

The Eight Brocades

The Eight Brocades are a set of qigong exercises that originated in China and are practiced throughout the world. They are also known as the Eight Silken Movements, The Eight Treasures Dao-yin, The Eight Pieces of Silken Brocade, Baduanjin, or Pa Tuan Chin. Whatever the name, they are a set of qigong movements that date back thousands of years.

Just as there are many names for the Eight Brocades, there are various names for each of the movements and a variety of styles. You will also notice seated and standing versions of the movements. Remember, these movements have been passed down through the years, with each master or sifu having a slightly different style.

The Eight Brocades are most often considered a medical qigong exercise set. You will see similarities between the Eight Brocades and the first eight movements of the Eighteen Hands of the Lohan, which are a set of exercises taught to Buddhist monks at the Shaolin Temple in China. Because of this similarity, you will also read that the Eight Brocades are a martial arts qigong.

It is suggested that you do the entire set at least once per day. Go at a pace and do the number of repetitions which matches your fitness and health level. Gradually, work up to eight repetitions of each movement. By completing these qigong movements, you should notice improved health, increased energy, reduced stress, a revitalized mind and body, improved balance, and an overall sense of well being.

The Eight Brocades - The Movements

Propping Up the Sky

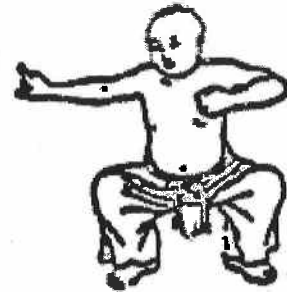
1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left to a Horse stance.
3. Inhale as you raise your hands, palms up.
4. At chest level, start turning your palms out.
5. At forehead level, your palms should be facing front.
6. Continue to raise your hands overhead.
7. Rise up on your toes (if possible) as you extend your arms, palms facing the sky, fingertips close together and eyes watching your hands.
8. Exhale as you sweep your arms to the side, with your palms facing down, until you are standing flat footed.
9. Repeat steps 3-8. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
10. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



This movement is also called "Push up the Heavens" and "Pressing the Heavens with Two Hands". Practicing this movement helps build good posture. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, TCM, practicing this movement helps to regulate the triple burner, and relieve fatigue by activating the fluid flowing in the triple burner and ensuring proper nourishment throughout the body.

Drawing the Bow

1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left to a wide Horse stance.
3. Exhale as you sink and cross your arms in front of you with the right arm in front of the left.
4. Inhale as you extend your left arm out to the left with your pointer finger and thumb creating an "L" shape. At the same time pull your right arm to the right side holding the string with your right hand. Your right elbow is bent. Your right and left arm should be in a straight line.
5. Exhale as you release the right hand and let the arrow fly.
6. Inhale as you drop your arms, palms down, in an arc to your side as your body floats up.
7. Repeat steps 3 - 6 on the right side. The left arm will be crossed in front of the body, the right arm will create the "L" shape and the left hand will hold the string.
8. Repeat Drawing the Bow on both sides. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
9. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



This movement is also known as "Drawing the Bow and Letting the Arrow Fly", and "Drawing the Bow and Shooting the Serpent". Practicing this movement strengthens the muscles of the hands, arms, chest and thighs. According to TCM, practicing this movement, enhances the function of the respiratory and circulatory systems.

Separating Heaven & Earth

1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left to a Horse stance.
3. Inhale as you lift your hands, palms up, to stomach level.
4. Continue raising your left hand until your left arm is extended over head with your palm up and fingers pointing to the right.
5. At the same time, extend your right hand to your side, palm down with your fingers pointing to the front.
6. Exhale and return to the starting position, with both palms up at stomach level.
7. Repeat steps 3-7 with your right arm up and your left arm down.
8. Repeat Separating Heaven and Earth movements on both sides. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
9. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



This movement is also called "Touch Heaven & Earth" and "Plucking Stars". It stretches the muscles in the arms and shoulders. According to TCM, it strengthens the digestive system and aids in prevention of gastrointestinal disorders. It contributes to the ascending of spleen-qi and the descending of stomach-qi, thus promoting the digestive functions.

Shake the Heavenly Pillar

1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left into a Horse stance.
3. Look straight ahead and gaze into the distance with your arms extended down at your side. Sink your shoulders.
4. Inhale as you turn your head slowly to the left.
5. Gaze behind you as far as you can. Turn your eyes so you are looking out of the corner of your eyes (backwards & downwards).
6. Exhale as you return your head to the center.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 on the right side.
8. Repeat looking on both sides. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
9. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



This movement is also known as "The Wise Owl Gazes Backward", "Looking Right and Looking Left", and "Looking Behind". As you warm up, turn your head farther each time. Move slowly, time your movement with your breathing. According to TCM, practicing this movement helps your lungs, immune system, and large intestines. It enriches the essence and blood, calms the mind, and promotes organ functioning.

Punching with Tiger Eyes

1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left to a wide Horse stance. Try to work up to two shoulder widths.
3. Make a tight fist with both hands & hold both fists at waist level with palms up.
4. Exhale as you punch out slowly with the left hand. Use a spiral motion and end with the left fist palm down, at chest level.
5. Your eyes are wide open and glaring. Imagine fire, determination, courage, or toughness. See the energy traveling out of your fist.
6. Inhale and relax as you bring your left hand back to the starting position.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 on the other side (ie extend your right hand)
8. Repeat punching with both hands. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
9. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



This movement is also known as "Punching and Glaring", "Punching with Angry Gaze", and "Clenching Fists and Looking with Eyes Wide Open". A wide Horse stance improves the muscles of the thigh. According to TCM, this movement helps stimulate and revitalize the liver.

The Big Bear Turns from Side to Side

1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left into a wide Horse stance. (Try and work up to two shoulder widths.)
3. Bend your knees and squat down lower. Make sure you have a straight back and your knees are centered over your toes.
4. Place hands just above your knees with your thumbs on the outside of your legs and your elbows pointed to the side.



5. Inhale slowly as you shift your weight to the left, turn your chest to the left, and your tailbone to the right. Extend your right arm to help you turn to the left.
6. Exhale as you shift back to center.
7. Inhale as you shift your weight to the right, turn your chest to the right, and your tailbone to the left. Extend your left arm to help you turn to the right.
8. Repeat steps 5-7. Work up to being able to do eight repetitions.
9. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.

This movement is also known as "Rotate Head and Trunk", "Search the Clouds", and "Shake Head and Sway Buttocks to Extinguish Fire in the Heart". As you are completing this movement, place your attention on the bubbling wells in the bottom of your feet. This movement will strengthen legs and waist. According to TCM, this movement benefits the heart, gets rid of heart fire, and causes the kidney-yin to ascend.

Touching the Toes and Bending Backwards

Warning: If you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, don't put your head below your heart. Also, people with lower back stiffness or pain should not bend deeply.

1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left into a Horse stance.
3. Exhale as you lean forward, with your arms at your side. Draw your abdomen in and bend your knees slightly to grasp your toes (if possible).
4. Inhale as you slowly roll up, vertebrae by vertebrae.
5. Exhale as you put hands on your back at the kidneys and bend back slowly and gently bend back, looking upwards and backwards.
6. Inhale as you stand up.
7. Repeat steps 3-6. Work up to being able to do eight repetitions.
8. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



If you have uncontrolled high blood pressure, don't put your head below your heart. Also, people with lower back stiffness or pain should not bend deeply. This movement is also known as "Carrying the Moon", "Nourishing the Kidneys", "Touch the Sky, Press the Earth", and "Touch Toes to Reinforce Kidneys". This movement will stretch and lengthen the muscles of the lower back. According to TCM, this movement stimulates various meridians in the body.

Bouncing on the Toes

1. Start in a Wuji stance.
2. Step left into a Horse stance.
3. As you inhale, place the backs of your hands on your lower back and raise up on your toes.
4. Exhale as you drop back down on your heels to gently bounce your whole body.
5. Repeat steps 3-4. Work up to being able to do 8 repetitions.
6. To end, step with your left foot back to the Wuji stance.



This movement is also known as "Jolt Body to Keep All Illnesses Away", "Lift the Back", and "Cure the 1000 Illnesses". This movement will exercise your calves and thighs. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine bouncing in this manner stimulates the immune system and helps rid the body of many diseases.

To finish the Eight Brocades

1. Stand in a horse stance.
2. Place your palms, face in on your dantien, with your thumbs at navel level
3. Feel the qi radiate out from your dantien through out your body.
4. Now, feel this energy radiate out through your pores and skin until you are enveloped by warm radiant energy.
5. For a few more moments, continue belly breathing as you feel the qi radiating around and through your entire body.

If you'd like to read more about the Eight Brocades, check out the following sites:

- <http://www.martrix.org/baduanjin2.html>
- <http://www.egreenway.com/taichichuan/esb.htm>
- <http://www.lookagain.ca/qigong-v1.pdf>
- http://www.shen-nong.com/eng/lifestyles/tcmrole_health_maintenance_8brocade.html

"One single posture done correctly is more valuable
than 150 movements done without understanding."
Unknown