

Five Element Qigong Sound Healing

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Qigong is one of the four pillars of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). The others being acupuncture and moxibustion, tuina (medical massage) and bone setting, and Chinese herbal medicine and diet therapy.

Qigong is comprised of two Chinese characters – “qi” (氣) and “gong” (功). The character “qi” (氣) is made of two different characters, 气 and 米. 气’s ancient meaning was vapors or mist rising and gathering to form clouds, which indicated that qi is not always seen, but was always changing, moving, lacking of material form. It also could be sensed and experienced. 米 is the character for rice. This added a nourishing element to the meaning of qi (氣). By the 2nd century C.E., the meaning of qi took on a complex “set of meanings related to vitality and life-sustaining substances and processes, while maintaining its underlying sense of connective and transformative impetus”. Today, qi is often defined as “life-force”, “vital-energy”, “bio-energy”, “bio-electricity”, “breath”, etc. With the simplified writing system that the communist Chinese government implemented in the 1950s, the character for qi became 气. The character “gong” (功) is made up of two characters, 工 (gong), meaning work and 力 (li), meaning strenuous, ability, power, strength, effort. Put together “gong” (功) means to attain an ability or skill through time and effort. Thus, the meaning of “qigong” (氣功) is to work with your life-sustaining substances (vital-energy) and processes (functioning) through time and effort. Some people define it as just “breathing exercises”. Think of it in simpler terms of exercises to work with your body’s energy.

There are five classifications of qigong. They are listed with their intent in the table below.

Classifications	Intent
Medical Qigong	Medical qigong emphasizes the circulation and balance of qi in the body. The primary purpose is to treat illness or cure disease and to maintain health. It can be a self-practice or used on another person. Medical practitioners learn how to use it for diagnosis and healing.
Taoist Qigong	Stresses preservation of the physical body, high virtue, and being in harmony with nature. Tai Chi is considered to have been created by a Taoist.
Buddhist Qigong	Aims to liberate the mind, cultivate virtue and to obtain enlightening wisdom. The human body is considered a tool for attaining enlightenment. Dynamic qigong was used to strengthen the body for meditation (still qigong).
Confucian Qigong	Aims to provide high moral character and intelligence.
Martial Arts Qigong	Trains the body for protection from injury in martial arts. It also trains the practitioner to strike using qi, instead of just muscle strength.

(Sometimes Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian Qigong are put into one category – Spiritual Qigong.)

There are three aspects common to all qigong practices. They are regulating the body, regulating the mind and regulating the breath. Regulating the body refers to how the body moves or what postures to be in. The body movements, such as Tai Chi, are considered dynamic; and body stillness, as in poses or postures, are considered quiescent. The body movements work to activate and circulate the qi and blood, loosen the muscles, and open the joints. The body postures tend to open up specific areas or meridians that the qi would move through. Other times, the postures are determined by the health condition of the person. A weak or debilitated person could sit or lie down. Hand mudras are also considered as regulating the body through the hand postures and activating the hand meridians, such as the Lungs, Heart and Pericardium.

Regulating the mind refers to one’s intent and awareness. This is an important aspect of feeling the qi sensation and moving it. The calm and quiet mind can “hear”, “feel”, “smell”, “taste” or “see” what the body is experiencing. All the

senses can be heightened. Then, with one's intent the qi will move and the qi will follow the intent. Visualization or guided imagery is also used in regulating the mind.

Regulating the breath refers to how one breathes. There are many breathing techniques in qigong. Some techniques activate the body and the qi. Others calm down the body and still move the qi. There are many beneficial physiological effects of controlled breathing, especially deep, slow breathing. One of them is to regulate the autonomic nervous system by calming down the sympathetic nervous system and activating the parasympathetic nervous system, which will improve physiological functions and the immune system. Another important point with regulating the breath is on exhalation. A sound can be produced with a certain frequency and vibration to resonate with the body and organs. If the organ's energetic function is in disharmony, a sound can be used to regulate it back into harmony. Qigong has several different methods of using sound to enhance health. Some of the sound qigong styles are the Six Sounds, Singing Qigong, and Five Elements Qigong, and within each style there are multiple variations of the sounds.

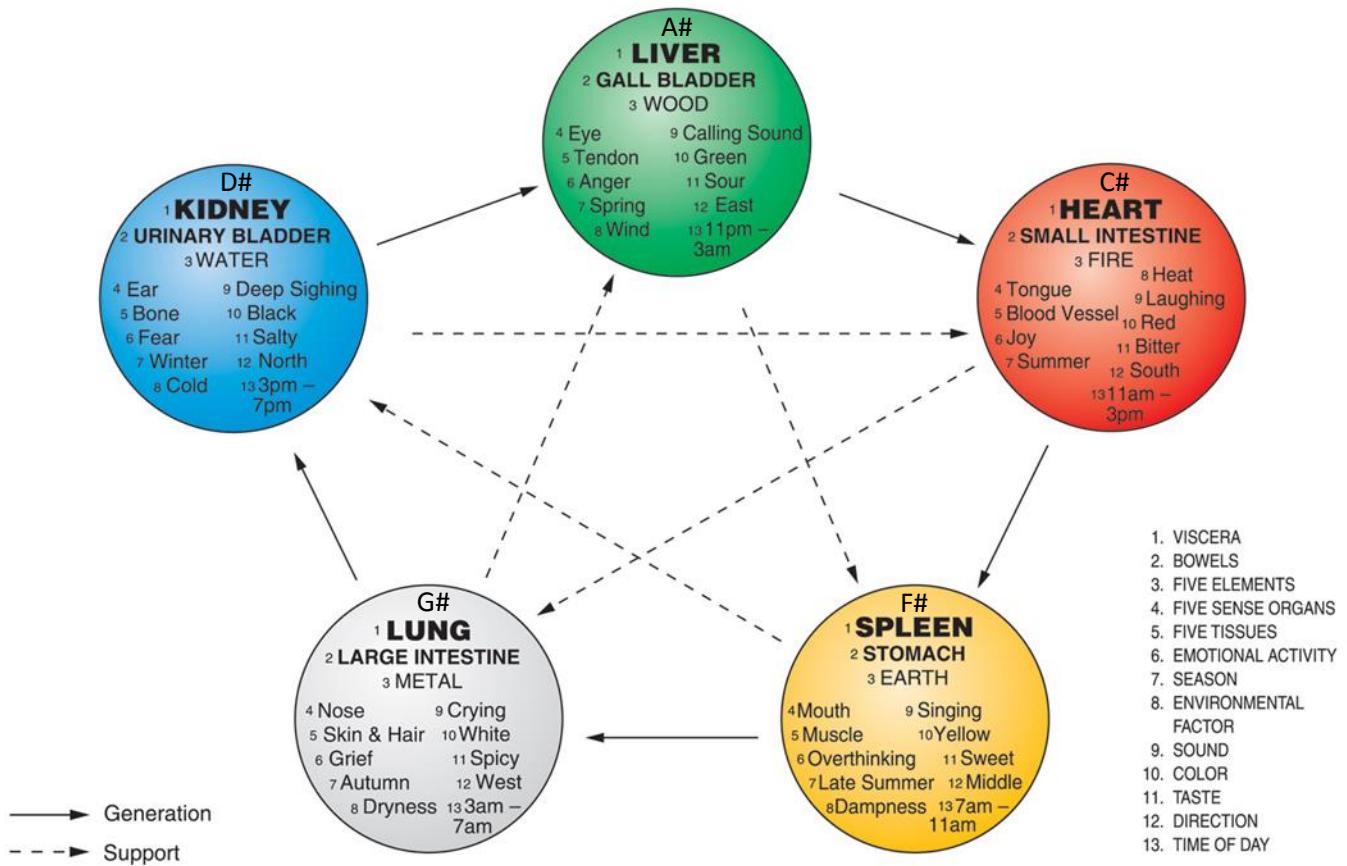
Five Element Qigong is based on the Five Element Theory. The ancient Chinese philosophers developed this theory through watching the interactions within nature. These interactions were movements and relationships of things in nature or the universe. In English, we use the term "Five Elements", but literally translated, "wuxing" (五行) means "Five Movements". This means that these elements are dynamic and alive. They grow and diminish and affect other movements (or elements). The system of the Five Elements, originating from Taoism, provides the basis for harmony in universe, in nature and in man. All things in the world are in relationship to each other and contain in each case itself a microcosmic representation of the universe. Accordingly, they are each assigned to the Five Elements, which the basic elements are water, wood, fire, earth and metal. Below is a table and diagram of the associations and relationships of the Five Elements.

5 Elements - Associations in Chinese Medicine

	Wood (Outward)	Fire (Raises)	Earth (Stabilizes)	Metal (Inward)	Water (Downward)
Zang Organs (Yin)	Liver	Heart	Spleen	Lungs	Kidneys
Fu Organs (Yang)	Gall Bladder	Small Intestine	Stomach	Large Intestine	Bladder
Healing Sounds (Expanding)	Kuo/Guo	Zheng	Gong	Shang	----
Healing Sounds (Contracting)	Xu	He	Hu	Si	Yu
Musical Notes	A#	C#	F#	G#	D#
Directions	East	South	Center	West	North
Colors	Green or Blue-green	Red	Yellow	White, Silver or Gold	Black or dark Blue
Emotions	Anger	Joy	Worry	Sadness, Grief	Fear

	Wood (Outward)	Fire (Raises)	Earth (Stabilizes)	Metal (Inward)	Water (Downward)
Sense organs	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ears
Tissues	Tendons/Sinews	Vessels	Muscles	Skin	Bones
Fluids	Tears	Sweat	Thick Saliva	Phlegm/Mucus	Saliva (Excess)
Tastes	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent	Salty
Sounds	Shouting	Laughing	Singing	Crying	Groaning or Sighing
Climates	Wind	Heat	Dampness	Dryness	Cold
Stages	Birth, Germination	Growth	Transformation, Ripening	Harvest, Collect	Storage
Seasons	Spring	Summer	Transitions btwn seasons	Autumn	Winter
Numbers	8	7	5	9	6
Planets	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Yin-Yang	Lesser Yang	Utmost Yang	Center	Lesser Yin	Utmost Yin
Animals	Fish	Birds	Human	Mammals	Shell Covered
Domestic Animals	Sheep	Fowl	Ox	Dog	Pig
Grains	Wheat	Beans	Rice	Hemp	Millet

CLASSIFICATION OF THINGS ACCORDING TO THE THEORY OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS



Since man contains equally a microcosm of the nature, thus representing the fundamental processes in nature, and since the five elements arise from the nature, it follows that man can be analyzed in Chinese medicine in accordance to these elements. It is the aim of that analysis to clear the organs of the person, and to strengthen them and to bring them into a harmonic balance to each other, for that the qi can circulate freely from organ to organ and through the meridians, in order to help the body regaining a physically and emotional healthy state of being. The five elements are connected through a specific cycle, in which one element feeds or creates the following one. Water feeds wood, wood fuels fire, fire creates ash which returns to the earth, earth bears metal and metal produces water. This cycle is called growth, generation or creation cycle.

The second cycle is the controlling cycle, which protects against overgrowth or too much abundance. Within the controlling cycle, wood controls earth, earth controls water, water controls fire, fire controls metal and metal controls wood.

These two cycles have a dynamic relationship which balances each other and creates a harmony among the elements. The two main disharmonies are over-controlling and insulting. Over-controlling is when one element exhibits excess control on an element in the controlling cycle. Insulting is the result of a controlled element fighting back and causing a reverse of the controlling direction.

In the Five Elements Qigong, sounds, directions, colors and elements can be used together or separately to affect the organ energetic functions bringing back the balance of the corresponding relations of the elements to help heal our bodies. What is unique about the sounds is that a particular note and sound has a frequency and vibration that resonates with the organ energies of that element. Refer to table above for notes and sound. In this Five Element

Qigong, it has a sound for expanding to activate, disperse and move, and a sound for contracting to nourish and tonify, for each element, except for water. The water element's yin organ's qi, the Kidney qi, should not be dispersed, but tonified. This qi is connected to the dantian qi, which is our body's "bank of qi" and we want to keep it full as possible. The Kidney qi nourishes all other organ qi, thus, we want to protect it and not lose it. Age and an unhealthy lifestyle will deplete the Kidney qi! Many qigong styles practice to keep that qi strong.

In conclusion, practicing most any qigong will be a healthy addition to one's lifestyle and will improve one's health. A qigong that includes sound, such as the Five Element Qigong, will bring another aspect of healing to the body. The resonating vibration of the sound's frequency will carry the intention to benefit the organ's energy. The more we can do for ourselves, the healthier we will be.