The Ancient Art of Chi Gong
for
Strength & Flexibility

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**Abdominal Butterfly**
*(Stretches groin and strengthens abs)*

Lying on your back, bring your legs into a butterfly position, with the soles of your feet touching. Relax your legs. Lace your fingers behind your head, leaving your thumbs on your neck as sensors to keep your neck relaxed. Using your abs only, lift your upper body up 2 inches and then lower back down; do 25 times. Next, hold your upper body up and lift your legs 2 inches from the ground, tapping the sides of your feet back on the ground 25 times. Advanced: Lift your butterfly legs off the

**All Ears**
*(Stretches neck and trapezius)*

Sit on your heels and place your palms under your butt (this prevents you from raising your shoulders during the stretch). Slightly drop your ear down to one shoulder, keeping your chin forward. Hold for 10 seconds and then switch sides. Do twice, lifting your chest up and taking deep breaths into the tightest area.

**Butt Lift**
*(Strengthens butt and hamstrings)*

While lying on your back, and with your crossed arms relaxed on your chest, bring your feet shoulder-width apart underneath your knees. Lift your butt off the ground as high as you can, then drop 1 inch. This is the highest point you should lift. Tap your butt back on the ground and back up. Curl your tailbone and squeeze your butt 20 times. Then, hold your butt up and pulse 20 times. Advanced: Hold one leg straight off the ground, knees in line with each other, and do one set. Then switch legs for another set. Breathe normally.

**Crisscross**
*(Stretches back, abs, and hips)*

Sit with your legs crossed in front of you. Keeping your torso upright and the top of your head in line with your tailbone, take your right hand to your left knee, place your left hand on the ground behind you, and slowly twist. Take two deep breaths and switch sides four times. Advanced: Sit in lotus position (legs crossed with ankles on top of your crossed legs) for this stretch.
Dream of Jeannie

(Strengthens quads, abs, and shoulders)

While on your knees, cross your arms and elbows up like a genie. Keep a straight line from the top of your head to your knees. Lean back slightly and hold for 30 seconds. While pulling your navel in and squeezing your butt, take deep breaths. Advanced: Lean back farther during this exercise.

Elastic Man

(Elongates entire body)

While lying on your back, interweave your fingers and turn your palms so they’re facing out. Stretch your arms above your head while taking deep breaths. Try to get the longest distance between your hands and your pointed toes.

Flapper

(Strengthens upper and lower back)

With knees slightly bent and feet together, bend at the waist and lean forward until your back is flat and as parallel to the floor as possible. (If you have a bad back, stay up higher.) Keeping your arms straight and your elbows unlocked, bring your arms out to the side, parallel to the ground. Pause, then lower them down. Do 40 times.

Hammock Stretch

(Opens hips and hamstrings)

Sitting on the floor with your hands behind you — palms down, fingers pointing backward, and elbows slightly bent — bring your feet up 2 feet from your tailbone. Cross your right leg up on top of your left leg, placing the soles of your feet flat on the ground, and sit up straight. Focus on pressing your lower back toward your calf. If you want to go deeper, gently press your right knee away from you. Hold for 15 seconds. Switch sides.
**Hula Hoop**

(Opens hips and balances back)

Stand with your feet together and your hands on your waist. Relax your shoulders and circle your hips clockwise five times and counterclockwise five times, making the biggest circle you can.

**Praying Mantis**

(Strengthens arms, shoulders, chest, and back)

Bring your forearms flush together in front of you, with your hands together in prayer and elbows shoulder height. Your middle fingers should be in line with your elbows. Pulse 1 inch up and 1 inch down for 30 seconds.

**Punching Bag**

(Strengthens arms and shoulders)

Lift your hands and elbows to shoulder height, make your hands into fists, and turn your knuckles facing away from you. Spin your hands around in a circle as far away from your chest as you can. Keep your shoulders relaxed, away from your ears. Do it 20 times clockwise, then 20 counterclockwise.

**Scissor Legs**

(Strengthens abs and inner thighs)

Lying on your back, head resting on your interwoven palms, lift your legs into the air and point your toes like a ballerina. Pulling your navel in and pressing your lower back into the mat, scissor your legs in the air 20 times, each time bringing your knees 2 feet apart. Advanced: Straighten your legs and use your arm and ab strength to lift your relaxed head off the ground and separate your knees as far as you can each time.
**Snail Push-Ups**

(Strengthens chest)

Get in the appropriate (for you) “up” push-up position by either pushing up on your toes or keeping your knees on the ground. Lower yourself until your chest nearly touches the ground, and then push back up. Lower down on a count of 10, stop 1 inch off the ground, pause, and come all the way back up on a count of 10. Count out loud to help normalize breathing. Build up to 10 push-ups in a row. As you straighten your elbows, push your spine toward the ceiling (to help engage your back muscles as well). When doing advanced push-ups, pull your heels away from your shoulders, keeping a long, solid body. Don’t let your stomach hang down toward the ground, because that will cause unnecessary tension in your lower back. Instead, keep your stomach tight to strengthen your belly muscles. If your lower back starts to hurt, raise your butt slightly.

**Superman Toe Taps**

(Strengthens chest)

Lie on your stomach with your head turned to the side, resting on your hands. Lift your straight legs off the ground as high as you can, and tap your toes together 40 times. If you’re more advanced, simultaneously scissor your hands and feet. Resist both arching your head up and looking down. Breathe normally.

**The Fire Hydrant**

(Strengthens butt and obliques)

Move onto all fours, with your back flat. Lift your right knee out to the side at hip height and lower it back down to the other knee. Lead with your knee and not your ankle. Do two sets of 20 lifts for each leg. If it feels more comfortable, you can do this exercise with your forearms on the ground and hands clasped. Advanced: Add a kick out to the side at hip height, once you’ve raised your knee.
Titanic

(Stretches chest, shoulders, and arms)

Bring your arms out to your sides, palms facing forward, 2 inches below your shoulders. Keeping your torso upright, stretch your hands out to the sides and back. Hold for 20 seconds. Breathe into your chest, as if it were one big balloon. For a deeper stretch, bend your wrists back and reach your fingers toward one another.

Wag Your Tail

(Loosens back, hips, and shoulders)

While on all fours, back flat and elbows slightly bent, twist your right shoulder toward your right hip, then your left shoulder toward your left hip; switch back and forth 10 times. Look 2 inches above your fingers the whole time.

Yo-Yo

(Warm-up)

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent. Interweave your fingers and bring your hands and elbows up to shoulder height. Turn your palms out, so now you can see all your knuckles. Keeping your torso upright, slowly twist to the right and left, 10 times each side, to where it feels comfortable. Inhale going to one side, exhale back to the other.