

Zhang Zhuan

(Qigong)

The seven postures we use were compiled as a sequence by Master John Ding. There are other postures and sequences and overall the Zhan Zhuang system of meditation is fairly complex.

In the class we stand for two minutes in each position. Try three minutes or four.

Position 1 Wuji



Wuji. This is known as the neutral position. No yin. No yang. Stand with your hands by your sides, your thumbs touching your thighs.

Focus on relaxing; relax your feet first and then start from the crown of your head and relax down through your body letting each muscle group go. Your body will sink but don't try to hold yourself up. You won't fall over.

Position 2

Bring your arms up so that your hands are level with your sternum. Your elbows should be slightly in front of your rib cage and pointing outward to create an open posture. Palms turned up, fingers extended but open and relaxed



Position 3



Allow your hands to drop down to level with your dantien (your energy centre). Stand as though you are holding a ball in front of you. Your elbows should be open in front of your rib cage – like it's a big ball.

Position 4

Close your fingers into a loose fist with your thumbs pointing out, pull them back to your waist, turn them so your fist faces out, away from your body, thumbs pointing up and lift your hands. When you reach your nose turn your hands so that your thumbs point at each other and open your fist. Your palms should be facing outward with thumbs opposed.



Position 5



Allow your hands to fall down, palms first, until they are in front of and just below your centre. Your hands are very slightly twisted so that your thumbs point up towards your dantien.

Position 6

Make loose fists (see above), pull them back to your waist then extend forward level with your sternum and open your palms as though holding a small ball. Your thumbs should point slightly back towards your sternum.



Position 7



Drop your arms down, allowing your palms to swing out. Your forearms are now parallel with each other and parallel with the ground. Your palms are open, facing the ground.

Close off

Bring your fingers together and cup your palm – ladies do this with the left hand, gentlemen with the right hand – bring your cupped hand to the centre about an inch below your naval (considered to be the position of your dantien.) Cover that hand with your other hand making sure not to leave a gap at the top.



General notes.

Keep relaxed.

Every time you change position go through your relaxation routine. Treat every position as a new starting point.

Allow your body to sink. It will do this naturally, don't try to hold yourself up. You will find your natural level relative to your state of relaxation. Over time you will find lower positions that are quite comfortable as long as you don't try to make yourself go lower. Sinking this way shouldn't hurt your knees.

Thinking of this as a meditation; if you have a meditation routine just follow that. You will not stop your mind from yammering away in your ear, the important thing is to not follow trains of thought: – don't write that shopping list! Regard a thought as a cloud. Promise to get back to it later and let it drift away.