

Embodying the Light

Sequence with Instructions

Standing Sequence:

Mountain: stand feet hip width apart, firm glutes and pelvic floor, open chest and roll shoulders back and down, tuck chin, lift through the crown, arms at side, palms open. Feel your connection with the earth and the sky.

Shoulder Rolls: Roll shoulders up and back several times, then forward and down several times. Release tension and breathe.

Arm Circles: Arms out to the side, palms down, start with small circles and grow larger until you reach your full range of motion. Stop and reverse, small to large. Do several circles in each direction. Take deep breaths, move the energy!

Neck Stretches and Rolls: Breathe into center looking straight ahead, turn the neck to the left and breathe out, return to center, look right. Center, drop left ear, center, drop right ear. Drop the chin to the chest and gently roll the chin to the left, then roll all the way across the chest to the right, repeat several times. Be slow and gentle and respect your range of motion.

Swinging Twisty Twist: swing your arms freely, allowing them to flop against your back as you twist from side to side and look behind you. Imagine yourself like a playful child again!

Namaste Sweep: Stand in Mountain, arms out to your side with palms up, sweep arms up over your head and gather in light as you breathe in. Bring the palms together over your head and draw them down to your heart. Pause with gratitude. Breathe out and draw your palms down releasing the light into the earth on the downward sweep. Bring the hands back up to the sides with palms up and repeat at least 4 times. Settle the Chi.

Settling the Chi: After each form in Qigong and Tai Chi, it is customary to settle the Chi. Within each form are two strands, or polarities: Yin and Yang, Earth and Sky, Active and Passive, Emptying and Filling, Breathing In and Breathing Out. These polarities are captured in the Ying/Yang symbol. The forms are designed to balance polarity and bring unity. Settling the Chi is a salutation at the end of a form which brings the two strands or polarities together and grounds them. Bring your feet together and lift your arms, circling them around a big ball in front of you. Then allow your hands to drift down towards the Earth, while bending your knees and sinking towards the ground. Allow them to settle at your side and pause before beginning the next form.

Pillars of Heaven: Stand in Mountain, bend your knees and scoop energy from earth with your hands, draw up to your heart and straighten your legs. Pause with gratitude. Flip the palms up and press them skywards, offering the energy to heaven. Sweep the arms downwards and repeat at least 4 times. Settle the Chi.

Piercing Earth and Sky: Stand in Mountain, breathe in and bring your palms (facing down) to your heart. As you breathe out, press the right palm down towards the earth and left palm up towards the sky. Look up at the left hand. Breathing in, bring the palms back to your heart. Repeat on other side. Repeat for 4 sets. Settle the Chi.

Wise Owl Looks Behind: Stand in Mountain, breathe into center, turn slowly left, looking behind you and breathing out. Slowly turn back to center, breathing in. Then turn slowly right, looking behind you and breathing out. Repeat at least 4 times. Settle the Chi.

Passing Clouds: Take a wide stance with knees slightly bent. Sweep the right hand across your belly to the left, along your left side and then across your field of vision to the right, allowing it to fall gently down the right side and back across the belly. At the same time, sweep the left hand across your belly to the right. As the left hand falls to the right, the right hand rises and sweeps across your vision to the left. Think of carrying a cloud across the sky and then switching the hands along the side of the body. Another image is that of the full moon setting, while the sun is rising. Follow your rising hand with your eyes and breathe. Meditation: all things pass before the still Witness at the center of your Being. Repeat as many times as you wish, then settle the Chi.

Bear: Stand with feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent. Tuck thumbs into fists and place the bones of the thumb against your right hip bone. Draw a circle around your lower belly to the left, then up and around the top of the belly, down the right side, across the bottom and stop at the left hip bone. As you draw the circle, roll your torso to the left, then backwards opening the shoulders and arching the back and looking at the sky, then around to the right, and lean forward as you come across the bottom of the belly. Reverse to the other side. Think of yourself as a big bear that just ate a bunch of honey and is massaging his full belly! Bear is good for promoting digestion and elimination, also opens the back and chest. Breathe. Repeat as many times as you wish, then settle the Chi.

Brushing Earth and Sky: Stand in mountain. Lift your hands up in front of you, palms down and reach up to the sky, breathing in as you sweep upwards. Draw the light down towards your head. Bring your hands along the side of your head, down to your armpits. Breathe out as you sweep your hands under your armpits and bend forward. Brush your hands down the back of your body. Bend your knees and as you sweep down the backs of your legs, brush the earth with your fingertips. Then sweep up, breathing in, straightening your legs and reaching again for the sky. Meditation: Imagine a shower of golden-white healing light washing down through your body and into the earth. Repeat as many times as you wish, then settle the Chi.

Deer: Begin by standing with feet shoulder width apart and shifting your weight from your left to your right leg, rocking side to side. Create your antlers by extending your thumb, forefinger and pinky, bending your middle and ring fingers into your palm. Shift to the right leg, swinging your arms gently to the right side of your body, breathing in. Step out left into a lunge (heel to toe), swing your antlers slowly around the front of your body to the left side (the right elbow lifts over the left and torso twists as you come around), follow your antlers with your eyes and exhale slowly. Keep your elbows softly bent and bend your left knee as you come out over it on the left side. Look behind you to the left. In one fluid motion, bring the antlers up over your head, following them with

your eyes. Sweep around to the right, down the right side of the body. Once your arms are out to your right side, draw your left leg into center. Continue sweeping your arms down across the hips, and out to the left side. This creates a weight shift onto the left leg. Breathe in. Step out to the right into a lunge (heel to toe) and repeat sequence to the right. This is a balance and coordination dance. Think of yourself as a deer looking all around you as you dance through the forest. Repeat as many times as you wish, then settle the Chi.

Giving Out, Pulling In Light: Draw light with open palms into your heart from the left side of your body, while breathing in. Step out to the left at a 45-degree angle. Hold your hands open gently and relax your fingers as if cradling a precious ball of energy—your life energy or Chi. Rock forward onto the left leg, bending the knee as you give out the light, circling to the left side and back around in front of you to the right. Keep your elbows loosely bent and hands cradled at heart level (Don't straighten the arm or overextend yourself as you come around; stay centered over your core and keep your spine straight.) Breathe out as you give out the light, when you come around to the right breathe in the light and draw your hands into your heart. As you come around to the right, slide your weight back onto your right leg, bending it while straightening your left leg and allowing your toes to rise up off the floor (think about the motion of a slider rocker). Retain your breath as you glide your hands across your heart, offering gratitude for your life and the gifts you have been given to offer the world. Continue the circle at least 4 times on the left side. Then bring your left leg back to center and settle the Chi. Repeat on the right side. Meditation: Life is a continual circle of giving and receiving. Notice any resistance to either giving or receiving. Notice if you are over-extending yourself from your center as you give and receive.

Eagle: Stand in Mountain. Find a focal point straight ahead, avoid looking down and keep your spine straight. Shift your weight to the right leg and bring your left heel off the ground, resting on your toes. 1) Breathe in as you slowly raise your hands out to the sides, palms down, like the wings of the eagle. Breathe out as you slowly lower your hands, crossing your wrists below your hips. 2) On the next inhale, lift the arms to your sides again and this time raise your left knee to hip level. Balance on your right leg, firming your glutes and performing a Kegel to engage your core and hold you in place. Exhale and bring your wings down, crossing your wrists below your hips. 3) On the next inhale, lift your arms over your head and lift your left knee to hip level. Exhale and bring your wings down, crossing your wrists below your hips. Shift your weight to the left leg and bring your right heel off the ground. Repeat the series of 3 on the right side. Repeat the entire series three times. Settle the Chi. Meditation: Look at your life from the highest perspective, notice opportunities that are calling you and swoop gently down to meet them.

To End: Return to Mountain. Bring your hands in front of your heart and rub them together. Pull them apart slowly, feeling the energy between them. Stop when you lose the connection with the energy. Meditate on the ball of energy between your hands, on your own life force and Light. Feel gratitude for your life in your heart. End with a Namaste Sweep and a bow of reverence to that which connects us all in the Light.

Yoga Poses on the Floor:

Cow-Cat: Get on all 4's on your mat. Begin with a neutral back. As you breathe in, lift your head and your rump picturing yourself like a cow mooing at the moon. As you breathe out, arch your back up, dropping your tail bone and your head, like a cat stretching after a nap. Repeat at least 4 times with your breath. This pose gently releases tension in the back from the standing forms.

Seated Forward Fold: Sit on your mat and extend your legs out in front of you, toes pointing up to the sky. Lift your arms above your head and inhale. Exhale and extend out over your legs, hinging at the hips and keeping your back and neck straight and aligned. Don't drop your head/chest down. Feel the muscles in your back and legs lengthening and opening. Keep your belly firm as if someone had their hand around your stomach and were pulling you backwards from the core as you fold forwards. Allow your hands and arms to rest wherever they fall, don't grab for your feet and force this pose. Allow it to open like a flower with the breath as you breathe into your back. You may find you can go lower as your muscles soften and release. Hold at least a minute.

Both Knees to Chest: Lie back on the floor. Draw your knees up towards your chest. Stop when you come to the edge of your flexibility and rest there, breathing against your knees. Gently rock from side to side, working the acupressure points on your lower back. This pose reduces tension in the low back.

Figure 4 Hip Opener: While lying on your back, bend your knee and place your left foot on the floor. Place your right ankle on the left knee (making a figure 4) and open your right knee, allowing it to fall open toward the wall in front of you. Don't apply pressure with your hand or force this in any way. Picture a flower opening in your right hip and groin as the muscles slowly release and open. Breathe into your belly softly. Hold at least a minute. Then switch sides.

Single Knee to Chest: While lying on your back, draw your left knee up towards your chest, stop when you reach the edge of your range of motion. Extend your right leg out. Hold your knee gently against your chest and breathe into it, allowing the muscles in your leg and hip to relax. Hold at least a minute. Open your knee out to the left side, allowing it to fall open and rest wherever it stops on its own. Breathe into your belly and relax the hip and groin. Hold at least a minute. Switch sides.

Bent Knee Twist to Side: While lying on your back, extend your arms to the side, palms down. Breathe in and draw both knees up to your waist. Exhale as you allow both knees to twist to the left, keep your shoulders flat on the floor and turn your head slightly to the right. Hold at least a minute while breathing deeply. Repeat on the other side. Twists are great for releasing toxins out of the body and clearing the lymphatic system. Think of yourself like a dish rag being wrung out.

Savasana: Assume corpse pose, progressively relax your entire body while breathing deeply in and out of the abdomen. Once relaxed, you can meditate focusing on the breath, light your chakras or practice yoga nidra.