

# **What is QIGONG?**

“Qigong” (*Chi Kung*), the Study (*Kung*) of Human Energy (*Chi*), embodies a total system of Physical, Mental and Spiritual Exercises that deal with different aspects of our being. Qigong was developed in China around 1500 B.C. and has evolved into four major schools of thought:

- 1. Scholar Qigong:** Ethical development, refinement of temperament, self-cultivation
- 2. Martial Qigong:** Enhance and develop the strength, endurance and spirit of a warrior
- 3. Medical Qigong:** Improves quality of life, complements ongoing Western treatment, relieves symptoms of illness
- 4. Religious Qigong:** Divided into two categories:
  - Daoist* – Cultivation of physical body and spirit, merging with nature to achieve longevity and immortality
  - Buddhist* – Spiritual Cultivation as a way to enlightenment, freedom from the cycle of life and death

## **Purpose of Medical Qigong**

The practice of Qigong can help ease some of the side effects of a Western treatment plan on a physical, mental and spiritual level. Qigong is a Mind/Body Spiritual approach to better health that, according to Eastern philosophy, tries to balance and harmonize the body, breathing, mind, energy and spirit – the building blocks of our being. The study of Qigong teaches us how to enjoy and cultivate a mindful practice of regulating those essential building blocks, empowering patients and their families to participate on their journey towards better health.

## **What is Involved?**

Qigong involves the practice of Mind/Body techniques during specific hours of the day in various postures – lying, sitting, standing still, moving slowly (Tai Chi), or moving quickly (Kung Fu), to achieve a higher quality of life. Mind/Body/Spirit methods and techniques include stretching, strengthening, increasing range of motion in the joints, learning how to align bones, learning how to use the body in the most (or least) effortless way possible, lengthening the spine, increasing lung capacity, massaging the organ area through movements. Techniques, metaphors and visualizations are also used to create space for the nervous system to function better, improve relaxation, increase concentration; all to utilize the mind and awaken the spirit as healing tools to achieve a higher quality of life.

## **What has been Proven?**

Studies have shown that exercise prevents muscle loss, increases bone density, prevents osteoporosis, increases stability and balance, helps relieve arthritis pain, reduces stress, lowers anxiety, improves overall health and self esteem, relieves depression, strengthens the immune system and increases lymph flow. Since Qigong involves many of the elements of regular exercise and more, then we can apply what has been proven about exercise to Qigong. For example, resistance training has been shown to increase bone density. Since Tai Chi (a form of Qigong) involves resisting your own body weight, we can make a connection between the resistance study and Tai Chi.

## **Possible Side Effects**

The act of stretching, challenging and reactivating different soft body tissue (skin, fascia, muscles, tendons, and ligaments) may lead to minor physical pain.

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