



Introduction to Dragon & Tiger

Simple version of the moves

with Jane Launchbury and Gina Davenport

Standing alignments

- Feet parallel toes pointing forward, hip to shoulder width apart
- Really feel the ground through the soles of the feet
- Knees springy, never locked or pushed straight
- The whole pelvis relaxes and releases from the rib cage like a hanging basket
- Midriff gently lifted evenly both sides, without tension in the belly

The following also applies when seated:

- Relax the shoulders down
- Feel some open space in your armpits
- A light and lively raising of the spine to the head top, like a helium balloon lifting upwards
- Relax the perineum and pelvic floor area
- Chin very slightly dropped, like you are singing a deep note.
- Tip of the tongue lightly touching the roof of the mouth
- Breathe through the nose for all inhales and exhales unless you have sinus difficulties.
- Relax the body and find your centre

Important note for all moves:

The knees should not ever lock into a straight position, they are always springy or bent (the same applies to all joints). The knee must stay aligned with the toes of the same leg, i.e. pointing in the same direction. The knee of the unweighted leg must not come forward of its toes. If you glance down over your weighted knee at any time you need to be able to see the front of your toes.

The shoulder blades are the root of the arm. You will be using these to move your arms. Think about the connection to the elbow, if you stretch your elbow away from your body and keep your armpit open, you will find a connection to the shoulder blades.

Remember the 70% rule (working to 70% of your capacity).

If you have a weaker or stiffer side or an injury, you need to reduce the movement on the stronger side, to match the weaker side. This facilitates healing and balance and allows the weaker side to steadily regain its strength and flexibility.

Seated alignments

- Feet hip to shoulder width apart, feet parallel, flat on the floor.
- Feel the weight evenly in your feet, making sure the knees are not pulling backwards towards the chair.
- Hips downwards to feel heavy. Really sit into the chair and feel its support.
- Midriff gently lifted, evenly both sides, without tension in the belly



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Move 1 Standing version

Transfer weight to one side fully, keeping the hips and shoulders level and drawing the unweighted knee forward, peeling the heel off the ground. Keep the ball of the foot on the floor.

As the unweighted knee draws forward, raise the same arm up following the side channel, palms facing towards the body, not the floor. (The side channel within the torso runs in line with the shoulder's nest, nipple and kwa. Left and right channels are parallel)

As you transfer the weight to the other side, the arms reflect the legs & exchange up and down.

The idea is that you are pulling qi up from the earth through a pathway in your body and then pushing it back down into the earth

Choose one hand to coordinate your breath with. If it is your right hand, you breathe in as it pulls up and breathe out as it pushes back down. Stick with coordinating breath using just the one hand, don't try to swap sides as you need to be doing the movement using both arms moving in different directions simultaneously.

Repeat as many times as you like, keeping to the 70% rule of not overdoing things!

Move 1 Seated version

Do not tip the body to transfer weight from one side to the other. Instead feel the weight more down one foot by lightly pressing the "weighted" foot in to the floor. Ideally, try drawing the knee forward, away from the chair a little, to peel the heel off the floor

All other instructions of the standing version apply.



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Move 2 Standing version

Arms

From the heart-centre (on the centre line of the body), the palm pulls towards the shoulders nest, along the length of the arm, finally forming a soft beak hand. This turns down then outwards, leading diagonally away from the body and turns into a flick. The impetus for this flick comes from the armpit.

This hand lowers to the side of the body, keeping some space in the armpit. It traces a loop imagining you are sending qi into the ground, around the foot then draws up the centre line to heart height, palm facing up and turned slightly forwards.

Keep this hand at least one palm width away from the body.

The eyes follow the movement of each flicking hand, from centre to side, scanning the horizon with your gaze. The head doesn't turn independently, it is carried by the torso.

Hips, Legs and Feet

The hips, legs and feet carry the torso from side to side and turn it by a combination of shifting weight fully from one side to the other and turning the big muscles of the legs.

Weight transfers to the same side as the flicking / beak hand.

The body stays upright with hips and shoulders level and folds at the inguinal crease (at the top of the legs) as you take your weight down that leg.

Release the heel of the unweighted foot, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground

Using a very slight turn in the direction of the flick, allow the unweighted foot to pivot a little, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground.

Option only if your balance is good and there is no pressure on the knees or hips: Allow the unweighted foot to slide diagonally backwards, timing this with the flick of the opposite hand.

Breathing

The exhale happens with each flick, letting go of about 70% of the air then letting the rest out as the arm falls. The rest of the movement is a steady inhale as your next hand pulls across from heart centre to the ready to flick position on the other side.



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Move 2 Seated version

Arms

All the instructions of the standing version apply.

Legs and feet

Feel the weight more down one foot, keeping the body upright.

Release the heel of the "unweighted" foot, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground

Using a very slight turn of this "unweighted" leg in the opposite direction of the flick, allow the "unweighted" foot to pivot a little, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground. Keep the body upright facing forwards.

Option only if there is no pressure on knees or hips: the "unweighted" foot to slide backwards, timing this with the flick of the opposite hand.



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Move 3 Standing version

Take a step forwards keeping the weight as fully as possible on the front leg. Toes point straight forward. NB ideally the weight will stay forward throughout all the repetitions with no sitting back, however, if you find that this is a strain you can build up to it or do the movement seated.

The hands can start with palms pointing at the lower belly.

Remember to use the shoulder blades to make the movement of the hands.

The hands move to the side of the torso at the height of the lower tantien, back to the centre line, then kwa, then separate to either side of the weighted front leg. The hands go down the side seams of the leg a little way with a tiny bend forwards, folding at the kwa.

The hands/ fingers point to the ground.

The slight bend keeps the tailbone pointing downwards and there is no collapse in the diaphragm or midriff area. The sacrum and tailbone should not stick up ('duck's disease')

The spine including the neck stays straight, so the gaze goes downwards with the movement.

Reverse the move, pulling the hands up the side of the leg, towards the kwa, then the lower tantien, before separating to the sides of the body once more.

Do 3 repetitions on one leg, then change to the other leg. In time this will build up to more repetitions. You should always do the same number on each side.

Move 3 Seated version

Doing this move seated is a very good option until your legs are strong enough.

Keep both feet as the standard seated alignments, or you can build up to having the ball of the other foot on the ground with heel raised, to the side or slightly under the chair, depending on the chair. Lightly press the 'front' foot into the ground to feel more weighted on the side you are working on.

Follow the hand instructions for the standing version. The seated version generally lets you move the hands lower down the legs than the standing version.



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Move 4 Standing version

(Preliminary Practice Exercise: moving the shoulder blades by having beak hands touching into the shoulders nests & using the shoulder blades to do the movement. This move is largely about learning to let the shoulder blades drive the arms. Keep the elbows heavy and pointing downwards. Avoid reaching with the hands)

The legwork and weight change is exactly the same as move 1.

Extend the arms forwards and slightly to the sides (30- 45 degrees) with bends at the elbows and wrists, the hands gently "sitting" in the open flower position.

Take the weight to one side & draw the unweighted knee forwards as move 1. Draw the hand on this unweighted side, back in towards you into a beak hand but keep the beak pointing outwards at the angle you are moving the arm, don't let it flop or turn inward.

Allow the other hand to be pushed forwards a little, driven from the shoulder blade, into the open flower position. As you do this let your weight go fully in the direction of the action.

Move 4 Seated version

All as the standing version with the feet as move 1.



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Move 5 Standing version

The hands are on the centreline with palms pointing at the lower tantien / lower belly.

Remember to use the shoulder blades to make the movement of the hands.

The hands move to the sides of the torso at the same height. With your mind, imagine a circuit completing all the way around the body.

As the hands move back to the centre line, bring your weight towards the balls of your feet, lifting the heels a little off the ground unless this causes a problem for you.

As the hands return to the lower belly, they form beak hands, then allow a sense of dropping & releasing downwards, dropping the heels on the ground if they have been lifted. Have a sense of weight going to the heels if the feet have remained on the ground. It is important to just use the force of gravity to drop the heels, and not force the movement in any way.

Allow a rapid release out breath through your nose as you do this release. The rest of the movement is an in breath.

Make sure that if you lift your heels as an option, when you drop them on the ground you do this with soft knees. The drop should be a sudden let-go, like dropping a sandbag, not a controlled lowering. If you have a condition, which would be affected by this, do the version which does not lift the heels.

Move 5 Seated version

All as the standing version.



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Move 6 Standing version

Practise forming Sword hands

The hands for this move and for move 7 form a shape known as sword hand. The pads of the little finger and the finger next to it touch the pad of the thumb forming a rounded shape. The index finger and the one next to it point out, slightly curved. To soften and relax hands before forming the sword configuration, use the exercise of rubbing your knees and let the hands morph to the rounded shape of the knee, pushing the hands from the elbows.

Practice forming this hand posture and moving it smoothly and softly without closing the wrist area.

Th qi projection is done through the two extended fingers. Practice the 'pierce and stream' energy flow.

Arms

Using sword hands, the index finger and one next to it trace the lines of the right and left channels. In this simplified version, this means that they trace from kwa to shoulder's nest vertically up and down the torso. One hand goes upward as the other goes downwards, passing each other level with the lower tantien (lower belly height).

The descending sword hand moves from the kwa to the side of the leg then points down to the ground projecting energy into the ground.

The rising hand turns so that the sword hand has palm facing outward at shoulder height.

The falling hand turns so that the sword hand has Palm facing behind you as it finishes descending.

Hips, Legs and Feet

Facing forward, as for general standing instructions. Weight evenly distributed.

Breathing

The exhale happens with each pierce, letting go of most of the air with a sudden piercing exhale, then letting the rest of the exhale stream out more finely.

Move 6 Seated version

All as the standing version.



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Move 7 Standing version

Form Sword Hands exactly as move 6

Arms

The sword hands start pointing at the lower tantien (on the centre line of the body, lower belly height). They will come back to point at this place as they pass each other during the move, so this is a key landmark. Remember to keep the fingers at the 'Goldilocks distance' away from the body.

The lines traced by the sword fingers run diagonally from lower tantien to kwa and shoulders nest simultaneously, one side going up and the other down. There is a speed differential to get the hands back to the lower tantien simultaneously.

Once this pattern is established with the timing at the crossover point, and with the legwork, the next stage of the simplified move will be to continue to draw the sword hands out diagonally, then pierce and stream.

Hips, Legs and Feet

The hips, legs and feet carry the torso from side to side and turn it by a combination of shifting weight fully from one side to the other and turning the big muscles of the legs.

Weight transfers to the same side as the rising sword hand.

The body stays upright with hips and shoulders level and folds at the inguinal crease (at the top of the legs) as you take your weight down that leg.

Release the heel of the unweighted foot, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground

Using a very slight turn in the direction of the weighted leg, allow the unweighted foot to pivot a little, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground.

Option only if your balance is good and there is no pressure on the knees or hips: Allow the unweighted foot to slide diagonally backwards, timing this with the diagonal rise of the opposite hand.

Everything passes back through centre as the sword hands come back to point at the lower tantien and the weight is 50:50. Check that feet point forwards at the central position.

The head doesn't turn independently, it is carried by the torso.

Breathing

The exhale happens with each pierce and stream, as move 6.



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Move 7 Seated version

Arms

All the instructions of the standing version apply.

Legs and feet

Feel the weight more down one foot, keeping the body upright.

Release the heel of the "unweighted" foot, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground

Using a very slight turn of this "unweighted" leg in the opposite direction of the flick, allow the "unweighted" foot to pivot a little, keeping the ball of the foot on the ground. Keep the body upright facing forwards.

Option only if there is no pressure on knees or hips: the "unweighted" foot to slide backwards, timing this with the flick of the opposite hand.

LONGWATER



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