

Opening Movement 1 - Standing Meditation: Holding Barrels

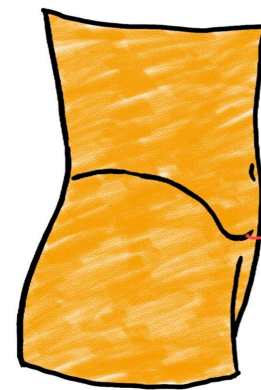


Qi circling the Dai Mai or Belt Vessel

By practicing Holding the Barrels your Dai Mai, one of your body's Extraordinary Vessels, will open and further develop.

The Dai Mai (or Belt Vessel) is one of the deeper channels of energy within the body. The Dai Mai can be thought of as one of the deep and vast reservoirs of energy. This vessel is the only channel that flows horizontally. It includes acupuncture points from the liver, kidney, and gallbladder meridians.

The Dai Mai functions to keep energy flowing effectively between the upper and lower parts of the body. Qigong and Taiji are two of the methods for improving the energy flow of this vessel. This vessel can benefit issues of the waist and abdomen as well as the lumbar region and lower back.



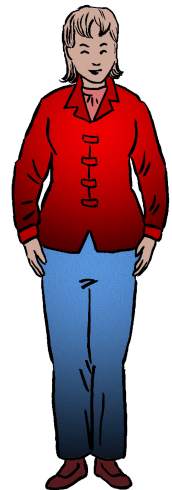
Belt Vessel (Dai Mai)

Starting Position

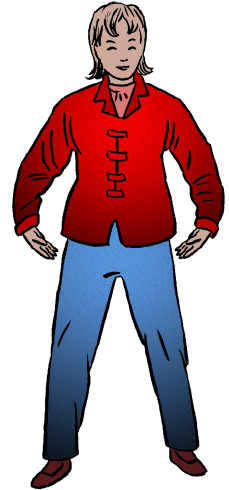
- Stand naturally. Your heels are together and toes apart. Your feet are spread about 70 degrees.

Main Position

- With your left foot, step out to the left keeping feet shoulders' width apart. Keep your knees bent and flex your hips as if you are getting ready to sit. Your feet should be parallel and your weight should be equally spread between both feet.
- Rotate your legs slightly inward and sink your weight back onto your hips. Tuck your tailbone slightly and flatten your lower back (lumbar spine).
- Straighten your spine by lifting the crown of your head as if your head is attached to the ceiling by an elastic cord. Your chest and abdomen can draw in slightly.



- Relax your shoulders and hollow your armpits. Round your arms and point your fingers at your waistline.
- Your head and gaze should be leveled and your eyes partially closed (rice eyes).
- Your teeth should be gently touching and your tongue leveled.
- Breathe naturally and keep your mind/attention on your Middle Dantian.
- Stand like a verdant pine with your feet planted like living roots. Stand resolutely and tower majestically. Be stable and unmoving.



Additional Information To Enhance Practice:

Practicing the Standing Meditation of Holding Barrels cultivates the following Taiji Energies:

- Peng or Ward Off. Peng Jing is outward expanding and moving energy.

This movement practices the following stance/direction of the 5 Stances:

- Ding or Settling at the Center

This posture is based on, or grounded in, these Xinqi patterns:

1. Breathe into your Middle Dantian.
2. Guide Qi from your Dantian, through your arms to your fingers, and into your belt vessel.

Ariel Maayan - TCM explanation:

The reason for the naming of the Dai Mai, or Belt Vessel, is easy to understand.

While many say that the true Dai Mai spiral-wraps the entire body, functioning as its horizontal energetic integration network, the acupuncture points associated with the Dai Mai wrap the hips much like a belt. While the Dai Mai itself may provide the horizontal integration network for the entire body, this is its central hub.

Clinically, the Dai Mai functions much like a belt, helping to hold up that which should not fall down. While its counterpart, the Chong Mai, the innermost of the eight Extraordinary Vessels, relates to Qi counterflowing upward, the Dai Mai relates to Qi counterflowing downward. That means that the Dai Mai is often used to hold things up and in, which can be useful in cases of diarrhea, prolapse, excessive menstruation, leukorrhea, urogenital discharge, etc. Energetically, it relates to the boundary between the self and the external world. An excess of Qi in the Dai Mai could manifest as excessive holding on and difficulty letting go, leading perhaps to a spare tire and, literally or figuratively, being full of one's own fecal matter. As the Chong Mai (penetrating vessel - sea of blood) is the core, the Dai Mai is the boundary of the body's Wei Qi fields (Wei Qi: protective Qi field).

As the Dai Mai connects all of the other channels, it is fitting that it shares the most points with the gallbladder channel. The gallbladder is an extraordinary organ, half yin and half yang, located in the center of the body. It is said to be the judge, upon which all other organs rely. Its channel seems to zigzag (or perhaps spiral-wrap, a view held by few) as though to stitch the front and back of the body together. Traveling along the sides of the body, the channel to which the gallbladder belongs traverses the physical edges of the self. Thus it is fitting that it is not only confluent with the Dai Mai, a channel representing this boundary of self, but that a point on the gallbladder channel actually bears the name "Dai Mai."