

## The Power of Endless Changing

### Why practice this Internal Art ?

Pa Kua Chang practiced either as a Martial Art or as a Health Form is quite unique in its health benefits to all systems of the body.

#### Summary of Benefits

The generalised effect of such *'Internal Arts'* as a *supportive method of Cardio-vascular exercise* is well-known. The techniques specific to Pa Kua Chang promote health in a unique, integrated form of exercise to all systems of the body:

- a) *'rooting and strengthening'* functions to protect, nourish, strengthen and preserve the deeper *'Constitutional Energies & Tissues'* of the body; through which health is maintained with the benefit of supporting vitality with ageing, i.e. Longevity.
- b) *'turning the waist'*, in which movement is directed from the waist whilst the pelvis is held stable or *'rooted'*, incurs that all the internal organs receive a stimulating massage to enhance optimal function.
- c) *'the twisting and turning movements of the limbs'*, especially with the identification & separation of the movements of the waist to the pelvis to the abdomen-torso, results in a torquing movement which stimulates circulation of blood & lymph flow to the limbs themselves, but more importantly the length of the vertebra of the back as well as the CNS, PNS and the connection between the two.

Cervical vertebrae are *'massaged'* in a similar fashion through the upward twisting movements of the arms, initiated from the scapula. This enhances the brain, all the senses and those glands central to the hormonal system through the stimulation of the blood circulation via the Circle of Willis.

- d) *'harmonising the Body through the Mind via the Breath'*. Conscious breathing, with intention directing movement increases awareness and sensitivity to body, self and environment. This process within the context of continued practice brings an integration of these different aspects of the self and a deepening relaxation into the NS

The attentive awareness of gentle, slowly performed bodily movement releases tensions trapped within the fascia (PTSD). The tissue which is a connective unifier of all bodily organ systems, as both storage of experiences and pathway to healing through release both locally and distally.

- e) *'the principle of energy movement or energy return'*, as the correct approach to exercise, *'returns energy into the body during the period of the exercise'*. In this manner bodily energy is generated and the body regenerated in itself during the period of the training of the form; without the need for recovery or external supplementation.

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## Benefits of the Practice of Pa Kua Chang as an exercise for Health

**Stimulation of the cardio-vascular system** is a primary benefit of the practice; a 20 minute training session being equivalent to an hour jogging style running; similar to a 20 minute [T'ai Chi Ch'uan session](#).

The comparative benefits are even more notable in considering the lack of jarring to the whole body, especially that to knees, hips and even ankles of jogging type exercises to the supportive toning effects of the subtle, rhythmic circular movements in sync with the capability of one's own body which relax, de-stress and thus enable re-invigorate of blood circulation.

### The emphasis of the movements specific to the form support health in a variety of ways:

✦ **'rooting & strengthening'** through the leg-work of slow paced circular steps, bending & stretching, low bending → crouching (always according to your capability ..... Ok to take some months to get there).

The 'root' is the 'Kidney Qi' or Kidney Energy` which implies the strength of the lower part of the torso, the legs & feet and *including all of the constitutional tissues*. That is, bones & marrow, nervous system & brain plus neuro-transmitters, hormonal glands and secretions.

These are the tissues and functions of the deep storage and maintenance of the body. Health is created when *'the nourishment and energies (function) of these are in abundance*, which applies particularly to older age and to the possibility of 'Longevity' or well-being and vitality body and mind with ageing.

The physical activity of the *'rooting and strengthening'*, with the particular emphasis over opening the *'Gua'* - the area of the pelvis, pelvic floor & inguinal areas - in itself directs circulation to all tissues in the lower body; as well as the intentionality of the mind which directs *'energy and surplus energies to be collected in the Kidney Qi'* (the visceral organs being seen as reservoirs and deep reserves).

Furthermore, at a later stage specific breathing of a physical nature and then more alchemical (or energetic) nature are used to *'direct, build, store, consolidate, refine and preserve the energies of the Kidneys'* (which implies all of the constitutional tissues).

✦ **'turning the waist'**. The circular movements of twisting the body and turning the arms involve the 'separation in movement'

- of the pelvis – which remains stable and firm as the root
- the abdomen and upper body – which move as a consequence and in sync with the waist
- and the waist itself – which is the actual part which moves.

The effect of this, with the rather strong turning and twisting of the Pa Kua movements and the identification and separation of movement of those three body parts is **to massage all of the internal organs**.

**Massage** in this case implies, just as one would massage or be massage on an external skeletal muscle, a stimulation and invigoration of the circulation of the blood and lymph supply to all of the internal organs. Thereby, increasing their general and collective functions, stimulating the release of toxins and gradually bringing each of their specific functions to an optimal level.

**Each time your practice the form**, once learnt, you are giving yourself a health tonic... free internal organ massage through twisting and turning.

**At the same time**, *'the point of the Gate of Destiny is stimulated'*. Situated between the Spinal Process of the lower Back (L3 & L2), this is a vital area from which one 'descends from Heaven to make one's destiny'. That is the creativity, ideas, visions that one has for one's life are manifested into action ... by you taking action ... going forward with movement into your life.

### ✚ ***'stimulating the flow of Qi in the meridians'* \***

**Part 1** The action of the arms and legs, once again that strong twisting and turning, which is often counter-opposite to the movement of those three body parts (pelvis, waist, abdomen/torso) creates a subtle, but definite 'torque-like' movement to the spine.

The consequence is, obviously, not only a 'massaging' of the whole length of the vertebrae of the spinal cord; which will give health to the whole of that physical parts of pelvis, back, shoulders, neck.

But also, a massaging of all the 'efferent and afferent nerves' coming out of the Central Nervous System (CNS) into the body as the Peripheral Nervous System (PNS). That is the communication of impulses, the messages of 'motor or movement and sensory or sensation', back and forth to the brain and all parts of the body – hormonal glands, senses, organs, muscles, skin and so forth.

Obviously, when these have been stimulated one again supports the body towards health and then later towards optimal health; as well as preventing serious diseases of the nervous system.

**Part 2** The movement of the arms and legs, in themselves, creation enormous stimulation to localised blood and lymph flow in both soft and harder tissues, including to the surface of the limbs and to all the smaller peripheral vessels.

In particular, once again, the specific gentle, but strong and defined twisting, turning and torquing is a unique manner through which to exercise muscles of all 4 limbs and create nerve stimulation. It is almost unparalleled in its optimal effectiveness in achieving this; much superior to both athletic and gym-weight type training, even such as cross-fit.

**Part 3** The turning-rotation movements of the arms, initiated through the shoulders & extended upwards together with the counter-turning of the torso specifically stimulates the blood circulation into the brain and enhances all of the senses.

This gentle rotation-massage of the cervical vertebrae again stimulates the movement of impulses of CNS → PNS, releases blocked muscular tensions locally and allows a more free flow of arterial blood circulation into the Circle of Willis.

Heightened functioning of the brain processes obviously leads to an optimal functioning of all the senses; as well as that of all the hormonal processes in the body, through more effective nourishment of all fluids to Pituitary and Pineal Glands, the central controllers of the whole hormone system.

\* In Chinese Medicine, the Qi in the meridians can be understood, on a bio-physical level, as the electromagnetic flow of the Nervous system. So, in a simplistic model, meridians are equivalent to the nerves of both the CNS and PNS; Qi is equivalent to nerve flow and impulses.

✦ **Harmonising the Body through the Mind via the Breath;** *or the act of conscious breathing which initiates the intention to the direction of movement!*

This creates a heightened awareness of bodily movement, a nuanced sensitivity to self and a sense of presence of oneself with the environment coupled together with a very conscious, determined control of it. Through the process of repeated practice this will gradually give a deepened sense of relaxation, together with a feeling of integration and then harmony of the whole Nervous System of the body.

This is very much created by the releasing of both tensions and micro-tensions, accumulated through many years of ordinary daily life, from [the fascia](#). This is the [connective tissue](#), mainly collagen, which *encloses, separates, attaches and stabilizes* all the organ systems of the body, that is skin, muscles – smooth & striated (internal and external-skeletal) – and all the internal organs.

By being a continuous band or banding of all bodily systems, it can be seen to form a unified whole throughout the entirety of the body. One which both carries the memories of all experiences of one's life – and in such effects bodily function both local and distal; and which can become the pathway to the releasing of tension-memories (in modern memory called PTSD) towards healing of not only muscular-skeletal issues but also deeper disturbances of health related to organ, senses and brain function.

✦ ***‘the principle of energy movement or energy return’*** . *‘Through rooting, the legs generate power, the waist manifests it; merging into the hands, it is returned again from the fingertips. In this manner energy is returned’* .

This principle or approach to movement during exercise is found within all of the Internal Martial Arts; though very specific in its effectiveness in the practice of Pa Ka Chang. This differs from other usual forms of exercise which are based on the exertion of energy, needing rest in order for the body to recover itself.

Correct practice of the form generates energy which , *within the practice itself, ‘returns energy into the body during the period of the exercise’* . In that manner, one generates bodily energy and then regenerates the body, within itself, through a session of the form without the need for resting or recovery time, nor seeking external nourishment or extra supplements to build or rebuild.

The movement; the breathing; the creation, gathering and storing of vital energy, of Chi, are both nourishment and supplementation enough for the regeneration of the body.

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