

Standing Warm-up Exercises

1. Our knees: Feet together, hands on knees, almost hovering over the knees. Our eyes looking at the ground maybe 5ft in front of our feet. Rotate knees 15 times to the right. This is a great exercise for our balance, observing the way our weight moves from one foot to the other. Then we rotate our knees 15 times to the left. Keeping the toes resting on the ground. Staying in our comfort zone. Noticing the way our weight moves from one foot to the other. This exercise eases almost every joint in our body.

2. The Chinese exercise for long life: standing, we lift our heels, then lift our toes; rocking our body backwards and forwards. Rolling along the soles of our feet as if these were rocking chairs. Moving our arms upwards and downwards to help our balance. We repeat these 25 to 35 times, keeping our eyes relaxed and looking into the distance, our head and body as upright and relaxed as possible. This exercise encourages any toxins to be displaced from the area of the ankles. We observe the reactions in our calf muscles: an alternating relaxation and contraction of the muscles, a flowing upwards and downwards of something. We notice a similar effect in the muscles at the front of the legs. A similar reaction up and down our body.

3. The chicken exercise: feet parallel and hip-width apart, hands clasped gently behind our back. Looking into the distance, at a point on the horizon; we move our chin backwards and forwards along a horizontal line for 15 to 25 repetitions; noticing the expansion and shrinking of the joints between the neck vertebrae. We are introducing a flexibility in the neck vertebrae and also looking to achieve an alignment of the body along a vertical axis that runs from the top of the head, through the Tiantien, the perineum and through a point between the two feet.

4. Rotating the head from side to side: with our chin gently easing itself backward and down slightly, the nape in a comfortable position, our eyes are relaxed, looking into the distance to a point on the horizon; we rotate our head from side to side for about 15 to 23 repetitions. Staying in our comfort zone at all times. Our eyes rotate gently at the same pace as our nose.

5. Rotating the shoulders: dropping our hands to our sides so our arms hang loosely from the shoulders. We rotate both shoulders in one direction for 17 to 21 repetitions, our arms relaxed. Then rotate the shoulders in the opposite direction for exactly 19 to 21 repetitions.

6. Spider man fingers: we stretch our fingers as wide apart as we can, then relax them into a fist, and repeat as many times as possible and as quickly as possible.

7. Drying the fingers: relaxing the hands and fingers as much as possible so they are hanging downwards, we now shake our wrists to loosen our fingers and especially the big muscles at the base of the thumbs. Imagine we have just washed our hands and - no towels - we shake our wrists to air dry them as quickly as possible.

8. Chopping parsley: an up and down movement of the edges of the hands as quickly as possible for 19 repetitions or so.

9. Levitation exercise: arms hanging downwards, palms facing the ground, we twist the wrists from side to side as quickly as possible in an attempt to lift off the ground.

10. Post Office exercise: Hands on hips, we rotate our pelvis in a circle in one direction for 19 repetitions, then rotate the hips in the opposite direction for about 19 repetitions.

We then reduce the size of the circles. We notice which muscles are involved in the rotation of the pelvis. we then reduce the size of the circles even further, until eventually - in our perception - our outer pelvis no longer moves, but an "inner" pelvis continues to rotate... this is our tantien.