

Arcing the Arms or Embracing the Moon on the Chest

Beginners' Version: Stand in Empty (aka Cat Stance or Xu Bu) one foot in front with the ball of the foot touching the floor lightly and the heel slightly raised, toes pointing straight forward. Heels are close together but not overlapping. Rear foot firmly planted, toes pointing outward at a 45 degree angle to the front foot. All the weight is on the rear leg.

Hold your arms in a horizontal circle at shoulder level, palms facing in, fingertips almost touching, and chest curved inward. Hold your tongue at the roof of your mouth to complete the circuit between the Governing and the Conception vessels. After three minutes, switch to the other leg without lowering your arms. After three more minutes, gradually lower the arms and feel the Qi flow into the hands. Beginners should be able to sense Qi by moving their hands in front of their face or moving them close to one another. The Qi should feel like heat or an electrical charge. If beginners find it difficult to hold the arms at shoulder level, they can start with arms at a 45 degree angle and gradually raise them as they gain strength through practice.

Advanced Version: In the posture described above, perform two visualizations of leading the Qi in coordination with the breathing. Visualize a horizontal circuit leading the Qi to your fingertips as you exhale. The Qi moves across the gap and returns to the center of your chest as you inhale. [Yes the Qi moves in both directions at once.] At the same time, visualize a vertical circuit. As you inhale, take in Qi through your Bai-hui point at the top of your head and lead it downward to the lower Dan Tian. On the exhale, lead Qi downward and out through the Yongquan (Bubbling Well) point on the sole of the empty foot. Gradually lengthen the time you stand to strengthen your arms and lower back.

This exercise is reported to be capable of relieving serious illnesses such as cancer when performed for several hours a day.

Reading:

The Essence of Tai Chi Chi Kung, pp. 80-83. [pages are the same in the new edition]