

# Tai Chi Philosophy Protocol for IBS



**“Be as still as a mountain, move like a great river.”**

Expositions of Insights into the Practice of the Thirteen Postures  
-Wu, Yu-Hsian

Tai Chi philosophy embodies a wide variety of diverse concepts, theories, and practices.

In this specific Tai Chi intervention for IBS, you will learn a short Tai Chi form from the Yang Style Tai Chi. You will learn to use meditations and visualizations while sitting, standing, and performing the Tai Chi form to relax and dissolve stagnation in the abdominal area, the digestive system, and the entire body.

This Tai Chi intervention will allow you to develop balance between strength and flexibility, develop the lungs to increase oxygen intake, and tap into the power of the mind for healing. The intervention will teach you how to reduce stagnation and stress and increase circulation in the internal organs both through movements and self-massage.

We will meet once a week for 8 weeks, but I encourage you to practice at least 3 more days on your own. At the end of the program, you will find a schedule to keep track of your practice.

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# Tai Chi Philosophy

## Tai Chi Theory

## Theory

### What is Tai Chi?

#### Tai Chi or Grand Ultimate

For centuries, Tai Chi Chuan (Taijiquan) has been a practice acknowledged to promote deep relaxation and excellent health, to prevent injuries and illness, and sometimes to reach higher levels of skill in martial arts. The gentle, moving meditation helps you balance strength and flexibility, offers a low-impact workout, and engages all of the various soft tissues in your body: muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia, and skin.

Commonly known by its abbreviated name tai chi (taiji) practice improves the circulation of blood and qi (energy) which **enhances the body's natural healing capabilities**. In addition to learning fundamental tai chi stances and postures, body-conditioning exercises help you increase muscle mass, while the gentle movements continually massage your internal organs leading to increased flow of blood and oxygen through every cell in your body.

Tai chi is an excellent way to improve your quality of life and daily physical performance. You learn to optimize your internal energy use and to allow the natural energy from your surroundings to rejuvenate your body. Relaxation is an essential key to successful practice and should be the primary goal of students new to tai chi.



## Theory

# What is the difference between Tai Chi & Chi Kung?

Many people ask in class, “What’s the difference between qigong and tai chi?”

There is a simple answer: tai chi is qigong, but qigong is not necessarily Tai chi. Qigong is the cultivation of your qi energy in the body.

Tai chi is a form of qigong, but its movements may also be applied at full speed as a martial art.

Tai chi is martial chi kung. It is a form of qigong that is designed for both health and martial arts. Both medical qigong and tai chi emphasize the power of the mind and the importance of cultivating energy and evoking our spirituality. Many of the internal skills are acquired through meditation.

Qigong is the study (gong) of human energy (qi). It embodies a total system of physical, mental and spiritual exercises that deal with different aspects of our being. Many popular qigong exercises were developed as long as 2,500 years ago.

Qigong was developed in China and has evolved into four major schools of thought:

### **Scholar Qigong or Confucius Qigong**

Ethical development, refinement of personal temperament, self-cultivation.

### **Martial Qigong**

Enhancement and development of the strength, endurance, and spirit of a warrior.

### **Medical Qigong**

Improvement of quality of life. Complements Western treatments. Relieves symptoms of illness.

### **Religious Qigong**

Divided into two schools: Taoist and Buddhist.

*Taoist* Cultivation of physical body and spirit, merging with nature to achieve longevity and immortality.

*Buddhist* Spiritual cultivation as a way to reach enlightenment, freedom from the cycle of life and death.

## Theory

Both medical qigong and tai chi emphasize the power of the mind and the importance of cultivating energy and evoking our spirituality. Many of the internal skills are acquired through sitting, standing, or moving meditation.

Often, people memorize a tai chi or qigong sequence of movements without learning the internal skills, which are the essence of the art. However, it is through the internal skills that deeper benefits arise. Your health will improve, your balance will improve, your energy will increase, and your mind and spirit will become more focused and clear.

The goal is to make these subtle internal skills as easy as possible for you to understand so you may enjoy these benefits in your daily life, rather than focus on the external forms and becoming frustrated by trying to memorize dozens of intricate tai chi movements. First and foremost, you must learn to relax, and then through practice, you will master the internal skills, after which you can learn external moves and various forms.

## Theory

### The Five Building Blocks

The Eastern Arts divide our “being” into various elements, so we may better observe them as a whole. For example, yoga is sometimes symbolized with a triangle, which represents body, mind, and spirit. The philosophy of Qigong and Tai Chi divide our “being” into five elements, which refers to The Five Building Blocks of our Being. These five blocks are: Body, Breath, Mind, Energy, and Spirit. Remember the five building blocks and try to apply them in each movement. Within each block there are a number of skills that need to be acquired.

When you are focusing on the **Body** block, emphasize the following: alignment of the skeleton, softness of the soft tissue, Empty/Full Moon breathing, “stretch” and “release” the bows, sacrum dropping, head suspended, shoulders dropping, face relaxing, and gentle pulsing within the joints.

Within the **Breath** block: breathe long, deep, peaceful, and quiet inhalations and exhalations. Soften the muscles around the lungs on exhalation, and move the air to different parts of the lungs using the various positions of the ribs and spine, which can be enhanced by moving the limbs and bending the torso. Pause briefly in the space at the end of your exhalation. This is considered to be the quietest time in our body.

In the **Mind** block, try to achieve a meditative mind, a state between awake and asleep. For the **Energy** block, spend time focusing on your internal visualizations: the Lower Energy Center. Lead impurities and energy either up to the heavens or down to the center of the earth.

Regarding the **Spirit** block: Evoke the spirit by learning each Tai Chi movement and try to fulfill the “spirit” of each move.

## Theory

### Holding the Stretches for 2 to 3 minutes

I am a strong believer and a practitioner of holding the stretches for 2 to 3 minutes. Of course you do not need to start doing it right away but over time you will get there. The main reason for holding the stretches for 2 to 3 minutes is that you do not want to practice it but you want to be it.

When I travel back home to Israel and see the stone workers, ages 20 to 70 years old, chipping and chiseling the Jerusalem stone while sitting on the ground for 8 hours a day with their legs crossed, knees touching the ground, or when I see the market workers, old and young, squatting down to attend to their boxes of merchandise without thinking twice I understand that since they have been doing it all their lives they never lost it: they are it. They do not need to practice.

It is all about conditioning and convincing, or demanding, the soft tissues to stretch and change and then maintain that elasticity; easier said than done!

When you hold the stretch for 2 to 3 minutes you first stretch whatever soft tissue is the tightest in your body. That is why students tell me that they feel the same stretch in different places. Within a minute, the tight area starts to open up and the next tightest soft tissue starts to stretch, and so on. You are not just stretching muscles, you are also stretching your fascia and tendons as well as your skin. All of these layers need to be stretched to achieve the final goal of freeing yourself from being a prisoner of your soft tissue. This allows your skeleton to reach its full potential of freedom and the ability to do what it was designed to do in the first place.

Another important reason for holding stretches for 2 to 3 minutes is that you need that time to not just achieve better flexibility but also to integrate deep breathing and meditation into your exercise. Spending time will allow you to focus on deep breathing while emptying your mind. Stretching for 20 to 30 seconds, the typical time individuals do it for, is too short and not long enough to emphasize the breath and the mind.

Being able to hold a stretch for 2 to 3 minutes is an indicator that you really have it and you are not taking shortcuts since the body likes to find ways to get there even if it really cannot do it.

## Theory

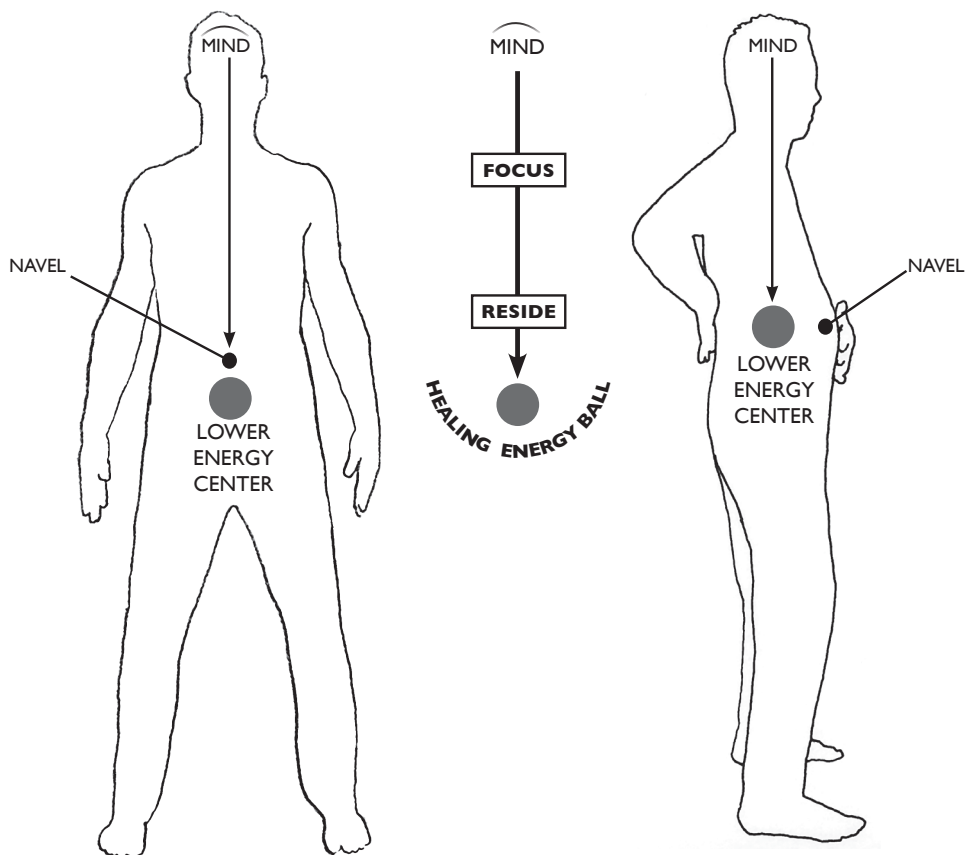
Last but not least, holding the stretches for 2 to 3 minutes and being able to stay calm and quite is a sign that you can find that place inside of you, where you can center yourself and not get distracted by the monkey mind or the emotional mind. I stumble every now and then into people, in my class, who are not able to hold the posture or the stretch for 2 to 3 minutes. They move around, they come out of the stretch and do other stretches and you can see that they cannot find this quiet and calm place. Their monkey mind controls them verses them controlling their monkey mind. But after a few months and practice even those who couldn't do it in the beginning can! Suddenly they are still in the posture or stretch, they can calm the mind and focus on the breath. Sometimes they will tell me "What, that was 3 minutes? It felt like 5 seconds." That is when I know that, as my Zen teacher use to say, *they are time*. That is when they are it and not just practicing it any more.

## Theory

# Empty—Full Moon with Lower Energy Center Visualization

The main energy center of the body is located two inches below the belly button and about three inches inward from that same spot, in our physical center of gravity area. In Qigong, this area is known as the **Lower Dan Tian**, which translates as Elixir Field and is believed to be the main area of the body where Qi energy is stored and from where it is circulated.

The first skill that is needed for both martial arts and health is the ability to reside mentally in the center of gravity energy center, while physically moving the abdomen and back muscles with the breath. I refer to this expansion of the abdomen and back muscles as Empty Moon and Full Moon. This is the secret to storing Qi energy, and upgrading our human battery. The practice of residing in the lower energy center should not only be an exercise. It should eventually be practiced throughout all your daily activities. There are many benefits that this skill will give you for martial and health training.



# Tai Chi Philosophy

## Tai Chi Principles

## Principles

### Sacrum Dropped

Alignment of the sacrum is essential. Because the sacrum is at the base of the spine, working on the sacrum will give you a starting point for achieving a larger goal, which is alignment of the spine as well as the entire skeletal system. Through correct alignment, we become directly connected to the earth and heaven. This is fundamental first step on the path of achieving abundant energy through our bodies.

At first, you will need to be more muscularly “active” to tuck in the sacrum using your abdominal and hip muscles, which will cause tension. Over time, however, as you become more flexible, you will be able to just drop the sacrum, using less force and generating less unwanted tension.



Sacrum dropped



Sacrum tilted back

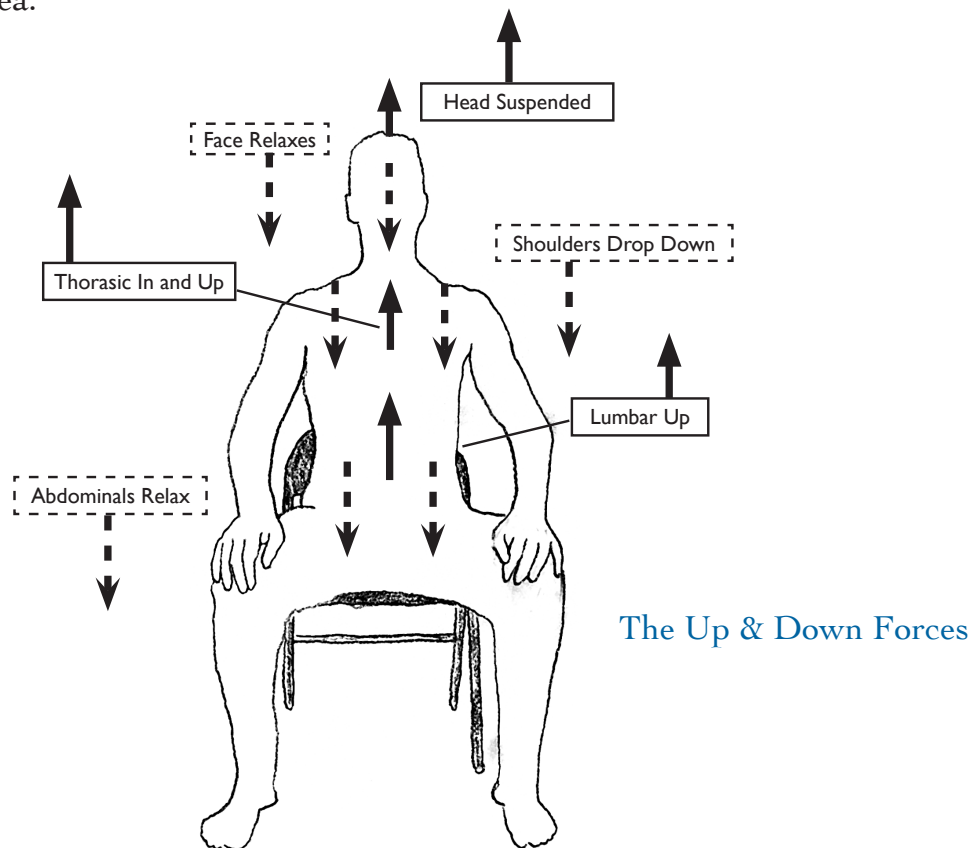


## Principles

### Head Suspended, Shoulders Dropped

We often allow our head to hang, and allow the neck to be compressed. We also have a tendency to have “floating” shoulders, and we hold tension in them and in the upper back. For these reasons, many individuals suffer from headaches, migraines, and neck issues. In many instances, the shoulders are a major part of the problem, as well as the solution. The positions we sleep in for hours each night have a major influence on our neck and shoulders. Each one of us needs to find the best way to sleep without compressing the shoulders, or torquing the neck. The first step is awareness of correct alignment in the neck and shoulders at all times.

Your first step is learning the sensation of keeping the chin parallel to the floor. We tend to slouch and drop the head down, which puts it in misalignment. Some of us tend to tilt the head somewhat to the left or right, which again throws the alignment off. Our shoulders are often misused in three ways: We tend to have one shoulder higher than the other. We tend to “carry” one or both shoulders slightly forward which throws it out of correct alignment. Lastly, we tend to crunch or shrink the shoulders inward toward the neck, which can be associated with mentally holding tension in this area.



## Principles

Sometimes these behaviors happen because we do not use our shoulders much. If you do not use them correctly and regularly, you may lose their optimum alignment. Another reason is that we may sometimes suddenly abuse them or demand more than they can take while performing sports and hobbies, often after a sedentary period during which they can become weak and distorted.

Balance between strength and flexibility, and an understanding of alignment, are the key to having healthy shoulders, and a pain-free neck and head. Some of the instructions that you hear again and again when learning the Chinese health or martial arts are: “Tuck your tailbone in, keep your chin parallel to the floor, lengthen the spine, drop your shoulders, and keep your head suspended.”

In the Tai Chi Classics, it is written:

Head held upright to let the spirit of vitality rise to the top of the head. Do not use external strength, or the neck will be stiff and the Qi and blood cannot flow through. It is necessary to have a natural and lively feeling. If the spirit cannot reach the top of the head, it cannot raise.

-Yang, Cheng-Fu (1883 - 1936)

## Principles

### Weight THROUGH the Knees, Not into the Knees

We tend to misuse our knees, putting our entire body weight into the knee versus sending the weight through the knees (See pictures below).

Because the ligaments in the knees are not designed for that purpose, the pressure that accumulates in those ligaments is like a negative bank account. In this situation, many different problems can occur; some people gradually develop knee problems, such as persistent pain, and others end up with torn cartilage or meniscus, or hyper-extended ligaments, and eventually some end up with various types of arthritis in the knees.

Our modern lifestyle often includes a lack of walking, climbing, and proper leg exercise, and a lack of weight-resistance through the legs. However, the biggest reason for so many knee problems is lack of knowledge and attention toward correct alignment and not enough practice in the correct body mechanics during regular physical tasks such as walking or climbing stairs.

The knees are delicate; you must always pay attention to be careful with them.



Weight into the Knees



Weight through the knees

# **The Tai Chi / Mind-Body Intervention**

## **Part 1**

### **Meditations and Visualizations**



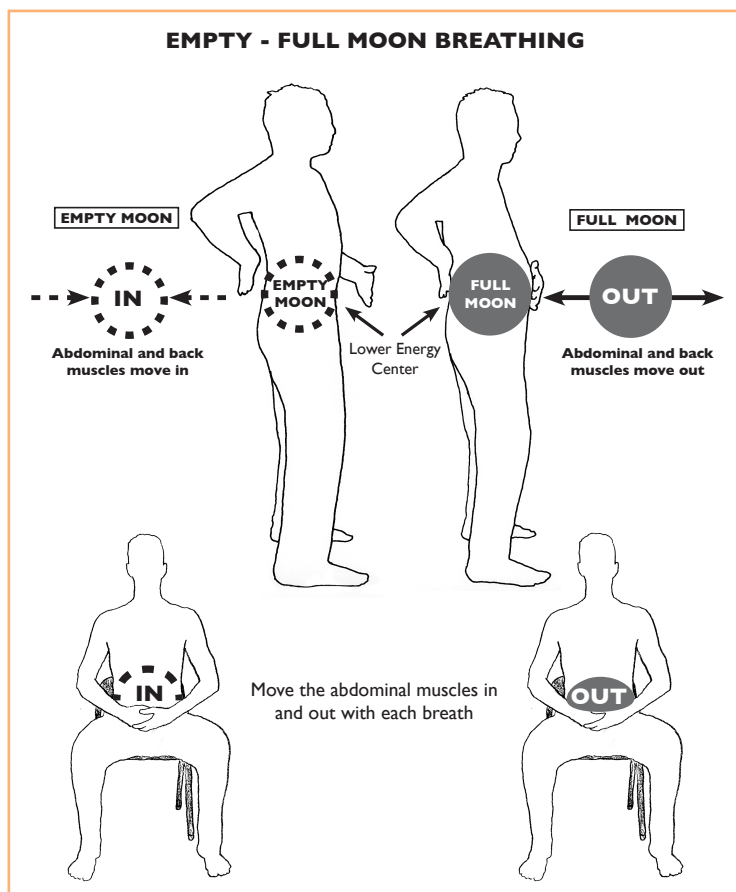
## Meditations and Visualizations

### Empty—Full Moon with Lower Energy Center Visualization

3 Minutes



While sitting on the edge of a chair, place your hands one on top of the other two inches below the navel. Sit straight and relax your shoulders, head suspended. Visualize the Lower Energy Center: A healing ball two inches below your navel in the center of your body.



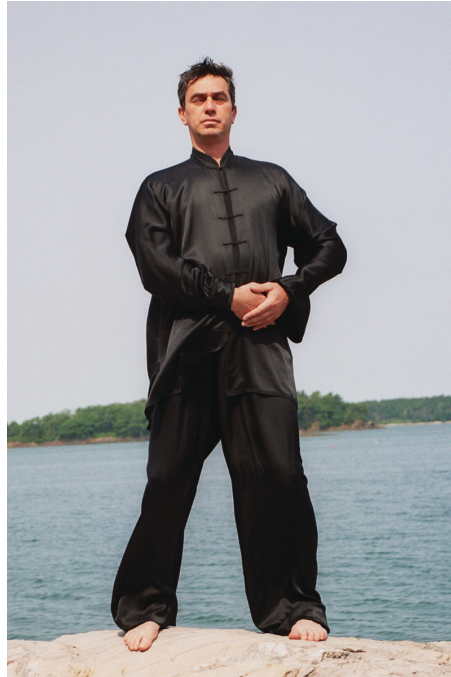


## Meditations and Visualizations

### Abdominal & Organ Massage

We massage our organs in two ways. One way of massaging the organs is through movements. The other way is literally through self-massage using your hands.

5 Minutes



This can be done standing, sitting or lying down.

Make sure to lengthen your spine and stay relaxed.

While breathing deeply, massage the internal organs from right to left in a circular, spiraling motion. This massage should always follow a clockwise direction, the same direction of the movement of the food in our intestines. You want to help encourage that movement. Calm your mind. Rub your hands until warm, then, massage the organ area from right to left.

Next, you want to monitor the Up and Down Forces. Is your spine nice and straight?

Are your shoulders relaxed? Is the top of the head suspended?

Did you relax the entire face?

Repeat this circular motion three times.

Then rub your hands again, and repeat the massage.

Put your mind inside the organs. You want to have the sense of smiling organs, happy organs. You want to have a sensation of nourishing the organs. You want to feel the sensation of relaxation in the organs and of feeding them with good, healthy, pure energy.

Start by massaging the organs for 3 minutes, and increase your length gradually.

## Meditations and Visualizations

### Organ & Abdominal Massage & Dissolving Impurities

5 Minutes



#### Physically

While sitting on the edge of the chair place both palms on your abdominal muscles, one on top of the other. Start massaging the abdominal muscles from right to left in a circlet motion. Start with very light massage. Some individuals can increase the strength over the 2 minutes others can keep the light massage depending on personal preference.

#### Mentally

As you massage your abdominal muscles keep visualizing the Lower Energy Center. While massaging and mentally dissolving the abdominal muscles, mentally lead the impurities into the Lower Energy Center.

## Meditations and Visualizations

# Dissolving Impurities & Leading them Down into the Earth

5 Minutes



### Rooting & Dissolving

Stand with your feet parallel, shoulder width apart and slightly bend your knees. Lengthen your spine, relax your shoulders, head suspended and tuck the pelvis in. Close your eyes and take 3 breaths to calm the mind and slow the heart. Visualize your Lower Energy Center.

Dissolve and collect all impurities from your abdominal area.

Then send or lead your mind and impurities down from the Lower Energy Center and abdominal area through the center of the legs down into the earth or the floor, two inches below your feet.

Keep doing this visualization for 2 to 5 minutes.



# Meditations and Visualizations

## DISSOLVE IMPURITIES

Lead them Down  
into the Earth

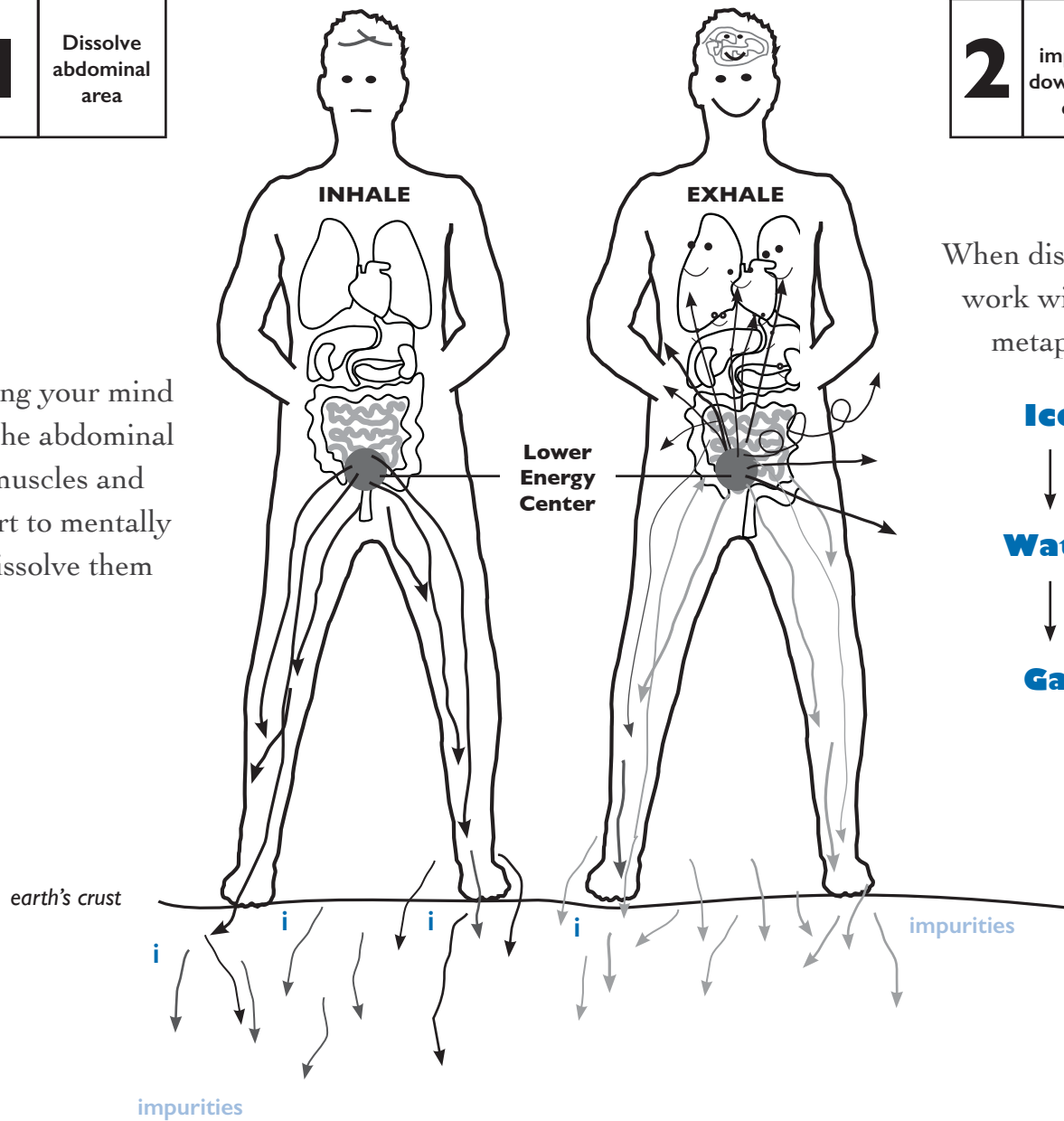
DISSOLVE	
1	Dissolve abdominal area

LEAD	
2	Lead impurities down to the earth

Bring your mind to the abdominal muscles and start to mentally dissolve them

When dissolving, work with the metaphor

**Ice**  
↓  
**Water**  
↓  
**Gas**



# **The Tai Chi / Mind-Body Intervention**

## **Part 2 Freeing the Skeleton**

## Freeing the Skeleton

### Iron on the Wall

2 Minutes



1. Stand with your toes a few inches from the wall.
2. Stretch your arms up the wall and lean your forehead on the wall, gently.
3. Spread your fingers while breathing deeply.
4. Relax your neck and shoulder muscles.
5. Experience the Up force through the bones while helping the Down force through the neck and shoulder muscles.

## Freeing the Skeleton

### Vitamin “H” or Hamstring Stretch

The hamstrings are the most stubborn muscle in the body because they are used all day sitting and standing to support the weight of the trunk and entire body.

Practice for 3 to 5 minutes



1. Bend at the waist, until you feel an even stretch through your hamstrings and calf muscles.
2. Tilt the pelvis upward. Breathe deeply, with long, calm, quiet, peaceful inhalations.
3. The leg muscles should be active or engaged but do not lock or hyperextend the knees. The spine is relaxed.
4. Sometimes, you can shift your weight to the ball of the foot to stretch the calf muscles further.
5. Raise your kneecaps slightly using your thigh muscles (quadriceps) to protect your knees.

This exercise can be trained in three stages. First, start with resting your head on some surface for support. Then, gradually lower the supporting surface. Eventually, you will be bending and reaching the floor.

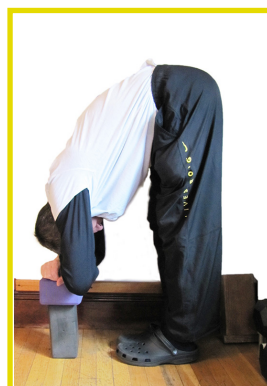
If this advanced level of reaching the floor does not provide much of a stretch for you because the hamstrings are conditioned, try generating leverage by grabbing the back of your ankles, and pulling gently, or even by cupping your heels with your palms.



Beginner



Intermediate



Advanced

3  
Levels  
of  
Stretch

## Freeing the Skeleton

### Chair Twist

2 Minutes each side



1. Sit sideways on a chair with no arms.

Touch your hip to the chair - this is your fixed point.

2. Keeping your left hip touching the chair, rotate to your left. Rotate from your belly button.

3. Use your hands to help. When turning to the left the right hand pulls gently and the left hand pushes gently. Opposite use of the hands when turning to the right.

4. Keep your weight even on both sitting bones.

5. Lengthen your spine, relax your shoulders, and keep your head suspended.

6. Breathe deeply and empty your mind.

## Freeing the Skeleton

### Up Like Smoke, Down like a Feather

10 - 40 Repetitions  
or 3 Minutes



#### First Set **Feet Apart**

1. Open the feet about shoulders width apart, and if you can, go a little further, it is even better. The wider you open the legs, the more you affect the quadriceps, the outer muscles of the thighs.

2. Slowly slide down and try to imitate a feather dropping from the sky. Then pause.

**Do not go further than 90 degrees.**

3. On the way up, make sure the knees stay over the middle toes. If you need to, you may open the knees a little bit, and push gently up like smoke.

4. Rise up slowly like smoke rising from incense.

Then slide down again slowly.

Maintain your sacrum, or tailbone, touching the wall. Maintain the knees over the toes and push up.

Your goal is to build up to 40 repetitions.

## Freeing the Skeleton

### Up Like Smoke, Down like a Feather

10 - 40 Repetitions  
or 3 Minutes



#### Second Set **Feet Together**

1. Put your feet together. Make sure your toes are still extended slightly farther than the knees.

2. On the way up, make sure that you do not open the knees. Sometimes the knees will want to open up to rely on the quads.

Do not let them. You are in control of which muscles to use.

3. Train this set just like the first set, gradually increasing the number of repetitions.

4. Put your spirit into the Up & Down movements: when moving up, move like smoke rising up from incense. When moving down, move like a feather floating down.

5. Increase your training time gradually. If this is too challenging at first, do less reps, but be sure that the inner and outer leg muscles get an equal workout.

Again, be careful not to overdo it.



# The Tai Chi / Mind-Body Intervention

## Part 3 The Tai Chi Form



**Mountain stance 1 & 2**

**Begin Tai Chi**

**Clouds Hands - to the Right & to the Left**

**Close Tai Chi, Cleanse & Return to the Mountains**



## Tai Chi Form

### Mountain Stance 1



Stand with your hands beside your body, middle finger touching the middle of the outer thigh, palms resting gently on your outer thighs. Breathe deeply and close your eyes until you are calm and centered.

When standing still, remember the majestic mountains and when moving, the flow of great rivers.

On your next inhalation open your eyes; you are as still as a mountain. You have awakened, yet you are relaxed. Your brain waves are between awake and asleep, and you can sense the earth beneath you and the heaven above. You are a part of the universe.

Try to sense a high spirit; a connection to the earth and heaven.

Align the spine, drop the shoulders, and visualize your Lower Energy Center.

## Tai Chi Form

### Mountain Stance 2



Next move your hands, slowly, to your Lower Energy Center.

Place the center of your palms two inches below the naval.

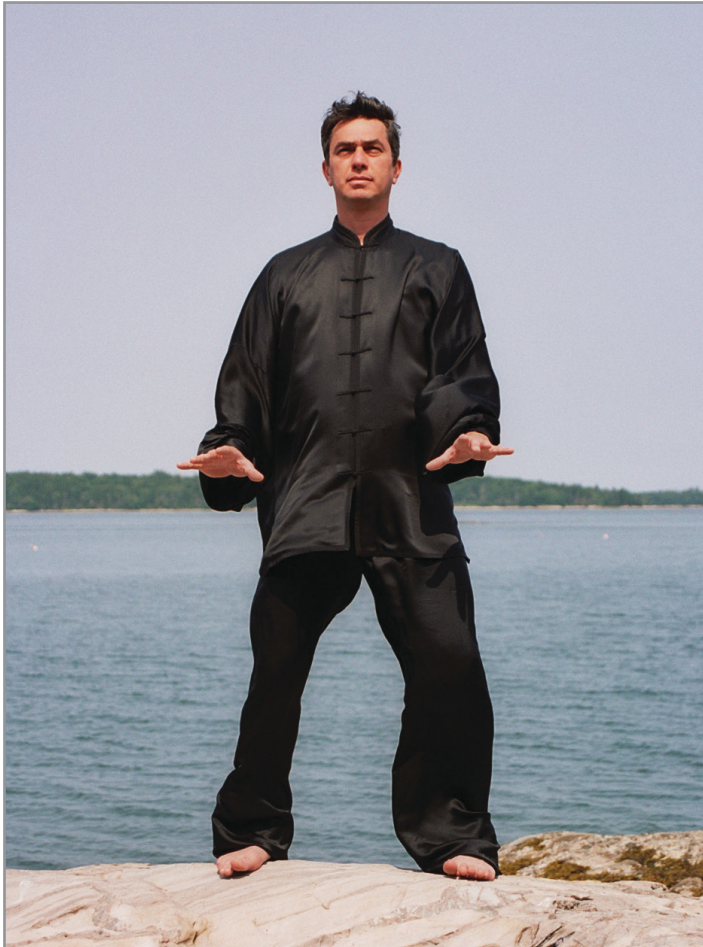
Line up the centers of both palms with your Lower Energy Center.

Remember, you are a great mountain.

You should be calm, quiet, and centered.

## Tai Chi Form

### Begin Tai Chi



Lift and hold the arms slightly so the palms face the floor about two inches below your waist.

To start, inhale and begin to raise your arms in front of your body, palms facing each other.

Lift the arms up until the hands are at shoulder height. Be careful not to raise the shoulders or make them tight.

Turn the palms downward, with a motion as if you are sliding your hands over two balls, begin exhaling, and begin to lower the arms back down.

Once your arms reach the solar plexus, sink with the legs into Horse stance, and continue to bring the palms down, pushing your palms down as you sink.

Bring your palms to your waist, palms facing up.

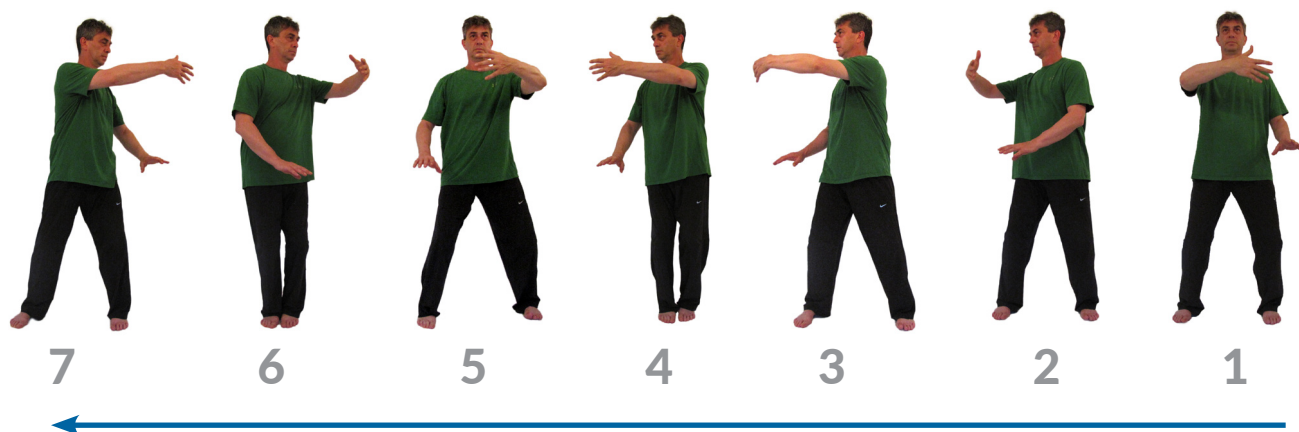
Move your left leg out so your legs are shoulder width apart, feet parallel.

Finish with the palms facing down, two inches below the navel while still squatting in horse stance.

## Tai Chi Form

### Cloud Hands to the Right 3 Times

Repeat 3 times



Raise the right arm in front of your chest in a hugging position. The left hand is at the height of the Lower Energy Center, as if you were petting a big, tall dog. As you inhale, turn the waist and rotate your body in the direction of the raised arm.

Exhale as you switch arms and repeat 3 times.

Relax your neck and shoulders. While you are turning, it is important to keep your inner arches alive. Do not allow your knees to move inward.

Once you have finished 3 Cloud Hands to the right do 3 Cloud Hands to the left.

## Tai Chi Form

### Cloud Hands to the Left 3 Times

Repeat 3 times



Now switch.

Raise your left arm in front of your chest and then move to the left. The right hand is at the height of the Lower Energy Center, as if you were petting a big, tall dog.

As you inhale, turn the waist and rotate your body in the direction of the raised arm, to the left. Exhale as you switch arms and repeat 3 times.

Relax your neck and shoulders. While you are turning, it is important to keep your inner arches alive. Do not allow your knees to move inward.

Finish with your left arm like it is hugging and the right palm facing down, facing forward, feet shoulder width apart.

## Tai Chi Form

### Close Tai Chi, Cleanse & Return to the Mountains



Bring your feet together.

Cross your arms in front of your chest. Open them and circle them over your head. At the same time bring your feet together and collect all the impurities from your entire body and deposit in the stars.

**Physically** Circle both arms in front of your body. Begin to inhale and continue the circle, as your arms cross up in front of your body, past your face, and then turn the palms outward, finishing the circle by dropping the hands down by your sides.

**Mentally** During Cleanse, you are mentally gathering any impurities in your body, drawing them up through the body, and expelling them outward, far away from you, through the hands. Deposit the impurities in the stars then repeat the scanning and depositing for 10 times.

When you are done, bring your hands and your mind to the Lower Energy Center and take 3 deep breaths. Stay focused on the Lower Energy Center.

The Tai Chi Classics says,

When standing still in your mountain stance, stand as still as a mountain.

When moving, move as a great river. Look for the stillness in the motion.



# The Tai Chi / Mind-Body Intervention

## Part 4

### Deep Breathing, Cleansing & Dissolving Meditations



Photo by Axie Breen

## Deep Breathing, Cleansing & Dissolving Meditations

### Zen Mind

7 Minutes

Sit on the edge of a chair or if you can, sit on the floor. Sit either with your legs crossed or in seza position on your knees, with or without a block.

Sit comfortably, with correct alignment. Surf your breath. Continue breathing slowly, deeply, and quietly through the nose. Push down through your sitting bones and lengthen your spine up into the heavens.

Relax your face, neck, shoulders, and abdominal muscles downward, while lengthening up through your back to the top of your head. Allow your mind to gradually settle into a semi-sleeping state. On the outside, be as still as a mountain. Look inside for the motion in this external stillness.

Remain aware of all your sensations—the sound in your ears, the movement of your breath, and the circulation of fluids and energy inside your body. Notice the sensations around you—the air, the sounds, the temperature. Allow your senses of both the inside and the outside to unify into a state of oneness until your body feels light and transparent.

Thoughts will come. Do not try to suppress them. Allow your thoughts to rise and pass naturally, using the breath and the stillness, as you settle into deeper relaxation and higher awareness.

The idea of the Zen mind is to empty the mind of any thoughts. The mind uses much energy and oxygen. It requires daily rest, but the task of emptying the mind is very difficult for many individuals.

Some may isolate themselves and go to monasteries in the mountain and try for years to achieve that one skill—emptying the mind from thoughts. This stage has different names. For example, in the East it is considered meditation, while in the West, the medical community discusses Dr. Herbert Benson's concept of the 'relaxation response'.

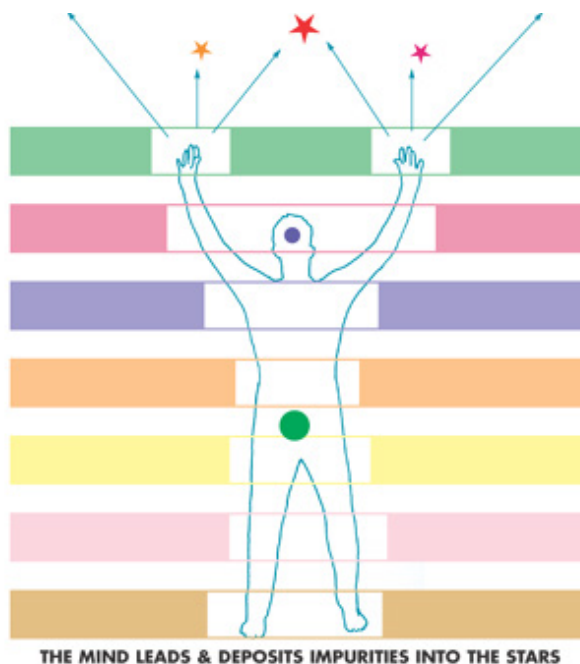
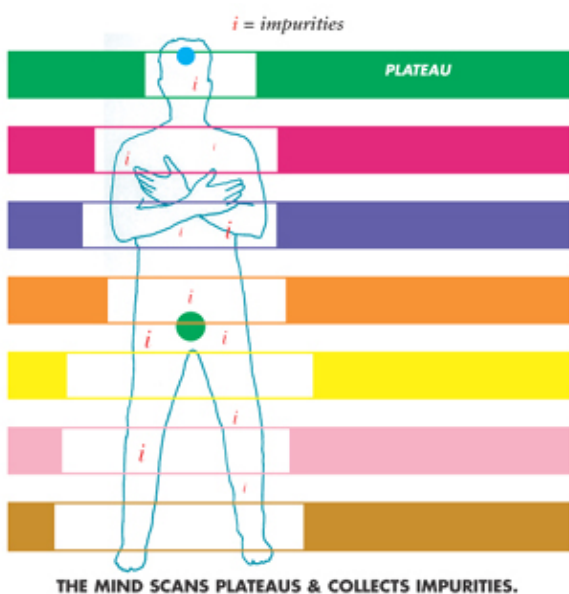
The idea is to close your eyes and empty the mind from any thoughts, using different techniques and methods. One way of emptying the mind is using the breath to help you. Surfing the breath is an effective technique to help you reach a place between being awake and asleep—a place of nothingness or emptiness. The thoughts will keep coming in. Your job is to not fight the thoughts and not to become upset. Your job is to loop your thoughts back into the breath or into nothingness.



## Deep Breathing, Cleansing & Dissolving Meditations

### Cleansing & Depositing Impurities into the Stars

10 Repetitions or 3 Minutes

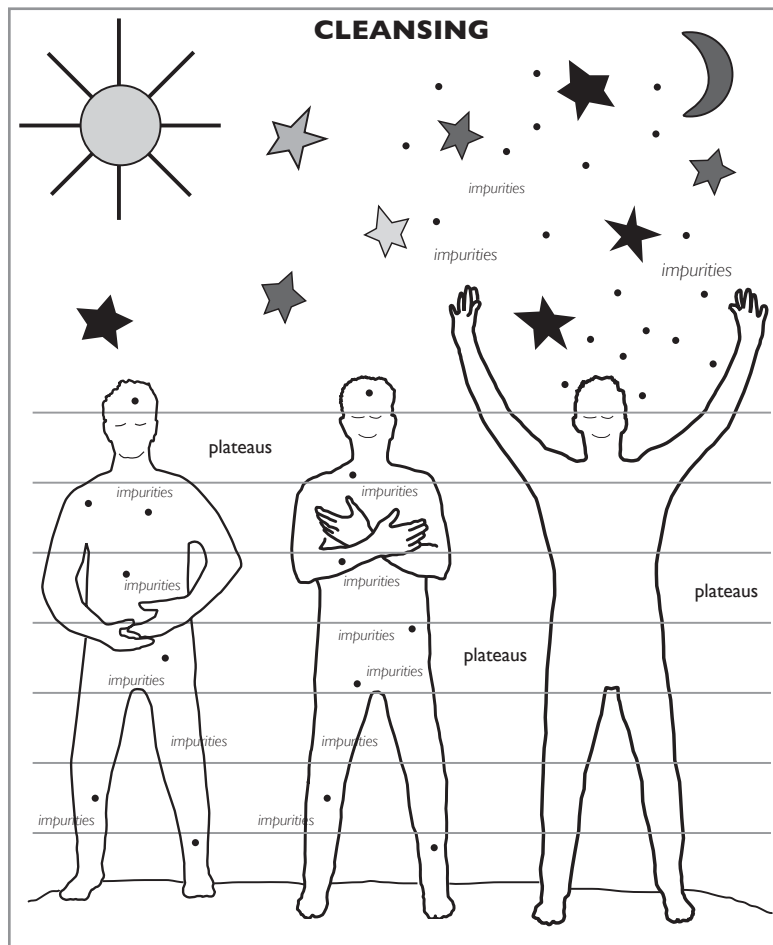


While sitting or standing, lengthen your spine, relax your shoulders, suspended your head, close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths. For the next 3 minutes focus on your breath and empty your mind from any thoughts.

Scan your body, with your mind, from the bottom up; collect impurities from the bottom of your feet all the way to the top of your head and then lead them out through the palms and the top of the head to the heaven or the stars. Then deposit the impurities in the stars.

Bring your arms down again and repeat the arm motion as well as the scanning and depositing 10 more times.

## Deep Breathing, Cleansing & Dissolving Meditations



During cleansing, the mind slowly scans inside the entire physical body, collecting impurities, and depositing them in the stars.

Maintain deep breathing throughout the exercise.

Relax your face and shoulders.

Distribute the weight between the ball of the foot and the heels.

Slightly bend your knees, which will build up strength in your legs.

Tuck the tailbone in slightly and maintain a peaceful, quiet, happy mind.

The idea is that a lot of the stress and traumas that we go through in our lives are stored on a physical level somewhere in the soft tissue and the organs. We want to dissolve those impurities, or dissolve those traumas, areas that hold stagnate energy, and lead them out of the body.

## Deep Breathing, Cleansing & Dissolving Meditations

### Dissolving Meditation

12 Minutes

What are impurities?

“Impurities” in the body are areas or places that have tension, pain, aching, numbness or inflammation. It could be a feeling or a sensation of tingling, pins and needles or you just know that something negative or wrong is there. It could be an area that feels bloated or swollen, a feeling of discomfort or a stuffed and heavy feeling, physical stress. It could be an area in your body associated with dark colors when closing your eyes and putting your mind there. It could be a feeling of pressure or tightness. It could be an area in the body that feels hot or cold. It could be a feeling of rawness or irritation, itchiness, soreness, or tenderness. There are many more words, feelings or sensations to describe impurities but this is a good start.

#### ACTION

Sit on the edge of the chair or on the floor. Relax your entire body. Breathe deep and empty your mind from any thoughts.

Take 3 deep breaths and start scanning your body, with your mind, from the head down. Divide the body into plateaus about 3 to 5 inches for each plateau. Scan the plateaus and sense if there are any “impurities” in each plateau.

Once you have identified in the plateau any impurities focus on the impurities and start, with your mind, dissolving the area.

Work with the metaphor ice to water and water to gas.

Dissolve the impurities over and over. Do it slow and stay relaxed and calm while breathing deeply, yet softly.

After you have worked on dissolving impurities in a plateau for a few minutes, move down to the next plateau where you feel an impurity and start the dissolving again.

Spend about 2 to 5 minutes on each impurity in each plateau.

**Always move downward not up.** If you want to go back to a higher plateau to dissolve any impurities, go down to your feet and then start from the top of the head again, down to the plateau you are interested in dissolving.

For our group we will focus on dissolving the plateaus between the neck and the pubic bone. We will also dissolve the head area. But you are encouraged to dissolve other plateaus, if needed.

# **The Tai Chi / Mind-Body Intervention**

## **Part 5**

### **Chart to Track your Practice**







