What is Qigong?

Qigong (pronounced chi kung), often called acupuncture without needles, is a health maintenance technique similar to Tai Chi. Qigong can be translated as “working with energy” – the same “energy” used in Chinese Traditional Medicine and Acupuncture. Some Qigong methods involve mindfulness; others can be more meditative with little movements. The combining of movement with stillness works best for many.

Qigong has a 5000 year history of development in China. As early as 770-221 BC, Qigong had achieved high level recognition. During its evolvement in thousands of years, Qigong has progressed, developed and gained sophistication. At the present time, Qigong practice can be classified into five schools:

- Taoist
- Buddhist
- Confucianism
- WUSHU masters (Martial arts)
- Chinese Traditional Medicine

Many current Qigong practice methods employ combination of different schools. It is estimated over 200 million people are currently practicing some Qigong forms.

Silk scrolls discovered in ancient tombs at Xian (circa 186 BC), have elaborate drawings of famous movement Qigong forms called Daoyin exercises. After recent study and organization in China it is now generally agreed to use the term Qigong to describe all of these ancient practices. **Qigong means to cultivate vital energy.** Qigong is also becoming a science which explores the mysteries of human life, it’s a way of improving health, treatment and prevention of disease, and traditionally was a means to increase longevity. It is believed that many body functions may be controlled by yourself. Thus Qigong is sometimes called self cultivation and is recognized as a health maintenance technique.

By the way it is practiced; Qigong has two forms:

- Quiet form
- Active form

The quiet form may adopt 3 quiet body positions, namely the supine, sitting and standing types.

By controlling one’s mind and adjusting the breathing pattern, the quiet form of Qigong aims to exercise the internal organs of the body.

The active form combines the mental consciousness and Qi-energy with the movement of the extremities, (such as standing form, TAIJIQUAN Qigong, Daoyin, An Mo self massage, etc.) **The goal is to activate the circulation of vital energy and blood and to quiet the mind while moving body parts.** It is termed “external Qigong exercise” due to its visible active movements of the body.
The first step is the foundation, in which the feeling of Qi begins to appear. When the change of qin into Qi is complete, Qi can circulate along REN-DU channels, (i.e. along the middle lines of chest, abdomen, back and head). When the change of Qi into spirit is completed, Qi can circulate along all the main channels around the body.

Over time a Qigong practitioner may increase his skill level and some individuals have obtained unusual or extraordinary human functions. Generally, good health, longevity and the opening of wisdom is a goal for most Qigong practice. It can be performed by all individuals regardless of age or body condition.