What is Qigong?

Qigong can be described as a mind-body-spirit practice that improves one’s mental and physical health by integrating posture, movement, breathing technique, self-massage, sound, and focused intent. There are likely thousands of qigong styles, schools, traditions, forms, and lineages, each with practical applications and different theories about Qi (“subtle breath” or “vital energy”) and Gong (“skill cultivated through steady practice”).

What are the Benefits of Qigong?

Qigong opens the flow of energy in meridians used in acupuncture and Chinese medicine. It enhances our ability to feel the Life Force underlying the physical world and to deepen our communication with it.

Physically, slow gentle qigong movements warm tendons, ligaments, and muscles; tonify vital organs and connective tissue; and promote circulation of body fluids (blood, synovial, lymph). Thousands of studies have shown qigong effective in helping to heal life challenges ranging from high blood pressure and chronic illness to emotional frustration, mental stress, and spiritual crisis.

A Path to Health

All Qigong begins as a personal journey of self-discovery through the use of movement, breath, and intention. Although some practitioners may independently determine how and what to practice, the NQA also recognizes the benefits of working with an experienced teacher. There are a number of different paths of cultivation including Health, Clinical, Martial, and Spiritual.

- Health: A self-cultivation practice to prevent dis-ease and to improve, sustain, and maximize overall well-being.

Qigong can be a highly effective health care practice. Many healthcare professionals recommend Qigong as an important form of alternative complementary medicine.

Qigong creates an awareness of our internal health that are not part of traditional exercise programs. Most exercises do not involve the meridian system used in acupuncture nor do they emphasize the importance of adding mind intent and breathing techniques to physical movements. When these dimensions are added, the benefits of exercise increase exponentially.

The gentle, rhythmic movements of consistent Qigong practice can reduce stress, build stamina, increase vitality, and enhance the immune system. Some practices have also been found to improve cardiovascular, respiratory, circulatory, lymphatic and digestive functions.

Qigong is recommended by:

- Harvard Medical School
- Cleveland Clinic, Mayo Clinic,
- National Council on Aging (NCOA)
- National Institute of Health (NIH NCCIH)
- American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
- Many physicians and Dr Oz.
People do Qigong to maintain health, heal their bodies, calm their minds, and reconnect with their spirit.

When these three aspects of our being are integrated, it encourages a positive outlook on life and helps eliminate harmful attitudes and behaviors. It also creates a balanced lifestyle, which brings greater harmony, stability, and enjoyment.

There are a wide variety of Qigong practices. They vary from the simple, internal forms to the more complex and challenging external styles. They can interest and benefit everyone, from the most physically challenged to the super athlete. There are Qigong classes for children, senior citizens, and every age group in between. Since Qigong can be practiced anywhere or at any time, there is no need to buy special clothing or to join a health club, however when learning Qigong it is helpful to start with a group or class.

Qigong’s great appeal is that everyone can benefit, regardless of ability, age, belief system or life circumstances.

Anyone can enrich their lives by adding Qigong to their daily routine:

- Children learning to channel their energy and develop increased concentration
- Office workers learning Qigong to reduce stress;
- Seniors using gentle movements to enhance balance and their quality of life;
- Caregivers embracing a practice to develop their ability to help others;
- Prisons instituting Qigong programs to restore balance in inmates lives;
- Midwives using Qigong techniques to ease childbirth.

Those who maintain a consistent practice of Qigong find that it helps one regain a youthful vitality, maintain health even into old age and helps speed recovery from illness.

Western scientific research confirms that Qigong practices may also reduce hypertension and the incidence of falling in the aged population.

When an individual or group assumes responsibility and takes action for their health and healing, we all benefit.