

Main Movements

1 - Calm the Shen and Regulate the Breath



In Chinese symbolism, a ball is often a pearl with great spiritual value.

Throughout the exercise:

- a. Straighten your knees slightly, your body rising as you raise your hands.
- b. ‘Sink’ your weight into your hips, as if you are preparing to sit, as your hands descend.
- c. Be mindful of your middle dantian; focus your attention on the space behind your navel.
- d. For mental imagery (internal practice): imagine that you are standing in water up to your shoulders.
- e. Calm your shen (mind/heart/spirit) and let your breath become peaceful.



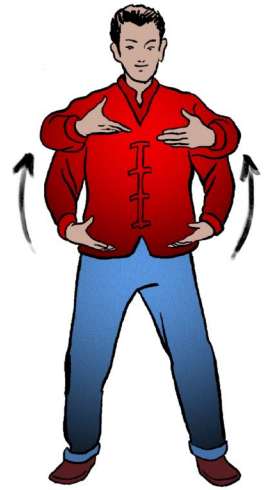
Mind calm like a tranquil mountain lake.



Breathe gently like a soft, soft breeze.

Part 1

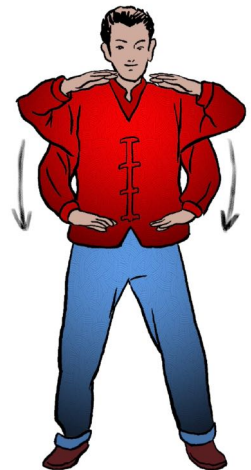
- a. Continuing from Opening Movement 3: both hands are positioned as if holding a ball just below the navel.
- b. Slowly lift both hands as though you are lifting the ball to the level of your heart. (M 1)
- c. As you are lifting the ball, imagine you can feel the water brushing against your skin.
- d. As you lift the ball, straighten your knees slightly, your body rising, as you lift your hands.
- e. Explore the mental imagery of qi being drawn up from the yongquan points on the soles of the feet as your hands ascend. Qi is drawn up through the middle dantian to the level of your heart (tanzhong point).
- f. Once your hands reach the level of your heart, relax your shoulders and let your elbows hang. Draw your shoulders toward each other, causing your arms to bow slightly outward. This is the posture "Holding the Ball at Breast Height."
- g. Your eyes should be level and your waist relaxed. Keep your mind in your middle dantian and your qi rooted in your feet.



M 1.1

Part 2

- a. As your hands reach the level of your shoulders, turn them to face palm-down, so that your arms form a horizontal oval shape at the level of your shoulders. This is called "Pressing the Ball at Shoulder Height." (M 1.2)
- b. Let your shoulders be relaxed and your elbows hang.
- c. As your hands descend, you should brace both forward and back. This means that your hands should press forward, as though pushing against



M 1.2

something with the outer edges of your palms, and your shoulders and back should press backward, as though pressing against a wall behind you. It should feel like your hands are connected to your shoulders and neck via rubber bands.

- d. Slowly press and lower both hands to the level of the lower abdomen, Ren mai point 4: guanyuan - The Gate of Origin.'
- e. Your hands press downward as if pressing the ball underwater. This is 'Pressing the Ball Beneath the Navel.'

Repeat the pattern of lifting the ball and pressing the ball down as many times as desired. This move is typically performed 5-8 times before beginning to train any of the fifteen movements, either in isolation or as part of a sequence. When ready, move onto the next movement.

Additional information to enhance practice:

This posture uses the following qi guiding patterns:

1. Breathe into the middle dantian
2. Guide qi up from your yongquan through your middle dantian to the tanzhong point (Part 1). Guide qi down from the tanzhong (Ren mai 17 - Sea of Qi) down to your middle dantian (Part 2).

The path of life cultivation (yangsheng) qigong is full of wonder.

