

The Eight Little Treasures Qi Gong

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What is it?

The Eight Little Treasures is the short form of the longer Eight Treasures Qigong form transmitted by the Ni Family Tradition. The Eight Treasures is comprised of 32 movements arranged in 8 sections. The *Eight Little Treasures* is comprised of 1 movement from each of the 8 sections.

These movements combine toning and strengthening, stretching and breathing techniques for the purpose of maintaining health and preventing disease. *The Eight Treasures* is based on the natural motion of the planets and stars as well as on the simplicity and power of Mother Nature. As our bodies are a small model of Nature, by focusing on maintaining a smooth flow of Qi in our bodies, our small universe can begin to attune to the greater rhythms of the Universe, thus creating health.

What are the benefits?

- ✓ Unblocks energy – prevention of stagnation, a sure precursor of disease.
- ✓ Strengthens the musculo-skeletal system to improve blood circulation.
- ✓ Improves flexibility to prevent and reduce the chance of injury.
- ✓ Increases lung capacity to improve vitality.
- ✓ Improves balance to prevent injuries.
- ✓ Reduces tension which in turn helps reduce stress-induced imbalances.
- ✓ Increases Immunity, thus improving self-healing power.
- ✓ Improves metabolism and digestion.
- ✓ Enhances sensitivity and subtle awareness

Practice Guidelines

- Ⓢ First and foremost, trust your body. You do not need to push yourself to perform....be gentle with your own universe.
- Ⓢ This Form can be practiced any time of the day, though the ideal practice time is sunrise and sunset (5 to 7 am and pm). It is best to face the sun during practice i.e. east in the morning and west in the afternoon.
- Ⓢ Outdoor practice is preferred to indoors, especially if you are surrounded by plants and trees. If indoor practice is your choice, be sure that the air is fresh and flowing. Always follow your intuition, no need to force yourself to practice outdoors if you feel like staying in!

- ④ It is preferred to practice on or close to the earth rather in a high rise apt.
- ④ It is generally not as suitable to practice this form right before bedtime, especially the first four treasures. The seventh and Eight Treasures can be helpful for insomnia (especially so when you practice the long form).
- ④ Avoid practicing in the following situations:
 - Damp or cold areas
 - Polluted areas
 - In disturbing weather conditions such as thunder. Hurricane and storms
 - When emotionally disturbed
 - A half an hour before and after meals
 - During heavy menstrual flow
 - When exhausted or particularly unwell as you need energy to perform movements
 - We recommend avoiding practicing after using alcohol, drugs, tobacco or stimulants.
 - You may want to avoid sitting down immediately after practice. It is more beneficial to take a walk afterwards.
- ④ Repetitions can be done with each movement. 3, 7 or 9 repetitions are preferred in one's practice.
- ④ Perform the movements without strain and pain. There are times where some strengthening and stretching are necessary, but one should never force it so as to be uncomfortable or painful.
- ④ It is more beneficial to perform the movements slowly so you can sense the energy flow of each movement. In all circumstances, listen to your body...you may find that at certain times you need to speed up and that is ok too! Always remember to use gentle strength rather than brute force.
- ④ Consistent practice is important to reap the benefits of the Eight Treasures. The ideal amount of practice is 3 times or more in a week.

The Little Eight Treasures Form

Warm Up

1. Awakening Qi in the channels

Stimulate the flow of Qi, open the channels and relieve tensions so that Qi or Vital Force may flow more freely.

- A. Swinging and Tapping the trunk
- B. Tapping the trunk and arms
- C. Tapping the back and legs

2. Loosening and Opening the joints

To help Qi flow unimpeded

- A. Turning the neck
- B. Turning the shoulders/ribcage
- C. Turning the elbows and shoulders (optional)
- D. Turning the wrists (optional)
- E. Turning the waist and trunk
- F. Turning the hips and pelvis
- G. Turning the knees
- H. Turning the ankles
- I. Shaking the whole body
- J. Swinging the arms back and jump up

First Treasure

SUSTAINING HEAVEN WITH BOTH HANDS TO ADJUST THE THREE WARMERS

General Benefits:

Western: respiratory, endocrine, digestion and elimination systems.

Eastern:

- ✓ Nourish physical body by mobilizing Yin store of energy.
- ✓ Relax whole body and open the joints so Earthly and Heavenly energies can freely gather and circulate throughout your system.
- ✓ Draw energy upwards to nourish the whole self and vitalize and tonify muscles, keeping them buoyant and thus counteracting the pull of gravity.

1. Move the stars and turn the Big Dipper

Start in Single Horse Stance

Move into Left Bow or forward Stance

Form a beak with the right hand, and move the point of the beak, fingers pointing upward, to the base of the spine.

Move the Stars:

- ❖ Horizontal circles with left hand from outside in. Arms circle at the level (height) of the forehead. X5
- ❖ Vertical circles down to the center. X5
- ❖ Gather into the chest. X3
- ❖ Scoop into the Lower Burner. X3
- ❖ Continue down to Earth

Turn Dipper:

- ❖ Draw in feet together
- ❖ Gather Earthly energy with left hand from outside in, close to feet.
- ❖ Draw up midline to center of the chest and rest to gather.
- ❖ Pick up again, hands in beak shape with fingers pointing downward, and look through the hole made by the beak.
- ❖ Progressive turns X3

Repeat Movements on Right side.

Second Treasure

DRAWING THE BOW WITH BOTH HANDS TO AIM AT A DISTANT TARGET

General Benefits:

Western: Cerebro-spinal, tendo-muscular, immune, Heart and Lung systems.

Eastern:

- ✓ Gathers and raises Earthly energy into the body.
- ✓ Activates movement from and strengthens chest (Lungs and Heart).
- ✓ Conducts energy horizontally.

2. The Great Bird spreads its Wings

- ❖ Double Horse Stance.
- ❖ Spread out arms either side and then bend over and hang from hips with wrists crossed, neck loose.
- ❖ Gather Earth and pump Kidney X9 or 12
- ❖ Lift from the lower back area, arms hanging and wrists crossed and let scoop happen from action of pump
- ❖ Slowly bend at the knees and straighten up.
- ❖ Keep your knees bent into full horse stance
- ❖ Draw the hands in towards the Heart center and then push the hands straight out to the sides.
- ❖ Flex wrists and feel the pull, guiding the energy to the center of the palm.
- ❖ Arc hand back to the center of the chest and gather energy back down to your tummy.

DO WHOLE SET TWICE.

NOTE: Do not perform this treasure if you have acute lower back pain or a pinch at the level of L2-L4.

Third Treasure

RAISING THE HANDS TO ADJUST THE STOMACH AND THE SPLEEN

General Benefits:

Western: Digestive, elimination and metabolic systems.

Eastern: Moves energy upwards, massages and regulates internal organs. Particularly balances and adjusts the functions of the digestive system.

3. The Jade Plate Receives the Morning Dew

- ❖ Start with heels together.
- ❖ Beak with right hand at the base of the spine.
- ❖ Left hand begins at right side

- ❖ Sweep left hand around to the back behind the head and then into the left side of the head, keeping left palm parallel to the sky.
- ❖ Follow left palm with eyes.
- ❖ Push left hand palm up to the sky and roll eyes (not head) up and right palm down to Earth and then back to “offering” position. X3
- ❖ After third time come back to head and beak positions and sweep left hand back to right side/
- ❖ Sweep both hands to left side where left arm forms beak and right hand takes plate.

REPEAT MOTION FOR 2 SETS EITHER SIDE

Fourth Treasure

TURNING THE HEAD TO TONIFY THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

General Benefits:

Western: Tonifies cerebro-spinal and skeletal structures

Eastern:

- ✓ Regulates inner organs
- ✓ Stimulates Yang Energy
- ✓ Facilitates the movement and flow of energy between your head and trunk.

4. Turning the Head to look at your Star

- ❖ Start with heels together.

HAND POSITION

Women: Right hand over left.

Men: Left hand over right.

- ❖ Place thumb of the upper hand inside thumb of the lower hand and tip of the middle finger of upper hand over the side of the big knuckle of the little finger on the lower hand.

GATHER

- ❖ Circle and gather into trunk in counterclockwise X3
- ❖ Close gather by pushing down on right side just under the heart center.

LOOK UP TO SKY

- ❖ Drop chin to chest and lean a little forward.
- ❖ Turn head gently to left and roll eyes up to sky.

REPEAT ON RIGHT SIDE

- ❖ Reverse gathers.

Fifth Treasure

SWAYING THE SPINAL COLUMN TO TAKE AWAY HEART FIRE

General Benefits:

Western: Digestive and elimination systems.

Eastern: Drains excess Heart Fire. It balances the Yang energy of the body.

5. Lying down to watch the Constellations

- ❖ Start with horse stance with

- ❖ Beak your right hand at the base of the spine.
- ❖ Sweep left hand and arm around to grasp the chin on right side.
- ❖ Sink into full horse stance. Feel the outer side of your ankle as you do so.
- ❖ Turn from low belly into twist as you move elbow over left knee and then to midpoint between the knees to twist trunk and squeeze.
- ❖ Hold and look up.
- ❖ Slowly uncurl hand and release and gradually untwist and come up.

REPEAT ON RIGHT SIDE.

Sixth Treasure

RAISING THE HEELS TO REMOVE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WEAKNESS

General Benefits:

Western: Cerebro-spinal and abdominal area.

Eastern: Raises Yin energy (water) and strengthens and awakens the energy of the body and brain.

6. **Bringing the Stream back to Sea**

- ❖ Heels together
- ❖ Inhale into your lower belly and raise onto ball of feet
- ❖ Visualize connection from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head
- ❖ Exhale and drop down on heel. Feel the little shock from the bottom up.
- ❖ Repeat X7 to X9

Seventh Treasure

TIGHTENING THE TENDONS TO REINFORCE YOURSELF

General Benefits:

Western: Tendo-muscular, cardiovascular, nervous and liver-gall bladder systems.

Eastern: Raises up the Qi.

7. **Pushing Down the Fierce Tiger**

- ❖ Double horse stance
- ❖ Hinge over hip joint area and hang back and neck down as place hands on inside arches of feet
- ❖ Gather with small circles up legs to groin
- ❖ Move the sides of body and palms and ascend up sides to an area below the breast
- ❖ As you move the hand up, raise slightly off the heels
- ❖ Turn hands so fingers point toward each other at the level of the chest and press down to the area between the navel and the pubic bone
- ❖ Drop and sink into deeper horse stance
- ❖ Flex wrists as you drop

REPEAT X5

Eight Treasure

GRABBING THE ANKLES TO STRENGTHEN YOUR VITAL FORCE

General Benefits:

Western: Endocrine, cerebro-spinal, musculo-skeletal, digestive and elimination systems.

Eastern: Gathers all Qi and draws it back to the Vital Organs.

8. The dragon Flies throughout the Heavens

- ❖ Start on single horse or little wider stance
- ❖ Move from pelvic area to move trunk and arms in circular motion
- ❖ Hands form claws and arms sweep across belly and up the right side and across in front of head height and down left and across again to repeat
- ❖ Start with X3 even rhythm circles
- ❖ Then on 4th circle, around head height, accelerate around first half of circle down to the waist, tightening hands and wrists into the hip and then ease out when you go past your belly and change back to previous slow pace for second half of the circle
- ❖ Repeat this slow/fast rhythm for X5
- ❖ Keep the circles flowing appreciating the shift of gears that occurs in front of the head and tummy when pace changes from slow to fast and back from fast to slow

CHANGE and REVERSE CIRCLES SO AS TO GO IN THE OTHER DIRECTION FROM UP LEFT AND DOWN RIGHT SIDES: SLOW FOR X3 AND THEN FAST/SLOW FOR X5.

STANDING MEDITATION AND RETURN OF QI

(Taken from the Integral Way of Life self study program)

It is important to quietly meditate after your moving cultivation to gather and return the energy you have stimulated back down to the lower storage field, the field that particularly supports your physical well-being.

Stand in *Wu Ji* and place your arms as though embracing a large tree trunk. Your palms face the middle of your chest around the area between your nipples. Your fingers should be gently spread and relaxed. Your eyes may be gently focused about 12 inches in front of you. Your eyelids are relaxed and lowered, and importantly your lower spine is suspended down to gently lengthen the lumbar and ease out the lumbar curve.

Once you begin to place your attention in your lower belly, avoid involving yourself in anything that angers, saddens or bothers you. Simply relax into the posture and do not become involved in the passing thoughts or feelings. Let them pass as they arose. Remain simply aware and restful. Allow your breath to open down into your abdomen and exhale completely without any force or strain. As you relax further, your breath will become fuller and deeper.

If your body becomes uncomfortable and it actually hurts, gently and slightly shift your position. You do not need to remain in a tight and painful position, just respond naturally and subtly. If you find yourself fidgeting, however, restrain the nervous impulse to move and observe yourself. It is in stillness and quietness that your tensions and weaknesses show up more clearly.

Recommended Materials

1. *The Eight Treasures Energy Enhancement Exercises* by Dr. Maoshing Ni
2. *The Eight Treasures* VHS or DVD
3. *Mastering Qi: strength from Movement* by Hua-Ching Ni