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The **COMPLETE BOOK** *of* **CHINESE HEALTH** *and* **HEALING**

Guarding the Three Treasures

By

DANIEL REID

Illustrated by
Dexter Chou and Jony Huang

Exercises for boosting immunity

All *chee-gung* exercises boost immunity by enhancing and harmonizing the Three Treasures. However, some exercises were specifically designed to stimulate the glands, organs, and other

mechanisms directly involved in immune functions. It is a good idea to include some of these exercises in your daily *chee-gung* programme.

According to the tenets of Chinese medicine and Taoist alchemy, the human immune system has three primary centres: the thymus gland, located in the centre of the chest over the heart at a vital energy point midway between the nipples, called *tan-jung*; the adrenal glands, located on top of the kidneys and regulated by a point along the spine, called *ming-men*; and the spine. If we draw a schematic diagram of the thymus, adrenals, and spine, lo and behold, we see a familiar image: the 'Supreme Ultimate' symbol of the Tao itself! (Fig. 14) Note that the thymus is associated with the heart, which is governed by Fire, while the adrenals are associated with the kidneys, governed by Water. The spine and its potent cerebrospinal fluids regulate the circuitry of the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomous nervous system, govern the biofeedback between the endocrine and nervous systems, and maintain the brain's control over organs, limbs, and other tissues throughout the body.

Another line of defence is managed by the kidneys and the liver, which are responsible for filtering and purifying the blood. Blood boosts immunity by carrying metabolic wastes, toxins, and microbes out of cells and tissues for excretion, and by delivering nutrients, oxygen, enzymes, and immune factors into the cells and tissues. The blood's defence functions depend entirely on its purity and pH balance, which in turn depend on proper kidney and liver functions.

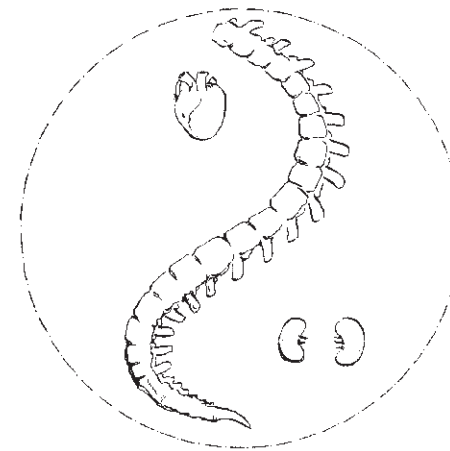


Fig. 14 Schematic depiction of three pillars of the human immune system: thymus, adrenals, and spine.

According to Taoist alchemy, the sweet clear saliva secreted from the glands under the tongue also has potent immunological properties. Master Chang San-feng said:

The key is to let the mouth fill with saliva as energy rises and circulates during periods of stillness. You should visualize this saliva as sweet dew, like honey. Buddhists refer to it as the elixir of enlightenment. Swallow it, and use your mind to drive it down into the cauldron of the lower abdomen, where it crystallizes and nourishes primordial energy.

Keeping the tongue pressed against the palate during *chee-gung* and meditation practice stimulates these beneficial secretions. Two tongue exercises specifically designed to increase these secretions are given below.

The pituitary gland and bone marrow also play important roles in human immunity by secreting vital hormones and producing red and white blood cells. In Chinese medicine, the brain is regarded as a form of marrow and all exercises which energize marrow also draw energy into the brain. In order to draw energy into the brain and marrow, *chee-gung* exercises must be performed slowly, smoothly, and softly. Meditation is even more effective in energizing these innermost tissues.

Thymus tap (Fig. 15)

Technique: Stand in the Horse stance, completely relaxed. Make a fist with the right or left hand and raise it up to the middle of your chest. Start tapping the spot midway between the nipples with a rhythm of one hard followed by two softer taps: *one, two, three; one, two, three;* etc. Tap hard enough to vibrate the sternum and create a deep drumming sound in the chest. Continue for three to five minutes, breathing naturally and keeping your mind focused on the vibrations in the chest. You may practise this in the morning as part of your warm-up, or just before bedtime, or both. Practising at night before going to sleep is particularly beneficial because the thymus gland becomes most active approximately ninety minutes after you fall asleep. Since the thymus shrinks in adults during the late teens or early twenties, it's a good idea to make this exercise a regular part of your practice, in order to stimulate this gland's immune functions.

Benefits: Stimulates the thymus to produce T-cells, which are primary immune factors. Draws blood and energy into the thymus,

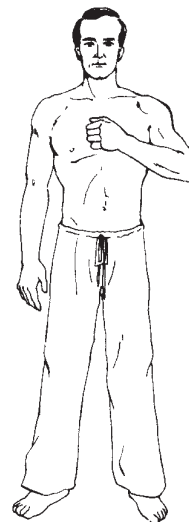


Fig. 15 Thymus tap.

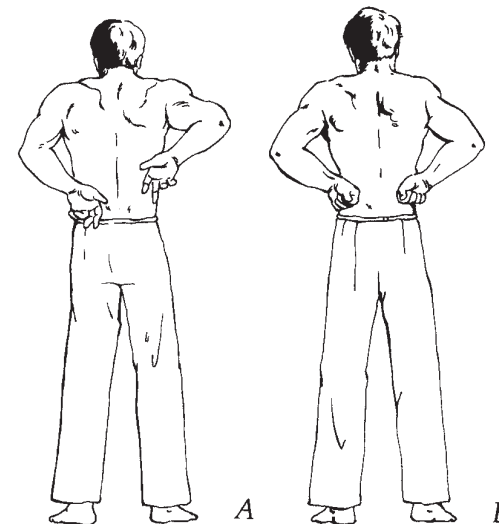


Fig. 16 Kidney rub (A) and tap (B).

thereby energizing and nourishing it. With regular daily practice, this exercise will increase the size of the thymus and improve its immune functions. The rhythmic vibrations not only stimulate the thymus, they also vibrate throughout the chest, gently massaging and energizing the lungs, heart, bronchial tubes, and throat.

Kidney rub and tap (Fig. 16)

Technique: Stand in the Horse and relax. Raise the hands behind the back at kidney level and start rubbing briskly up and down over the kidneys, using the backs of the hands. Continue until the kidneys start to feel warm, which usually takes only two or three minutes. This is a great way to warm up the entire body on cold winter mornings. After rubbing, you may also tap the kidneys gently with the backs of the hands, alternating left and right. Do not tap any harder than is comfortable, and if your kidneys are sore or sensitive, then skip this phase of the exercise until you have developed more strength in this area.

Benefits: Stimulates secretions of the adrenal glands and draws blood and energy to the kidneys, thereby warming up and energizing the entire system. Tapping also helps dissolve crystals before they form kidney stones and stimulates the kidneys' filtering and excretory functions.

Lyrea's note: Similar tapping should also be done on Tan Tien, navel and all over the abdomen to promote optimal function of all internal organs. To stimulate the flow of energy in the meridians, continue tapping down the inside of arms and up the outsides. Tap down outside of legs and up the insides.

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The Six-Syllable Secret

The Six Syllable Secret is an ancient form of healing *chee-gung* that uses differently modulated modes of mouth exhalation to cleanse and stimulate the various vital organs. In a book entitled *The Maintenance and Extension of Life*, written by the famous physician

Tao Hung-jing during the fifth century AD, this system is described as follows:

One should take air in through the nose and let it out slowly through the mouth . . . There is one way of drawing breath in and six ways of expelling breath out. The six ways of expelling breath are represented by the syllables *hsü, her, hoo, sss, chway, shee*. The six ways of exhalation can cure illness: to expel heat, one uses *chway*; to expel cold, one uses *hoo*; to relieve tension, use *shee*; to release anger, use *her*; to dispel malaise, use *hsü*; and to regain equilibrium, use *sss*.

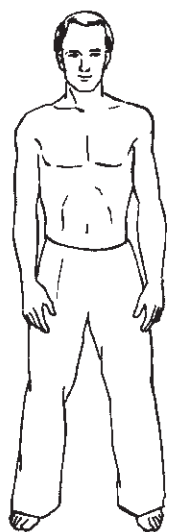
This system works by establishing resonance between the vibratory pitch of exhalation through the throat and mouth and the frequency of a specific internal organ-energy system. When resonance between external breath and internal organ energy is achieved, fresh energy flows freely throughout the particular organ-energy system activated by the syllable used for exhalation. According to the tenets of traditional Chinese medicine and Taoist alchemy, internal organ energies are directly influenced, for better or for worse, by prevailing external energies. Each of the six syllables used to modulate exhalation in this practice establishes the precise energy vibration which the related organ-energy system requires to open up its meridian, expel stagnant energy, receive fresh energy, and restore optimum energy balance.

The version of the Six-Syllable Secret introduced here is provided by courtesy of one of the author's main *chee-gung* teachers, Master Luo Teh-hsiou of Taiwan. It should be practised precisely as presented below.

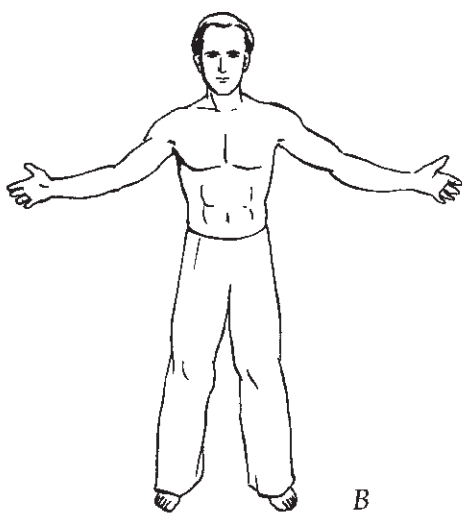
Important points of practice

Before commencing practice, it is essential to relax the body completely, calm the mind, and regulate the breath. One should prepare for this practice as follows:

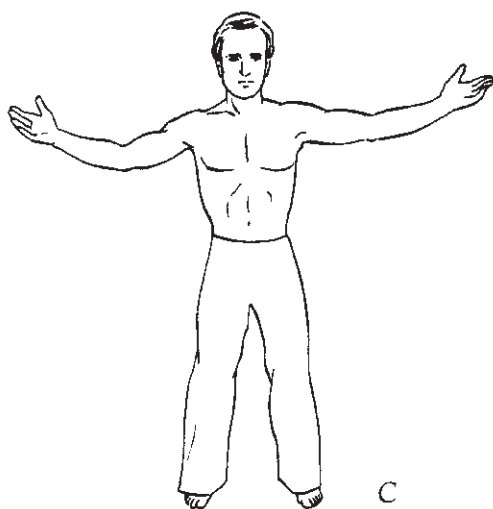
- Stand in the Horse stance, muscles and joints relaxed, arms hanging loosely down by your sides, head held as though suspended from a string, chin drawn slightly in, with a straight line running from the crown of the head down through the perineum and on down to the soles of the feet.
- In addition to calmness, it is very important to remain as loose and relaxed as possible. The entire body should be so relaxed that it



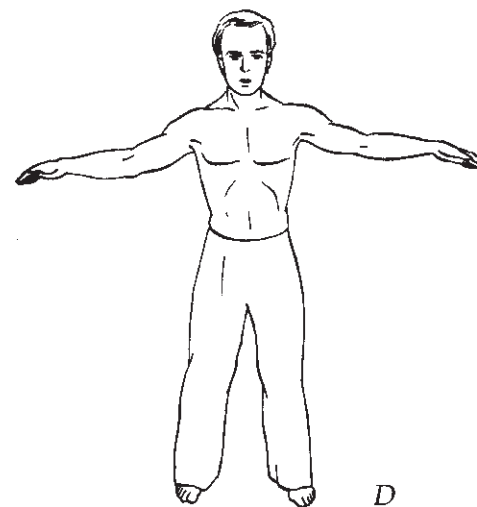
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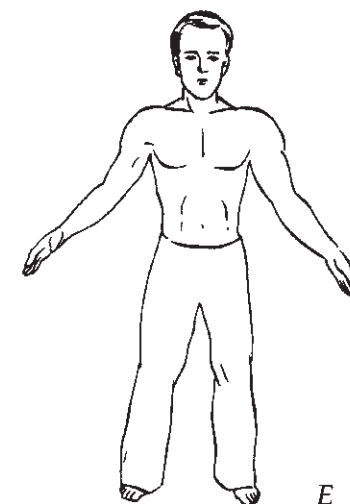
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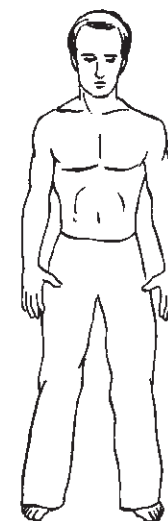
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D



E



F

Fig. 22 Liver/gall bladder syllable: *hsü*

A. Starting posture: Horse stance.

B. Turn palms up, raise arms to side, grip big toes to ground, inhale.

C. Arms extended to sides, palms up, complete inhalation.

Fig. 22 continued

D. Turns palms down, relax toes, start exhaling with mouth, aspirating 'hsü'.

E. Lower arms down to sides, continue exhalation/aspiration.

F. Return to Horse stance, relax; repeat.

feels as though each and every muscle were being pulled towards the earth by force of gravity.

- Only after attaining a state of total relaxation, calm, and smooth natural breathing, should you begin to practise the Six-Syllable Secret.

- Practise each syllable at least six times, but do *not* sound them out loud. Instead, aspirate each syllable silently in the throat, and use your mind to regulate and guide its vibrational frequency into the related organ. Before commencing aspiration of the syllables, first perform a few deep diaphragmic breaths to expel stale air and stagnant energy, then start by taking a long, slow, deep inhalation through the nose, followed by a long, slow, silent exhalation through the mouth, with lips, tongue, teeth, and throat formed as though to pronounce the syllable.

- It is not necessary to practise all six of the syllables every time you practise. You may select one or two, according to your requirements, and incorporate them into your regular daily *chee-gung* workout. You may also practise the entire set as a complete workout from time to time.

The Six Syllables

Syllable One: hsü (pronounced as 'shoo', with lips pursed, but softened by the umlaut over the vowel)

Element: Wood

Season: spring

Organ: liver/gall bladder

Method: 1) Stand relaxed in Horse. Bring your hands slightly forwards so the palms are facing each other at thigh level. Focus attention on the point between the eyebrows and the point midway between the nipples, in order to open up these vital energy centres, then shift attention to the centres of the palms and the tips of the middle fingers.

2) Grip the ground with the big toes to activate the liver meridian, and start inhaling slowly and deeply into the abdomen, while slowly raising the hands up and out to the sides, turning the palms up towards the sky as you raise them. Focus attention on the middle fingers and palms.

3) When your breath is full and your palms reach shoulder level, turn the palms over to face the ground, relax the grip of the toes on the ground, and slowly lower the arms back down to the sides, while exhaling through the mouth, silently aspirating the syllable *hsü* with pursed lips, and visualizing a stream of energy

flowing up and out from the liver along with the breath.

4) When breath is empty and hands are back down in front, pause and relax for a moment, then grip big toes to ground and commence another cycle on next inhalation.

Benefits: Decongests the liver and clears the liver meridian. Draws fresh energy into the liver and gall bladder. Helps detoxify the liver and stimulate its functions.

Syllable Two: her (pronounced as 'her' but without the final 'r', with mouth open, tip of tongue pressed against lower teeth, and syllable aspirating in the top of the throat on exhalation)

Element: Fire

Season: summer

Organ: heart/small intestine

Method: 1) Stand in Horse and hold the palms facing each other in front in same starting posture as the previous syllable. Commence inhalation and, as you begin to raise your hands up and out to the sides, turn the palms so that they face towards the back, and extend the little fingers outwards as far as possible in order to activate the heart meridian.

2) When your breath is full and the hands reach shoulder level, commence exhalation through the mouth, aspirating the syllable *her* in the top of the throat, while slowly lowering the hands back down the sides with little fingers relaxed. Visualize hot Fire energy streaming up and out of the heart with exhalation.

3) When the breath is empty and your hands are back down in front, pause to relax, then begin the next cycle on the next inhalation.

Benefits: Pacifies and expels excess Fire energy in the heart and clears the heart meridian. Especially effective during hot summer weather or in tropical climates to eliminate symptoms of excess heart Fire, such as insomnia, heart palpitations, profuse sweating, and hypertension. Also benefits the small intestine.

Syllable Three: hoo (pronounced 'who', with the lips rounded and the tongue suspended in mid-mouth, as though blowing out a candle)

Element: Earth

Season: late summer

Organ: spleen and pancreas/stomach

Method: 1) Stand in Horse. Bring your hands out front, just below the navel, with the palms facing up to the sky and the fingers

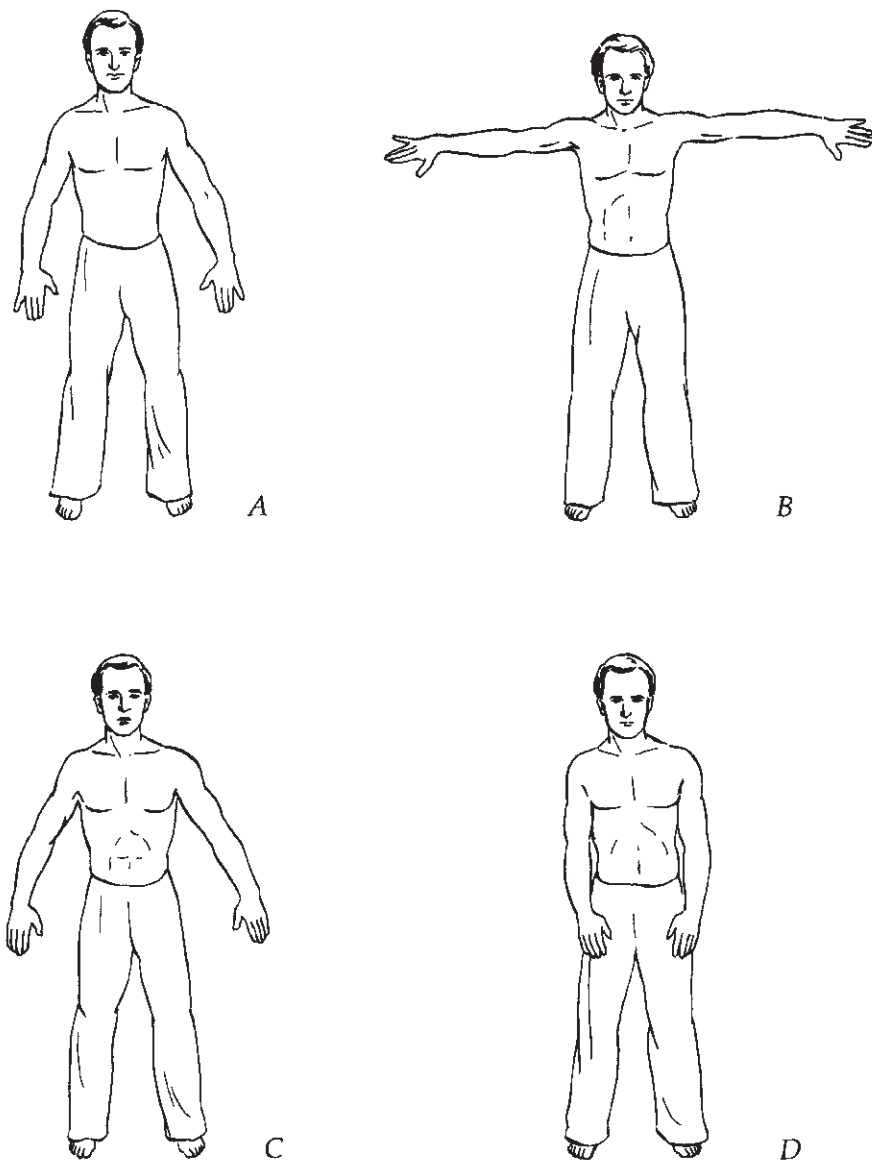


Fig. 23 Heart/small intestine syllable: *her*

- A. Starting posture: Horse stance, turn palms back, extend little fingers out, raise arms up to sides, inhale.
 B. Arms extended to sides, little fingers extended up, complete inhalation.
 C. Relax little fingers, lower arms down to sides, exhale with mouth, aspirating 'her'.
 D. Return to Horse stance, relax; repeat.

aligned. Slowly commence inhaling through the nose as you raise both hands up along the centre of the torso.

2) When your hands reach the *tan-jung* point midway between the nipples, and the breath is full, commence exhaling through the mouth and aspirate the syllable *hoo* as you turn the right palm out and around 360 degrees so that it faces the sky. Continue raising it upwards past the face and above the head, while turning the left palm in and around 180 degrees so that it faces the ground; then push it down the front of the torso back to thigh level.

3) When the breath is empty, right palm is extended up towards the sky above your head, and the left palm is extended down towards the ground below, commence the next inhalation. Turn the right palm down, left palm up, and slowly bring the palms together so that they meet again at the *tan-jung* point midway between the nipples just as the inhalation is complete.

4) When the breath is full and your palms meet at mid-chest, commence the next mouth exhalation and syllable aspiration, and continue pushing the right hand down with the palm facing the ground, while turning the left palm out and around 360 degrees to face upwards again; continue raising it up above your head to full extension.

5) When the breath is empty, the left palm is extended above your head to the sky and the right palm extended down to the earth below, turn the palms over and bring them together again at mid-chest level on next inhalation.

Benefits: Improves the digestive functions of spleen, pancreas, and stomach. Benefits any sort of digestive ailment and helps eliminate bad breath caused by indigestion in the stomach.

Syllable Four: *sss* (pronounced as in 'hiss', without the initial 'hi-', with your tongue behind the lower teeth and the upper and lower teeth slightly parted)

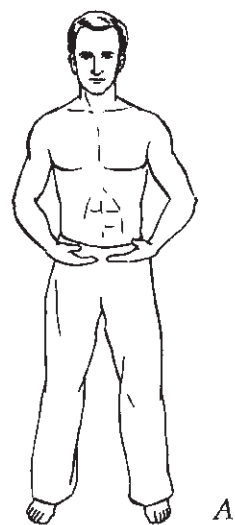
Element: Metal

Season: autumn

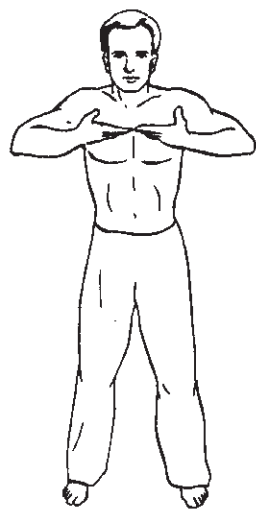
Organ: lungs/large intestine

Method: 1) Stand in Horse, bring your hands out to the front just below the navel, palms up (same as in the previous syllable), and slowly raise the palms up along the centre of the torso as you inhale deeply and slowly into the abdomen.

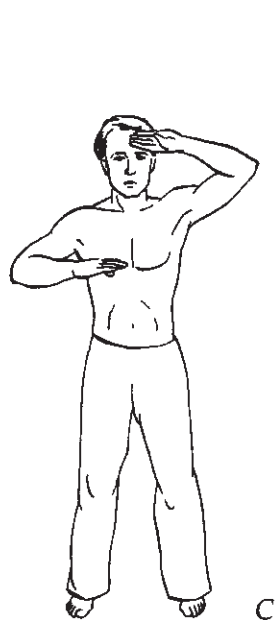
2) When your hands reach the point midway between the nipples and your breath is full, turn the palms down, around, and up again, so that they are facing outwards to either side, with the fingers



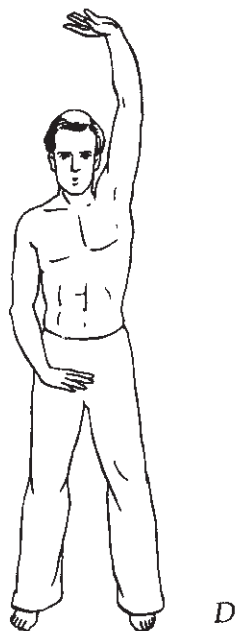
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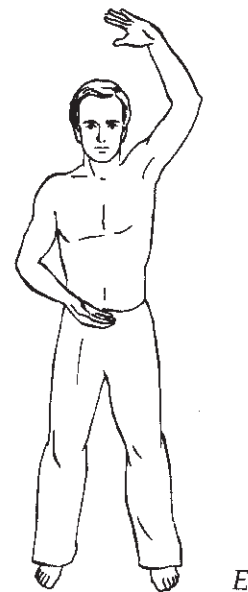
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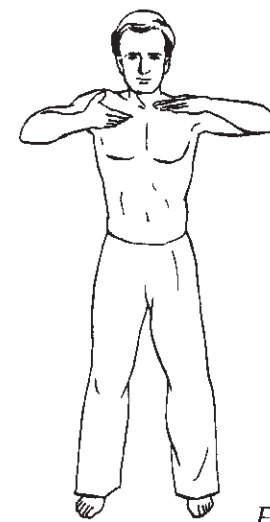
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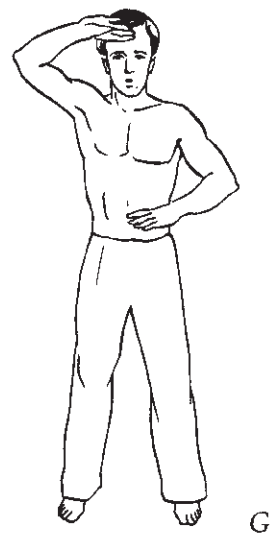
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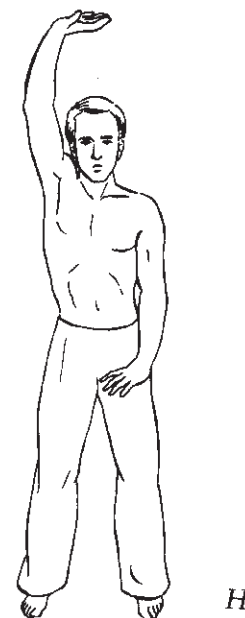
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Fig. 24 Spleen and pancreas/stomach syllable: *hoo*

A. Starting posture: Horse stance, turn palms up in front and raise hands along torso, inhaling.

B. Hands reach heart, palms up, complete inhalation.

C. Turn left palm up and raise, turn right palm down and lower; start exhaling with mouth, aspirating 'hoo'.

D. Palms fully extended up and down, complete exhalation/aspiration.

Fig. 24 continued

E. Turn top palm down and bottom palm up, slowly bring together at heart, inhaling.

F. Palms meet at heart, inhalation complete.

G. Descending palm continues down along torso, ascending palm turns out and up and continues rising above head; start exhaling and aspirating 'hoo'.

H. Palms fully extended up and down, complete exhalation/aspiration.

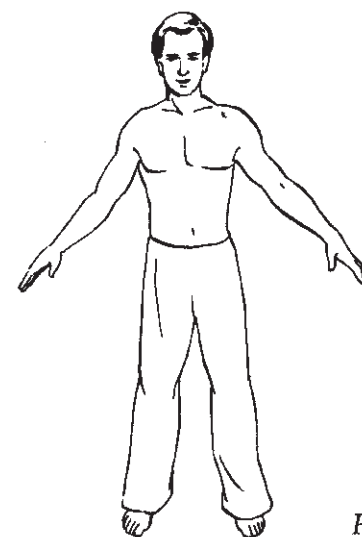
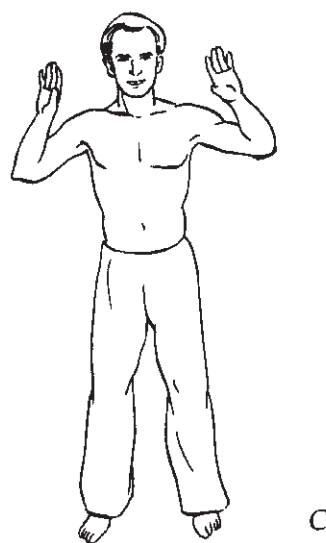
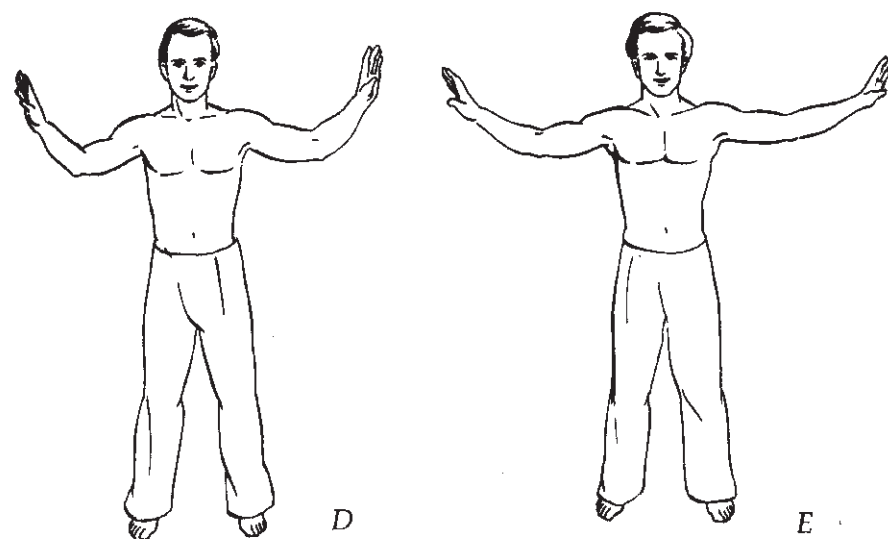
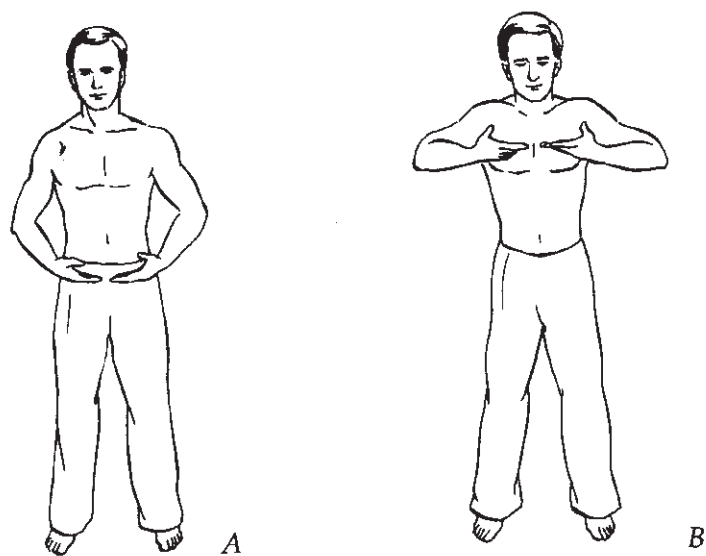


Fig. 25 Lungs/large intestine syllable: sss

A. Starting posture: Horse stance, turn palms up in front and raise hands along torso, inhaling.

B. Hands reach heart, palms up, complete inhalation.

C. Turn palms out to sides and push outwards, start exhaling and aspirating 'sss'.

Fig. 25 continued

D. Continue pushing palms out to sides and aspirating until arms extended.

E. Turn palms to ground and slowly lower to sides, continuing exhalation/aspiration.

F. Return to starting posture; repeat.

pointing up towards the sky. Commence exhaling and aspirating the sss syllable through the mouth as you push your hands outwards towards the sides, as though pushing open a lift door, with the palms facing outwards. When your arms are extended out to the sides but with the elbows still slightly bent (not locked in full extension), turn the palms down towards the ground and slowly lower the arms back down to the starting position while continuing the mouth exhalation and syllable aspiration.

3) When your breath is empty and your arms are hanging down loose by your sides, pause briefly to relax, then commence another cycle on the next inhalation.

Benefits: Clears congestion from lungs and the lung meridian and stimulates large-intestine energy. Eliminates excess heat from the lungs, enhances lung energy, improves all respiratory functions. Effective remedy for colds, flu, and other bronchial ailments. Also relieves aches in the shoulders and upper back.

Syllable Five: *chway* (pronounced as in 'way' with a 'ch' in front. Lips slightly pursed on the initial 'ch', then relaxed and open on the final 'way')

Element: Water

Season: winter

Organ: kidney/bladder

Method: 1) Stand with the feet slightly closer together than in standard Horse, arms hanging loosely down by your sides, the palms facing the thighs.

2) Take a deep inhalation, bend your arms and raise the hands slightly up in front so that the palms are facing each other at navel level, then slowly bend your knees and squat down to the ground as you exhale through the mouth and aspirate the syllable *chway*. Try to keep the spine fairly erect as you crouch down, slightly contract the anus, and keep the palms facing each other in front.

3) When your breath is empty and your body is crouched down in a full squat, with your arms wrapped around your legs and the palms facing, commence the next inhalation and slowly rise up to the original posture. Then commence the next exhalation and syllable aspiration as you squat down again in another cycle.

Benefits: Builds up kidney energy, clears the kidney meridian, tonifies the kidneys, and stimulates the adrenal glands. It is a remedy for sexual debility and any kidney or bladder ailment.

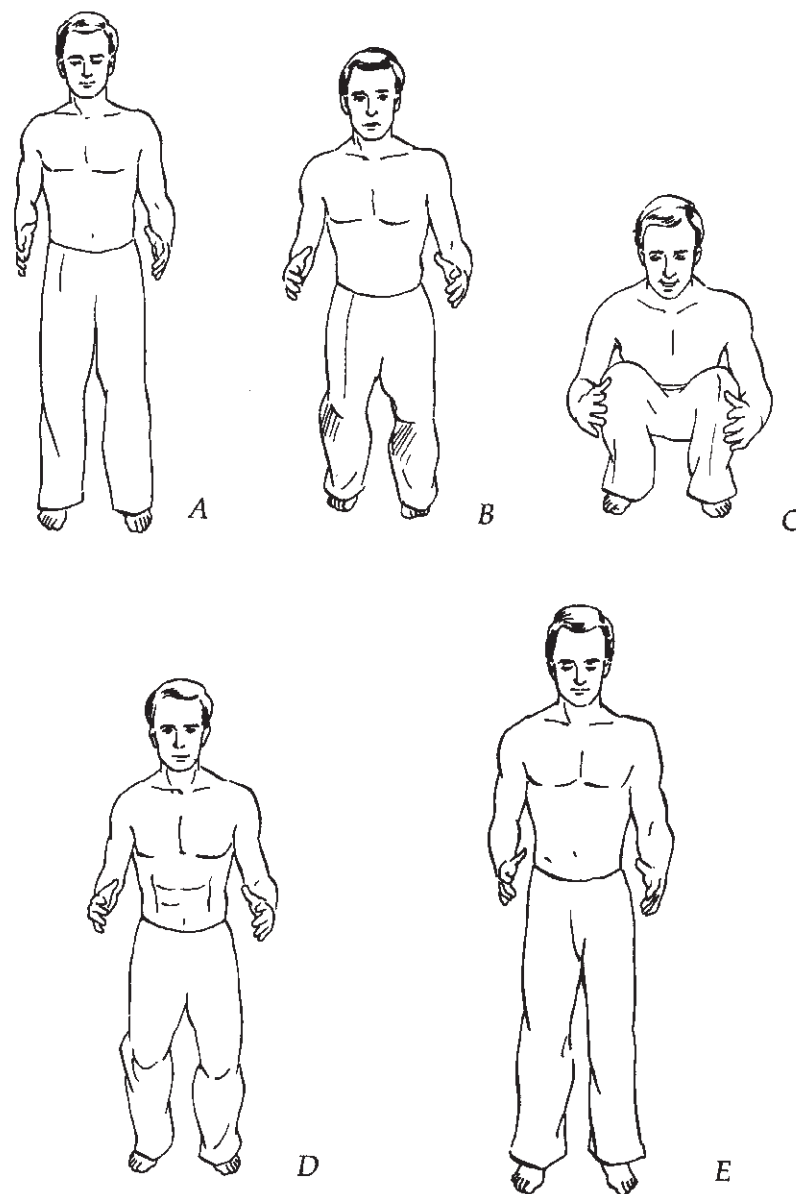


Fig. 26 Kidney/bladder syllable: *chway*

A. Starting posture: raise hands up in front, palms facing, take full inhalation with nose.
B. Bend knees and squat down slowly, start exhaling with mouth and aspirate first part of syllable 'choo'.

C. Continue squatting to ground, palms facing in front, and complete aspirating syllable 'way'.

D. Slowly rise up to standing position, inhaling with nose.

E. Return to starting stance, inhalation complete; repeat.

Note: If you have high blood pressure, avoid this exercise until your blood pressure is normalized. If your knees are too weak to perform the squat, wait until you build up your knee and thigh strength with other exercises, before practising this one.

Syllable Six: *shee* (pronounced 'she', with the teeth slightly parted and the lips formed in a small smile)

Element: Fire

Season: summer

Organ: Triple Burner/pericardium

Method: 1) This syllable exercise is performed in precisely the same format as the exercise 'Palms raised to heaven to regulate the Triple Burner'.

Lyrea's note: This is the same movement pattern as the *Qi Gong* exercise we have called "Bubbles." The only difference here is that each exhalation is now done open-mouthed as you aspirate the sound "shee."

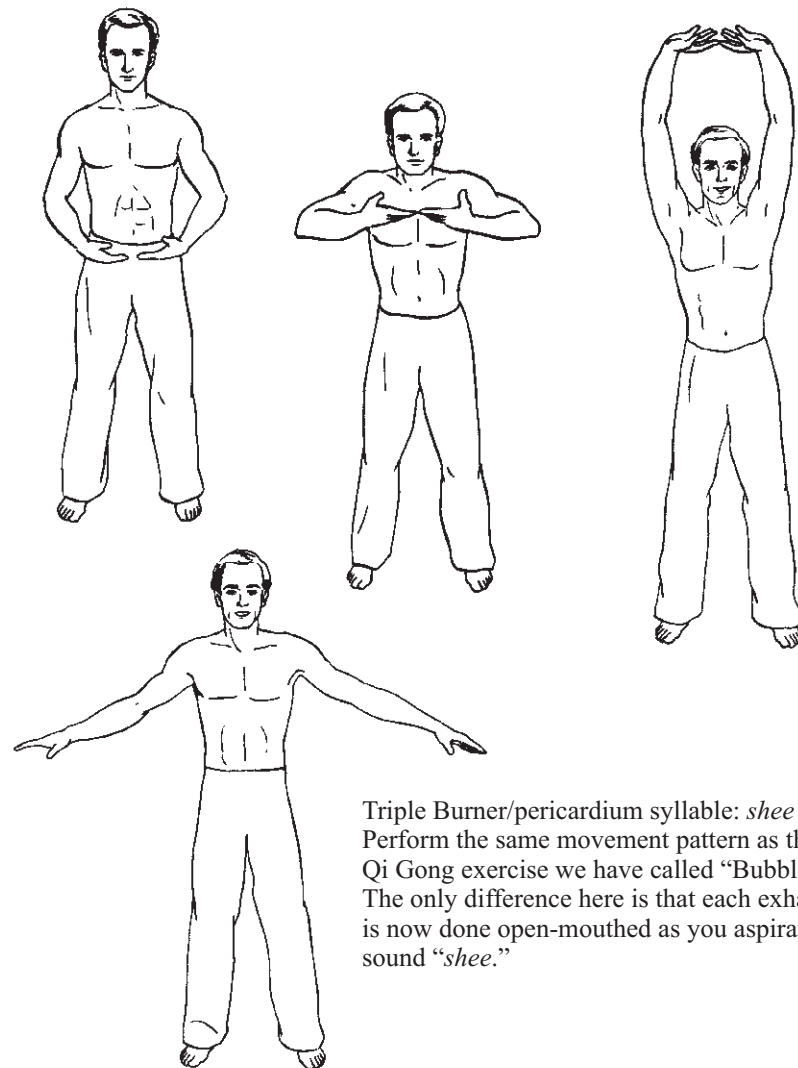
2) When your arms are back down in front of you, turn the palms up and commence another cycle on the next inhalation.

Benefits: This exercise helps remedy any ailments caused by imbalances or malfunctions in the Triple Burner system, including swollen thyroids, sore throat, hot and cold spells, ringing ears, bloated abdomen, profuse sweating, dizziness, and oppression in the chest. It is a good way to balance the entire Triple Burner system, including respiratory, digestive, and excretory functions. The difference between this and the other exercise performed in the same format is that this one focuses energy specifically on the apertures of the Triple Burner in the chest, solar plexus, and lower gut, whereas the other one circulates energy throughout the entire Triple Burner organ-energy system. Use this one for healing and the other one for overall stimulation of the entire system.

Note: If you have high blood pressure, you should not raise your arms any further than head level on inhalation. Upon reaching head level, turn the palms out and around, then push them out to the sides and lower them back down to the starting position on exhalation.

Two modes of practising the Six Syllables

1) If you are extremely fatigued, weak, or ailing, you may also practise the Six-Syllable Secret using only the aspirated breaths, without the movements of the body. In this case, each syllable you practise



Triple Burner/pericardium syllable: *shee*
Perform the same movement pattern as the *Qi Gong* exercise we have called "Bubbles."
The only difference here is that each exhalation is now done open-mouthed as you aspirate the sound "shee."

should be performed at least six times, using only the breath, either standing in Horse, or sitting on edge of a stool with your spine erect. After each exhalation, pause to relax the body, regulate the breath with a few ordinary abdominal breaths, clear the mind, then do another syllable.

2) When practising the syllables in conjunction with the physical movements, be sure not to tense the muscles or tighten the joints. Especially keep the shoulders as loose and relaxed as possible. Use the mind of intent to open up the vital energy points between the eyebrows and midway between the nipples, so that energy may flow freely between head and torso.