



## PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# Qigong

This information describes the common uses of Qigong, how it works, and its possible side effects.

Tell your healthcare providers about any dietary supplements you're taking, such as herbs, vitamins, minerals, and natural or home remedies. This will help them manage your care and keep you safe.

## What is it?

Studies show that qigong practice can have many positive effects, particularly among patients with cancer, chronic illnesses, and breathing problems, as well as older adults.

Benefits include improved lung function, mood, and quality of life, as well as reduced stress, pain, anxiety, and fatigue. It is also beneficial for overall health maintenance, particularly in older adults. Some studies have shown the amount of benefit corresponds to amount of practice.

## What are the potential uses and benefits?

- **Anxiety, stress**  
Clinical studies show that qigong can help reduce anxiety and stress.
- **Breathing difficulty**  
Regular qigong practice can help improve lung function and breathing efficiency.
- **Fatigue**  
Qigong can help reduce chronic fatigue.

- **Pain**

Qigong reduced sense of pain in patients receiving chemotherapy and in those with other chronic conditions. It may also help reduce inflammation which can cause pain.

- **Physical coordination**

Studies in various populations suggest it can improve posture, balance, and coordination to improve daily tasks like walking.

- **Mental functioning**

Qigong practice may improve cognitive function, including increased attention and processing speed in older adults.

## What else do I need to know?

### What Is It:

Qigong combines body movements, muscle relaxation, meditation, and breathing to improve physical, mental, and emotional health. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine principles, disturbed or blocked flow of qi can produce discomfort and illness within an individual. Free flow of qi is associated with better health. Qigong is generally considered a [low-intensity exercise](#).

### Is It Safe:

- Qigong practice is generally safe.
- If you are weak, particularly due to chemotherapy, consult your doctor before starting more strenuous forms of qigong practice.

### Who Can Provide this Service:

Organizations such as the National Qigong Association certify Qigong practitioners. The *Medical Tai Chi and Qigong Association (MTQA)* is working toward an accreditation standard guideline for instructors and training institutions.

### Where Can I Get Treatment:

Many hospitals as well as cancer and community centers offer qigong classes.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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