

# EIGHT PIECES OF BROCADE EXERCISE

## (*BA DUAN JIN QI GONG*)

# 八段錦氣功

This series of eight movements and stretches was developed in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century by the famous Chinese military hero General Yu Fei in order to add sensitivity and suppleness to the strength of his soldiers. Since then it has become one of the most commonly practiced qigong exercises in China.

Before starting the first movement take a couple of moments to clear and calm the mind. Stand straight and relaxed with a feeling of lightness at the top of the head. Breathe naturally from the diaphragm and focus the mind on the center of gravity below the navel.

1. “Support the Sky with Both Hands” to open up the lungs and stimulate metabolism.  
Stand straight and interlock the fingers in front of the waist with palms up. Raise the hands while turning the palms out, and push straight up while tilting the head back and looking at the sky. Repeat 6-9 times.
2. “Draw the Bow and Shoot the Arrow” to loosen the waist and sharpen the mind.  
Widen the stance and bend the knees. Extend left arm straight out to the side and reach across with the right hand to the left elbow and “draw back the bow.” Aim carefully and release the arrow. Repeat 6-9 times on both sides.
3. “Separate the Sky and Earth” to regulate the spleen and stomach and harmonize the center.  
Stand straight and cross wrists in front of heart with the left hand going up on the outside and the right hand going down on the inside. Extend in both directions with wrists bent. Repeat 6-9 times on both sides.
4. “Gaze Back like an Owl” to relax the five strains and soften the seven damages.  
Stand straight and even. Turn neck to the left and look behind while opening chest and twisting palms out. Then look to the right while closing chest and twisting palms the other way, Repeat 6-9 times on both sides.
5. “Swing the Head and Shake the Tail Like a Monkey” to clear heart fire and circulate the blood.  
Widen the stance, bend the knees, and place the hands on the thighs with thumbs out. Keep the spine straight, lean to the left, swing around in front, and come up the other side. Repeat 6-9 times on both sides.
6. “Bend the Waist and Touch the Toes” to reinforce the kidneys and strengthen the bones.  
Stand straight and place hands on the back over the kidneys. Slide hands with gentle pressure all the way down the back of the legs while bending the waist and out the side of the foot to the pinkie toe. Repeat 6-9 times.
7. “Strike the Fists with Fiery Eyes” to stimulate the liver and invigorate the qi.  
Widen the stance, bend the knees, and hold both fists at the side with palms up. Strike vigorously with strong intent while twisting the fist palm down, left first then right. Repeat 12-18 times on both sides.
8. “Rise on Toes and Fall on Heels” to unify the whole body's qi and dispel all disharmony.  
Stand straight and place hands on the back over the kidneys. Rock forward and rise up on the toes, and then fall quickly and firmly back onto the heels. Repeat 12-18 times.