



Meridian Flow

ENERGY EXERCISES

Improve the flow of chi through simple movements

The joints are vulnerable parts of the body. Fluid tends to accumulate and stagnate in these areas, and the whole body gradually becomes fatigued. This condition can lead to arthritis, rheumatism and neuralgia, common complaints of the modern age.

These Energy Flow Exercises, in addition to improving the flow of chi through the meridians, promote circulation of blood and body fluids through the joints, thus helping to cure illness and maintain good health. This series also increases flexibility and helps to balance, harmonize, and detoxify the body.

This is a helpful routine on its own, and is even more effective when combined with daily alternate nostril breathing. Use this sequence daily or as a weekly tune-up. You could also include these movements before beginning a hatha yoga practice. (Always check with your healthcare specialist if you have specific physical injuries or health problems before beginning.)

For even more powerful yet simple tools for your physical and emotional health (and for a step by step instruction for alternate nostril breathing), see www.AdventuresInConsciousness.org. See the Four Great Tools for more powerful practices to add to your daily routine.

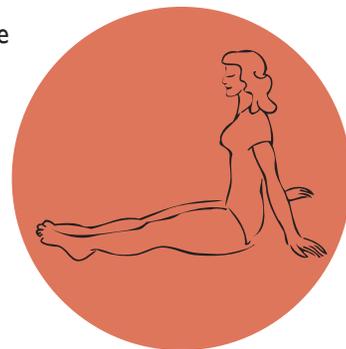
POSITION ONE: Sit on the floor with legs outstretched, arms straight and to the side of the hips, palms down. Lean back using your arms for support. Adjust your legs so that they are of equal length and the body feels balanced and relaxed.

Exercise One: Toe Bending

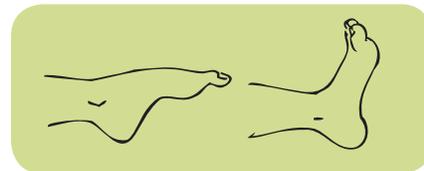


Sit erect on the floor in the first position with both legs fully extended. Move the toes of both feet slowly backwards and forwards, without moving legs or ankles. Repeat five to ten times.

You may also try holding the toes bent for a few seconds, imagining an accumulation of energy in them, spreading each toe as far apart as possible. This is good for improving chi flow. However gentle bending is helpful in promoting circulation.



Exercise Two: Ankle Bending



Remain in position one. Move both feet backwards and forwards as far as possible, bending at the ankle joints. Repeat five to ten times.

Exercise Three: Ankle Rotating

Remain in the same position. Separate legs slightly, keeping the heels in contact with the floor. Rotate the right foot clockwise at the ankle five to ten times. Repeat the motion in a counter-clockwise direction five to ten times. Repeat in both directions with the left foot. Then put both feet back together and repeat the exercise, rotating both feet simultaneously.



Exercise Four: Ankle Cranking

Still in Position One, place the right ankle on the left thigh. While holding the right ankle with the right hand, rotate the right foot with the left hand clockwise five to ten times. Repeat ten times in a counter-clockwise direction. Repeat with the left foot.

Bend knee only to where it is comfortable. As you practice these movements your body will become more limber

Exercise Five: Knee Bending

In Position One bend and raise the right knee, clasping the hands under the right thigh. Straighten the leg (without allowing the heel to touch the floor) keeping the hands under the thigh. Return the leg to its previous position, bringing the heel near the right buttock. Repeat ten times.

If you practice this exercise with the heel pushed out, thus stretching the back of the leg, the stimulation of the urinary bladder meridian is stronger.



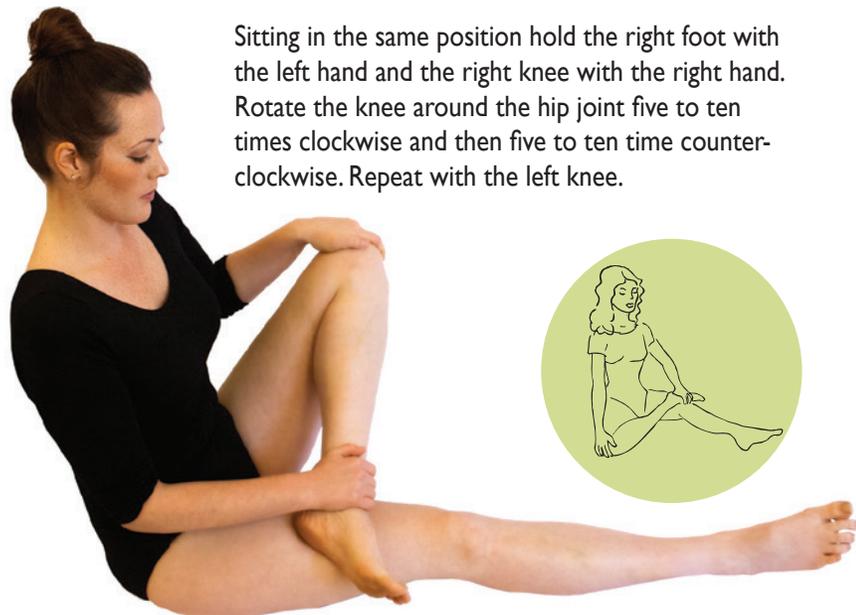
Exercise Six: Half Butterfly

Still in Position One, place the right foot on the left thigh. Hold the left knee with the left hand and place the right hand on top of the bent right knee. Gently move the bent leg up and down with the right hand, relaxing the muscles of the right leg as much as possible. Continue until the right knee touches, or nearly touches, the floor. Repeat these movements five to ten times and then do the same motion with the left knee.

Always practice movements without strain or forcing.



Exercise Seven: Hip Joint Rotation



Sitting in the same position hold the right foot with the left hand and the right knee with the right hand. Rotate the knee around the hip joint five to ten times clockwise and then five to ten times counter-clockwise. Repeat with the left knee.

Exercise Eight: Full Butterfly

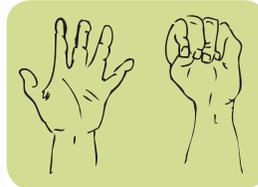


In the sitting position, place the soles of the feet together and bring the heels as close to the body as possible. Push the knees toward the floor with hands, and then allow them to bounce upwards. Repeat this motion five to ten times.

Exercise Nine: Hand Clenching



Sitting in the starting position, extend the arms forward at shoulder level. Alternately extend and clench the fingers of both hands. Close the fingers over the thumb to make a tight fist. Repeat this action five to ten times.

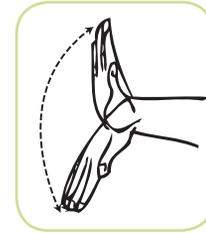


Note: Many daily activities require clenching or grasping movements, rather than extension of the fingers or gentle movement of the finger joints. It is therefore important to practice enough extension and gentle movement during this exercise to find a balance. At times you should try to stretch the fingers as much as possible, spreading each finger as far apart as you can, and holding this position for a few seconds. This stimulates all the meridians in the arms. It is also beneficial to use the alternative hand to gently rotate each finger joint whenever you have an opportunity. These simple exercises have tremendous effect in facilitating balance within the body. Rotation of the toe joints has a similar, if not greater effect, as this action is rarely performed in daily life.

Exercise Ten: Wrist Bending

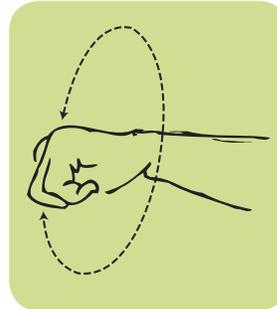


Maintaining the starting position, extend the arms forward at shoulder level and bend the hands back at the wrists, as if to press the palms against a wall with the fingers pointing up. Then bend the wrist to point the fingers down. Repeat five to ten times.



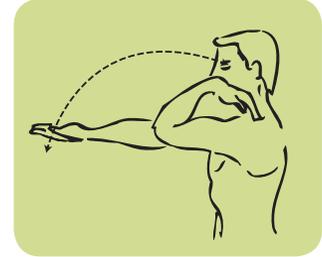
Exercise Eleven: Wrist Rotation

In the same sitting position, drop the left hand. Clench the right fist and rotate the wrist five to ten times in each direction. Then drop the right hand, raise the left and repeat. Extend both arms in front of the body with both fists clenched. Rotate the fists together five to ten times in each direction.

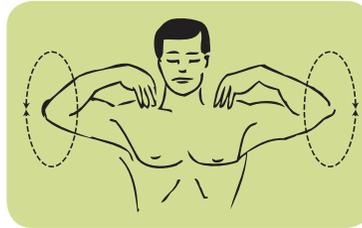


Exercise Twelve: Elbow Bending

Assume Position One. Extend the arms forward, palms up. Bend both arms at the elbow and touch the shoulders with the fingers, then straighten the arms again. Repeat five to ten times. Next perform the same movement with arms extended sideways.



Exercise Thirteen: Shoulder Rotation



Maintaining the same position with fingertips touching the shoulders, move the elbows in a circular motion, rotating the shoulder joints. Repeat ten times in each direction. Make the circle as large as possible, bringing the elbows

together in front of the chest and touching them together briefly and continuing.

*You may also practice this movement in the kneeling position.
(See next page.)*

POSITION TWO: Assume a kneeling position with the heels on either side of the buttocks and the big toes touching behind the hips. If this is difficult, sit with legs extended in front of you.

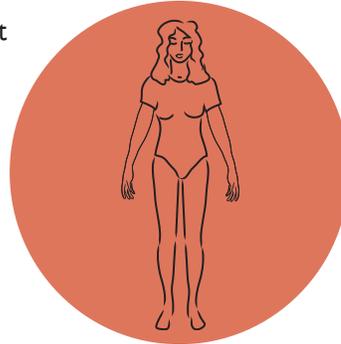


In position two, slowly rotate the head in as large a circle as possible without straining, twice in each direction.

POSITION THREE: Stand erect with feet together or if this is impossible — slightly apart.

Exercise Fifteen: Heavenly Stretch

Assume Position Three. Gaze at a point or object directly in front of your eyes. During inhalation raise the arms overhead with the palms facing upwards. Lift the heels and stretch the whole body as if it were being drawn upwards. Hold the breath for one or two seconds and then, during exhalation, return slowly to your beginning position. Repeat one or two times.



This exercise develops and stretches the stomach muscles and promotes proper spinal bone growth. It clears congestion around the inter-vertebral foramina and also stimulates all the meridians in the body. When the palms face upwards the small intestine and heart meridians, flowing along the ulnar side of the arms, are stimulated. When the palms face down the lung and large intestine meridians, flowing along the radial side of the arms, are stimulated.



Exercise Sixteen: Backward and Forward

Stand erect with arms at your sides. While inhaling, raise the arms above the head, at shoulder width and bend the head and trunk backwards slightly. Hold this position for a few seconds. Then exhaling, bend forward from the hips until the palms

or fingers touch the floor. In this final position, breathe out completely and then relax, breathing normally, again holding the position for a few seconds to let the vertebra stretch. Raise the trunk slowly and return the starting position.



The legs should be kept straight throughout these movements. These two movements should be practiced together once or twice. You may wish to rest briefly in the starting position before repeating the movements, or you may go straight back into the forward position.

This exercise stretches all vertebral joints, tones and spinal nerves and abdominal organs and aids digestion. All of the meridians are stimulated, especially the urinary bladder meridian, facilitating smooth energy flow.

Students whose lower back form an outward curve or have outward-projecting lumbar vertebra(e) should first practice forward stretching and then go into backward stretching. Those with inward-curving lower back or lumbar vertebra(e) should do the reverse sequence, stretching first backwards and then forwards. This helps to return displaced vertebra(e) to their normal position.

Students with displacement in the thoracic area (middle and upper parts of the back) should, when

returning to the erect position, briefly hold the pose when they feel sensation in the area of their displaced vertebra(e).

Similarly, when stretching backwards, they should briefly hold the pose where there is a sensation of displacement, and then continue to do the full stretch. Throughout the exercise, concentration should be focused on the area of displacement, which will help to stimulate the flow of energy in the area of displacement, thereby facilitating healing.

Exercise Seventeen: Wheel Pose

Stand up straight with feet together and arms at your side. Slowly raise the right arm to the side while inhaling. When the arm is horizontal to the body, pause and turn the palm up. Then slowly continue raising the right arm until the upper arm touches the ear. The arm should meet the head without bending the head. Then slowly begin exhaling while bending to the left side from the waist, keeping the arm in contact with the head and the trunk straight. The left arm and hand should slide naturally down the left leg. Bend only as far as is comfortable and hold the position for a short period of time. Slowly reverse the movement, inhaling as you return the body to the upright position and exhaling as you lower the arm first to the horizontal position, turning the palm parallel to the floor and then returning it to the side of the body. Repeat the movement on the left side. Do once or twice on each side.



As with the last two poses, all the vertebral joints are stimulated and the spinal nerves toned, but the effect is also beneficial to the gall bladder meridian, as well as being helpful for correcting displaced vertebrae.

The greatest benefit will be gained by stretching to the side which is easiest first. If problems are experienced in the lower back, then bending should be done from the waist, rather than trunk. If problems are felt in the middle back, then attention should be focused there and one should bend first on the left side.