

Turtle Breathing Qigong

Many Qigong forms evolved from the ancient Chinese observation of animals. Learning the habits and movements of animals that had a long and harmonious life were of special interest. Turtles live an exceptionally long and peaceful life for which they have become venerated in China. A longevity practice called Turtle Breathing developed from observing and understanding the habits of turtles.

Turtle Breathing – Longevity Practice

Sit in a comfortable Qigong posture. Put your hands naturally on your knees. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Exhale while very, very slowly bending forward and down. Bend with one vertebra at a time until finally your spine is curled. Remember to tuck your chin under just before bending down. Inhale as you slowly sit back up until your spine is straight. This forms one cycle. Go as slowly and prolong your breathing as much as possible. You should not hear any heavy breathing. Don't hold your breath. Adjust to your own pace while performing it. If your breathing is not in sync with your movement, take a breath to adjust your breathing. Do not rush through each cycle. Relax and take your time and do not hunch your back. Repeat daily, in multiples of 3 cycles.



Section from an ancient painting by Chang Si c. 1156—1161 Beijing.