An Introduction to Qi Gong and Tai Chi

Joanne Gard Marshall
Certified Tai Chi for Health Teacher
marshall@ils.unc.edu

Qi Gong and Tai Chi are ancient Chinese movement practices that have been shown to decrease stress and promote bone, cardiac and brain health. The practices also improve strength, balance and general well-being. Qi Gong means “energy moving”. It consists of a series of gentle exercises that contain all the movement principles found in Tai Chi. These two practices are complementary. Qi Gong may be used separately or as a preparation for practicing the more formal choreographed Tai Chi forms. Tai Chi originated as a martial art; however, it now being widely used for health promotion. Both practices may be done at work, home or in a group. They are typically done standing but can be modified for sitting in a chair.

Today we will learn the series of Qi Gong movements that are used as preparation for practicing Sun Style Tai Chi. This version was developed by Dr. Paul Lam, a family physician in Australia. It has been adopted by the arthritis associations in Australia, US and UK and has been approved by CDC as an evidence-based health promotion program. I like Sun Style because it is a modified form that is easier to learn and can be practiced by people of all ages and fitness levels. I also recommend Dr. Lam’s DVDs and other materials to my students who cannot attend my class regularly. http://www.taichiforhealthinstitute.org/.

Additional resources:

This publication provides an overview of the benefits of Tai Chi and reviews research on the topic: Harvard Medical School Guide to Tai Chi.

Good bibliography and brief description:
http://www.stanford.edu/group/taichi_wushu/taichi.history.html

Several lessons given by Dr. Lam may be found at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvN8oawFIXI

Preparation
Tai chi greeting
Tai chi stance
Inner focus
Relaxed body/ breathing
Four corners of feet/ Bubbling well  
Knees slightly bent  
Sit on high stool  
Weight shift/ one foot full, one foot empty  
Dan tien rotation from center/ Search light  
Combine weight shift and rotation.  
Tai chi walking / small slow steps

**Qi Gong (energy moving)**
1. Calling the chi  
2. Open and close  
3. Follow hands  
4. Shoulder rolls back  
5. Gather the chi  
6. Carry the ball  
7. Combine heaven and earth  
8. Hands back, heel forward, hands up/foot to side  
9. Side press, alternate foot to side  
10. Loose fists by hips  
11. Toe touch forward, alternate arm punches  
12. Toes slightly out, step straight forward, alternate arm punches  
13. Hands on dan tien (center)  
14. Toe/heel touches  
15. Foot inside/outside

**Sun Style Tai Chi Forms**

**Part 1**

**Basic six**
1. Commencement  
2. Open and close  
3. Single whip *(Right)*  
4. Open the curtain with left hand  
5. Wave hands like clouds 3 times *(Right)*  
6. Open and close

**Reverse basic six**
7. Open and close  
8. Single whip *(Left)*  
9. Open the curtain with right hand  
10. Wave hands like clouds 3 times *(Left)*  
11. Open and close  
12. Close (if conclude here)