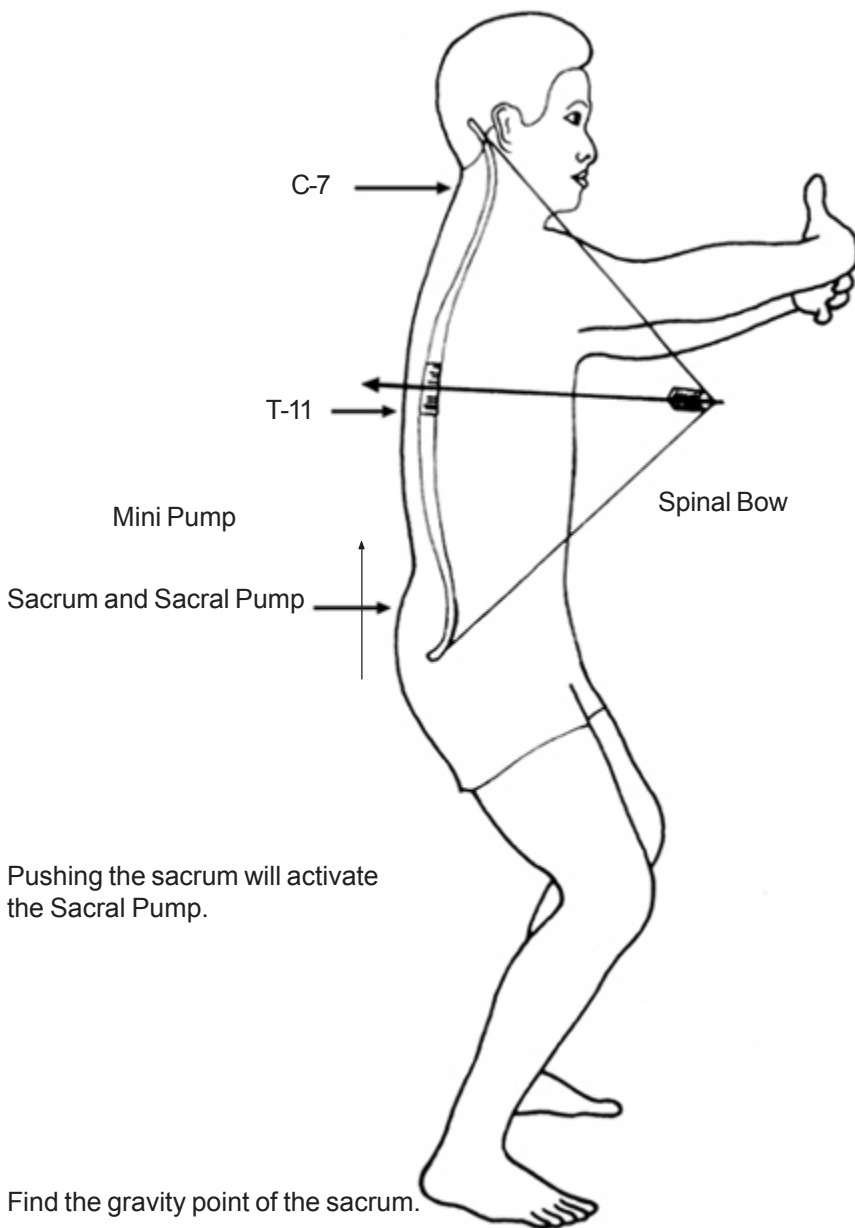


Fig. 3.18 Third Circle: Connect hands, scapulae and spine to sacrum.

This connection is made by pushing out the curve of the C-7 from the sternum, the natural curve of the spine, and locking the hips. This will stretch the spine like a flexed bow that will link the spine, C-7, scapulae, shoulders, arms, elbows, and hands together. Push the sacrum out as if you were pushing against the wall; the hips remain the same. The hip bones and sacrum can be separated individually. Once you can separate out and move the sacrum straight, you can activate the sacral pump which is very important to help circulate the Chi. (Fig. 3.19) You will feel the connection of the spine, the scapulae and the sacrum. Find and adjust the gravity point of the sacrum in between the feet.

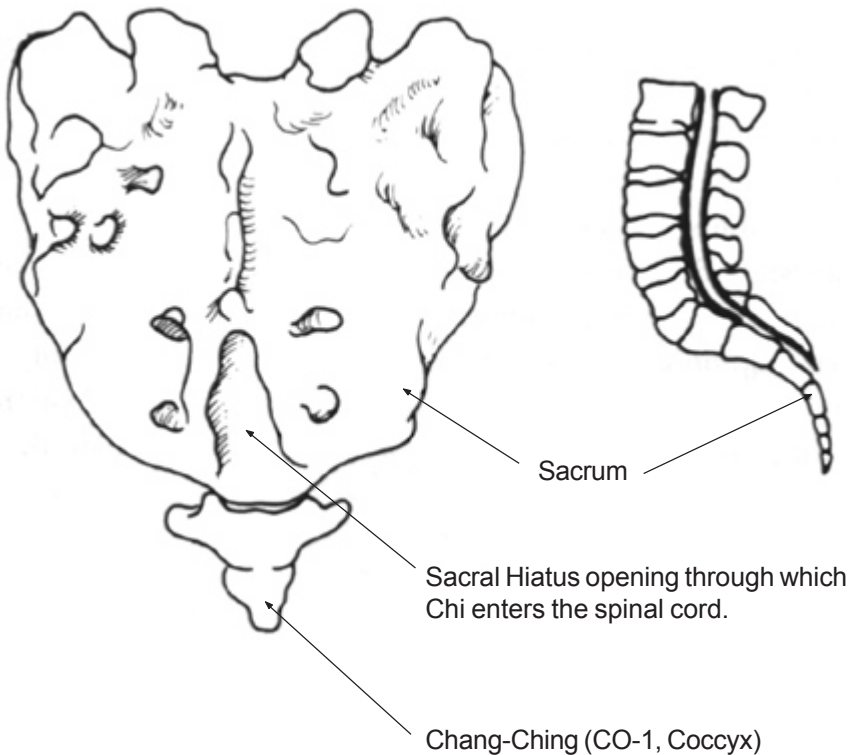


Fig. 3.19 *Sacral Pump*

The greatest kinetic energy and power in the human body is generated through the hip joints, around which are attached the largest muscles (the psoas muscles). (Fig. 3.20) However if you cannot open the pelvis and differentiate both sides (pelvic differentiation), the power of the hip joints is limited to only two directions. The simple fact of standing on one leg without leaning to one side would require an internal sense of the angle of the pelvis, and the arrangement of the spine. To feel “empty” on one side can only happen when you feel grounded, supported and aligned on the other (emptiness and fullness: Yin-Yang).

Round the pelvic area like an arched bow. By turning the big toes in slightly, the second toes point straight ahead so that your feet are positioned as though standing on the circumference of a circle, making yet another circle. This will gradually open the groin area and allow the Chi pressure to fill the area as if a ball were in this area.

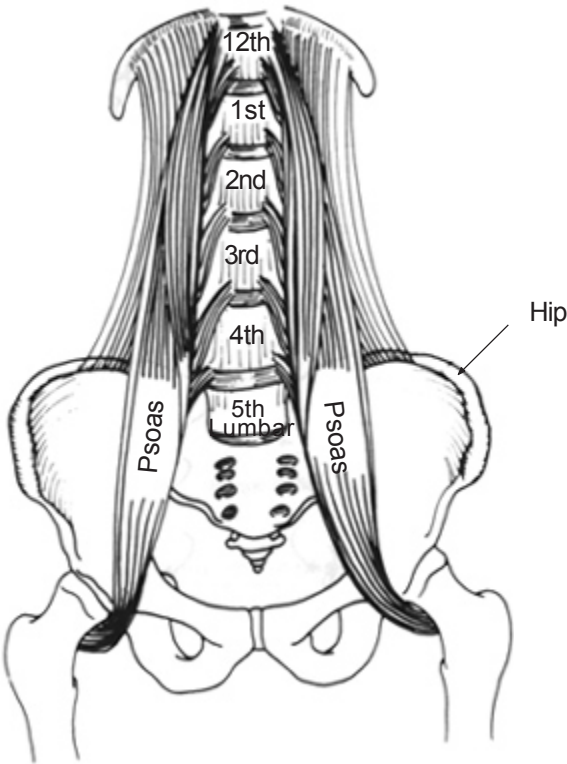


Fig. 3.20 *Opening the Pelvic Area*

The hip joints are synergistically dependent upon two further joint alignments: the knees and ankles.

The knees, ankles and feet are the next connection to the earth. Embracing the Tree requires a precise alignment of the knee and ankle joints. The critical joint alignment is in the 'saddle' of the tibia (shin bone) over the talus (ankle bone), which stabilizes everything above. Sink, down and open the knees a little bit, turning the knees outward slightly as if you were in a saddle. Feel a spiraling downward movement as if your legs were screws, screwing down into the ground, created by pressing firmly on the feet, and then feel the whole body force transfer to the ankles, the feet, and to the ground. (Fig. 3.21) Feel your bone structure. The knees should feel as if they are simultaneously being pushed in and out. Lock the knee caps.

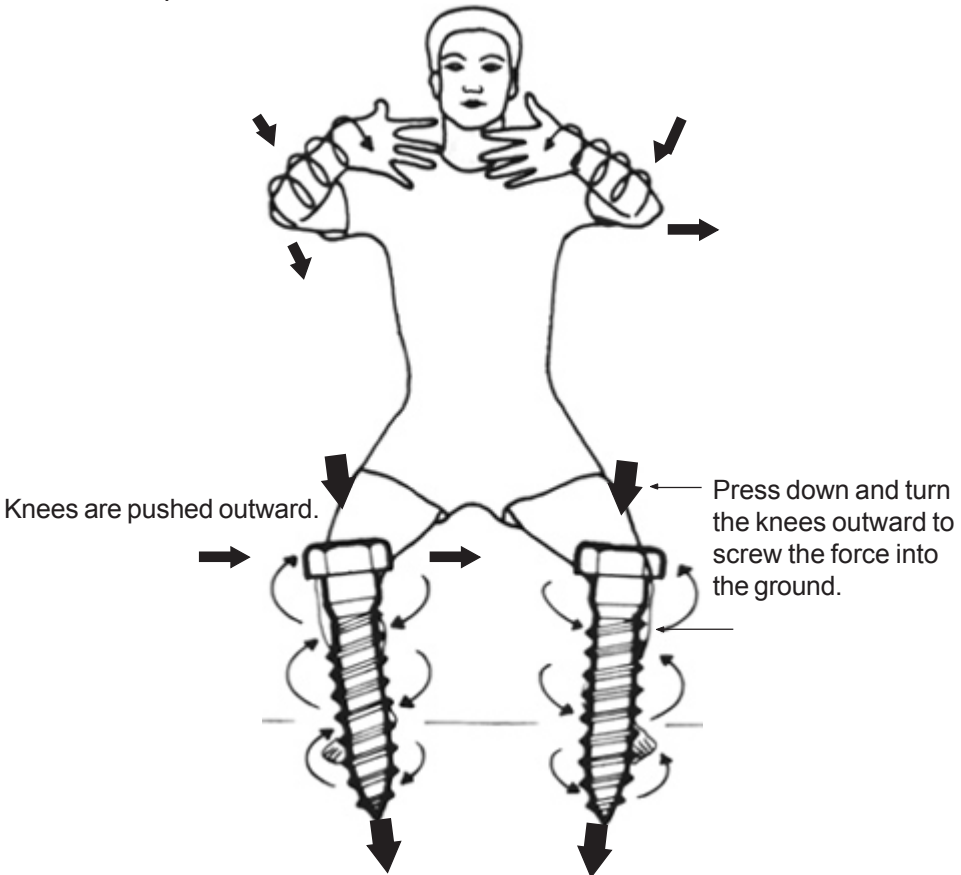


Fig. 3.21 Screw the force into the ground.

If the alignment is oblique, forces through the feet are not spread evenly.

The knee joints should not be positioned over the big toes as this may cause some to experience knee pain, making them unable to continue. If you have trouble with your knees while in the Horse Stance, you must judge just how much you can do. In your own best interest, you may have to forego some of the positions. Note, however that the cause of pain is not necessarily found in the physical location in which the pain is felt.

Fold the tongue back to the soft palate in the area of the Heavenly Pool. (Fig. 3.22(a)) If this is difficult, simply touch the tip of the tongue to the gum line behind the front upper teeth. (Fig. 3.22(b)) Now you should feel the whole body structure connect into one piece from the feet, ankles, knees, hips, sacrum, spinal cord, scapulae, arms, elbows and hands.



(a) Heavenly Pool



(b) Tongue touches behind the teeth

Fig. 3.22 Tongue Positions

5. Eyes Can Help to Direct Chi

The Taoists regard the eyes as the windows of the soul and a most powerful tool in directing and absorbing Chi into the body.

Direct the eyes to look at the fingertips of both hands. Hold the eyes steady to direct the Chi flow. Keep them wide open while looking at the fingertips to help connect the Chi between the fingers while seeing the tip of your nose with some part of your vision. Allow the ears to listen inside the body to the navel. (Fig. 3.23) This will make you feel very centered, peaceful and calm.

During inhalation, create a ball by expanding the abdomen on all sides. Exhale and feel the ball roll up your chest.

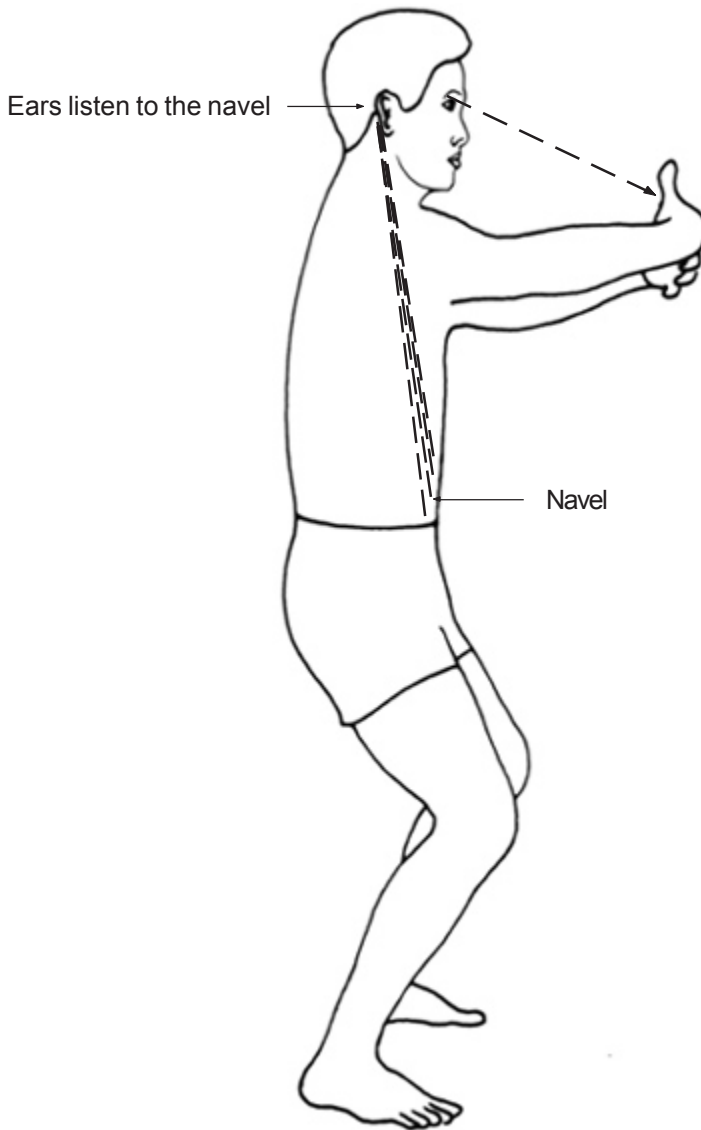


Fig. 2.23 *Inhalation*

6. Begin with Energizer Breathing (Abdominal and Reverse Breathing)

Concentrate on the area just one and one-half inches inside and below the navel until you feel some Chi activity there. At that point, begin breathing, preferably the Energizer Breathing. As described in Chapter 2, this is accomplished by first inhaling into the lower abdomen (the region below the navel). Feel the abdominal wall pull the lower lobes of the lungs down and the air move in. Feel the lower abdomen and perineum bulge on all sides like a ball, then forcibly expel the air through your nostrils. With this expulsion of air, feel as if a ball were rolling up your chest. (Fig. 3.24) Sink the sternum and press into the thymus gland. At the same time, pull up the sex organs and the anus. When exhaling, the abdomen is flat to the spine. Release. One such inhalation and exhalation constitutes a round.

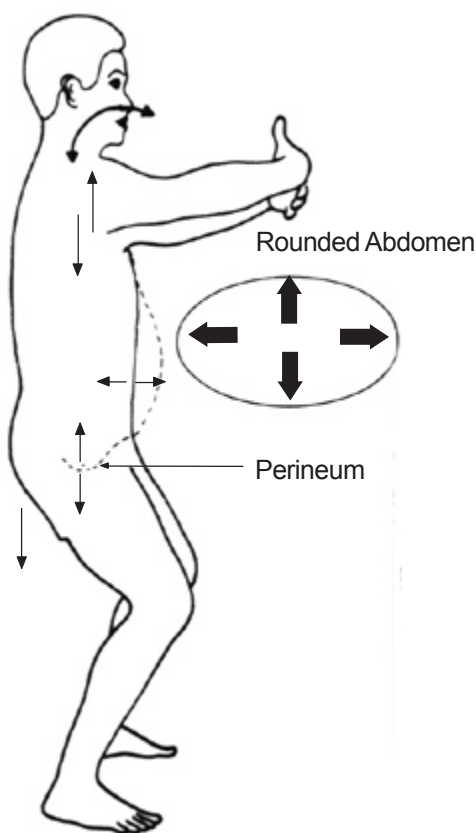


Fig. 3.24 Energizer Breathing

7. First Stage

a. Do nine to eighteen rounds of Energizer Breathing. Remember the breath should be generated from the lower abdomen, one and one-half inches below the navel. You can put your hand at the lower abdominal area to make sure the breathing is generating from there.

b. Exhale your last inhalation and be aware of how you flatten the abdomen, pulling in and up behind the front lower ribs to do this. This will increase and strengthen the psoas muscle. Exhale once more and relax the diaphragm downwards. Gradually you will feel the diaphragm press against the adrenal gland. (Fig. 3.25) Do not tighten the abdomen. Contract the perineum and start to do the Iron Shirt Packing Process.

Diaphragm presses down on the adrenals and kidneys.

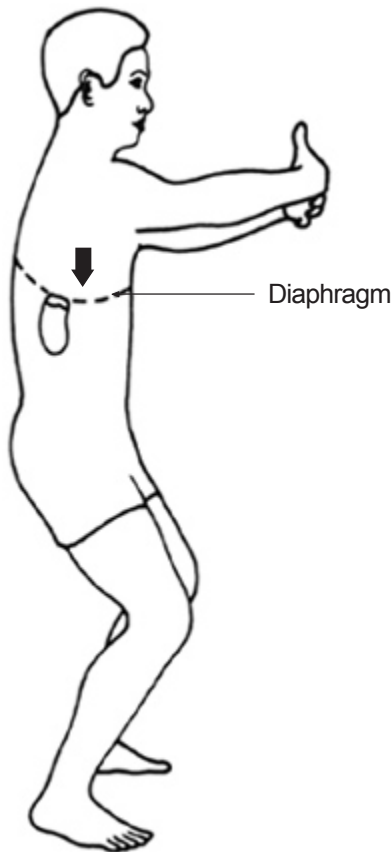


Fig. 3.25 *Relax the diaphragm downwards.*

c. Perineum power: Inhale ten percent of your capacity with short, quick breaths generating from the navel by using the navel to pull the air in and pull up the sexual organs. (Men pull up the testicles and the penis; women pull up the uterus and squeeze the vagina tight.) Keep the abdominals in the position they assumed when you exhaled and feel pressure build in the upper abdomen. (Fig. 3.26)

Diaphragm, abdominal wall and perineum press into the abdomen.

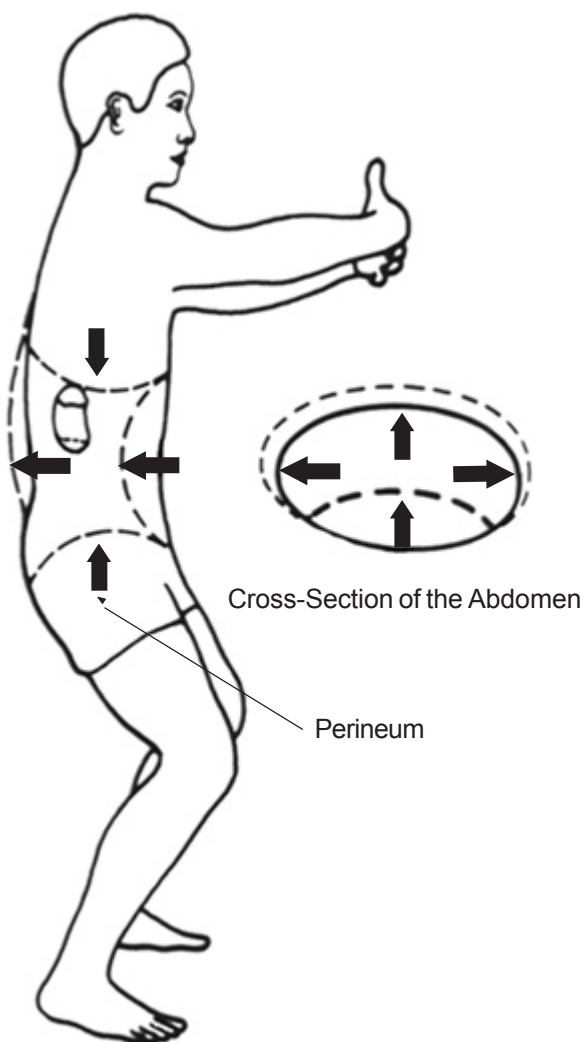


Fig. 3.26 *Perineum Power*

d. Inhale another ten percent and pull up the left side of the anus. Bring the Chi to the left kidney and wrap and pack the kidney and adrenal glands with Chi. (Fig. 3.27) In the beginning you might not feel it, but when you practice for a while, you will feel something under the back rib cage bulge out. The sensation is very unusual. Inhale again to the right side of the anus and pull the Chi to wrap around the right kidney. The kidneys are the first organs to be exercised. Remember the first point of each kidney, K-1, is on the sole of each foot; these points are the major points of rooting. When the kidneys are strong, the bones will be strong because the kidneys control the bones and the Chi in the bones. When you can master the kidneys' Packing Process, that is, wrapping and packing the Chi around the kidneys, you can easily move to wrapping and packing the ovaries, prostate gland, adrenal glands, liver, spleen, lungs, heart, and thymus gland. (Fig. 3.28)

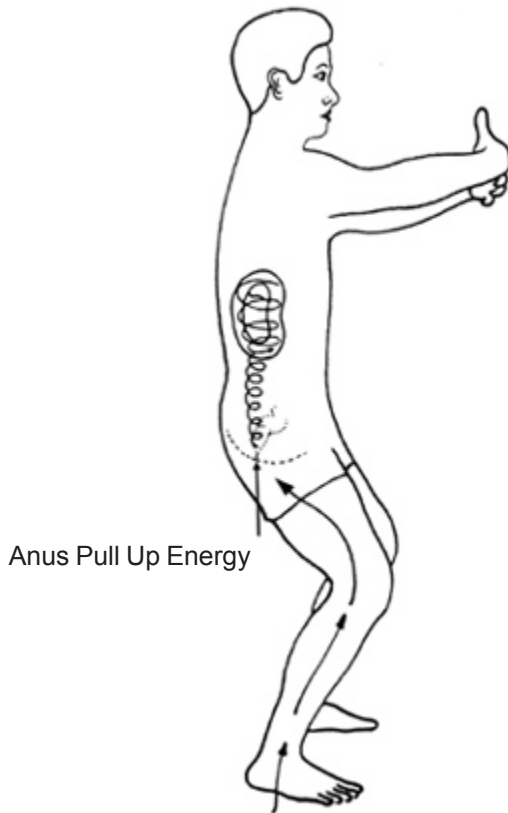
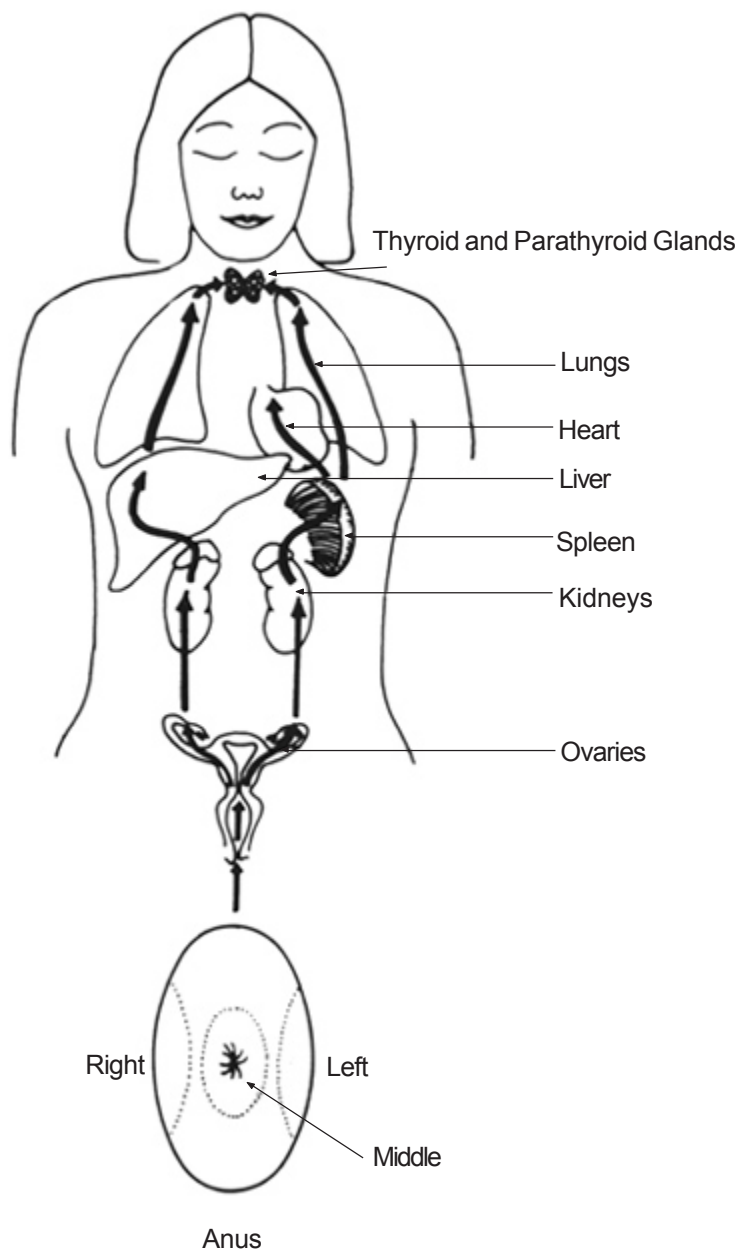


Fig. 3.27 *Wrap the energy around the kidneys.*

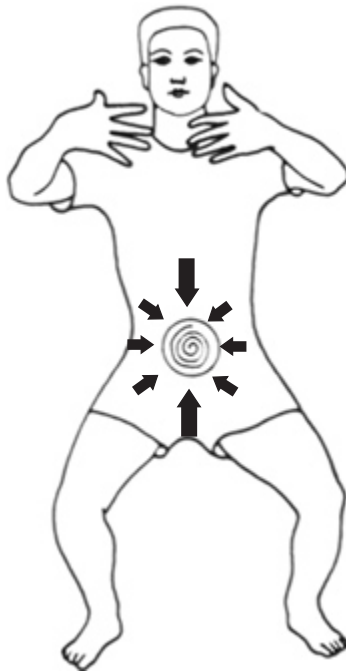


Once you have mastered the Kidney Packing Process, you can proceed easily to wrap and pack the other organs.

Fig. 3.28 Kidney Packing Process

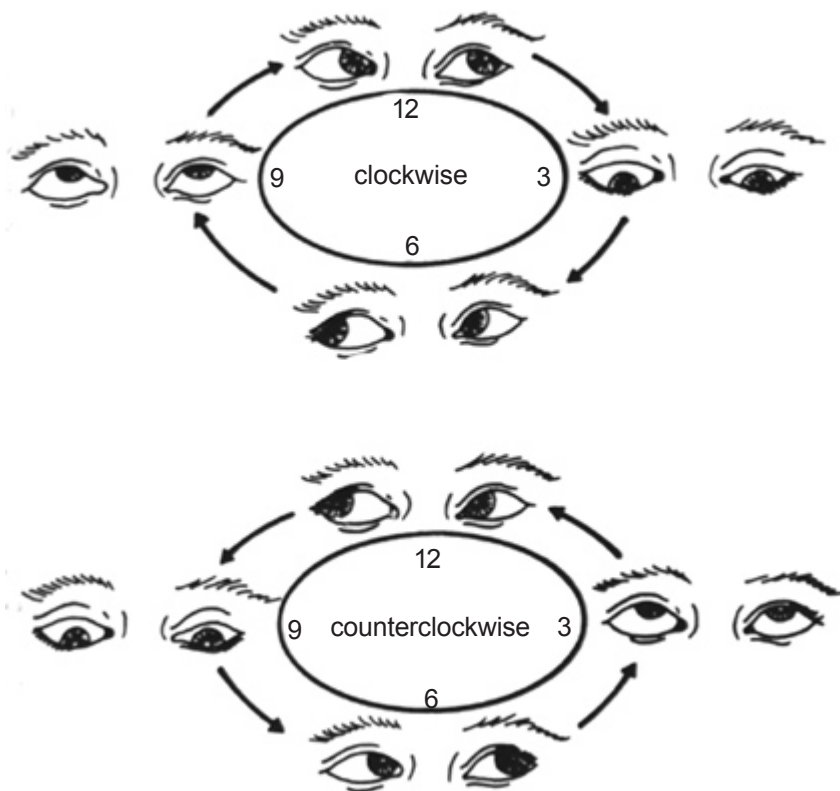
e. Concentrate on the navel and circle the Chi in that area nine times in a clockwise direction in an area three inches in diameter, and nine times in a counterclockwise direction, thereby condensing the Chi into a ball. (Fig. 3.29) Use your mind and eye movements to help create the circular direction by moving the eyes in a round circle. (Fig. 3.30) First move the eyes clockwise beginning with the eyes looking downward, moving up to the right corner, to the top, to the left corner and down again nine times; then, circulate the Chi counterclockwise by moving the eyes from the bottom to the left, to the top, down to the right, and to the bottom nine times.

You should begin at your navel and circle inwards using a three inch diameter, while thinking that the Chi in the body is being drawn to that place by that activity and that it is being packed into the smaller and smaller area of an energy ball, to be finally contained in the navel. Slowly do nine rounds. Concentrate and collect your energy when you feel Chi has been generated. The Chi will condense into a small, dense unit.



Circle the Chi and concentrate the energy into an energy ball.

Fig. 3.29 *Creating an Energy Ball*



Use the mind and eyes to help circle the Chi energy ball nine times clockwise...and nine times counterclockwise.

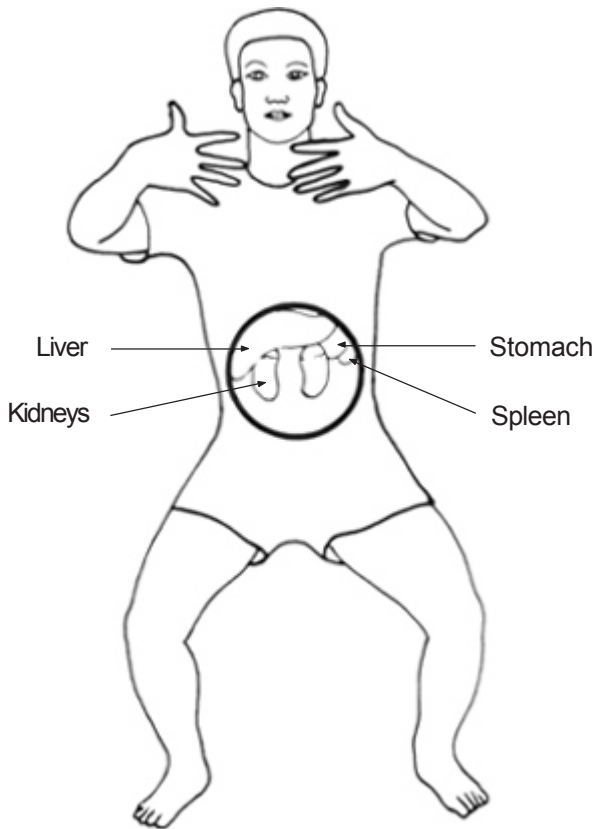
Fig. 3.30 *Circulate the Energy Ball.*

There are nine points in which the Chi is to be circulated and condensed. (Fig. 3.64) In later practice, you will condense, store and bring up the Chi from these power stations. These Chi power stations are tremendously useful in the Kung Fu energy and spiritual practice.

It is most important to keep the diaphragm down. Remember to check it by touching the sternum and the stomach. You can feel the diaphragm coming down when it is distinguishable from the stomach.

f. Inhale another ten percent. If you feel that you cannot inhale more, you can exhale very little and inhale again. Make the abdomen flatter and draw Chi into the lower abdominal area. The area below

the navel seems to be filled, but keep the upper abdomen flat in order to minimize the space so that the Chi pressure can be increased. As mentioned previously, this sensation is caused by the action of the diaphragm pressing down against the organs contained in the abdomen. The pressure between the outer wall of muscle of the abdomen, which is kept flat, and that of the diaphragm pushing down from above serves to compress the abdominal organs. When you pull up the pelvic and urogenital diaphragms and pull up the sex organs and anus, more energy will pack in the lower abdominal area. There is where the Chi is condensed into an energy ball. This energy ball will expel wastes and rinse out the toxins from the system, aiding in the circulation of blood and lymph through the area and driving excess Chi into storage between the fascial layers. (Fig. 3.31) Remember the Chi will occupy this space, prohibiting fat from being stored there.



Packing and condensing the organs will help to expel toxins and wastes from the body.

Fig. 3.31 Pack and condense the organs.

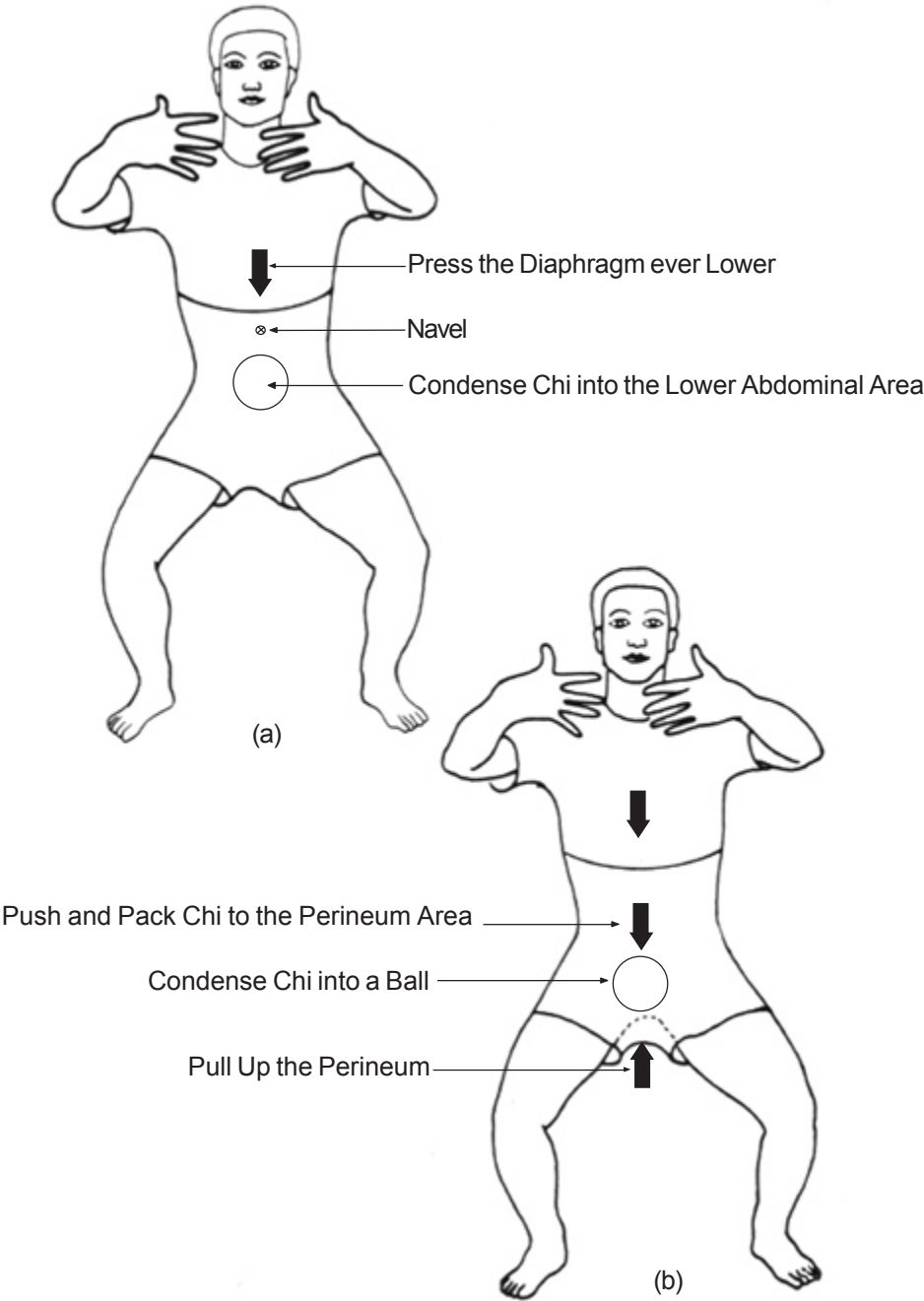


Fig. 3.32 Condensing Chi

g. Inhaling ten percent more of your total capacity presses the diaphragm even lower so that now you become more aware of the contents of the lower abdominal area. (Fig. 3.32(a)) Women should be aware of the area in which the ovaries rest. Hold your breath until the need arises to inhale.

It is at this point that you can work on your feet and coccyx, which are most important as energy sources. Those who have already completed the Microcosmic Orbit should make rapid progress here.

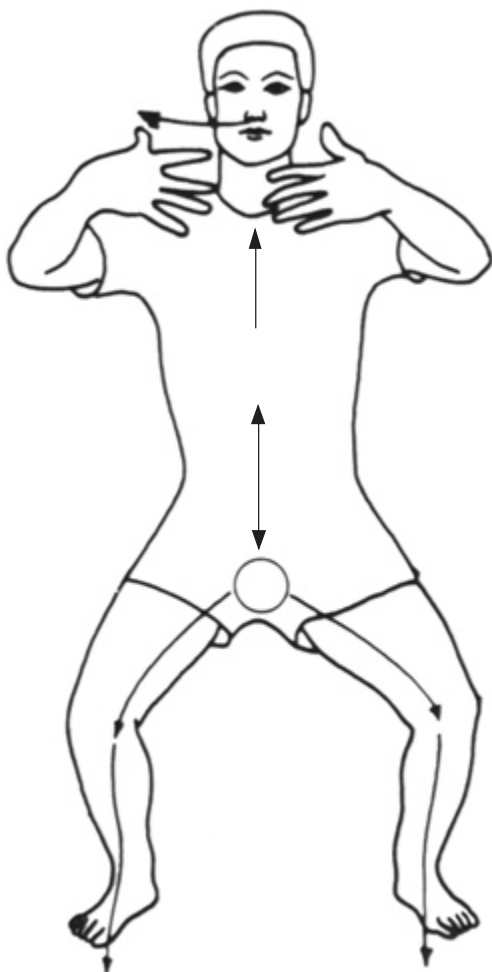
h. Inhale ten percent more of your capacity. Concentration should now be on the sexual organs.

With more practice your mind can direct the Chi more easily, giving you greater control over the Chi energy. Condense the Chi into a compact ball. Hold this energy in the lower abdominal area where you can increase it by using your mind and the Packing Process.

i. Inhale ten percent more of your capacity to the Hui Yin (perineum) to activate Perineum Power. Pull up the perineum, push and pack the Chi down to the perineum area and condense it into a ball. (Fig. 3.32(b)) Concentrate on the perineum again. With more practice you will gradually feel the perineum bulge downward. You should be able to feel a big channel running from the navel to the abdomen to the perineum connecting with Chi. Hold the breath as long as you feel comfortable.

j. Now exhale and relax the whole body, sending energy down the back of the legs into the ground. (Fig. 3.33) Regulate your breathing with energizer breathing. Inhale more; exhale less. When you exhale, pull up the perineum (include the sex organs and anus). Be aware of the middle of the palms of the hands and the middle of the soles of the feet. Use the mind to feel the palms and soles "breathing". Coordinate your breath with the palms and soles, breathing simultaneously. With the Packing Process Breathing, the palms and soles will open easily. Gradually, you will feel as though the soles and palms seem to breathe. (Fig. 3.34) The left eye looks at the left palm, the right eye looks at the right palm. In the forehead, above and between the eyebrows, resides what the Taoists regard as another eye called the "Heavenly Eye". Feel the Chi from the palms flow to the forehead while the "Heavenly Eye" sends Chi to the palms.

Now exhale and relax the whole body, bringing the Chi down the backs of the legs to the soles of the feet and hold your attention there. Concentrate on the soles until you feel the energy going down into the ground. Gradually, increase the energy down to the ground and feel as though you are growing roots like the roots of a tree inch-by-inch downward, at first six inches, then one foot, and so on. Feel the flow of Chi from the navel to the perineum, to the backs of the knees, to the soles of the feet and down into the ground. Become one line of energy flow.



Exhale and let the energy flow down though the legs and into the earth.

Fig. 3.33 *Send the energy into the earth.*

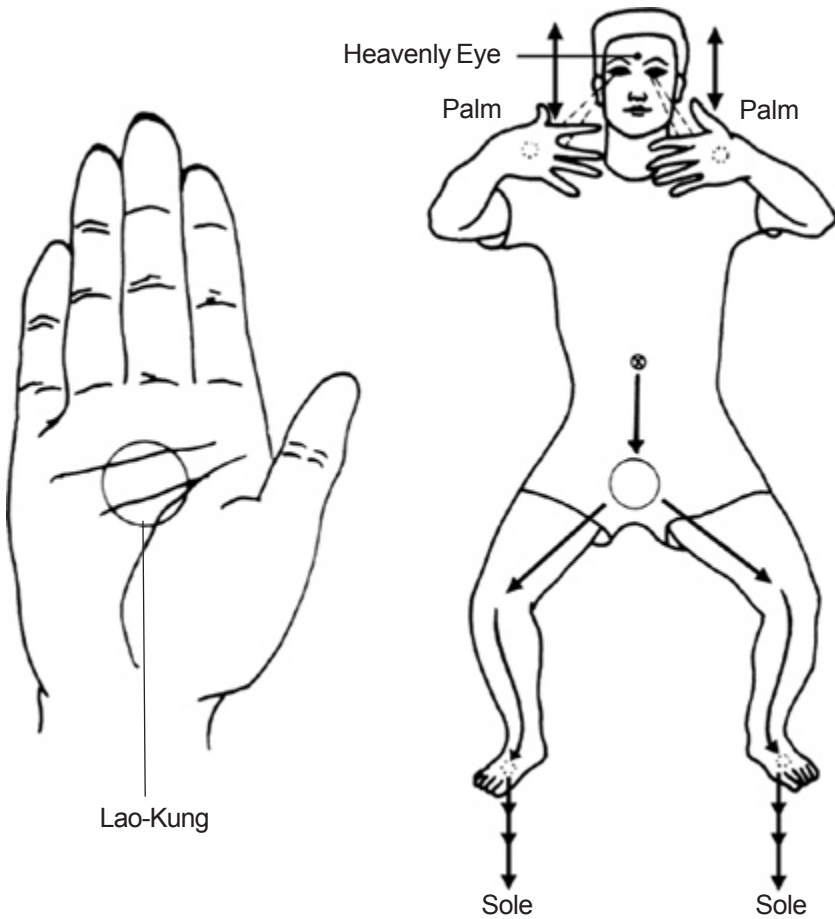


Fig. 3.34 *Feel the palms and soles breathing.*

k. When you can feel that you are rooting into the earth, you are hooking up to Mother Earth's inexhaustible sources of energy (Fig. 3.35) Become aware of the "loving, healing energy" emanating from Mother Earth, which enters through the soles and rises up the front of the legs six inches at first, then two feet, then three feet or more. Continue in this way until your whole body is full of this "loving, healing energy". Hold and pack the Chi in the perineum until you feel the urge to breathe. Exhale and do the Energizing Breathing to regulate your breath.

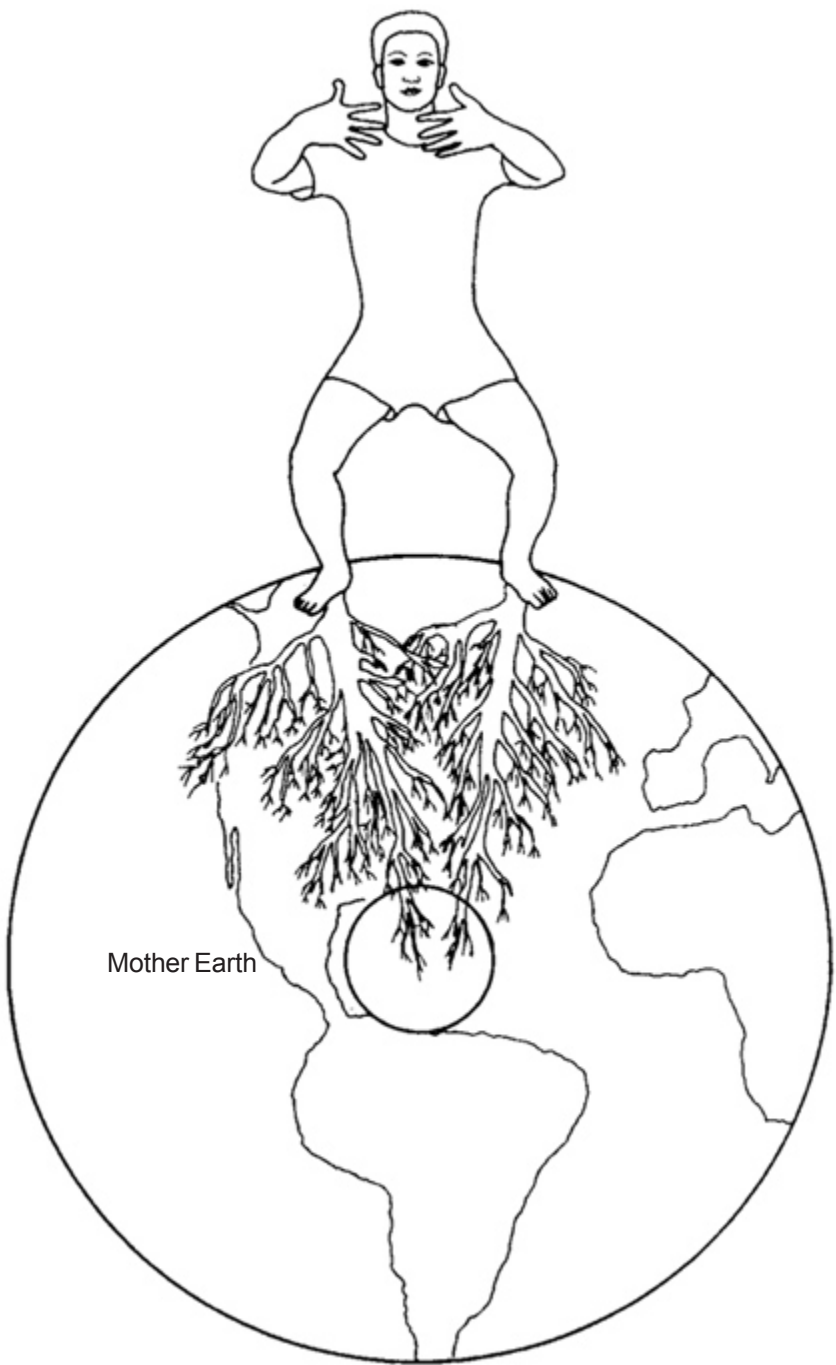
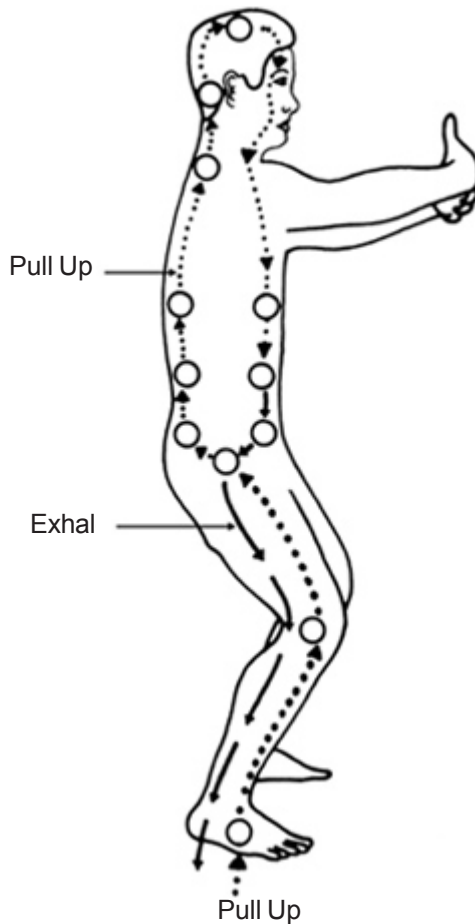


Fig. 3.35 *Hooking up to Mother Earth's inexhaustible sources of energy.*

At the end of each stage, once you have finished packing the Chi, standing or holding yourself still and relaxing the muscles of the whole body are very important. You should hold this position for as long as you can or have time to hold it, gradually increasing the time, if possible. Using the Iron Shirt Chi Kung Packing Breathing has created a tremendous Chi pressure and you can now use your mind to condense and direct the flow. (Fig. 3.36) At this point, you will fully feel the energy flow in the Microcosmic Orbit. Use your mind to direct the energy up and down, flowing from finger to finger, down the legs and back up.



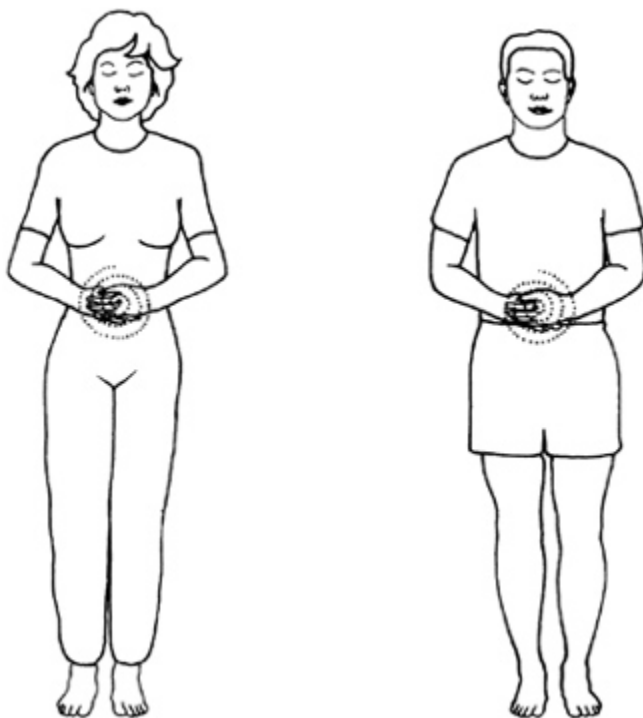
Stand still. Relax the whole body and direct the Chi flow.

Fig. 3.36 *Direct the Chi flow.*

In the beginning it seems that you are very tense and nervous when you practice Iron Shirt, the way you felt when first learning to ride a bicycle. However once you are trained and know how to move and pack the energy, you use more structure and mind control with confidence and less muscle.

Each time you finish a stage and are not proceeding to the next stage, you must collect the Chi in the navel. Stand up straight, touch the tongue to the palate, and put the palms over the navel. Men put the right palm over the navel, covering it with the left palm. Women put the left palm over the navel, covering it with the right palm. (Fig. 3.37) Concentrate on the navel for a while, feeling the energy that is generated by the Chi Kung. As you are standing, practice the Bone Breathing Process described below.

Practice the first stage for a week or two, until you can master moving the Chi from the navel to K-1 at the soles of the feet and master palm and sole breathing, and then proceed on.



Woman places the right palm over the left. Man place the left palm over the right.

Fig. 3.37 Place the palm over the navel and collect the Chi.

8. Second Stage

Begin with the First Stage and continue as follows:

a. Press the soles of the feet to the floor so that they seem to adhere to it by suction. The toes are part of a tendon line and, as such, are part of an energy flow line. To take advantage of this fact, press and clamp all of the toes firmly to the floor but do not allow them to bulge up. When concentrating on the soles, you may find that they grow warm or feel cool. Inhale ten percent and coordinate with the breath, sucking the earth energy into your soles. Inhale ten percent using the Packing Process breathing technique described in the First Stage. (Fig. 3.38) Pull the energy up to the sexual organs and the urogenital diaphragm, the pelvic diaphragm, the left and right anus, the kidneys (Fig. 3.39) and the lower diaphragm. Feel as though you are sucking the earth. Feel the earth energy begin to enter the soles and move up the leg bones to the knees. The earth energy can feel cool or sometimes tingling. Some people feel warm.

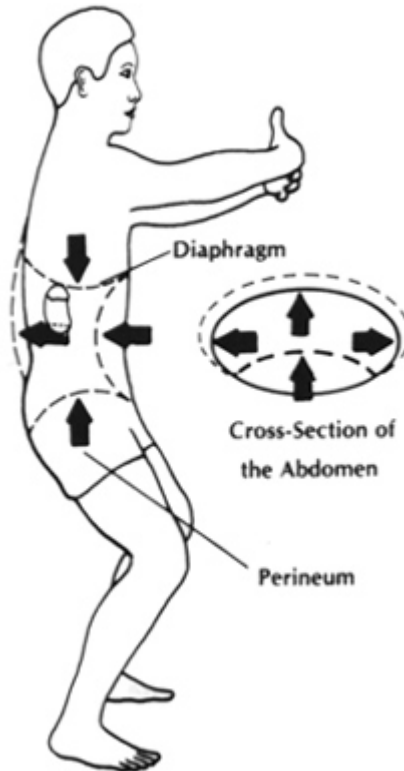


Fig. 3.38 Pull and lower the entire diaphragm.

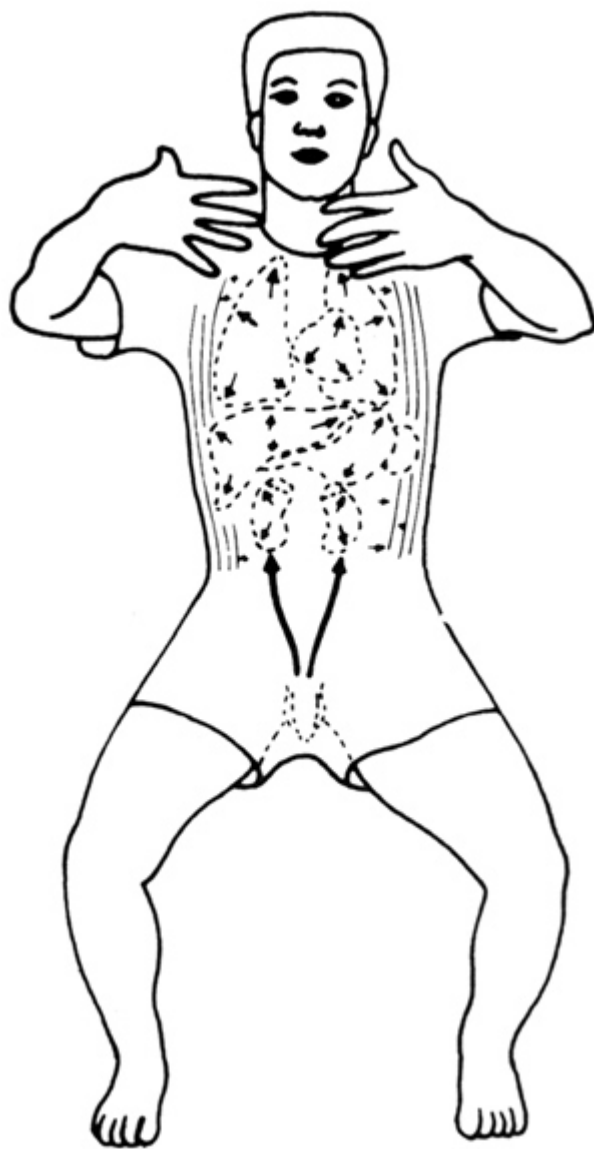


Fig.3.39 Pull the energy up from the anus to the kidneys.

b. Using your K-1 center in the soles of the feet as a hub, circle nine times clockwise out from the middle to a distance of three inches, and then nine times counterclockwise back to K-1. (Fig. 3.40) Again, use the mind, coordinating with eye movements, to help circulate the energy.

Inhale ten percent and press the soles of the feet firmly into the Earth.
Claw the toes and circulate the energy nine times.

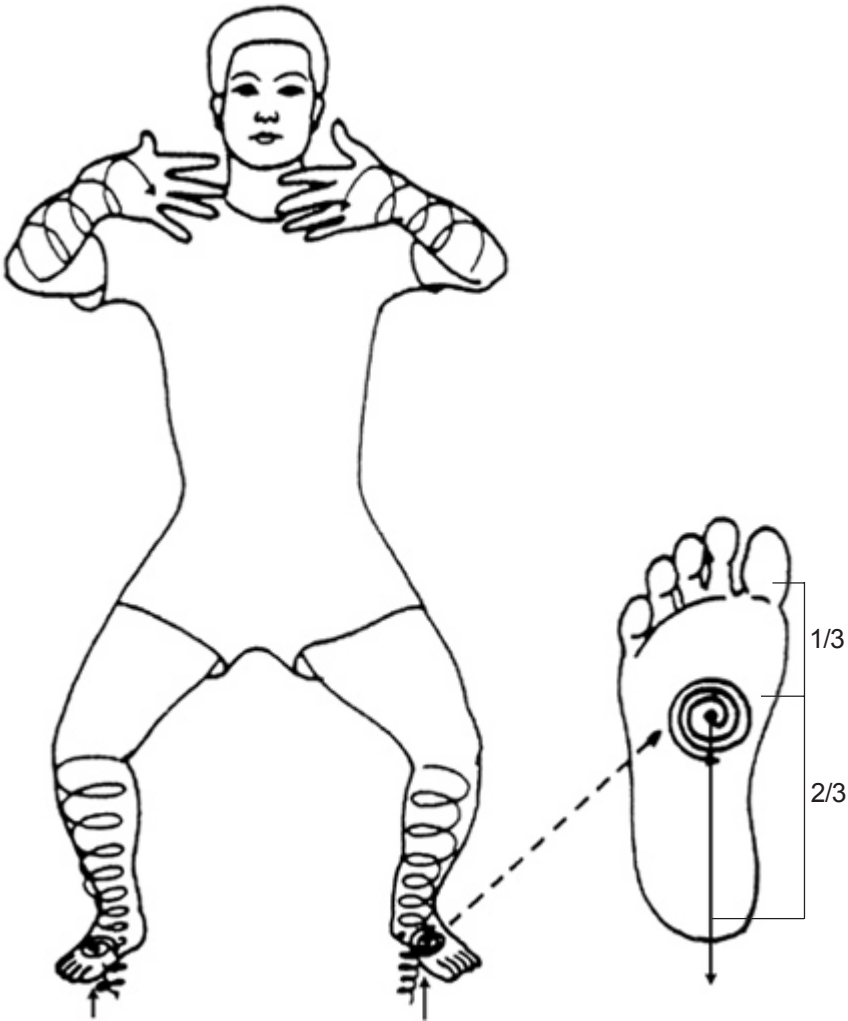
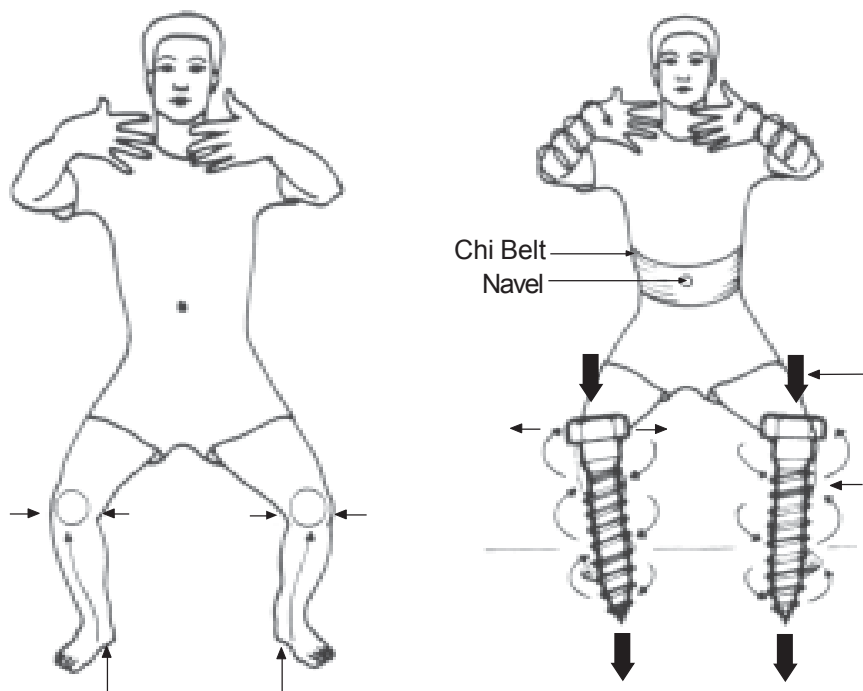


Fig. 3.40 Use the K-1 center in the soles of the feet as a hub.

c. Inhale and bring the energy up out of the big toes to the knees.

Lock the knee cap and tighten the legs by turning the knees outward with the feet firm. (Fig. 3.41(a)) Feel the legs like screws being screwed into the ground. (Fig. 3.41(b)) Imagine someone pushing the knees in while you try to push outward. Slightly pull the knees outward and feel the outside force push in. This action will join the sacrum with the knees, and the knees with the ankles and the feet. This also activates and aligns all the lower part tendons together Remember that the feet point in and the knees push slightly outward. Concentrate on them until you feel energy collect there. Do not circulate the energy at this point.

When you feel the urge to breathe you can exhale a little bit. Exhaling and inhaling are very personalized; therefore, each person must adjust to his or her own needs.



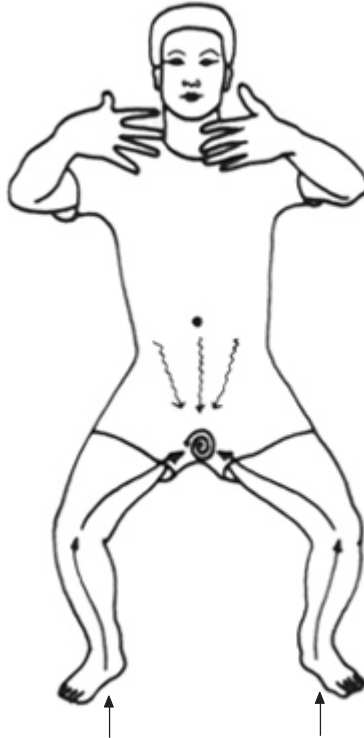
(a) Inhale twenty percent and bring the energy up to the knees. Lock the knees.

(b) Press down and turn the knees outward to screw the force into the ground.

Fig.3.41 Screw the force into the ground.

d. (1) Inhale ten percent, coordinating the breath with pulling in the sexual organs and anus, thereby bringing the energy up your knees to the buttocks and then to the perineum (Hui Yin). At the same time, feel the energy as it is drawn from the earth enter the soles of the feet and rise to the knees and perineum. Inhale and pack more in the perineum. Use your eyes to help circulate the Chi energy nine times clockwise and nine times counterclockwise in a three inch diameter at the perineum. (Fig. 3.42)

Increasingly send energy down to the Hui Yin from the navel and continue to feel it come up out of the legs. In time, it may seem as though there is a flow as of water entering the Hui Yin from above and from below moving up and down as though through a pipe. It might also become evident why the K-1 points in the soles of the feet are referred to as the “Bubbling Springs”.

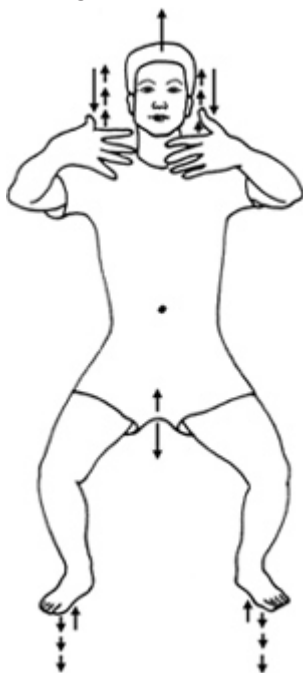


Pull the sexual organs and anus in. Inhale ten percent up to the perineum. Circulate the energy nine times clockwise and nine time countercwise.

Fig. 3.42 Draw the energy from the earth and pack and circulate it in the perineum.

(2) Exhale and normalize the breath by Energizing Breathing. (Fig. 3.43) Relax and collect “loving energy” from all of the organs. To create the loving energy you can start your smile in the eyes. Bring that smile down the face, slightly lifting the corner of the mouth, and keep on smiling inwardly to the organs: the heart, lungs, liver, pancreas, spleen, kidneys and sexual organs. (Fig. 3.44)

Remember standing or holding yourself still at this point and relaxing the muscles of the whole body are very important. Feel the energy flow in the Microcosmic Orbit. (Fig. 3.45) Remember also that after each stage, if you are not proceeding to the next stage, you must collect the Chi in the navel. Stand up straight, touch the tongue to the palate, and put the palms over the navel. Men put the right palm over the navel, covering it with the left palm. Women put the left palm over the navel, covering it with the right palm. (Fig. 3.46) Concentrate on the navel for a while, feeling the energy that is generated by the Chi Kung. As you are standing, practice the Bone Breathing Process described below, which has just been described above as the First and Second Stages then proceed to the next stage.



Exhale and Inhale. Regulate the breathing through the palms and soles.

Fig. 3.43 Energizer Breathing

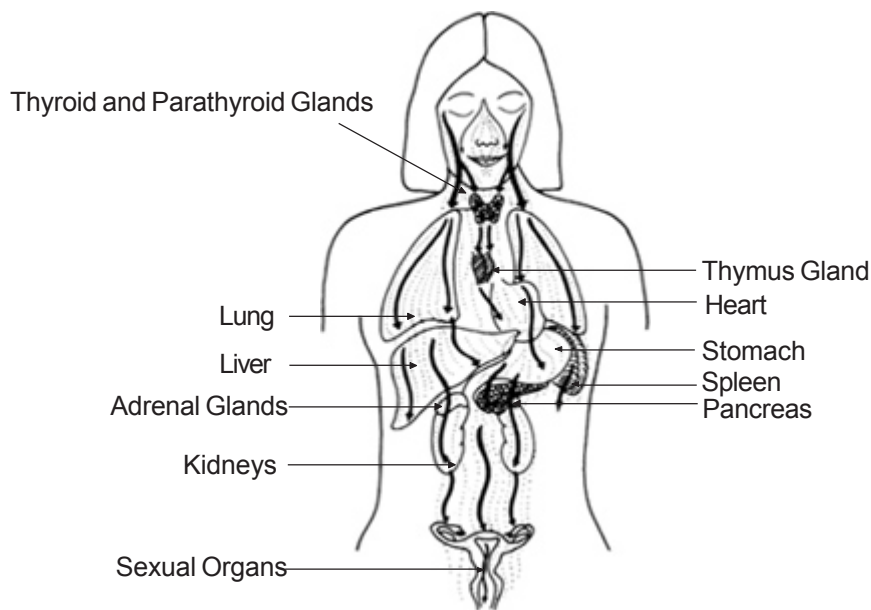


Fig. 3.44 Smile down to the organs.

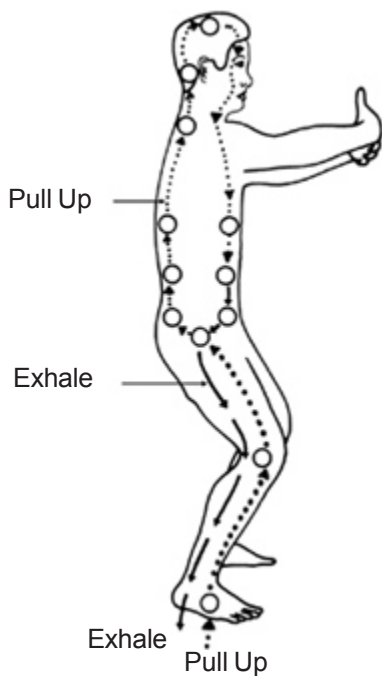
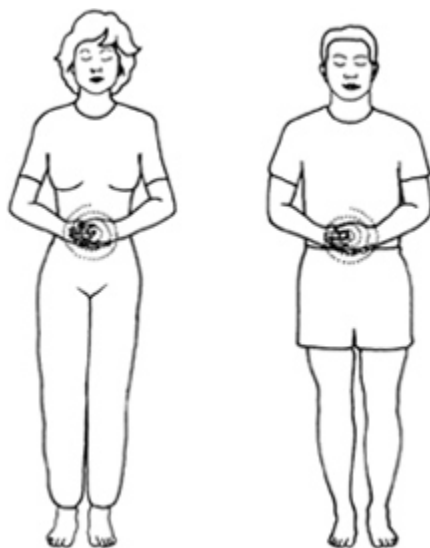


Fig. 3.45 Stand still in Embracing the Tree position and feel the energy flow in the Microcosmic Orbit.



Woman places the right palm over
the left.

Man places the left palm over
the right.

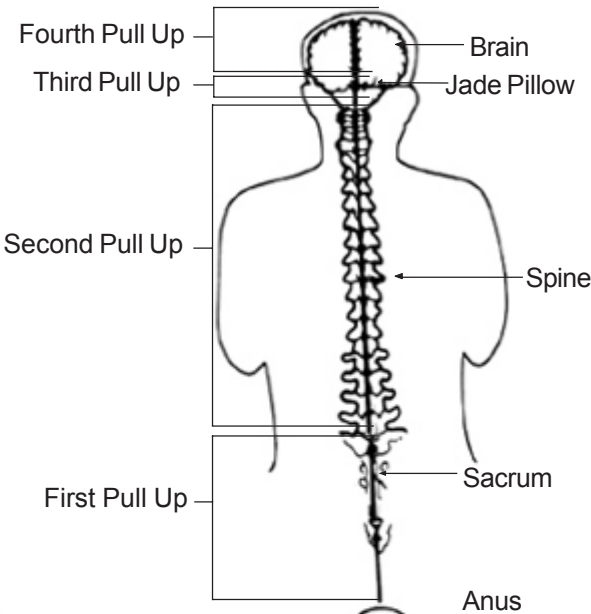
Fig. 3.46 Place the palms over the navel to collect the energy.

9. Third Stage

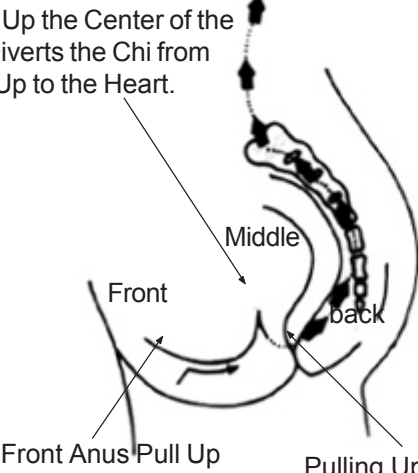
Begin by repeating the First and Second Stages, then proceed as follows:

a. After you have normalized the breath, exhale and flatten the stomach. Inhale ten percent using the Packing Process Breathing as described in the First Stage. Inhale up the front and middle of the anus, and at the same time, pull up the back part of the anus so that you can direct the Chi into the sacrum, (Fig. 3.47 (a) and (b)) Put pressure on the sacrum by pressing tightly to the ground and tilting the sacrum back without moving the hips. This will activate the sacral pump. (Fig. 3.48) You can practice this by putting your back to the wall and pressing the sacrum to touch the wall, as described in Section I of this Chapter. Do this gradually and do not force it. In gradually developing the psoas muscle, as well as the hip and sacrum tendons and muscles, you will be able to move the sacrum separately. (Fig. 3.49) By this movement, you are activating the sacral pump to help increase the spinal fluid and to open the sacrum for the Chi to enter This will greatly increase the circulation of spinal fluid. When you can master this, you will no longer need the wall. Use wall alignment in practicing Embracing the Tree.

(b) Back View of Anus Pull Ups

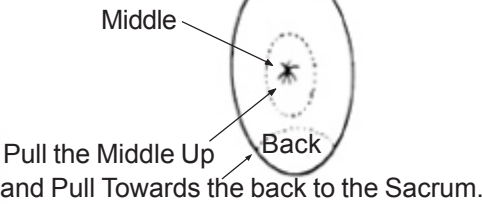


Pulling Up the Center of the Anus Diverts the Chi from Going Up to the Heart.



Front Anus Pull Up

Pulling Up the Back of the Anus Pulls the Chi Up the Spine.



Pull the Middle Up and Pull Towards the back to the Sacrum.

(a) Side View of Anus Pull Ups

Fig. 3.47 Direct the Chi into the sacrum.

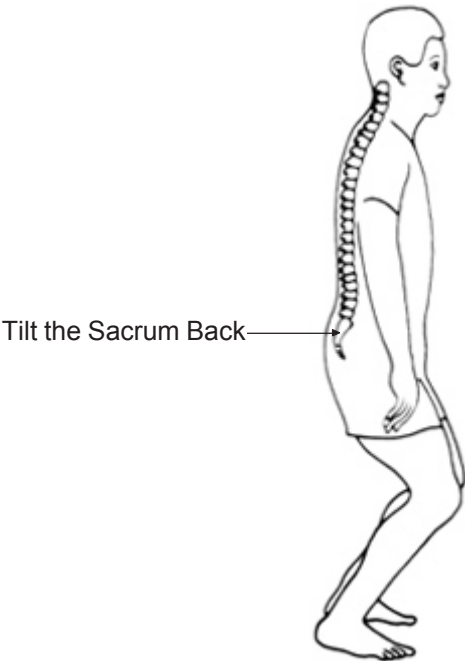


Fig. 3.48 Activate the sacral pump.

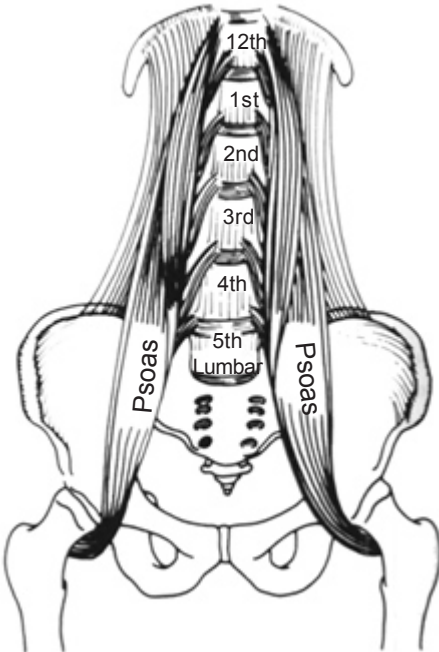
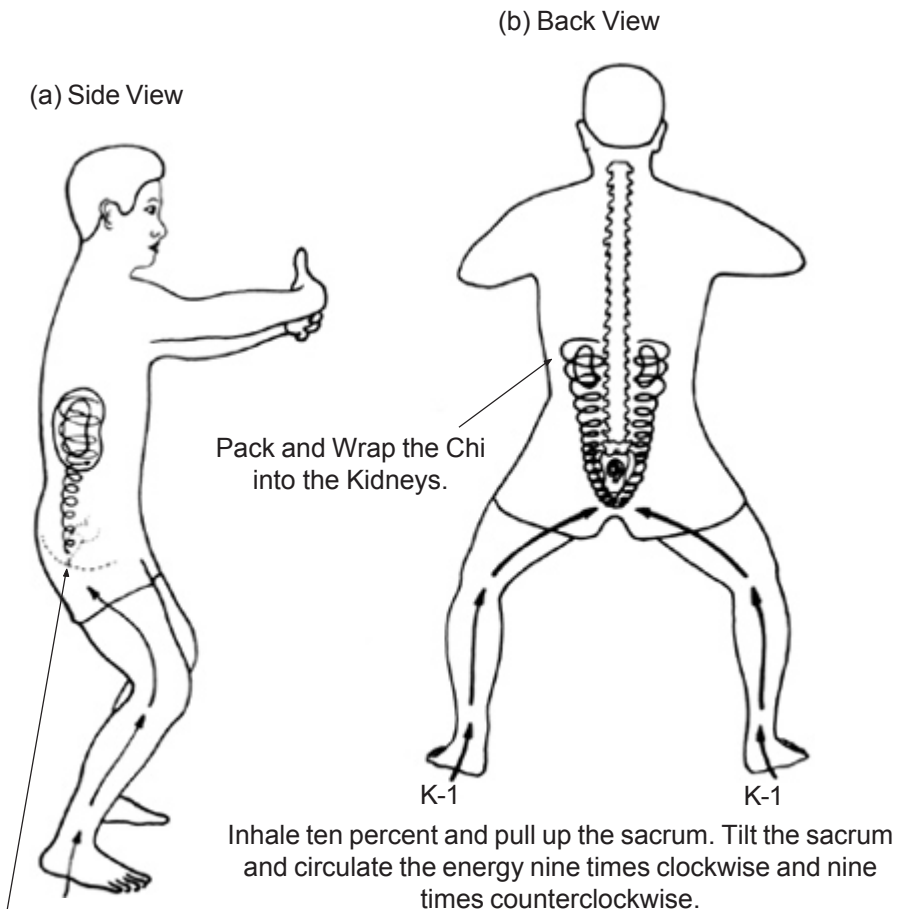


Fig. 3.49 Sacral tilt will help develop the psoas muscle.

b. (1) Bring more energy (kidneys' energy) up from K-1 on the soles of the feet to the coccyx and to the sacrum. Inhale, pulling up the left and right anus and the back part of the anus. Pull up toward the coccyx and up to the sacrum, packing Chi to the kidneys. (Fig. 3.50(a)) Feel the back area surrounding the kidneys bulge out. Concentrating here, tilt the sacrum and circle the energy out at the sacrum from that point first nine times clockwise to a distance of three inches, and then nine times counterclockwise back to the sacrum, using the eyes to help direct the circulation. (Fig. 3.50(b)) Feel the collection of the Chi there.



Use the Anus to Pull Up the Energy into the Kidneys.

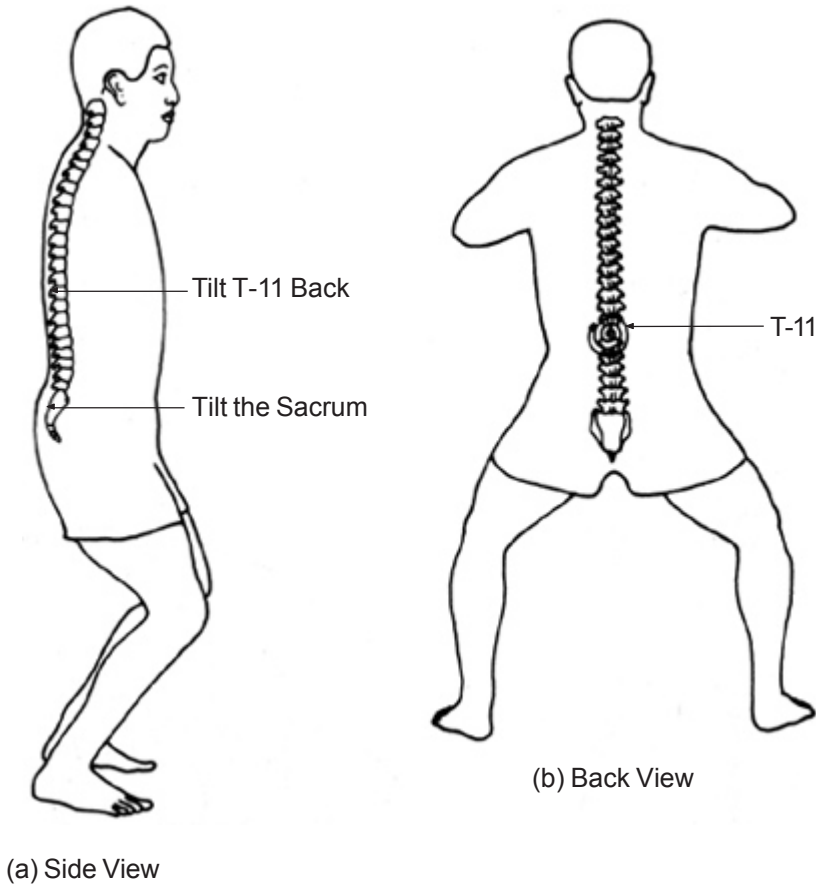
Fig. 3.50 Pack and wrap the Chi into the kidneys.

The Chi feeling is reported differently, even by the same practitioner at different times. There can be a range of feelings such as hot or cold, or pricklings, vibrations, numbness or a combination of all of these and other sensations. The effect is identifiable as something which is not ordinarily experienced. There might be pain or extremes of sensation. This part of the practice should take one or two weeks.

I feel that it is necessary to stress that in this system you must realize that what you experience is very real. There are no visualizations or acts of the imagination here. You actually feel energy accumulate and then go from place to place because it really does. In some people it takes off on its own and goes through the very same routes and stopping off places that would have later been prescribed. If this happens to you, it is extremely convincing and is thereafter self-evident that there really is Chi and that all one needs to do is follow.

(2) When you feel Chi in the sacrum, inhale ten percent and pull the Chi up to T-11, tilting the T-11 (the adrenal glands, Chi-Chung, CO-6) back. (Fig. 3.51(a)) This will push the lower back and straighten the curve. Again, use the wall as a guide. Do not force your spine, but gently ease it until you feel the spine becoming straight. This will open the Door of Life Center (Lumbar 2 and Lumbar 3) opposite the navel. The pumping action will increase as the spine straightens, pulling like a pipe or bow and the Chi will flow easily as if through a straight pipe. With the lower back pushed and the curve straightened, you will be stretching the psoas muscle very strongly. This will help to strengthen the lower back tremendously. Connect the sacrum and the C-7 into one pipe or a bow. Bring the Chi to T-11, concentrating at this center, and circle the Chi outward clockwise to a distance of three inches. Do this nine times and then circle back nine times down to that center in a counterclockwise direction, finally concentrating it there. (Fig. 3.51(b)) It can take you from less than a week to more than three weeks to develop to the point where the sacrum and the T-11 fuse into one channel.

It is important to remember that each time you start to inhale and pack, you must start at the navel, gather the Chi, and bring the energy gathered there to the Hui Yin. Then, push the energy to the ground. Bring it up from the soles to the Hui Yin, and mix it with the energy already brought down from the navel before going on to the coccyx, T-11 and up. As you continue to practice in this way, the whole procedure will take less and less time until it finally becomes simply moments.



Inhale ten percent up to T-11. Tilt T-11 back and circulate the energy nine times clockwise and nine times counterclockwise.

Fig. 3.51 Tilt T-11

c. Inhale and pull the Chi from the T-11 up to C-7. (Fig. 3.52) Push from the sternum to tilt the C-7 back. Tuck in the chin, clench the teeth (Fig. 3.53(a)), squeeze the temples (Fig. 3.53(b)) and the occipital bone, and press the tongue firmly to the roof of the mouth. (Fig. 3.53(c)) This will create a tension similar to the tension of the arched bow discussed previously which is ready to release an arrow. (Fig. 3.54(a)) The whole neck will be connected to the spine and sacrum, and to the legs and heels. (Fig. 3.54(b)) As the energy moves up from the sacrum to C-7, the major push of internal force occurs. (C-7, T-11 and the sacrum are known as the “stations of

internal force".) Once you can develop and feel the force in the C-7, you will be able to exert the force. This entire process is called self-adjustment of the cranial pump and will activate the cranial pump. (Fig. 3.55) The action of the cranial pump will greatly increase, thereby increasing brain power as well. Circle nine times clockwise and nine times counterclockwise at C-7. Feel the Chi energy join the scapulae, the arms, and the hands and fingers together. You will feel the Chi start to flow from the thumb and fingers of one hand to the thumb and fingers of the other hand, like a jumper cable. Use the eyes to look at the thumbs and direct the Chi to that point.

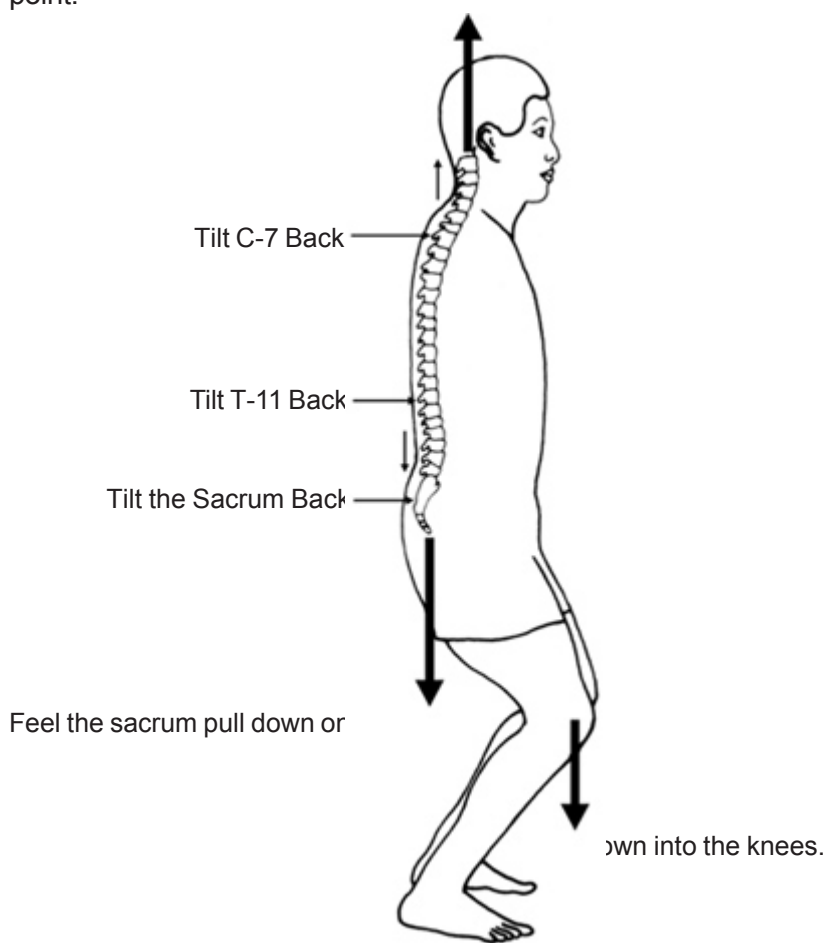
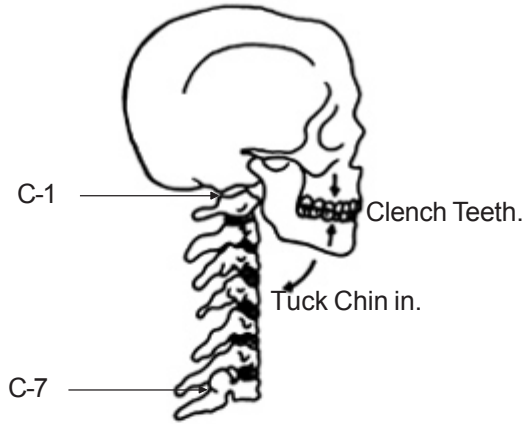


Fig. 3.52 Pull the Chi from T-11 up to C-7.



(a) Clench the teeth. Sink the chin in.



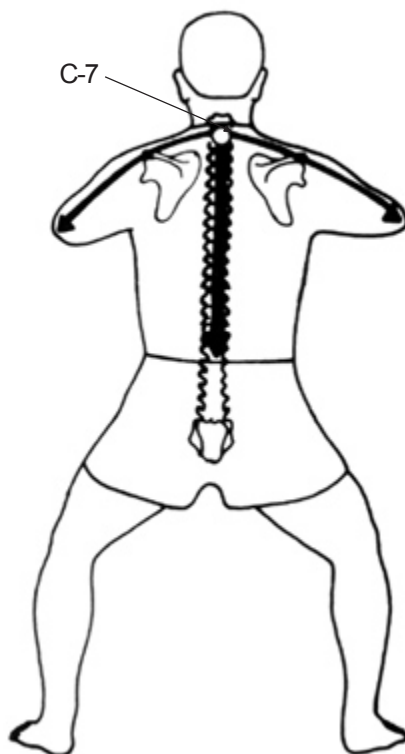
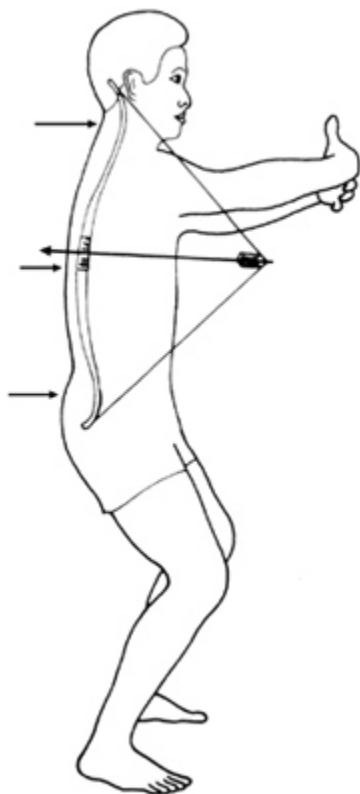
(b) Squeeze the temple bones.



(c) Press the tongue firmly to the roof of the mouth.

Fig. 3.53 *Locking the Head*

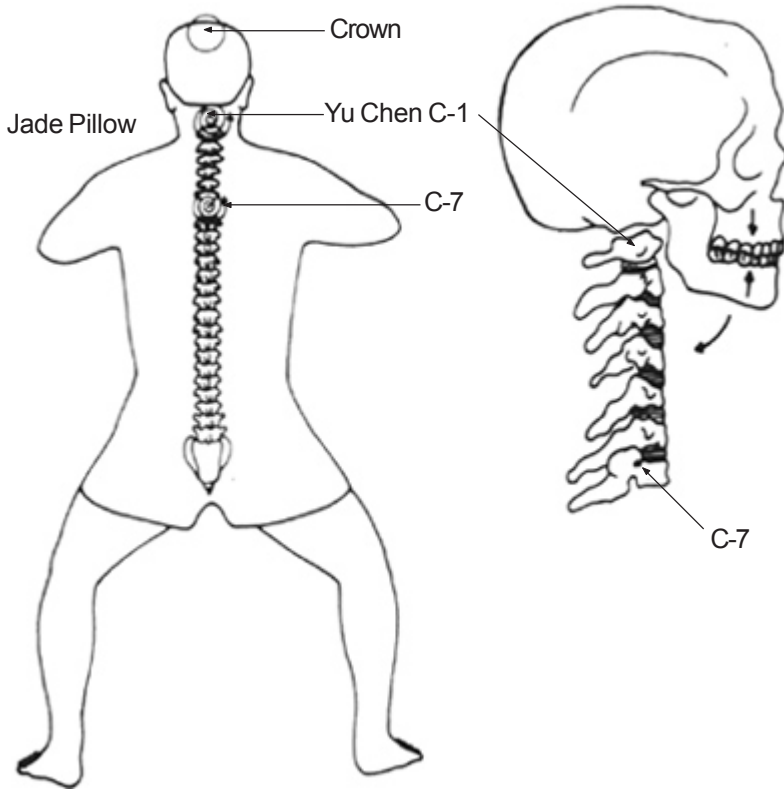
(a) Create a tension similar to a fully arched bow.



(b) As you push from the sternum to C-7, the spine and shoulders will connect.

Fig. 3.54 Spine Alignment

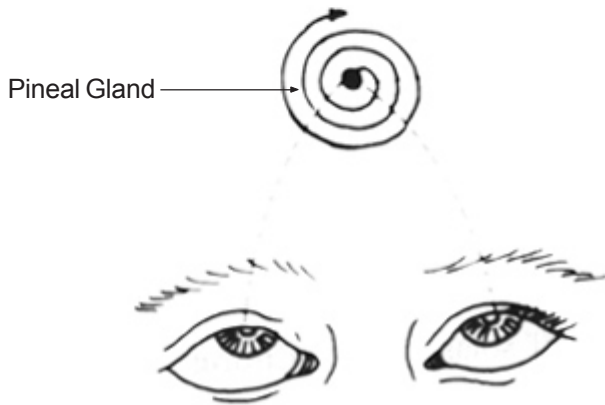
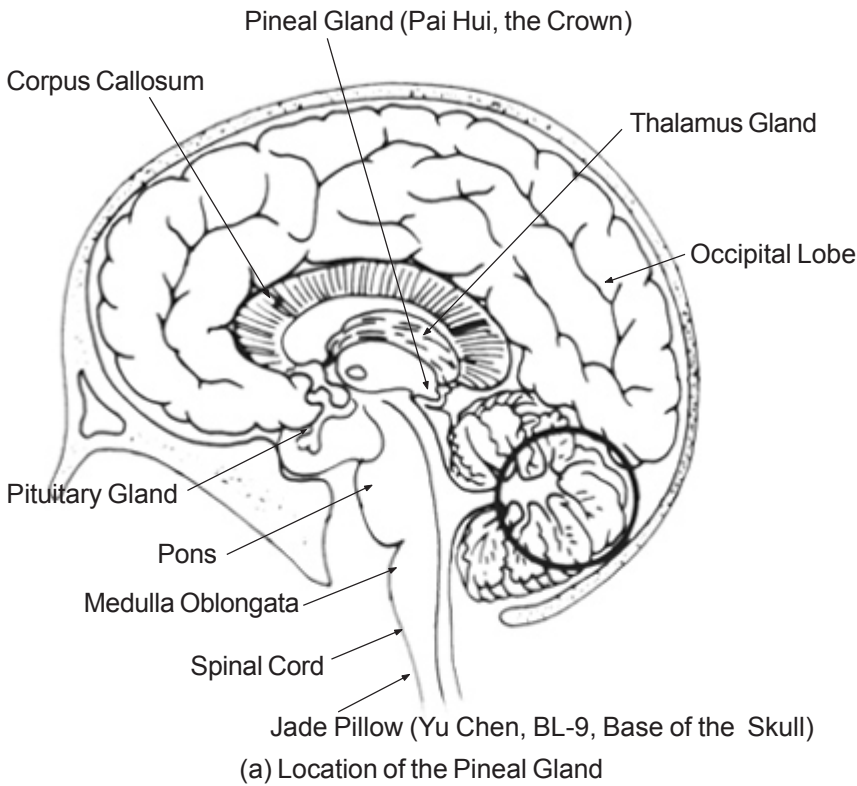
d. If you are out of breath or cannot go on, exhale a little bit and then inhale again. If you cannot do this, you can simply exhale and bring the Chi up to the crown, omitting the Yu Chen (Jade Pillow, BL-9 or Base of the Skull). If you can continue, bring the Chi up to the Yu-Chen and circle it nine times both clockwise and counterclockwise as you did at the points previously described, until you feel that Chi has developed there. (Fig. 3.55)



Inhale ten percent up to C-7. Tilt the neck back and circulate the energy nine times clockwise (to the left) and nine times counterclockwise (to the right.) Inhale again and bring the energy up to C-1 at the base of the skull. Circulate nine times counterclockwise. Inhale and bring the energy to the crown.

Fig. 3.55 *Self-Adjustment of the Cranial Pump*

e. Inhale and pull the Chi up to the crown (Fig. 3.55), the seat of the pineal gland located at the top of the head, by looking up with your eyes. (Fig. 3.56(a)) Concentrate on the Pai Hui at the crown and circle it again nine times clockwise and nine times counterclockwise, using your mind and your eyes, until energy is experienced there. (Fig. 3-56(b)) Feel the energy flow from the sacrum to the Door of Life, to T-11, to C-7, to the occipital bone, and to the crown as they become fused into one channel and linked together. If you are out of breath, you can pull up and exhale. Normalize your breathing.



(b) Look up to the pineal gland and circle the energy nine times clockwise.

Fig. 3.56 Circle the energy in the pineal gland.

f. Make sure that the tongue is up on the roof of the mouth. (Fig. 3.57(a)) Bring the energy down to the mid-eye, concentrating there for a while while practicing normalized breathing, until you feel the energy build up. (Fig. 3.57(b)) Then bring the energy down to the palate where the tongue will serve as a switch joining the Governor Channel to the Functional Channel. Bring the Chi down to the throat, heart center and solar plexus (Chung Wan, CO-12), circling it nine times in both directions, until you feel energy enlivened there again. (Fig. 3.57(c)) Use the eyes to help in this circulation.

Mid-Eye, Third Eye, Pituitary Gland



(a) Tongue is on the roof of the month.

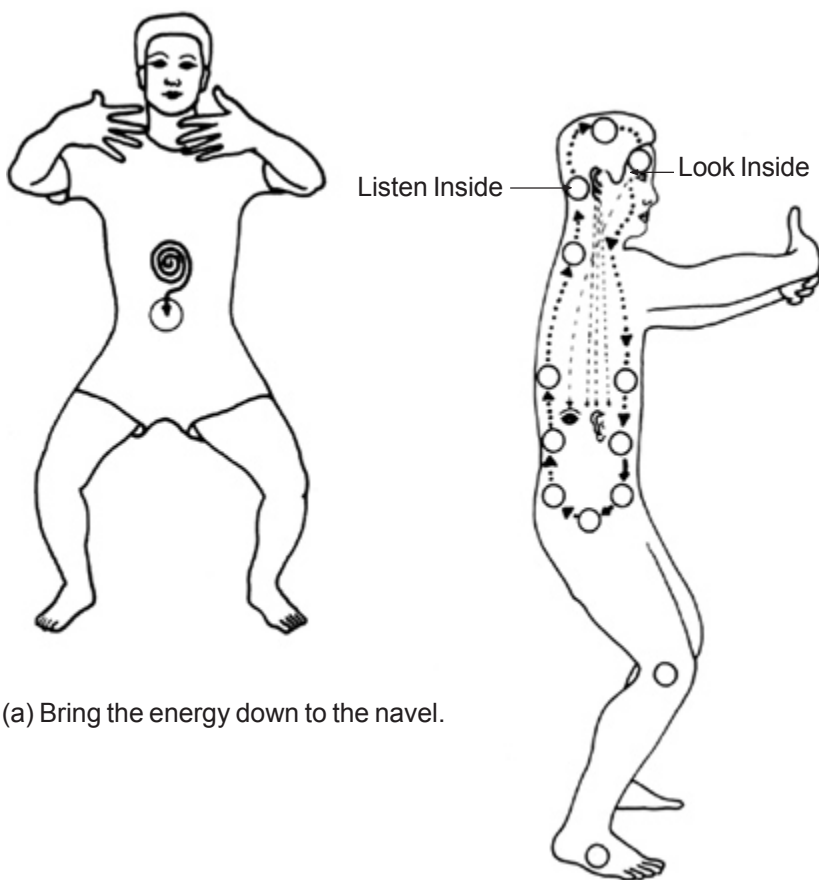


(b) Bring the energy down to the third eye.

(c) Bring the energy down to the solar plexus.

Fig. 3.57 *Functional Channel*

g. Finally bring the energy to the navel. (Fig. 3.58(a)) Concentrate there until you feel Chi freely go down to it. Listen and look inside. Feel the sensation of the flow of Chi in one circulating motion from the navel to the perineum, to the soles, up to the knees, to the perineum again, and up to the sacrum, to the spine, to the crown and down to the third eye, to the throat, to the heart and to the navel. (Fig. 3.58(b)) When you feel the circle is moving well, simply let it flow by itself. Feel the navel warm and fill with Chi.



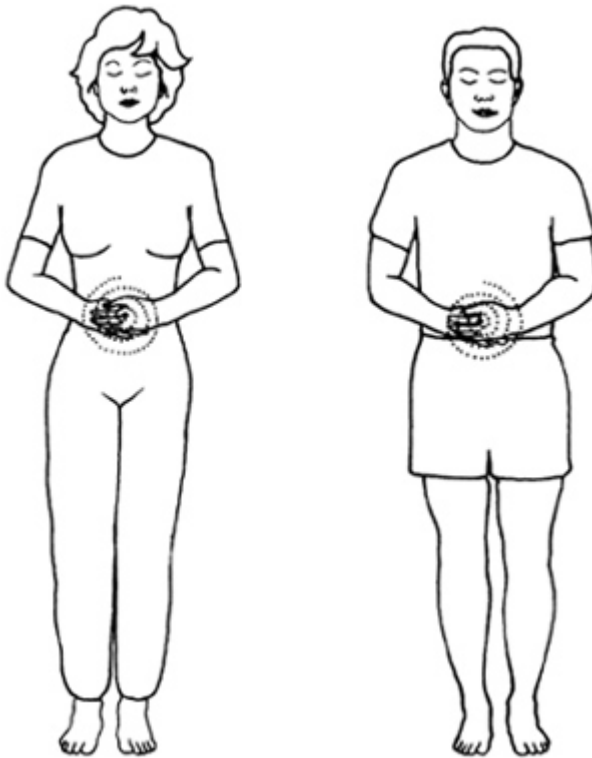
(a) Bring the energy down to the navel.

(b) Feel the sensation of the flow of Chi.

Fig. 3.58 *Microcosmic Orbit*

Remember as you complete the final stage to stand still and relax all of the body's muscles, holding this position for as long as possible. Simply standing and experiencing this powerful energy flow for ten to fifteen minutes will shorten the time necessary to master the Iron Shirt techniques by as much as one to three hours. You have created a tremendous Chi pressure and your mind will condense and direct the flow. Feel the energy flow in the Microcosmic Orbit.

Stand up straight, continue to touch the tongue to the palate, and put the palms over the navel. Men put the right palm over the navel, covering it with the left palm. Women put the left palm over the navel, covering it with the right palm. (Fig. 3.59) Concentrate on the navel for a while, feeling the energy that is generated by the Chi Kung. As you are standing, practice the Bone Breathing Process described below.



Woman places the right palm over the left. Man places the left palm over the right.

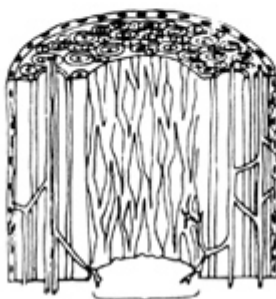
Fig.3.59 *Stand up straight and put the palms over the navel.*

10. Bone Breathing Process

a. The Bone Breathing Process is practiced immediately after you finish the First Stage, the Second Stage and finally, after the Third, and final, Stage of this exercise, to bring the energy down to the navel. At this time, your body is still filled with energy. To practice the Bone Breathing Process you can use Embracing the Tree or any position that you are in at the time.

Bone Breathing or bone compression is the method of “Cleansing the Marrow”, or cleaning out fat in the bone marrow so that you can direct and absorb the creative (sexual) energy into the bone to help regrow the bone marrow. (Fig. 3.60) During this process, we take advantage of the Chi generated in Iron Shirt I by absorbing Chi into the bones, thereby greatly increasing the circulation of Chi. With increased circulation, the Chi is permitted to flow freely into the bones and the blood, carrying necessary nutrients and oxygen, and is permitted to circulate freely throughout the body. Tension in the muscles surrounding the bones is lessened. The bones become strong and healthy because the marrow as the major product of red and white blood cells, now has room to grow.

Bone Marrow



Bone Marrow Cavity

Fig. 3.60 Bone Marrow

This process takes time to practice. It is most important that you relax and are not tense when you practice Bone Breathing.

Bone Breathing is a two stage process:

1) Inhale and exhale as though through the fingers and toes: In the first stage of the Bone Breathing Process, by using the powers of the mind and the eyes, outside energy is breathed in through the fingertips and toes, gradually up to the hands and arms to the skull, and then down the spinal column and legs. (Fig. 3.61) A sensation is felt as you breathe into each area. Some people report a numbness, others a fullness, still others a tingling, or “something different” in their bones. Many people claim to feel more in their legs. When you inhale through the fingers, the feeling is cool. When you exhale, the feeling is warm. Feel inside the bones. No matter what you feel, Bone Breathing is practiced to cleanse the fat stored in the bone marrow to make room for positive energy such as creative energy (sexual power), which will allow the bones to store, rebuild and grow the marrow.

(2) Inhale and exhale the same way through the toes: In the second stage, inhale through the toes and then, by degrees, inhale up to and into the thigh bones. After inhaling, hold your breath, but not so long that you experience discomfort. Then, exhale down and out through the toes. In the next progression, inhale up through the legs and into the hips, then exhale down and out through the legs. When you have accomplished this, breathe in through the legs to the sacrum. Here, you may feel energy surge up through the back and throughout the entire nervous system. Breathe up the back; the breath will be quite long at this point.

Finally, while you breathe through the legs and up the back, also breathe in through the fingers, up into the arms and shoulders, through C-7 and into the head.

Keep in mind that energy is absorbed and ejected more effectively at appointed places such as the toes, fingertips, elbows, knees, sacrum, C-7, Door of Life, shoulders, or tip of the nose. (Fig. 3.62)

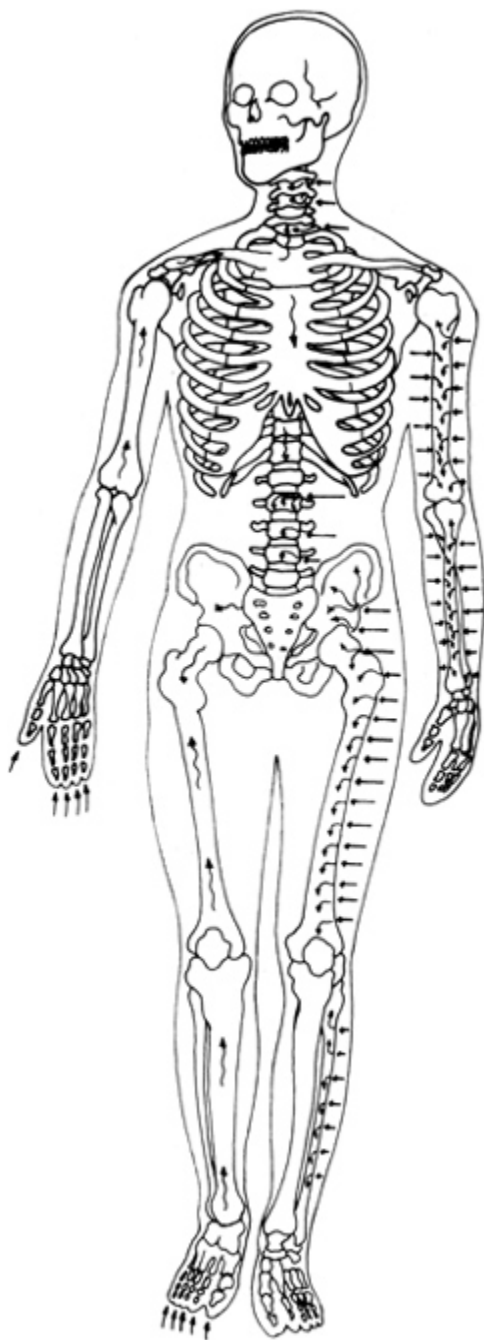


Fig.3.61 Use the mind and eyes to breathe Chi though the fingertips and toes, up the arms and legs, and up the spinal column to the skull.

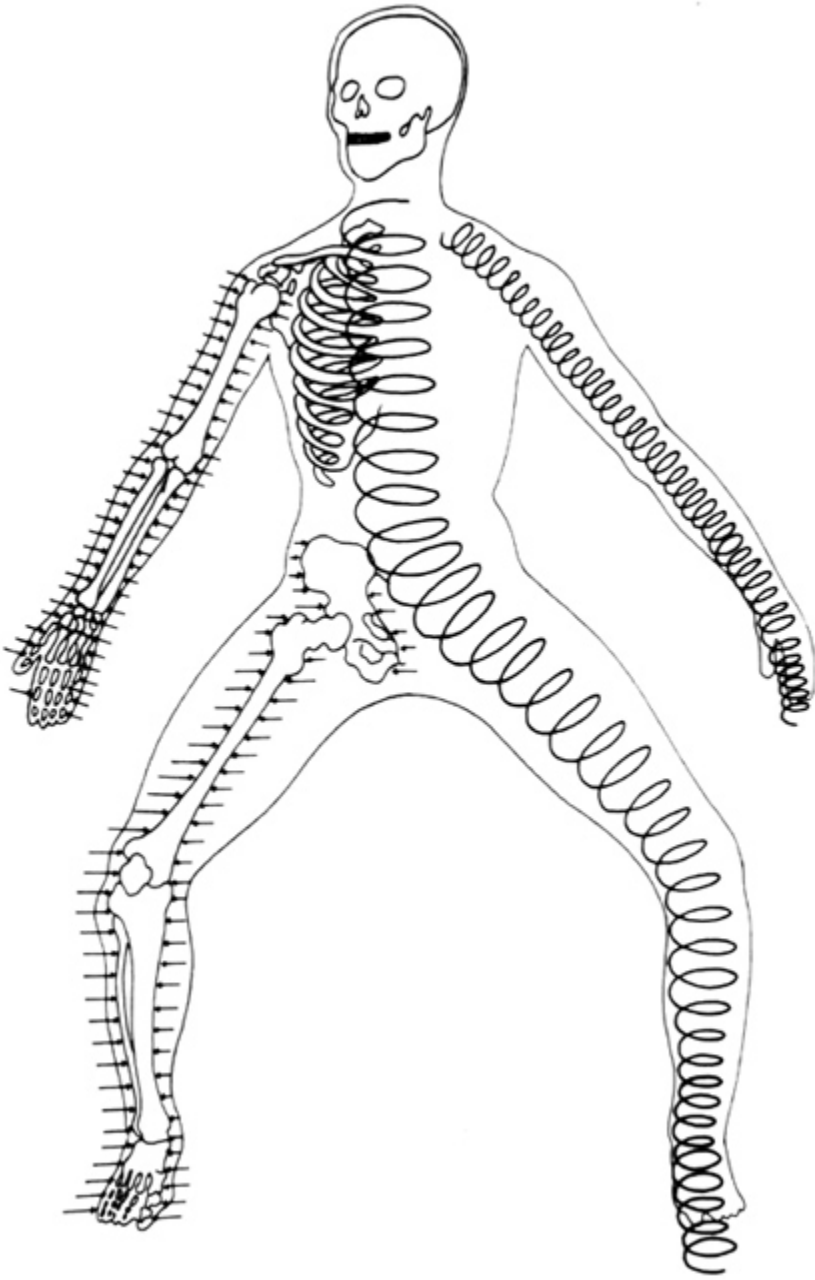


Fig.3.62 In advanced techniques, you will learn to breath through the skin to push the Chi into the bones and wrap the Chi around the bones.

11. Power Exercise

This exercise is another means of increasing the flow of Chi to the bones, squeezing out the toxins, sediment and waste materials, as well as the negative emotions that have become stored in the muscles. Muscles and the Emotions Stored within Them

In this stressful life, pollution and chemicals accumulate in the system, depositing in our organs. In the Tao System we believe that all negative and positive emotions are also stored in the organs. When the organs are filled with toxins, sediment, waste materials and too many negative emotions, these substances will back up into the muscle which handles the overflow of each organ, similar to a backup tank. If we do not squeeze the muscles by increasing the flow of Chi, thereby eliminating the undesirable elements and emotions which have been stored there, the muscles will be very tense and clamp onto the bones. As a result, the person will constantly have the feeling of stress.

Once the negative emotions are cleaned out, the positive emotions have more room to grow. Positive emotions make the muscles relaxed and loose. The explanation below gives details of muscles and the emotions that become stored there. This information is contributed by Larry Short, the founder of the Institute for Total Person Facilitation (T.P.F.).

Muscles and Their Associated Negative/Positive Emotions

Hands	Upper arms
– Fear of losing grip	Correspond to Stomach and Spleen
+ Belonging, reaching out	
Forearms	Biceps and Triceps, Deltoids
Brachioradialis and forearm extensors/flexors	Correspond to Lungs
Correspond to Stomach—appropriate meridians	– I can't do it
– Rejection	– Weakness, fear of lack of capacity
– Fear of attack	– Sorrow, loss
+ Acceptance	+ I can do it
+ Recognizing the way to proceed	+ Strength
Scapulae	+ Responsibility
Correspond to Triple Heater	–Fear Gluteus (Muscles of Buttocks)
– Fear of taking risks; not willing	– Disloyalty, lack of commitment

to take risks
– Cowardly
+ Vitality, radiant power, life-force, responsive action
+ Brave
SCM, Scaleanus, and Neck Muscles
Correspond to Stomach
Upper Trapezius Muscles
Correspond to Kidneys
– Guilt
– Fear turtle hiding
+ Responsive
+ Expressive
+ Taking risks
Feet
Correspond to Spine
– Insecurity
+ Taking a stand, projects, leaving your mark in the world
Lower legs, Calves
Correspond to Adrenals and Triple Heater
Gastrocnemias
Soleus
– Hesitation, fear of going forward, waiting
+ Setting the stage, preparing
Upper legs, quadriceps
Correspond to Small Intestines
distraction
– Lack of support
Hips, Psoas/Iliacus
Correspond to Kidneys
Jaw Masseter, Pterygoids
Correspond to Stomach
– Frustration
+ Knowing what you want and need
Occiput
Corresponds to Back of skull

+ Loyalty, commitment, letting go
Sacrum, Piriformis
Correspond to Circulation/sex
– Insecurity
+ Security, rootedness, rounded, stable
Lumbar spine, Sacrospinalis
Correspond to Bladder
– Fear of being taken advantage of and/or of being cheated
+ Ability, bravery, courage, ability to take charge of situation
Thoracic spine and rib cage, Spine
Correspond to Bladder
– Fear, cowardice, running away
+ Ability to perform
Ribs
Correspond to Lungs
– Sorrow and grief
+ Vitality, surrender, openness
Cervical spine
Corresponds to Neck extensors
– Inappropriateness, tiredness
+ Clarity
Skull
Corresponds to Breathing
Head
Corresponds to Temple
– Dullness, confusion,
+ Environmental awareness, being present, being here and now
+ Inspiration
– Dullness, worry
Sternum, Pectoralis muscles
Correspond to Liver
– Anger resentment
– Anger resentment