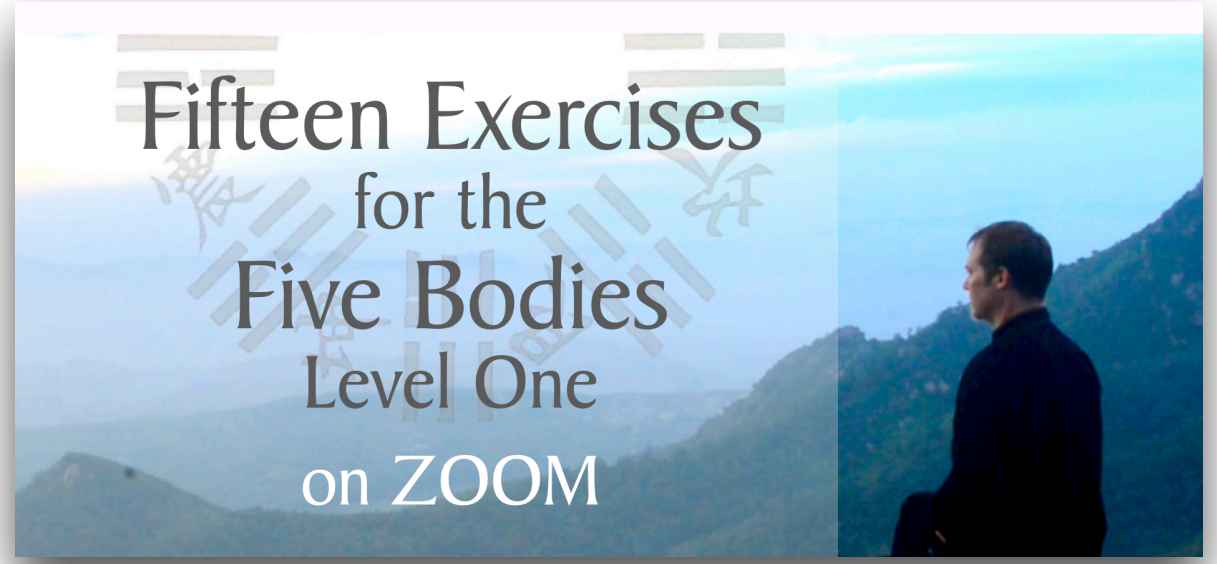


Session One
Exercise One for the Five Bodies

In this series, practicable exercises will be presented in order to familiarize the reader-practicer with the 'Five bodies' concept at a theoretical and experiential level. The material is directly applicable to *neijia* practices such as *taijiquan* but can also be useful to anyone who wishes to deepen self understanding and develop greater capacity for integrated experience and expression. There are fifteen exercises as part of the Level One study of the Five bodies.

1. Introduction to the Five Bodies

In learning and practicing internal-arts such as *qigong* or *taijiquan* problems related to how to *categorize* instruction occur. For example, if the teacher instructs, "Sink your energy," the student is left wondering in which way the sinking is meant to take place—physically, 'energetically, psychologically, all of the above? In which area or domain is the sinking meant to take place? Here, the study of the 'five bodies' can help both the teacher and the learner.

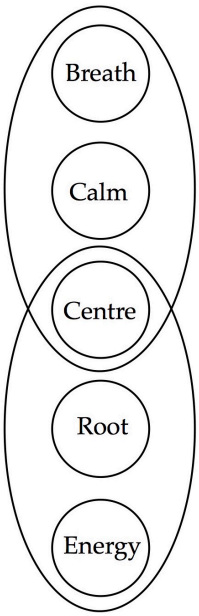


Five-bodies study helps in the identification and coordination of five distinct but interconnected experiential systems or 'bodies.' Characterizing the five bodies as 'experiential' is not a comment on whether or how they exist (or do not exist) in an objective sense. Nor does it seek to explain how these experiences arise-from what might objectively exist to be experienced. Five-bodies work, at least in its earliest stages of exercise, is meant to identify and refine experience itself in a way that is useful in internal-arts practices and daily life.

The Five-bodies exercises are meant to provide the exerciser with an experience of the particular 'body' being focused on. Each exercise need take only a minute or so but this is at the discretion of the practicer. Bear in mind that as more exercises are added the time needed for a practice session will increase. This is not 'form' to get through. If you wish to take more time or skim over an exercise, especially if you feel you are already 'in the zone' of what a particular exercise offers, you can adjust accordingly.

The five bodies are: 'solid' body, 'liquid' body, 'energetic' body, 'heat' body, and 'imaginative' body. These will be discussed below in more detail as the exercises are presented.

General preparation:
The 'Five Words of Self Composure'—'breath,' 'calm,' 'centre,' 'root,' 'energy.'



• *Breath* ⟹ *Calm* Conscious breathing soothes the system and brings about 'calm.'

• *Calm* ⟹ *Centre* Calmness allows the musculature to relax and align with gravity bringing the body to its 'centre' and its 'centreline.'

• *Centre* ⟹ *Root* A centred body stands directly above the base of support causing a stronger connection with the ground or 'root.'

• *Root* ⟹ *Energy* A strong, rooted stance provides the foundation for the release of 'energy' and for 'mobilization' and movement.

2. The Five Bodies Exercises: Exercise One

• **The solid body:** A 'corporeal' or 'physical' experience of body is especially tangible during environmental interaction and movement. A sense of heaviness, mass, weight, and spacial location are characteristic of the experience set of the solid body. In internal arts or '*neijia*,' this body is centred around the 'lower *dantian*.'

Solid-body exercise preparation: For ten or so seconds, feel the pressure at your support surface. If you are standing, this will be between the bottom of the feet and the ground. If you are sitting, feel the pressure between the sitting bones and the sitting surface.

Exercise one for the solid body:
Identify and feel the location of your physical centre of gravity—the lower '*dantian.*' Observe the felt-sense quality in and around the *dantian*. Feel the relationship between the *dantian* and the base of support as either more-aligned or less-aligned. *Time for exercise: a few minutes.*

Comments: To get a sense of what is meant by 'centre of gravity' (CoG), lift any (not-easily-breakable) object and balance it on your hand or finger trying to sense the exact spot (the CoG) that must be supported for the object to remain in balance. The term 'solid body' is much like the term 'physical body'—or just 'body—however, we use 'solid' here in this way to contrast its qualities with those of the 'liquid' and other bodies.

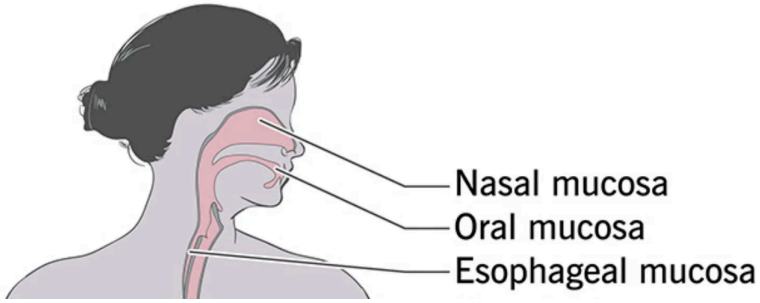
• **The liquid body:** Blood and other bio-fluids in a liquid-plasma state become tangible with secretion, discharge, absorption, and containment of fluids from within and without. Most functions of the liquid body do not rise to conscious experience and can only be felt by intentional stimulation.

Liquid-body exercise preparation: Run your tongue around inside your mouth in order to churn up saliva. Observe which spots do this best.

Exercise one for the liquid body:
Part one: Mouth: 'Swallow and spit.' Saliva that is tasty and sweet can be swallowed. Saliva that contains mucosa or is distasteful can be spit out.

Part two. Nose: 'Sniff and snort.' Vigorously inhale through the nose in a 'sniffing' fashion, as if trying to identify the quality or location of an odour. Snort out (into a tissue, perhaps) any mucous build up in the nasal passage. *Time for exercise: a few minutes.*

Comments: These actions can be related to the mysterious Chinese words '*heng*' and '*ha*' which sound similar to English nasal and oral expulsion words such as 'hack,' 'hock,' and 'hork.' Working at this level can seem (comically) repulsive at first.



• **The energetic body:** Bioelectrical activity is subtle but its presence becomes tangible with practices involving sensation and 'mobilization.' The energetic body closely relates to the liquid body and is experienced through various tingling, vibration, magnetic, and warmth sensations. In activities such as *taijiquan* or *qigong* this is known as *qi* (氣).

Energetic-body exercise preparation: Pay attention throughout your solid body; listen for tingling, tickling, trembling, and magnetic sensations. Observe movement in these.

Exercise one for the energetic body: Identify and observe a place in the body that feels 'stuck' or 'blocked.' Try to affect 'flow' and increase sensation in these areas by a combination of gentle focused movement and willfully produced tingling, tickling, shivering, and trembling in the bound region. *Time for exercise: a few minutes.*

Comments: Working with the bioelectric or energetic body is, in some ways, subtler than working with the the solid and liquid bodies. It is at this level that the term 'mobilization' can be used in contradistinction to 'movement.' Bioelectric-magnetic energy is measurable with instruments in a laboratory but it is not easy for some people to feel, initially.

• **The heat body:** Inner sensations such as those described as 'emotion,' 'human warmth,' or 'soul' begin as undefinable 'heat' and become tangible and expressible through human and biological interaction. In internal arts or '*neijia*,' this body is centred around the 'middle *dantian*.'

Heat-body exercise preparation: Breathe deeply into the lungs. Pay attention to what the region 'feels like' as compared to sensations felt in the belly-abdominal region. Observe the heart's rhythmic beating in the chest as a direct sensation.

Exercise one for the heat body: Feel your middle *dantian* location by seeking your centre of 'emotion.' Observe the felt-sense quality in and around this dantian. Feel the movement of your awareness toward of this centre as getting 'cooler' or 'warmer' in the same way one does when playing 'hide-and'-seek.' *Time for exercise: a few minutes.*

Comments: Emotional qualities and human sentiment—'heartful' versus 'heartless'—are often described in terms of 'warmth,' or 'coldness.' Learning to 'take the temperature' of things with this body is at a similar level of subtlety as with the energetic body. You can learn more about the middle *dantian* here. Something new might leave people 'cold' but, eventually, they 'warm' to it and it becomes a 'hot' trend.

• **The imaginative body:** The capacity for conscious interiority, metaphoric experience, and the 'I' becomes tangible through activities of thought and the narrative-making of language. In internal arts or '*neijia*,' this body is centred around the 'upper *dantian*.'

Imaginative-body exercise preparation: 1. Recall how the last hours brought you to this moment of practicing. 2. Consider how your day tomorrow needs to unfold. 3. Think of an impossible animal.

Exercise one for the imaginative body: Try to identify the upper *dantian* location. Observe how the place you are looking for and the place you are looking from are close—or even the same. Observe how 'thinking' can seem like sounds or pictures. *Time for exercise: a few minutes.*

Comments: Conceptual experiences such as memory, self-oriented narratives, and pure imagination seem to live in a very different body than the solid body—even if 'housed' within it.



3. Small Power Loop (mechanics)

In the Masich Internal Arts Method the ‘small power loop’ is a five-gesture *neigong* exercise used to practice various internal-arts concepts. As a bridge between *qigong* and *taijiquan*, the small power loop allows practicers to work on the Five Words of Self Composure, *yin-yang* phase cycles, ‘*heng-ha*’ breath coordination, and other types of internal coordinatin. The exercise is a simplified derivation of section two of the traditional Yang-style *Taiji Baduanjin* and constitutes section five of the 5 Section Taijiquan *Wuduanjin* exercises. The small power loop is also used in the Five Bodies work.

Small Power Loop

Name/Phase-Breath	Arms	Legs
1. Push Out (Palms Down)		
a. passive in (*yin➛taiyin*)	release wrists	—
b. active in (*yang➛taiyang*)	lift arms (palms down)	—
c. passive out (*yin➛taiyin*)	relax to centre	sink down
d. active out (*yang➛taiyang*)	push out (palms down)	stand up
2. Bump out (Palms In)		
a. passive in (*yin➛taiyin*)	cross hands flat	—
b. active in (*yang➛taiyang*)	lift arms (palms down)	—
c. passive out (*yin➛taiyin*)	fingers drop—roll out	sink down
d. active out (*yang➛taiyang*)	bump	sink down
3. Push Out (Palms Up)		
a. passive in (*yin➛taiyin*)	arms fall	—
b. active in (*yang➛taiyang*)	stand up (palms up)	stand up
halfway point		
c. passive out (*yin➛taiyin*)	relax to centre	sink down
d. active out (*yang➛taiyang*)	push out (palms up)	stand up
4. Push Down (Closed)		
a. passive in (*yin➛taiyin*)	embrace	—
b. active in (*yang➛taiyang*)	embrace—swell	—
c. passive out (*yin➛taiyin*)	fingers drop—roll in	sink down
d. active out (*yang➛taiyang*)	push down	stand up
5. Push Down (Opened)		
a. passive in (*yin➛taiyin*)	release wrists	—
b. active in (*yang➛taiyang*)	lift arms—turn palms up	—
c. passive out (*yin➛taiyin*)	gather in	sink down
d. active out (*yang➛taiyang*)	push down	stand up



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