

# Why is Wuji So Important for Improving Health?

by Gaofei Yan and Jude Smallwood

I - In Chinese philosophy, Wuji means absolute quiet, void of any movement, thought or activity, complete nothingness? Wuji is the quiet before the very beginning or after the very end. Tai chi comes from Wuji and returns to Wuji and is represented by the center circle within the large circle of the Tai Chi symbol.



The Wuji is in the center part of the circle. 1

The exercise discussed in this article is based on this philosophy.

II - The Wuji exercise immediately reduces tension, even deep unconscious body tension which usually goes undetected. Often we are unaware of these "background" tensions but by the time we discover their unhealthy effect on us, it is too late. By then, they have contributed to minor discomforts like headaches, indigestion, high blood pressure and other ailments common in our high stress society. When these deep tensions continue unchecked, eventually they can result in serious illness, disease or injury.

Chinese Medicine teaches that tension (stress) will block the continuous smooth flow of chi. Because chi is the "leader of the blood, poor chi circulation will negatively influence the blood circulation causing the body to grow improperly. Without the nourishment provided by a strong chi/blood movement, our body becomes "dry" and stiff, unable to optimize organic performance. Good chi and blood flow enable the body's systems to be "fluid" and soft in order to be successfully functional. Without good chi/blood circulation the total body, its organs, and its systems (nervous, circulatory, digestive, etc.), falls out of natural harmony resulting in sickness, weakness, systemic breakdowns, stress related illnesses and disorders. Chi flow stimulates blood flow which is vital for a good interchange of the internal energy necessary for good health.

When you develop the ability to relax completely and go into a deep "quiet," in time, you will reduce and eventually reverse the damage produced by pressure and emotional or physical strain. Initially it may appear that nothing has changed outwardly but, in fact, much has changed internally. After practicing Wuji, many people discover that their face and hands become warm and red, and the flesh (as in the hands) appears more "puffy" and softer to the touch than usual. These traits are evidence of good "chi" circulation.

III - Today, we are more aware of how unhealthy emotions like anger, worry, fear, sadness and insecurity affect our physical well-being. Modern medicine emphasizes that stress and tension are the largest contributing factors for the alarming increase in heart disease, nervous disorders, weakness, mental failure, and general health breakdowns. The greatest killer in this country is stress and related illnesses or conditions.

According to the theory of Chinese Medicine, each emotion is directly related to a specific bodily function or organ, and that "quietness" or harmony helps the kidneys to heighten the hormonal system. It considers the kidney the most important organ of the body and directly connected to the hormone system. When

the mind is quiet and relaxed, the kidneys become stronger and more stable, and stimulate hormone production. Due to this increased hormonal surge, more energy/chi is manufactured. Then all bodily systems and organic material like bones, organs and skin in their turn feast on the chi and blood (refer to figure 3). If the kidney is denied quiet and stillness, energy decreases producing ill side effects like loss of strength. As a result, each organ and system, like the "domino effect" is adversely affected one after the other.

The "Domino Effect" of Stress On Our Health

Step 1 - Mind is Out of Harmony

Step 2 - Kidneys become Weak

Step 3 - Hormone Production Decreases

Step 4 - Less Energy/Chi Manufactured

Step 5 - The Entire Organic Body receives insufficient Nourishment from Chi and Blood

The Best Natural Way to Improve Health

Step 1 - Mind is Quiet and in Harmony

Step 2 - Kidneys become Stronger

Step 3 - Hormone Production Increases

Step 4 - More Energy/Chi is Manufactured

Step 5 - The Entire Organic Body Feasts on the Chi and the Blood

Step 6 - We become stronger from the inside to the outside

Popular and professional opinions unanimously agree that a nutritious diet, proper exercise, fresh air and correct sleeping habits are necessary to preserve good health. Physical exercises like body building, aerobics and yoga can draw chi to specific areas and also increase circulation. However, this represents a "short term" solution for long term health. This concept is better explained by the analogy of the ordinary battery.

When the battery's circuit is properly connected and the voltage is increased, the tester bulb brightens. However, if the battery is not recharged or changed to a stronger one (represented by steps 1 through 4 from Figure 3), the bulb stays lit for a shorter period of time because the battery will be drained of power more quickly. Likewise, you can generate chi with exercise but if you do not include these steps, you are attempting to "light the bulb" without improving their battery. Based on this theory even people who make absolutely no effort to maintain a long healthy life and are "just easy going" can actually out live the proverbial health fanatic. This is because the efforts of these health conscious people start after step five (5) and although they will burn their bulb brighter, it will burn for a shorter time with the same battery. An easy going person will burn his bulb at a consistently lower voltage for a longer period with the same battery (longer life.)

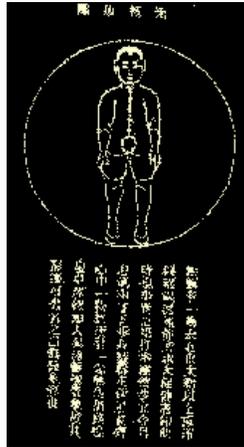
Everyday we witness many situations which define the critical role harmony

plays in maintaining good health. We often hear of a person, who, in spite of making all the right choices to maintain good health, unexpectedly suffers a severe injury or crippling disease, or even dies prematurely. And yet, we observe the opposite where people survive to an old age even though they abused their body or had physical habits which would normally guarantee an early disease or even death. But somehow they live a long time with little or no suffering despite their poor living. Why? It is simple. Quite often the latter, for one reason or another, was able to give minimal attention to their stress and emotional challenges. Therefore, without realizing it, they were able to reduce or eliminate their worry and anxiety tremendously benefiting mental and physical health. People who can relax do not "empower" their daily tensions and are better able to nourish their "internal" body and physically resist the potential bad effects from such negative pressure. They automatically enjoy better health.

An old Chinese saying, "kind people have a long life", has very sound physiological reasoning. By understanding the important role peace and quiet have on our health, we can see why people in harmony (kind people) have a long life. They obviously and perhaps unknowingly, took good care of their peace of mind and were able to "let go" of internal obstructions. They experienced "quiet."

IV - Wuji really is a simple exercise and you just have to follow the steps listed.

1. Stand naturally with the feet placed apart to the width of the shoulders. Place your hands to your side with the palms facing inwardly.
2. Close your eyes and smile a little. The tongue should naturally touch the roof of the mouth. Make certain that your body is straight with minimal or no muscle tension.
3. Imagine taking a shower inside your body, meaning that warm water at the top of the head would slowly trickle down while cleansing the whole body and exit from the bottom of the feet. Repeat this mental exercise three times.
4. Gently focus your mind on the lower abdomen (Dan tian) but do not force the attention. Visualize a calm, peaceful place like the middle of the ocean, top of a mountain or deep in the forest. Keep your focus there as long as you can.
5. Finish with the Wuji closing exercise.
6. Walk around for one or two minutes.



This exercise is a wonderful exercise! The goal is reach a state of nothingness, a calmness encountered only when you completely relax and release all tension and internal stress. The correct Wuji standing posture can be learned easily and with minimal daily exercise, it will soon benefit you mentally and physically. Good Wuji does not require a strict scheduling or special timing. You can start with three or five minutes at a time and do it as often as you can gradually increasing your practice time at your own pace. There is no rush to excel; the main objective is the quietude.

Successful meditation can help you gain tranquility but some styles of meditation do not really produce serenity as intended. They can consist of a series of complicated movements, imagination activity, visualization exercises, breath control techniques, and various other aversions. Most people need to relax deeply but are unable to and so they tend to pursue these meditations and exercises to help them. However, it is possible to be misled by technique which defeat the main purpose which is the attainment of peace and quiet. In addition, the extra expense and rescheduling might even contribute to their stress load.

V - Chinese Medicine has taught for thousands of years that, for all intents and purposes, proper exercise and nutrition are good but the most significant factor in good health is to first have peace and quiet, internal harmony. This is the key point emphasized by Chen Xin, 16th generation Chen Family in his great works, Illustration of Chen Style Tai chi;

The mind is the director and control center of the body; the kidney is the source of life (the building and rejuvenating energy of the body.) We must clear our mind of all desires and distractions in order to build, protect and maintain a well developed foundation. When our foundation or root (mind and kidney is stable and strong, our body is also stable and strong like a well-rooted tree which produces flourishing leaves and healthy limbs. With a strong foundation, our body will perform well at anything we choose. This is the most important principal

No matter how many theories and concepts are practiced, there is none more important than clearing our minds of all distractions in order to build a good foundation. A good foundation increases Original Chi and is the source of our body's life force. As your body becomes stronger, your practice will develop much better than someone who doesn't understand and apply this primary principal.

When your mind is calm, you will experience conscious and unconscious changes. As you let go, you release muscle tension and distractions like pain and mental "chatter."

You then begin to enjoy the benefits of Wuji. Try it. See how deep into this quiet state you can go and what sensations you can experience.

For your information...

- In the Shaolin Temple, the very first exercises given to beginners are "sitting quietly," and the reading and memorizing some of Buddha's Books. Some people think that this was a test of patience but that's just not true. These exercises are very important! Without cleansing the mind, there is no peace and quiet and, later on, when practicing, the martial artist can actually get hurt. Referring back to the lesson demonstrated by the battery circuit comparison, you can understand how valuable "sitting quietly" is in the overall picture.

- Today the term Zen (Chan) is very well known and the Chan branch of Buddhism originated in the Shaolin Temple more than 1300 years ago. Do you know that the meaning of Can is "Thinking quietly?" It should now become quite clear to you why the Shaolin martial arts are so good.

- Professor Chen Men Ch'ing was not only a good Tai Chi Master, but also a very good doctor of Chinese Medicine who specializes in lung diseases. Because he cured the wife of Grandmaster Yang Cheng Fu of lung disease, he was able to learn Tai Chi from him. In his book Cheng Tzu's Thirteen Treatises on Tai Chi Chuan, there is one treatise which is totally dedicated to the lungs, where he discusses the importance of the kidneys: "Kidney energy deficiency is the cause of sixty to seventy percent of the cases of tuberculosis... It is also said that the lungs are like the branches of a tree and the kidneys are like the trunk. When the trunk decays, the leaves dry first and fall. The lungs are the weakest organ and will no doubt become diseased before the kidneys. The sinking of the chi to the dan tien in Tai Chi Chuan is the function of the fire under water as in the hexagram "After completion." This is the only way to strengthen the kidneys. If the kidney chi is strong the lung chi will recover. This is a special result of Tai Chi chuan, and no one can dispute it."