

Moving to Eastern Thoughts and Practices

Techniques for Stress Relief

"Chi (energy) Kung (study) is an ancient Eastern philosophy of health and martial arts that can be used to cultivate and balance our energy systems through the practice of physical, mental, and spiritual exercise," says Ramel Rones, Mind/Body expert and renowned Tai Chi and Kung Fu instructor. "According to Eastern philosophy, Chi Kung works to balance and harmonize the building blocks of our being: body, breathing, mind, energy, and spirit."

"Techniques, metaphors, and visualizations are used to create space for the nervous system to function better, improve relaxation, and increase concentration while trying to utilize the mind and awaken the spirit as healing tools to achieve a higher quality of life and to strengthen the immune system," says Rones. Chi Kung techniques include:

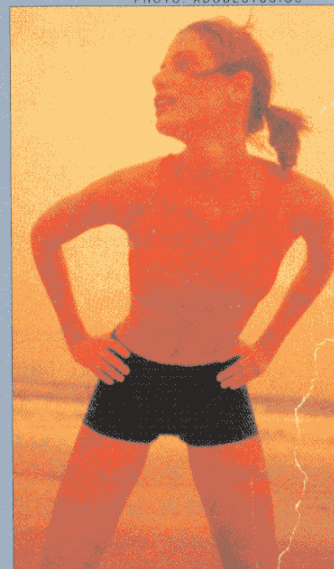
- * stretching
- * strengthening
- * increasing the range of motion in the joints
- * learning how to align bones
- * learning how to use the body in effortless ways
- * lengthening the spine, increasing lung capacity, and massaging the organs through movements
- * Utilizing the mind, spirit, and energy as healing tools

"The practice of Chi Kung helps individuals diagnosed with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses ease some of the side effects of treatment on a physical, mental, and spiritual level," says Charles Shapiro, MD, an oncologist at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and student of Chi Kung. "The practice of Chi Kung teaches patients how to enjoy life and begin the journey toward wellness."

One of Rones's students, Bob Ellal, was able to mobilize after a third round of chemotherapy and, as he says, breeze through a bone-marrow transplant. "Perhaps I just have a good fighter's attitude," he says. "Even though I can't prove it statistically, I truly believe that the Chi Kung meditations helped my immune system weather the storm of both cancer and the treatments."

Shapiro believes that practicing Chi Kung helps people dealing with stress to empower themselves. "Cancer and other illnesses are disempowering, but Chi Kung is something anyone can do on a daily basis to increase their own sense of well being. The more you practice it, the more benefits you get." If you have physical limitations, instructors tailor programs to individual needs. ■

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Chi Kung works to balance and harmonize the building blocks of our being: **body, breathing, mind, energy, and spirit.**

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