

# Body Breath & Mind

by Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S

**A** Chinese exercise technique known as “regulation of body, breath and mind” has a profound effect on achievement of wholeness. Connection of the body’s physical and energetic components is an integral part making this happen.

Existence of abundant Qi (vital energy) flow is another underlying factor as it ensures the continuous gathering and storing of energy, rather than allowing it to become stuck or squandered.

Regulation of the body refers to a form of physical posturing that is done to create alignment, relaxation and grounding. Regulation of the breath involves slow, even and rhythmical respiration that becomes synchronized with body movement. And regulation of the mind entails emptying oneself of extraneous thoughts and using the mind to direct body movement with the breath.

The balancing of yin and yang and harmonization of mind, body and spirit obtained through this three-prong integration practice brings healing power to a new level. The energetic benefit of this technique is far-reaching, one that manifests

as increased self-control, mental clarity, spiritual acuity, emotional balance and long lasting physical health. Regular and concerted practice is a definite prerequisite for bringing such outcomes to fruition.

The enactment of all three components ensures that movements, breathing and mind intent are fully aligned and “moving together as one.” This results in smooth and easy Qi flow, regular and rhythmic breathing and a relaxed peaceful mind. Orchestration of movement in this way is the underlying “modus operandi” of the graceful, flowing and powerful choreography of Tai Chi and Qigong. It is what makes these ancient exercise arts look so effortless and magical.

**The body should be supple like an infant**  
**The movements should be flexible like a snake**  
**The feeling should be soft like water**  
**The breathing should be smooth like a cloud**  
**— Qigong Proverb**

Body regulation requires a straight and flat back, relaxed pelvis and slight tucking under of the buttocks to achieve proper alignment. This allows qi to flow freely from the crown of the head to the perineum - the meeting place of yin and yang energy pathways, respectively. It is a posturing of the body that strengthens health through increased energetic nutrition gained from drawing Qi inward to the body from the earth and sky.

Relaxation of the jaw and drawing it slightly toward the neck is also important. This promotes Qi circulation to three major “seas of energy” located on the front center of the body – commonly known as the Three Dantians. Energetic nourishment of these three areas is known to promote health and longevity. Keeping the shoulders and arms relaxed is particularly effective for

encouraging Qi flow into the fingers. Relaxing the soles of the feet promotes more complete grounding and rooting into the earth. And focusing eyes on the hands with relaxed eyelids helps to bring one more into the present moment.

Breath regulation involves a form of deep breathing into the diaphragm and belly in a slow, relaxed and rhythmical manner. This builds Qi flow through increasing one’s ability to activate and circulate energy within the body. It also creates more efficient exchange of oxygen and carbon monoxide. In total, regulation of the breath increases oxygen capacity, body relaxation and blood cleansing. This serves to nourish the mind and strengthen the body’s systems. These positive outcomes are brought to an even higher level when exercise is done outdoors due to closer proximity to nature and clean fresh air.

Regulation of the mind is the application of a mind intent practice based on the traditional saying, “where the mind goes, the Qi follows.” It is an integral component for attainment of a state of Wu or no-mindedness. This eliminates the “monkey mind” that can otherwise be quite an an-

noyance. Mind regulation can also be used for self-healing purposes by focusing on a specific part of the body that needs help. Another goal includes enhancement of Tai Chi and Qigong through moving energy into the hands and feet, which can then also be released outwardly.

These techniques can be applied during any repetitive movement such as taking a walk, exercising on a treadmill, swinging a golf club or hitting a tennis ball. Or try simply integrating these whole body movement concepts into your daily activities.

**Being cognizant of “body breath mind integration” in this way creates a more tranquil state of being.**

It brings a special quietude and acute awareness of everything happening within and around oneself. Physical sensations and subtle energies that were previously undetected become quite noticeable. This all happens as one’s entire being becomes

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enlightened through synchronization of the body, breath and mind. The totality of this experience turns an ordinary situation into an extraordinary event.

*Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. is an acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist, Tai Chi and Qigong Instructor as well as director of*

*Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ approaching 30 years. Shoshanna is author of Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy and co-author of Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness. Visit [www.healing4u.com](http://www.healing4u.com) and [www.qigong4.us](http://www.qigong4.us).*



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