

## I. Bear Frolic

Main Point:

Powerful, rooted, steady, and calm

Envious of the light and buoyant

Mnemonic:

Externally, the bear is clumsy,

Internally, spiritual and full of insight,

Within grounded, powerful steadiness there is lightness,

Swaying and leaning, the strength is in the shoulders/arms,

Sinking the Qi to the Dantian and guarding the Middle Palace.

Concise formula:

The body of the bear appears heavy and clumsy from the outside, stepping softly as though boneless. Thus it is implied that within grounded stability, there should also be ethereal, buoyant lightness.

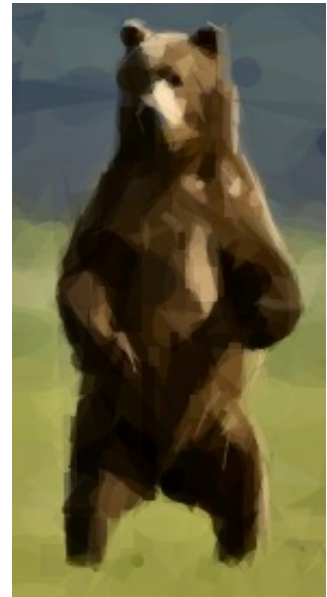
Not only should one embody the calm, stable, grounded and powerful spirit of the bear, but one should also embody ethereal lightness of motion within heaviness. Shaking and leaning are primary movements of the bear.

When practicing, one should direct one's power (劲 - Jing) to the shoulders (simultaneously including the shoulders, elbows, hands, hips, knees, and feet).

"Sink the Qi into the Dantian" means to sink the Qi down, entering into the umbilicus. This space within the umbilicus is referred to as the "Middle Palace".

"Guarding" refers to the guarding of one's intent; one's mind should remain focused on this point.

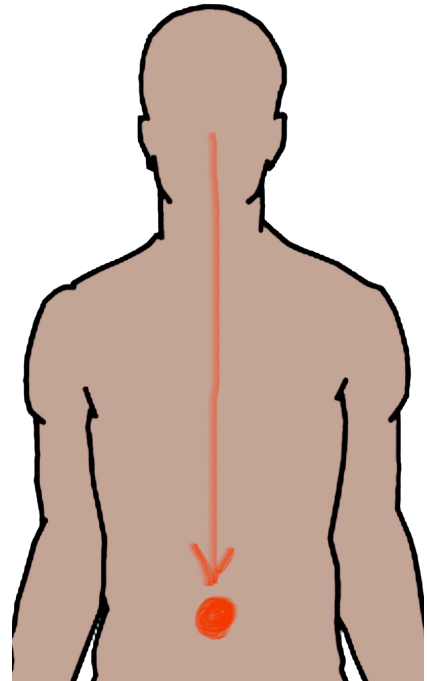
Keeping one's intent focused on this point harmonizes the Qi vessels.



Practiced long-term, this frolic will serve to lead the Qi downward and strengthen the functions of the Spleen and Stomach (digestive organs).

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, Qi Zhong (CV-8 / Center of the Navel) pressure point is located in Zhong Jiao (the middle burner - the area of the body between the diaphragm and the umbilicus, containing the spleen, stomach, etc.).

Meanwhile, spleen and stomach are earth (one of five elements) and they are the origin of everything. Concentrating upon this point helps to strengthen spleen and stomach as well as to develop deep abdominal respiration, which strengthens your respiration system and “massages” the internal organs, especially those in abdomen, due to the amplitude increase of diaphragmatic muscles.



Therefore, the Bear Frolic should be taken as a base, and is suitable for people with hypertension, neurasthenia, joint and musculo-motor issues, and those with a weak physical condition. The practices of Bear Stepping, Swaying, and Pushing are the three exercises most appropriate for the treatment of disease.

[1 am - The internal organs in the torso are divided into three Jiao, or “burners”. The Middle Jiao contains the Stomach and Spleen, which govern digestion in Chinese medicine, relates to Earth, and lies between the umbilicus and the diaphragm. In Chinese medicine, the body’s energy has two roots. Its prenatal root is the Water, relating to the Kidneys and one’s prenatal constitution. While this the is the root of the pre-birth energies and one’s innate constitution, it is not enough to sustain the body after birth, just as a plant needs more than its own seed to flourish. Just as a plant takes in nutrients through the soil, so humans have a postnatal root. Earth relates to the digestion and assimilation of nutrients, and therefore is considered to be the

postnatal root, as it is the primary source of nutrients and fuel after birth. (Although qi absorbed from food must still be combined with qi absorbed from the air. While this process happens through the lungs, it is still governed by the Kidneys, thus Earth and Water are still the roots of the body). Therefore, strengthening the Stomach/Spleen will ultimately strengthen entire body, not merely the digestive system, as the digestive system is the primary source of a creature's energy post-birth.]

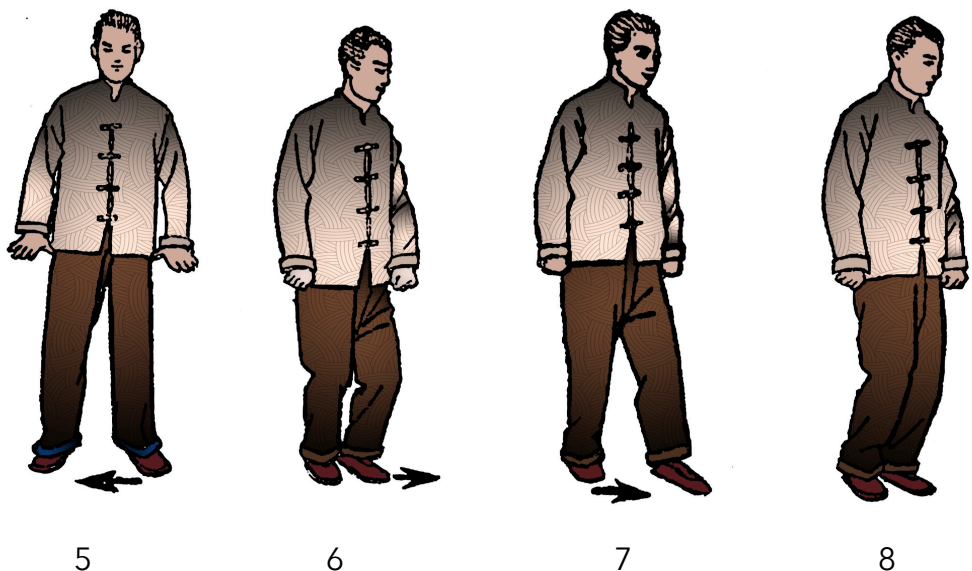
## A. Bear Stepping

When the Starting Movement is done, incline the head slightly forward and straighten up the neck slightly.

Bring the left foot together with the right. Place all your weight on your right leg, with your left foot tiptoed (left empty, right solid), allowing your body to turn slightly to the left.

Make your hands into hollow fists and bend your elbows slightly. Twist your fists in and lock them slightly back (toward the back of your hand), so that the strength (劲 Jìng) is put just above the backs of your wrists (an - dorsum of the forearm, just proximal to the wrist).

While breathing out, slowly advance the left foot forward and left, half a step (like you are walking in mud).



While breathing in, bring the right foot together with the left, simultaneously turning your body slightly to the right. (See Illustration 5-8.)

This is considered the left movement.

After the left movement, step out with the right leg as you exhale, in the same way that one did for the left movement.

This is right movement.

Practice left and right movements repeatedly.

This is a gōngfù (skill achieved through hard work and practice) of the legs and feet.

With regard to the inner Qi, it is training the Gen Qi (Rooting Qi). [am - Exercises of feet and legs cause Gen Qi (Qi of root) to ascend during this internal Qi exercise.] When you step forward, you must advance gradually, as though you are walking in mud.

## B. Bear Swaying

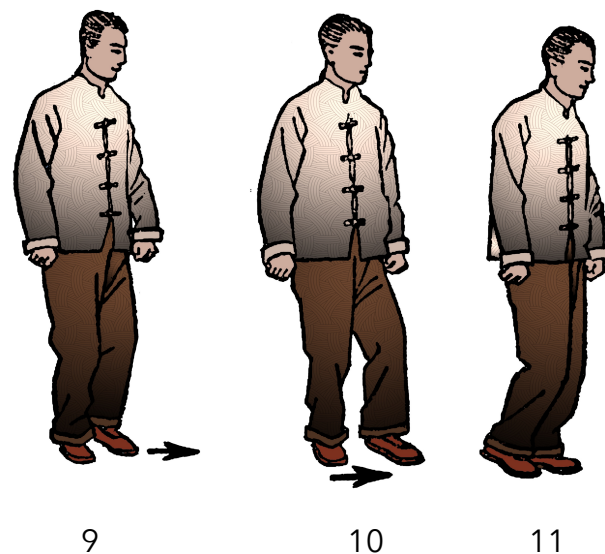
Continuing from the last motion, lead with the right shoulder, allowing the shoulders to lead motion of the arms, hips, elbows, knees, wrists and ankles, as you sway while spiraling slowly downward 3-5 times. "Swaying" here means rocking and shaking. (*Bear's swaying looks like that of the elephant. The elephant is rarely still when standing, as it is always gently rocking and swaying. It is the same with bear. The difference lies in that elephant's swaying is more obvious.*)

As you exhale, slowly move your left foot forward and to the left half a step, sinking the hips, knees slightly bent, utilizing the power from swaying.

Continue swaying 3-5 times.

As you inhale, bring your right foot together with left, simultaneously turning your body slightly to the right. (See Illustration 9-11.)

This is the left movement.



Following the left movement, step out and to the right, as you exhale, with the right leg, repeating (mirrored) the instructions for the left movement.

Put your right foot forward half a step while breathing out, follow the rest of left movement. This is right movement. Practice by repeating the left and right movements alternately.

### C. Bear Pushing

From the previous motion, open up your fists, separate and bend your fingers slightly, pressing downward like pupae (Make your fingers like silkworms, slowly bending and straightening like pupae. Mentally perform this action with your toes as well.)

Sink the shoulders and elbows, bend your arms and bow them slightly outward, press downward spirally 3-5 times. The internal power (内劲 Nèi Jīng) of Bear Pushing and amplitude are somewhat bigger than that of the previous exercise.

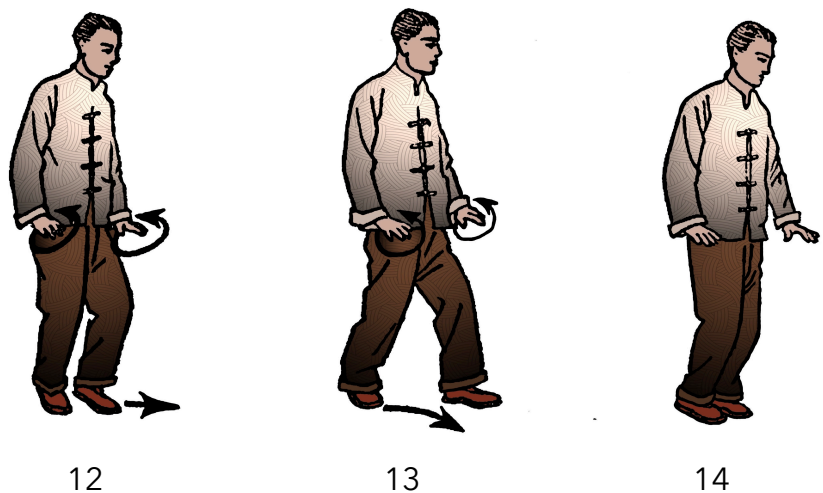
While breathing out, move your left foot forward and to the left half a step, knees slightly bent, hips sunk. Continue to press downward 3-5 times. While breathing in, bring the right foot to join the left, turning your body slightly to the right. (See Illustration 12-14.)

This is left movement.

Follow this with the right movement, advancing the right foot as you exhale,

mirroring the motions for the left movement. This is right

movement. Practice by alternating left and right movements repeatedly.



## D. Bear Leaning/Shoulder Strike

Following the preceding motion, move your hands outward in a circle, closing your hands into hollow fists, and follow the requirements of Bear Swaying to sway your arms slowly.

While breathing out, place your left foot forward and to the left half a step. Allowing the spiraling Jìng to lead your motion, circle your left arm from outside to inside, leaning with your outer arm forward and to the left (am - Tiger's Mouth<sup>1</sup> facing in), strength (勁 Jìng) in the upper part of the left wrist and shoulder/upper arm, as though you are leaning against a big tree. {ks - Kao Ching is a full body striking energy.}

Simultaneously, use the spiraling Jìng, curving your right arm back and outward, strength (勁 Jìng) in the right shoulder and upper part of ulnar side of the right wrist, as though one is dragging something behind.

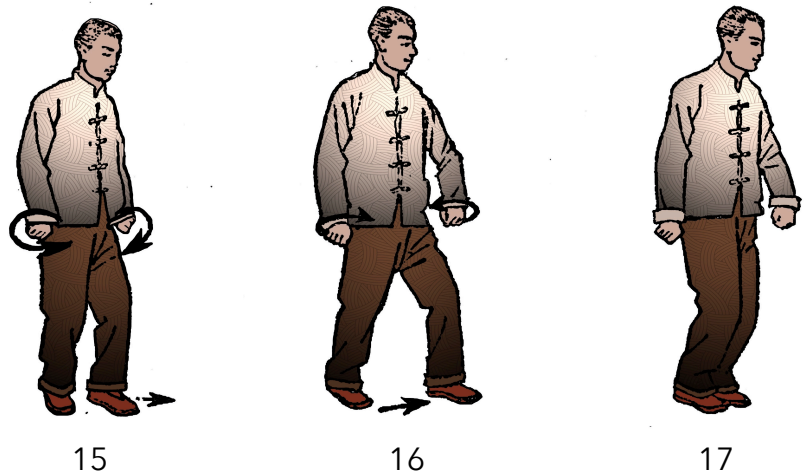
While breathing in, bring the right foot together with the left, turning your body slightly to the right. (See Illustration 15-17)

This is the left movement.

Follow this with the right movement, advancing the right foot as you exhale, mirroring the motions for the left movement.

This is the right movement.

Practice by alternating left and right movements repeatedly.



[<sup>1</sup> The Tiger's Mouth is often used in martial arts to refer to the area between the thumb and forefinger (thenar eminence). (It may help to imagine the hand as the head of a tiger.)]

## E. Bear Pressing

Following the previous motion, keep the hands in hollow fists. Following the requirements of Bear Swaying, slowly raise both arms, utilizing



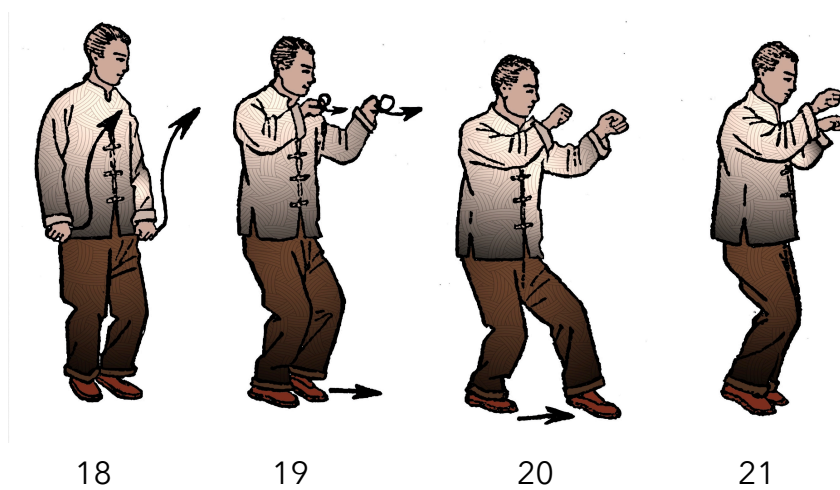
external rotational power, until both fists reach shoulder-height. Your fists should be about half a foot apart with your left fist in front of your right, the palm-side of your left fist facing forward and in, the palm-side of your right fist facing forward, and both wrists twisted slightly forward.

As you exhale, place your left foot forward and to the left half a step, utilizing spiraling Jìng to press forward with both arms, sinking the elbows and bowing them outward, drawing in the chest and belly, and issuing power (发劲 Fā Jìng) from the Dantian.

As you inhale, swaying your arms, bring the right foot together with the left foot, turning your body slightly right, as you draw your fists back, right fist in front, left fist behind, level with the shoulders. (See Illustration 18-21.) This is the left movement.

Following the left movement, step out with your right leg as you exhale, mirroring the instructions for the left movement. This is the right movement.

Practice by alternating left and right movements repeatedly.



Note: When turning the body to the right or left, nothing above the waist should move, the extent to which one turns being determined by individual flexibility and level of training. All turning of the body in the Five Animal Frolics should be done in this manner.