

If you are a complete beginner in Qigong, the training sequence starts with the practice of Back to Childhood Breathing, where you expand the abdomen and lower the perineum while inhaling and contract the abdomen and raise the perineum while exhaling. All movements are done gently.

After you are accustomed to Back to Childhood, begin practicing Reverse Abdominal Breathing, which is used any time the qigong practitioner has intention to move the Qi strongly. Here you contract the abdomen and lift the perineum while inhaling and expand the abdomen and lower the perineum while exhaling. All movements are done gently.

After you can perform Reverse Breathing in a relaxed and comfortable manner, you begin training how to lead the Qi. Since the Qi flows where the mind leads it, you lead the Qi by placing the mind in the intended destination.

The first step in leading the Qi is Yongquan breathing. Here you breathe in and out the Kidney 1 gates at the bottom of the feet. On exhalation, you place the mind below the feet and visualize the flow of breath and Qi down and out the bottoms of the feet and imagine that the feet are pressing into the Earth. On inhalation, you place the mind in the Real Lower Dan Tian and visualize breath and Qi flowing in through the bottoms of the feet and up to the Real Lower Dan Tian.

After you are comfortable with Yongquan breathing, move to Four Gates breathing, adding the Laogong (Pericardium 8) gates in the palms. The palms are held at hip level facing the Earth with the elbows and wrists not too sharply bent. (Sharp bends in the joints inhibit the Qi flow.) Everything is the same as in Yongquan breathing, except you are now including the hands.

For more information on these elements of Qigong Breathing see Dr. Yang, Jwing Ming's DVD, Understanding Qigong 2, Key Points of Qigong: Qigong Breathing, available from Qi Elements or YMAA.com.