

TAI CHI & QIGONG BASICS

Compiled by Rev Shelley Dungan

5 KEYS FOR HOW TO STAND

WUJI POSTURE = Feet shoulder distance apart, toes and knees pointing directly forward. This is a standing meditation and transitional posture, similar to child's pose in yoga. You are practicing the state of emptiness; relaxed, trusting, comfortably supported in your own physical structure. Wuji can be practiced with various hand placements including palms to the earth, palms facing lower abdomen (lower dantian) or palms facing chest.

- 1. RELAX OPEN THE JOINTS.** Toes, ankles, slight bend in knees, hips relaxing down as though you were going to sit onto a high stool. Relax up the spine, neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, fingers. Create space under your armpits, rotate palms to face back if helpful.
- 2. FORM THE TAIJI POLE.** The "pole" or central axis of the body extends from the crown of the head to the pelvic floor to the center of the earth. The top of the pole represents yang energy of heaven, the bottom of the pole represents yin energy of earth. To activate the pole lift the pubic bone up, sink the tailbone down onto the imaginary high stool. Feel the front of the hip creases relax open (known as the Kwa). Draw the chin back slightly to feel the connection between the sacrum and the base of the skull. The spine will feel like it is being pulled in 2 directions. The crown feels open like you are being suspended by a string from the sky, it will feel like you are hanging from a string. Your center of gravity is sinking down through the center of your feet into the earth. Tongue rests on the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth. Tune into heaven and earth through the activated centerline of your body.
- 3. SINK THE BREATH INTO THE ABDOMEN,** also referred to as your lower dantian. Relax your chest to help the breath sink. Maintain your structure as you breath long, slow, deep abdominal breaths.
- 4. USE INTENT RATHER THAN FORCE.** You will allow your mind to settle, focus and become more aware of your inner and outer world. Including awareness of your body structure and all sensations. Wherever you place your mental attention, chi will flow. As you develop your mind-body connection you will learn to move chi with your mental focus.
- 5. SMILE.** Allow a smile to spread through your eyes and shine through your heart. Smiling is a beneficial practice that lightens and opens the heart, fosters gratitude and self love, positively affects body chemistry!