

Eight Section Brocade

Baduanjin 八段錦

Origins

Baduanjin is a set of eight individual modules of movements that have been mentioned in Chinese literature that dates back to the Song dynasty (960 – 1279). “Baduan” (eight pieces) refers to the eight modules; “jin” (brocade) is descriptive of the elegance and the value of the eight internal energy training movements. The set is distinguished by the refined movements, with just the right amount of activity. The movements in each training module focus on the preventive and curative needs of the targeted organ or meridian. They work to open the qi (energy) channels and re-adjust the functioning of the organs. It stands out from among all the ancient Chinese qigong training methods as a fine example of the combined use of active and passive internal training and enjoys a pre-eminent position in the history of the development of Chinese qigong.

Baduanjin traditionally contains both a standing and seated set of eight postures each. In the modern era, the standing version is by far the most widely practiced. The particular order in which the eight pieces are executed sometimes varies, with the following order being the most common.



Movements

	<p><i>Two Hands Hold up the Heavens</i> (雙手托天理三焦¹)</p> <p>This move is said to stimulate the "Triple Warmer" meridian (Sanjiao). It consists of an upward movement of the hands, which are loosely joined and travel up the center of the body.</p> <p>除胸悶、腹脹、水濕之氣，增進食慾。</p>
	<p><i>Drawing the Bow to Shoot the Eagle</i> (左右開弓似射鷹)</p> <p>While in a lower horse stance, the practitioner imitates the action of drawing a bow to either side. It is said to exercise the waist area, focusing on the kidneys and spleen.</p> <p>胸部擴張、宣降肺氣、活動雙臂。</p>
	<p><i>Separate Heaven and Earth</i> (調理脾胃須單舉)</p> <p>This resembles a version of the first piece with the hands pressing in opposite directions, one up and one down. A smooth motion in which the hands switch positions is the main action, and it is said to especially stimulate the stomach.</p> <p>利於脾胃升降，以消食去積。</p>
	<p><i>5 Workers and 7 Injuries Gazes Backwards</i> (五勞²七傷³往後瞧)</p> <p>This is a stretch of the neck to the left and the right in an alternating fashion. Enhances blood circulation and stimulates the brain.</p> <p>使精血充盛、神氣寧；五臟六腑精足，勞損則消。</p>

¹ 三焦 Sanjiao: 上焦 Upper Jiao - 橫隔膜以上部位；主要包括心、肺。Upper part of the body, includes Heart, Lung, and Pericardium organs.
中焦 Middle Jiao - 橫隔膜下、臍上部位；主要包括脾、胃、肝、膽。Midsection of the body, includes Spleen, Stomach, Gall Bladder and Liver organs.
下焦 Lower Jiao - 臍以下部位；主要包括腎、膀胱、大腸、小腸。Lower section of the body, includes Small and Large Intestines, Kidneys and Urinary Bladder.

² 五勞 5 workers: 久視傷血；久臥傷氣；久坐傷肉；久立傷骨；久行傷筋。5 components of our body that overwork: blood (awake), chi (sleep), muscles (sitting), bones (standing) and tendons (motion).

	<p>Sway the Head and Shake the Tail (搖頭擺尾去心火)</p> <p>This is said to regulate the function of the heart and lungs. Its primary aim is to remove excess heat (or fire) (xin huo) from the heart. "Xin huo" is also associated with heart fire in traditional Chinese medicine. In performing this piece, the practitioner squats in a low horse stance, places the hands on thighs with the elbows facing out and twists to glance backwards on each side.</p> <p>搖頭使心火下降、擺尾使腎水上濟；故可去心火、補腎氣。</p>
	<p>Two Hands Hold the Feet to Strengthen the Kidneys and Waist (兩手攀足固腎腰)</p> <p>This involves a stretch upwards followed by a forward bend and a holding of the toes.</p> <p>腰為腎之府，久練能固腎、壯腰膝。對腎虛、腰痛等有幫助。</p>
	<p>Clench the Fists and Glare Fiercely (攢拳怒目增力氣)</p> <p>This resembles the second piece, and is largely a punching movement either to the sides or forward while in horse stance. This, which is the most external of the pieces, is aimed at increasing general vitality and muscular strength.</p> <p>可強壯胸、肩臂、腰、腿部肌肉。</p>
	<p>Bouncing on the Toes (背後七顛百病消)</p> <p>This is a push upward from the toes with a small rocking motion on landing. The gentle shaking vibrations of this piece is said to "smooth out" the qi after practice of the preceding seven pieces.</p> <p>頸項為足太陽經所循之處，足太陽經主一身之表，抱頸通達衛外之氣，使腠理密，邪不能犯，百病不生。</p>

³ 七傷7 injuries: 一曰大飽傷脾 Spleen 二曰大怒氣逆傷肝 Liver 三曰強力舉重、久坐濕地傷腎 Kidney
 四曰形寒、寒飲傷肺 Lungs 五曰憂愁思慮傷心 Heart 六曰寒暑風雨傷形 External appearance
 七曰大恐慌、不節傷志 Internal energy