



*Tai chi combines movement, balance and breathing.*

Tai Chi exercises the cardiovascular system. A 30-minute Tai Chi workout would be equivalent to a three-hour game of golf. Joints are loosened and co-ordination improved. At first, you will need lessons with a teacher, after which you can spend 10 minutes each day in your own home or garden, practising this enjoyable form of activating your body's energy levels.

### Qi Gong

Pronounced Chi Kung, this Chinese exercise is a combination of breathing, meditation and very slow and controlled movements.

How does Qi Gong differ from Tai Chi? They both act by increasing your Qi or inner energy levels, but Qi Gong incorporates much less movement and more mental concentration. It can be described as 'moving meditation'. The movements are very slow and gentle, and you need to be calm and centred while performing them. Scientific studies recording electro-encephalogram (EEG) brain waves of subjects practising Qi Gong show that there is a shift towards theta brain waves, which are associated with deep meditation, rather than the beta waves usually associated with day-to-day living.



*Qi Gong promotes mental relaxation and clarity.*

Your Qi Gong teacher will probably have experience in Tai Chi as well. Qi Gong movements are simple and you will soon be able to practise them at home. Try to do them for 15 minutes every day. You will not experience immediate results, but after one or two months you will experience an increase in energy, mental clarity and emotional wellbeing.

### Chinese balls

These balls are used to improve arm circulation and hand co-ordination. They also activate acupuncture points on the palms of the hands, thus activating your inner energy. They are often used by middle-aged and elderly Chinese people as a part of their overall preventive health regime.

Hold two matching balls, about 4cm (1½ in) in diameter, in one hand. Rotate the balls slowly in one direction, then change to the opposite direction. If you do not have Chinese balls, you can use chestnuts or even golf balls.

