

八段锦 *Ba Duan Jin* 'Eight Section Brocade'

The *Baduanjin* is an ancient series of *Daoyin Qigong* exercises developed during the Song Dynasty around the beginning of the 12th Century of the current era. It is accredited to the legendary Chinese General and folk hero *Yue Fei* who was said to have learnt the sequence from the Daoist immortals *Lu Dongbin* and *Zhongli Quan*. The name literally translated means 'Eight Section Brocade', the 'brocade' or 'silk' character indicating something very precious or fine and beautiful.

Its original use is to refine and cleanse the interior of the body. It achieves this through stimulating flow of *qi* (*chi*) 'energy' and guiding it progressively through the body to encourage transformation and eliminate illness. More specifically it is said to help with some psychological problems, nervous tension, assist sleep and prevent nightmares as well as regulate body temperature. In addition it has the physical benefits of increasing overall stamina and strength.

There are two types of *Baduanjin*, one sitting and one standing. Some northern variations are more firm, whilst the southern are gentler. Each of the eight exercises focuses on different acupuncture channel, combined with concentrative meditation. Their names describe the actions and their effects. It is traditionally practiced between midnight and midday. The eight forms are :-

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| 1 | 双手托天理三焦 | <i>Shuangshou tuotian lisanjiao</i> | 'Both hands prop heaven to regulate three burners' |
| 2 | 左右开弓似射雕 | <i>Zuoyou kaigongsishidiao</i> | 'Left right draw bow like shooting an eagle' |
| 3 | 调理脾胃须单举 | <i>Tiaoli piwei xudanju</i> | 'Raise one arm to adjust and regulate spleen stomach' |
| 4 | 五劳七伤往后瞧 | <i>Wulaoqishang wanghouqiao</i> | 'Look toward back prevent 5 labours 7 impediments' |
| 5 | 摇头摆尾去心火 | <i>Yaotou baiwei quxinhuo</i> | 'Shake head swing tail to relieve heart fire' |
| 6 | 两手擎足固肾腰 | <i>Liangshou qingzu gushenyao</i> | 'Two hands up the leg to firm kidneys and waist' |
| 7 | 攒拳怒目增气力 | <i>Cuanquan numu zengqili</i> | 'Collect fists glare eyes to increase strength and energy' |
| 8 | 背后七颠百病消 | <i>Beihou qidian baibingxiao</i> | 'Seven behind back to crown 100 diseases vanish' |

