

Practice 2.

FOCUS AT YOUR CENTER

Create a 'Ba Gua' around your navel,
to concentrate your Qi/Energy,
and store it there.

The Purpose:

This is a practice to increase the general volume of your energy, to 'ground' you, to 'check-in' with yourself, and to keep you 'centered' by bringing energy to your actual physical center. It quiets your mind and allows you to concentrate and focus your energy.

You can do it just for its own sake, or you can do it as a beginning and ending for other practices.

Overview and Explanation:

You are going to create a Ba Gua, which translates as 'The Eight Diagrams'. This is a pattern of three concentric, eight-sided shapes/octagons, one inside the other, which you create around your navel. To learn how to create this pattern, and train your mind, you begin by first using a finger to draw imaginary lines on your abdomen around your navel. Then, after some practice and experience, you can create it by just using your mind alone.

To begin this practice, first bring your energy into your navel - your center. This is where the external energy first entered into you, through the umbilical cord. Your navel is 'home-base', and the safest place in your system.

A note about measurements

As this document and these instructions are being written in American English, the standard unit of measurement is in Inches. However, as the document will be available globally via the Internet, the units are also presented as Centimeters. Both measurements are given, but as they are not exact equivalents all of these lengths and dimensions are approximate. You may be in a

country where neither of these measurement standards apply, so use your own judgement for what works best for you.

Creating A Ba Gua

A Ba Gua is three concentric 8-sided shapes/octagons (see preceding diagram). In the following practice you will begin by drawing the outer one, which is approximately 3 inches/7.5 cm wide, from the navel to its outside edge, and then a 2 inch/5 cm wide one inside that, then a 1 inch/2.5 cm wide one inside that, so that you end up with this pattern around your navel.

You will then spiral Qi/Energy out from the center to the edge of your abdomen, then reverse it to spiral back in to your navel again.

Do this exercise with half-closed eyes - half outward-focused looking at and watching what you are doing, and half inward-focused feeling the sensation that you are experiencing. Later, when you are familiar with the procedure, do it with your eyes fully closed so that you can concentrate on the sensation and experience. In this way, you will educate and train your mind about the experience and feeling, and learn how to control and direct your energy with your mind alone.

If you want to you can print out or copy the picture of the Ba Gua in this section and hold the center over your navel, as a guide. It should be the correct size - if it is not then expand or shrink it accordingly when you photocopy it.

Preparation:

Smile at Yourself.

THE PRACTICE:

Sit on the edge of a chair in an upright posture, knees parallel, shoulder-width apart and bent at right angles, feet flat on the floor.

Place your left palm in your lap facing upwards, and place your right palm facing down on top of it, and let your clasped hands rest gently in front of you. This seals in your Qi. This exercise can also be done lying down, in which case interlace your fingers over your chest, or let them lie by your sides with your palms lightly closed and facing up.

Close your eyes and visualize a blue cloudless sky. Clear your mind of outside thoughts. Breathe deeply. Be aware of your breathing in and out, and let it slow down.

Put your attention into your navel and, using your mind, begin to draw external energy into it. Continue until it feels warm, or until you feel some other noticeable sensation there, such as fullness or expansion.

You are going to create a Ba Gua around your navel. This is most important because it acts as a net or web to gather and collect your energy at your center.

Looking down at your navel, imagine it is a clock-face, with the navel as the center - 12 o'clock at the top, 3 o'clock to your left-hand side, 6 o'clock at the bottom, and 9 o'clock on your right-hand side.

Place a finger on your abdomen 3 inches/7.5 cm above your navel at 12 o'clock.

Imagine you are drawing with a soft, thick, felt-tip pen of your favourite color. Think of this as your mind-pen.

All of the eight lines on this octagon are about 2.5 inches/6 cm long. To get to the starting position of this top line, from 12 o'clock come back to your right about 1.25 inches/3 cm.

Line 1. With the tip of your finger go from right to left and draw a horizontal line across the top of your abdomen.

Line 2. Moving in a clockwise direction draw another line diagonally downwards.

Line 3. Next, draw a line vertically down, from top to bottom, on the left side, at the 3 o'clock position.

Line 4. Then, angle diagonally inward and down.

Line 5. Next, draw a line horizontally across the bottom of your abdomen from your left to right at the six o'clock position.

Line 6. Then, angle diagonally up towards the right.

Line 7. Draw vertically up, from bottom to top, at the 9 o'clock position.

Line 8. Finally, angle diagonally inwards and upwards, to join the right side starting position of the original horizontal line across the top.

You have now completed the first and outer-most octagon of the Ba Gua.

Repeat the above sequence, only this time just 2 inches/5 cm from the navel. Each line is approximately 1.75/4 cm inch long.

Repeat the above sequence, but this time only 1 inch/2.5 cm from the navel. Each line is approximately 0.75 inch/2cm long.

You have now created a Ba Gua - three concentric octagons - around your navel. See and feel it clearly. Hold it there with your mind.

Now do the sequence again, but this time just with your mind without using your fingers. Again draw three concentric octagons 3 inch/7.5 cm, 2 inch/5 cm and 1 inch/2.5 cm from your navel.

Close your eyes and concentrate. Repeat this over and over until you can feel and sense it clearly. In this way you will begin to educate and train your mind alone to draw the Ba Gua, and thereby train your mind to direct and control your Qi/Energy.

Repeat this until you can do it at will. If you lose the sense of it, then go back to doing it with your finger. For a more direct experience try doing it directly on your skin, not through clothing. Repeat it until you "get it". By doing this procedure you form a 'net' or 'web' around your navel, which can collect energy there.

Ba Guas are wonderful energy collection patterns. Once you have learned how to create them easily you can also use them at any other points - such as the center of your palms, the top of your head, the soles of your feet - to concentrate your energy there.

Spiraling

Next you will learn to activate and 'Open' your energy - in order to turn it 'ON'. Then how to 'Close' it - to turn it 'OFF'.

Using the tip of a finger, start in the center of your navel keeping your finger flat on your skin, and begin to spiral outwards to the sides, on the surface of your skin, in ever-increasing and expanding spirals. However, most importantly, men and woman go in opposite directions because of the opposite polarity of male and female energy - which is one of the primary differences between the sexes.

To 'Open' the navel and turn your energy 'On', you spiral out in one direction 9 times and then back in, in the opposite direction, 6 times.

Again, see your abdomen as a clockface with your navel as the center, as if you were looking from the outside towards yourself.

- 12 o'clock is at the top,
- 3 is on the left side
- 6 is at the bottom and
- 9 is on the right side.

Moving to the left is clockwise.

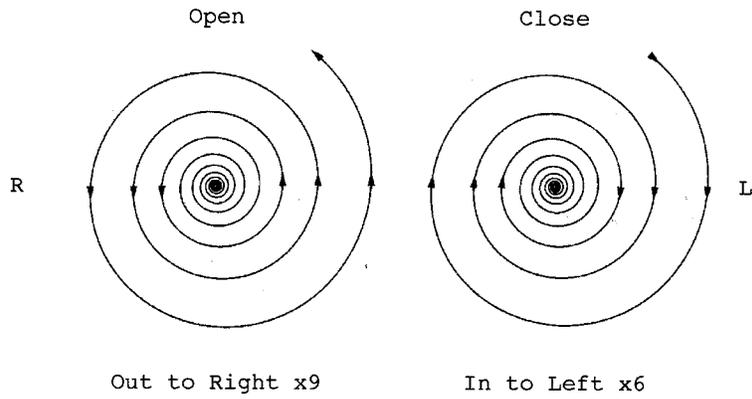
Moving to the right is counter-clockwise.

To turn your Ba Gua 'On' you are going to spiral out from the navel, and back into it.

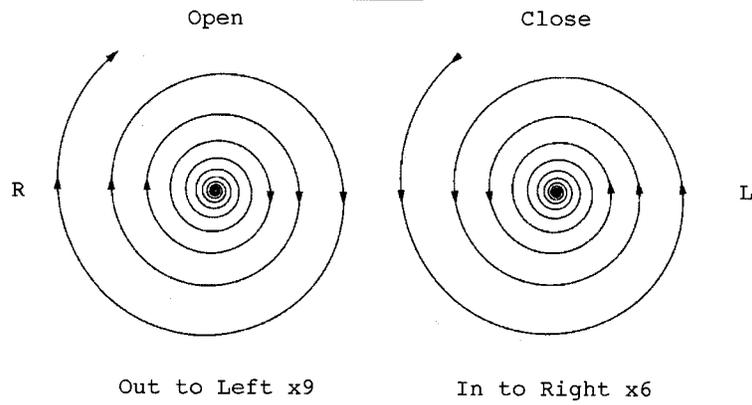
- Men spiral out to the right/counter-clockwise, from 12 o'clock to 9 to 6 to 3 and back to 12, and reverse back in to the left/clockwise

- Women spiral out to the left/clockwise, from 12 o'clock to 3 to 6 to 9 back to 12 again, and reverse back in to the right/counter-clockwise.

MEN



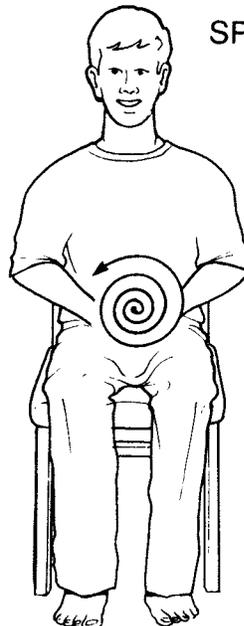
WOMEN



**DRAWING
WITH THE
FINGER**



**SPIRALLING
AT THE
NAVEL**



Do 9 spirals out. Move from the center of the navel all the way out, so that the bottom edge of the spiral touches the top of the pubic bone, which is at the 6 o'clock position, and the spiral finally comes to rest at the base of the sternum/breastbone at the 12 o'clock position.

Then reverse the direction for 6 spirals in to end at the navel.

Special note - Turning Your Ba Gua Energy On and Off.

Spiraling out, then back in, as described above, opens the energy center and turns it 'ON'.

To close the energy center down and turn it 'OFF' requires doing this in the opposite direction - men opening out to the left then reversing in to the right, and women opening out to the right, then reversing in to the left.

It is most important to close the energy center down after you have finished this practice, or any other of the following practices. This is how you end a Qigong practice session, in order to keep your energy safe and stable.

Therefore, after you have opened the Ba Gua energy center by spiraling out and back in, you must reverse the direction and go out and back in again, in order to safely bring your energy back to your center. Otherwise, it will remain opened up and may be uncontrolled, and can cause detrimental effects.

Again. To close down, bring the Qi back into the navel and turn the system OFF - do the following:

Men spiral out to the left/clockwise 9 times, and back in to the right/counter-clockwise 6 times.

Women spiral out to the right/counter-clockwise 9 times, and back in to the left/clockwise 6 times.

To finally seal it, put the center of one palm over your navel, with the center of the other palm on top of it. Left hand first for men. Right hand first for women. Concentrate your mind into the navel point, and imagine that you are breathing into it.

While doing this, maintain the visual image of the Ba Gua.

Spiraling With Just Your Mind

Once you have done this with your finger, which educates your mind about your body, do this with your mind alone, so that now your mind leads your Qi.

In this way, you gain mental control of your energy and can direct it with your mind as you need to.

This whole procedure brings the energy into your navel, which is the primary center and storehouse/holding-place for your energy. This is where the pre-natal Qi first entered into you, as an embryo in the womb. It is Home-Base. If you simply concentrate your energy there it will be safe and stable. The navel center feeds into the energy center in the lower abdomen called 'The Sea of Qi' / The Lower Tan Tien.

Advanced Ba Gua Practice

To take this procedure further, and concentrate your energy even more strongly, condense your outermost Ba Gua into a 1.5 inch/4 cm diameter, then 1 inch/2.5 cm inside that, then finally 0.5 inch/1.25cm inside that.

To develop even more concentration and power, spiral out 36 times and in 24 times.

It may be difficult at first to maintain concentration for this larger number of spirals. To make this easier, and to train your mind how to do it, break it down into thirds - go out 12 then 12 then 12, and back in 8 then 8 then 8. After some experience and practice it will become easy to do the whole sequence with your mind, and well worth the effort.

To gather more energy into you through your Ba Gua, use your mind to draw external Qi - from the sunlight, grass, trees and flowers, moon, stars, heavens, cosmos... into yourself.

By gaining control over your Ba Gua you will also gain control over your whole energy, and be able to bring it into your actual physical center - your navel. You will feel calm, grounded, alert and relaxed.

Once you have mastered the ability to do this procedure with just your mind, you can use it to check-in with yourself. If it is difficult to do because your energy feels too wild and out of control, or because it is too sluggish and won't move easily, that is feedback to yourself about how your general energy is doing. By concentrating and establishing control over the Ba Gua you establish control of your whole energy system.

You can also use this to build-up your energy and increase its volume.

Use it whenever you need to. Use it before going to sleep. Use it everyday. Use it whenever you are feeling 'unbalanced' or 'ungrounded' to get you back into your Center. Put it on automatic and have it happen all the time, by itself.

Forming and activating the Ba Gua around your navel is one of the most important and primary techniques that you can use to control, increase and re-charge your own energy.

Try it and see for yourself.

To Continue:

The Ba Gua can be the basis for continuing to a variety of the following practices.

It is a fundamental requirement to gather your energy in your center at the beginning and ending of every practice, to keep your Qi/Energy stable and safe.

Always end any practice with closing and sealing the Ba Gua.