

# 6th Principle - Sinking Energy



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## September Principle Qigong Focus: Sinking Energy

This is the sixth Qigong Principle in our year long, exploration of self through each of 8 Qigong Principles. We will share perspective on all three layers, physical, mental and emotional. The level at which you participate is always up to you. Awareness, empowers change.

### Qigong Principle 6 - Sinking Energy

Developing the ability to identify and release physical, mental and emotional tension through applied understanding of the previous Qigong Principles.

**Physical Level Goal:** Recognize how Sinking Energy helps you identify then release unnecessary physical tension.

Our first five Principles help us to achieve a structural integrity which in turn allows us to release muscles that are unnecessary for proper alignment or movement. Sinking Energy teaches us to explore inefficiencies and make the necessary adjustments, thus optimizing muscle use. There are many factors which influence the level of physical tension we carry at any moment. For example, think about the level of tension which builds up in your body when you are walking on ice, versus just walking. Why would this matter? Tension causes fatigue, increases pain levels and decreases effective blood flow throughout the body. Learning to release unnecessary muscles reduces pain levels and, by working with the proper muscles, increases strength, endurance and circulation.

**Mental Level Goal:** Recognize how Sinking Energy helps you identify then release unnecessary mental tension.

There are mental influences all around us. Some are positive, others negative. Where do you choose to focus your attention. Each of us, through our life experiences, hold onto thoughts, ideas, perceptions, judgements and biases which, over time, become habit more than fact. These become our filters through which we perceive the world around us. Some filters serve us well, others hold us back or cause us deep pain. Working with Sinking Energy invites you to observe your thought patterns objectively and determine which ones no longer serve you. The question: "Is this mine?" is a very useful tool in this process. Think about how unmet expectations build frustration in your daily life. How many of those expectations are not necessary or even useful? Once recognized, can you choose to let them go?

**Emotional Level Goal:** Recognize how Sinking Energy helps you identify then release unnecessary emotional tension.

Some research has shown that the life expectancy of an emotional response is about 90 seconds. 90 Seconds?! Then what is happening the other hours, days, weeks, even years that we feel an emotion, such as anger, so strongly? Why do some emotions seem to stay alive for so long? Our 8 base level emotions are simple, honest and clear. They are anger, fear, sorrow, disgust, gratitude, trust, joy and desire. These appear to us in their purest state when we are babies and, through recent research, it appears that these 8 are also the easiest for us to identify in adults. It is believed that we, as humans, are the only creature which mentally hold on to emotional patterns intentionally. Here is an example: Someone has been very disrespectful to me, causing me to feel angry. They seem oblivious to the fact that I feel disrespected, which only fuels a deeper level of anger in me. My belief is ~ "I deserve respect and I **expect** people to show me respect". I let them know I am angry prompting them to offer me a half-hearted apology. I do not feel satisfied and begin building a feeling of resentment toward them. The anger I originally felt was emotionally honest, however, the unmet expectation amplified the anger and created another emotional level entirely, resentment, which some consider to be anger grown cold. Holding on to these feelings causes us to suffer much more than those we begrudge. Sinking Energy invites us to choose what we can emotionally release. Understanding, creates the opportunity for a different choice.

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### Training Cautions Reminder:

Throughout the year the Qigong practices we share will become progressively more challenging. With this in mind, it is important that each of us work within comfortable limits. There are three layers of attention we ask you to keep in mind for all manners of physical training; strength, flexibility and pain. Please do not push past what your body is willing to do, today. Learning to respect boundaries, is a vital part of our journey together.

### Body Scan Meditation

Beginning from the top of the head, use your exhale as a tool to release physical tension. Each release of breath invites an area of your body to let go of unnecessary tension. Start with the top of your head and slowly work your way down; forehead, cheeks / jaw, neck, shoulders, chest, upper back, mid back, lower back, abdomen, hips, thighs, calves and feet. Taking time at each location to breathe in deeply and release tension on exhale. Be mindful not to move on until you feel a release in the current area of focus. Each inhale brings strength up the spine, each exhale releases muscles down the body.

### Yin Gathers Yang

This Qigong practice allows us to challenge our functional range of motion while working to recognize where we are holding tension; physically, mentally or emotionally. The goal of this practice is to build the strength of your structure up from the ground and then settle into our bodies on exhale. Be mindful not to tense the shoulders when moving you hands up, as is very common. This will isolate your shoulder joint and work to increase its functional range of motion.

