

[Method of Self Healing]

**Develop Qi Sensitivity and Restore Balance to the “Three Jiaos”
With a Powerful Exercise from Master Hua Tou.**

By Ken Andes

In today’s article I’d like to share with you one of my favorite (as well as one of the most simple) Qigong exercises. This exercise is taken from the Crane form of Hua Tou’s Five Animal Frolics, one of the oldest and most revered forms of Qigong.

Hua Tou was a famous physician during the Eastern Han Dynasty (circa 200 A.D.). He is famous in the history of Traditional Chinese Medicine as the first doctor to successfully practice abdominal surgery and for creating the Five Animal Frolics. The Five Animal Frolics are movements designed to mimic the energies and strengths of five different animals: the crane, bear, tiger, monkey, and snake. The five animals also correspond to the five elemental energies as well as the five seasons, with the fifth season being late summer. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine history, the Qigong exercises developed by Hua Tou have been proven to be some of the most effective for restoring health and promoting vitality.

This particular exercise is the most basic one in the Crane form. When practiced for a few minutes per day, it will have the following benefits:

- It will develop the ability to lead Qi into your hands. This is very valuable if you do any type of healing work or martial arts training.
- It will develop qi sensitivity in your hands as well as your body. You will be able to feel subtle energy currents with greater ease.
- It will guide qi energy into the three levels of the torso, also known as the “three jiaos” or triple burner in Chinese Medicine. This is excellent for restoring health to the internal organs.
- It will help you to relax, handle the effects of stress, center your energy, and keep your nervous system healthy.

Here it is:

Begin by standing with your feet shoulder width apart and your toes facing straight ahead. Relax your shoulders down and gently tuck your hips forward so that your lower back is not arched. Keeping your hips tucked forward and the back slightly flexed will open the energy circulation along the posterior acupuncture channels, as well take stress off of your spine.

Hold your hands with the palms facing upward at the level of the perineum. Your hands should be relaxed with the fingers close to each other, yet not touching.

Breathe in through the nose as you direct the air down into the



perineum. As you breathe in, slowly raise your hands up the front of your body and time it so that your hands are level with your collarbone as you end your inhalation.

When doing this motion, it is important that you keep your mind focused on *feeling* your hands move up the front of your body. Even though your hands are a few inches away from your body, you should be able to feel the subtle currents of energy emanating from them as they move up your body. By putting your intent (or *yi* as it is called in TCM) on feeling the energy of the hands moving up the front of the torso, you are guiding energy into both the hands as well as the torso. You are guiding energy up the lower, middle, and upper burners (the three jiaos) of the body while harmonizing the circulation of Qi.

At the end of your inhalation, and with your hands at the level of the collarbone, turn the palms down and begin to exhale slowly through the nose. Time your exhalation so that your hands end at level with the perineum as you finish your exhalation.



The same rule applies to the exhalation, *feel* the energetic presence of your hands as they move down your body. Become in tune with the movement of life force within your own being, and you will become in tune with the movement of life force in the area around you...and even further.

At the end of the exhalation, turn your hands upward and repeat the exercise for as long as you need to reach a meditative state. You can perform this exercise anywhere from 5 to 100 times. Or you can just allow the motion and energy development to induce a meditative state and remain in that state for as long as desired.



Remember, as you breathe in, feel your energy rise and lift with the movement of your hands. As you breathe out, feel your energy sink and lower with the movement of your hands. This is a metaphor for the yin and yang rhythm of the Universe. Allow your thinking mind to fall away during this exercise. Allow yourself to dissolve into this rhythm of yin and yang.

[Ken Andes, L.Ac, D.Ac. (RI) is a licensed acupuncturist, board certified herbalist, and medical qigong instructor. Dr. Andes has practiced various qigong for over 14 years, and he serves as vice-president of WISH and runs a private medical practice in Suffern, NY.]
