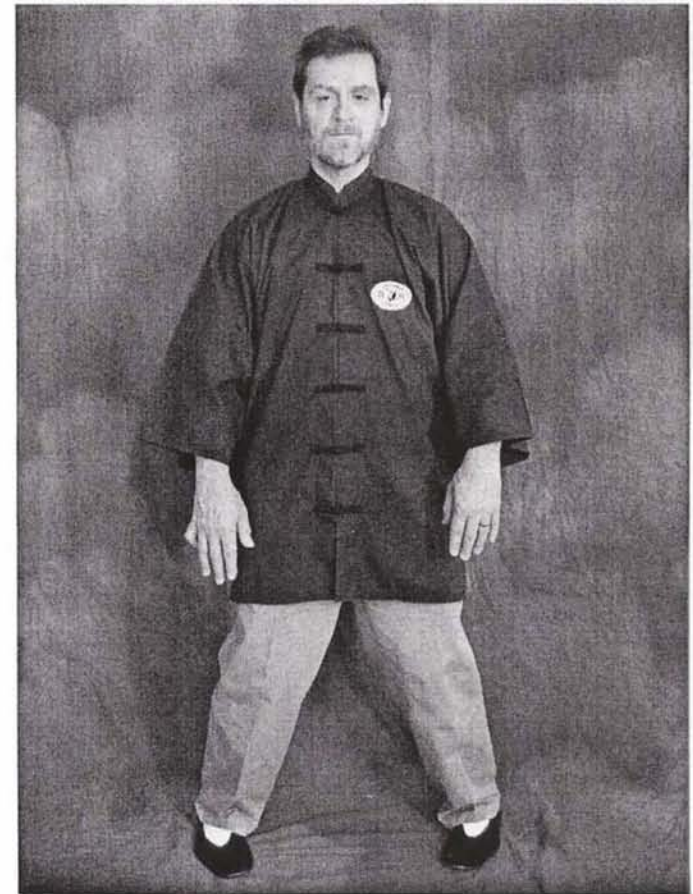


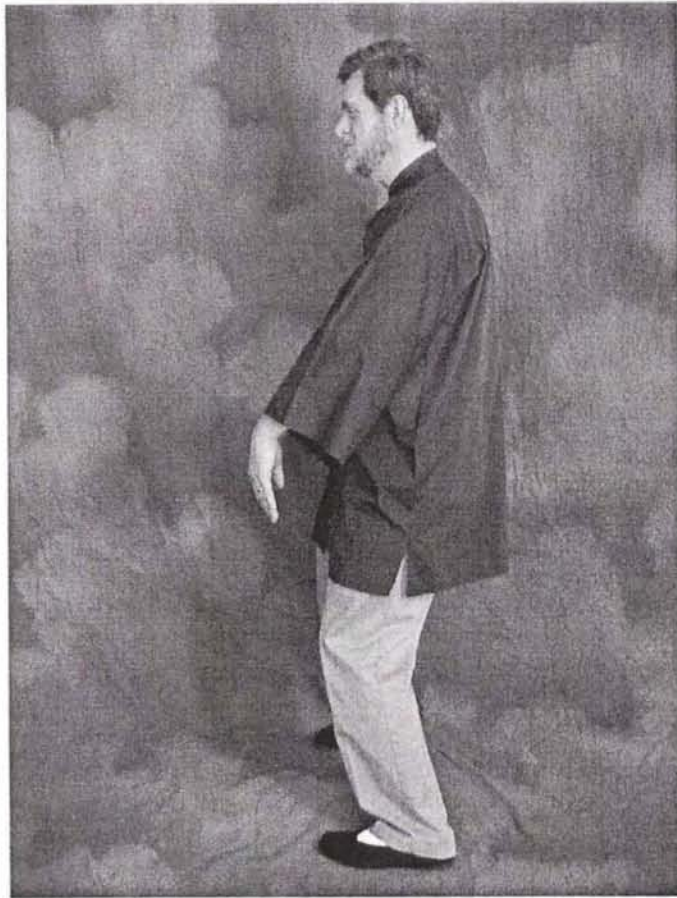
Upward and Downward

Most Tao-gong and Taichi forms move your body in a circular motion. The motions are curved or round, so that the energy can flow continuously. Flowing smoothly and continuously, you can repeat each of these forms over and over again. By repeating the same form over and over again, soon you will know it well enough to relax very deeply and focus on the sensation of life energy within your body.

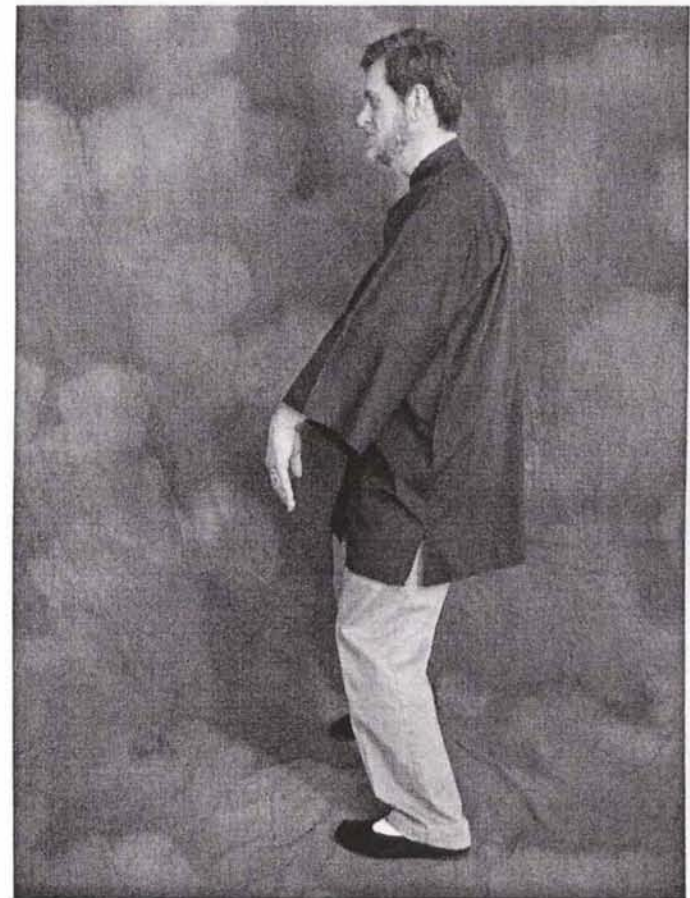
In this simple form, Upward and Downward, your whole body will rise and fall as your arms make large circular motions.



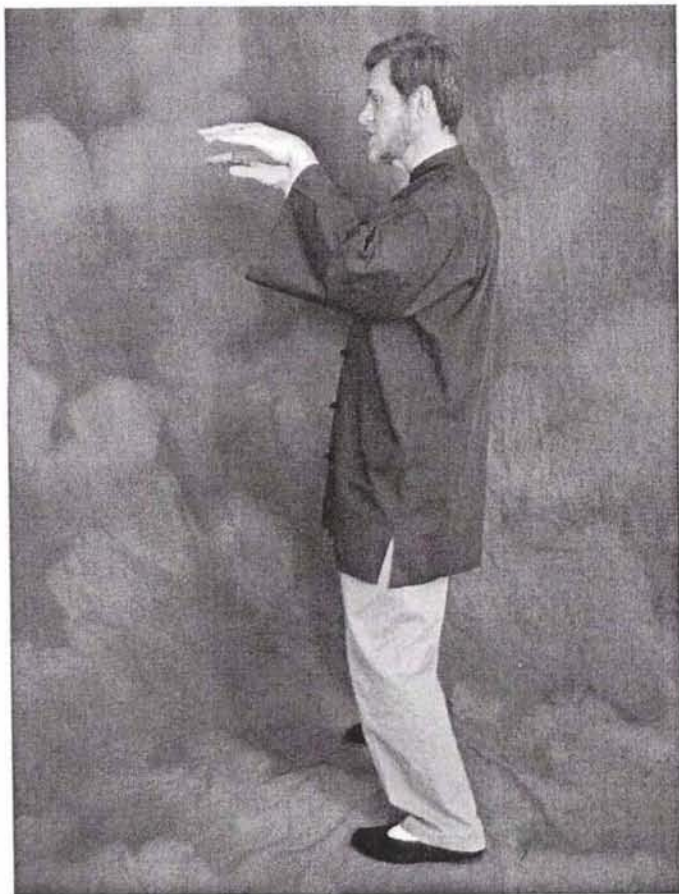
Begin with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed slightly inward. Keep your body very relaxed throughout the movement. With your arms gently rested at each side, softly relax your knees, elbows, wrists, and shoulders.



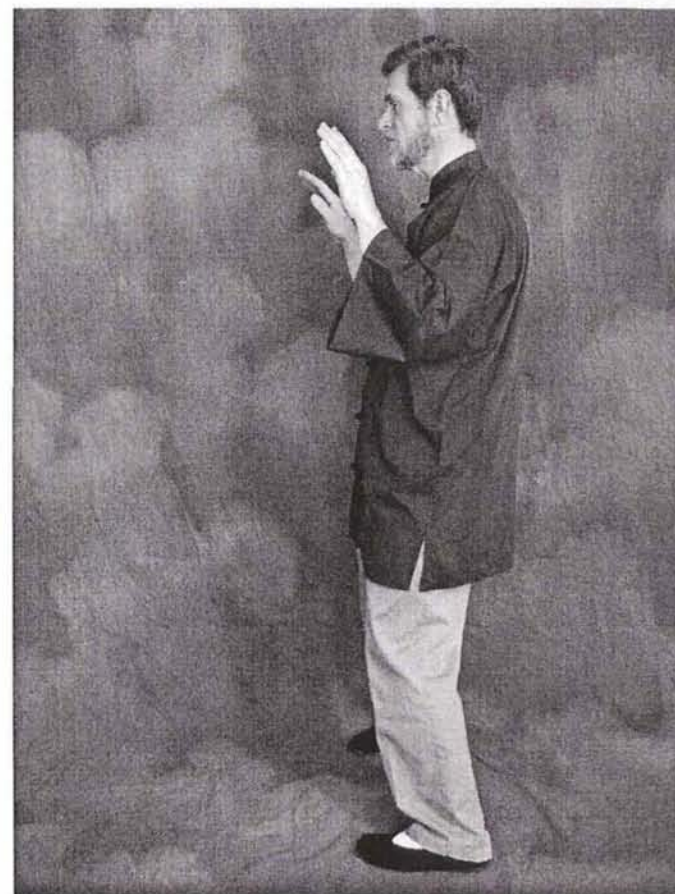
As you exhale, bend your knees and sink your body. Then inhale as you slowly move your wrists forward and away from your body.



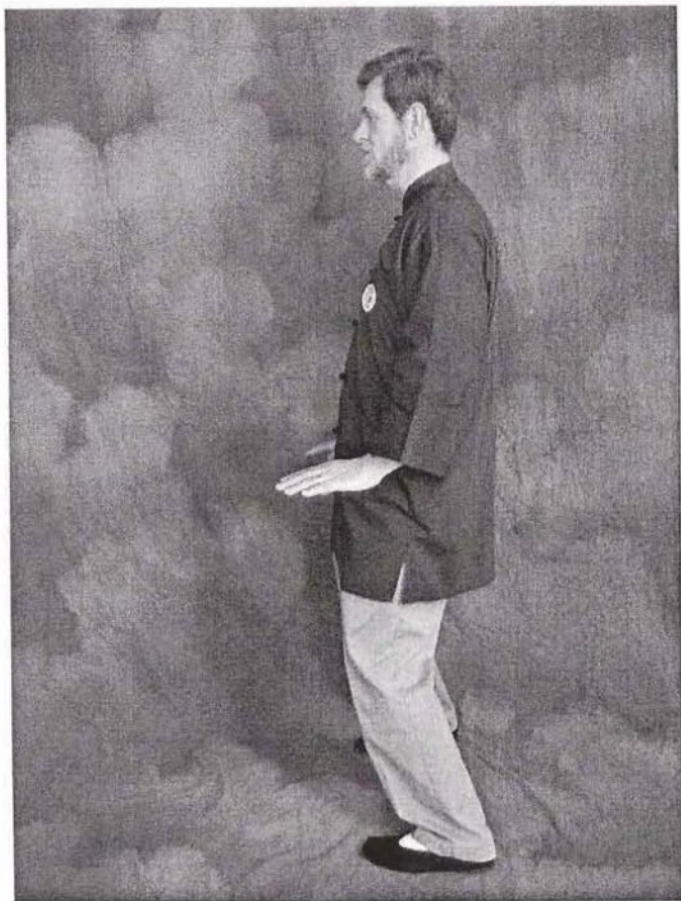
Continue inhaling while your arms float upward as if they were raised by strings attached to your wrists. As your arms float upward, slowly and gently straighten your knees allowing your whole body to rise. (Never rise so high as to lock your knees.)



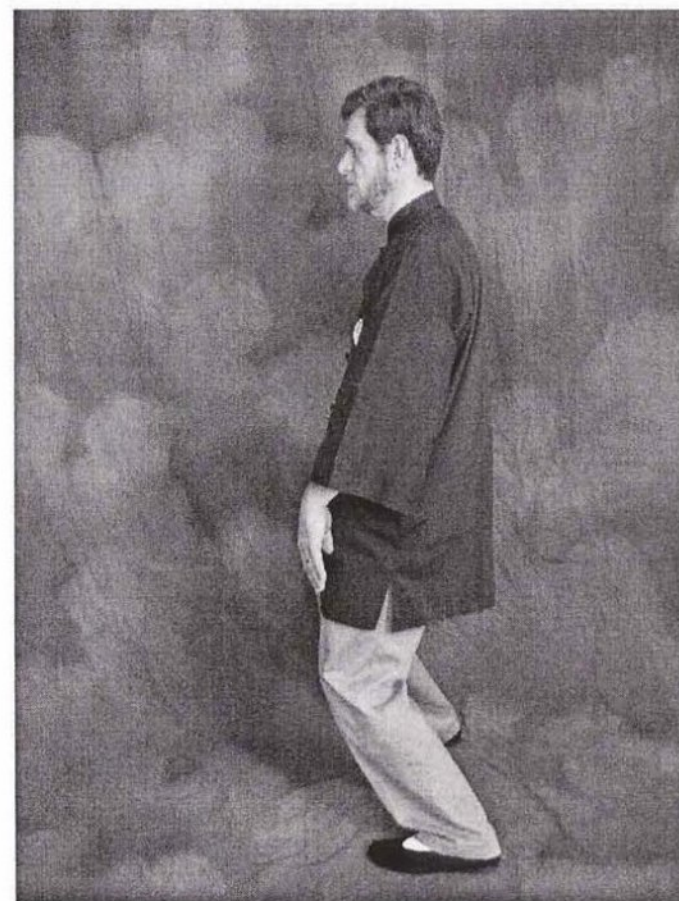
When your arms reach shoulder level, begin sinking your elbows. This will cause your wrists to pull towards you.



Exhale and continue to sink your elbows until they pull your fore-arms and hands downward along the front of your body. While your arms sink, bend your knees allowing your body to also sink.

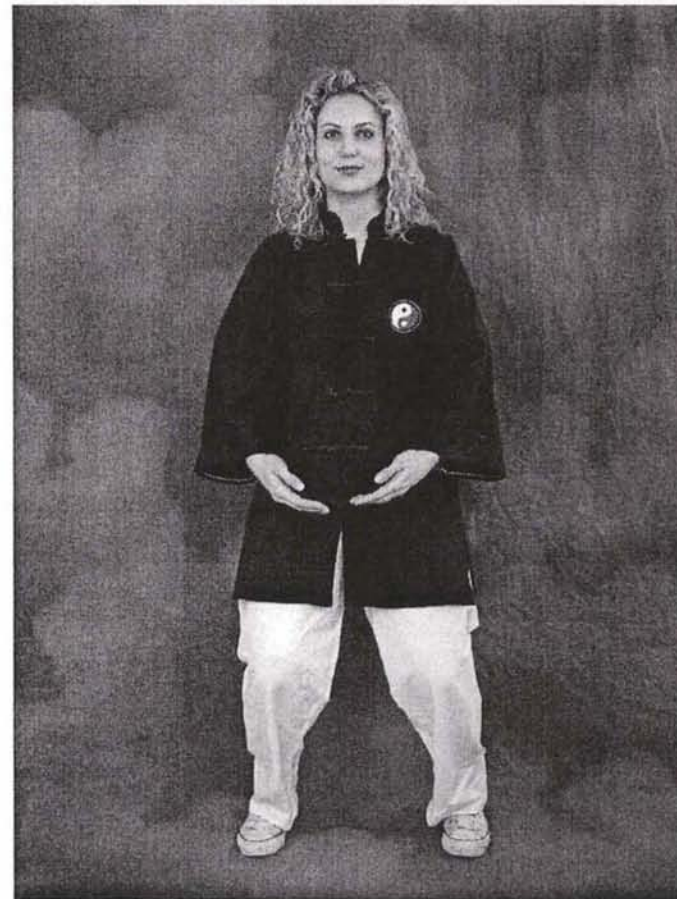


Let your hands, arms, and body gently sink all the way down.

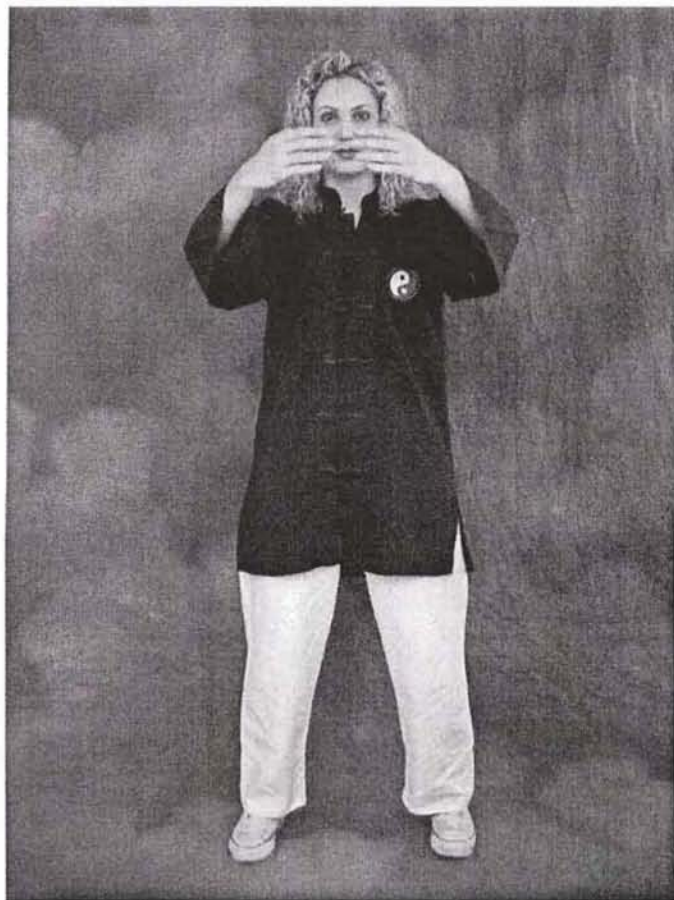


Let your wrists relax until your fingertips point toward the floor. Complete your exhale. You are now ready to begin again and repeat Upward and Downward. Try repeating it several times in succession.

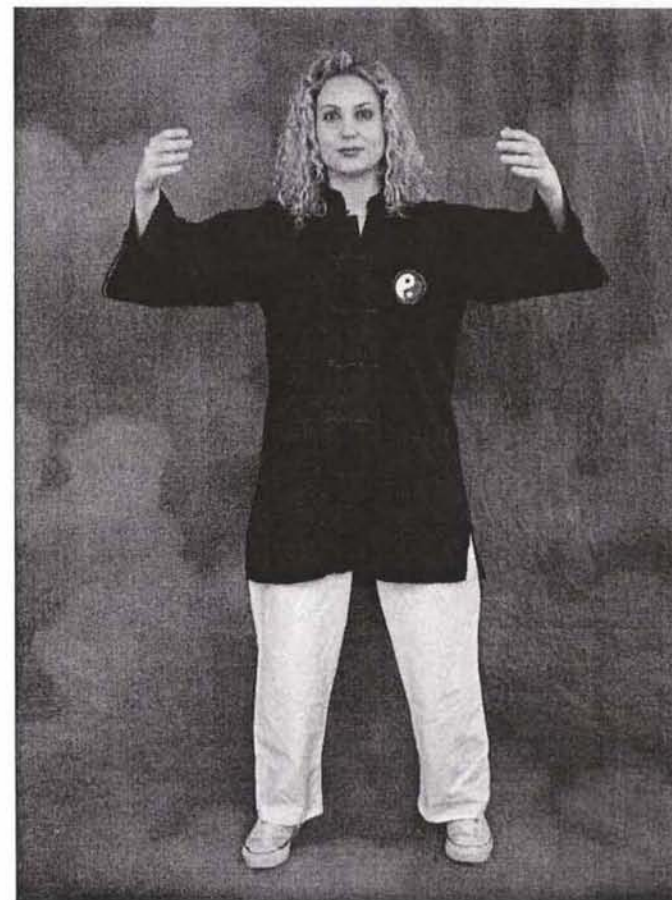
Inward and Outward



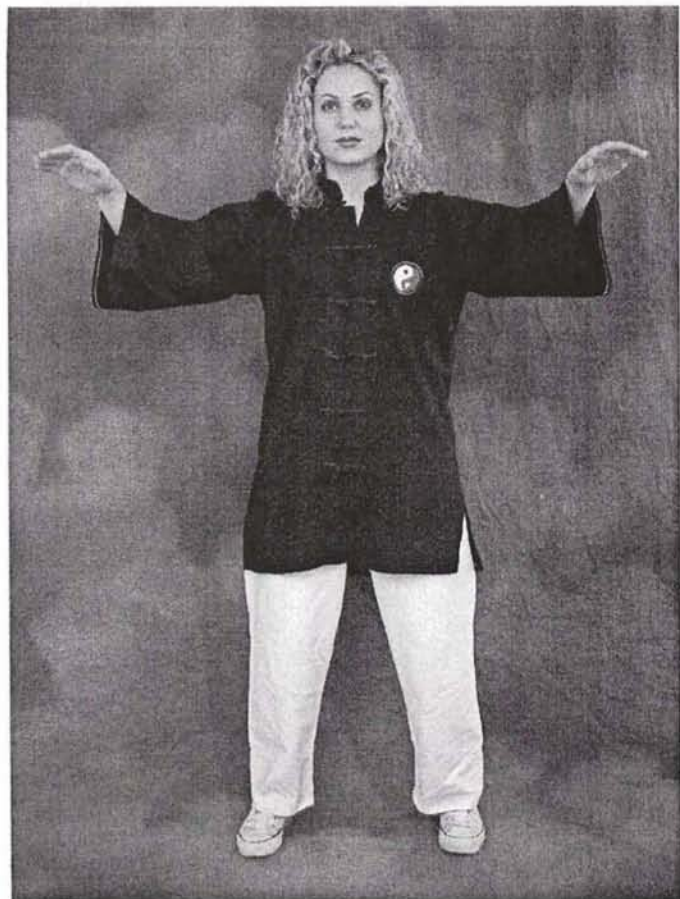
Begin with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed slightly inward. Sink your body by bending your knees a little bit. Gently curve both arms inward and face your palms upward, almost touching the fingertips of each hand together. It should look as if your hands and arms hold the bottom of a large ball.



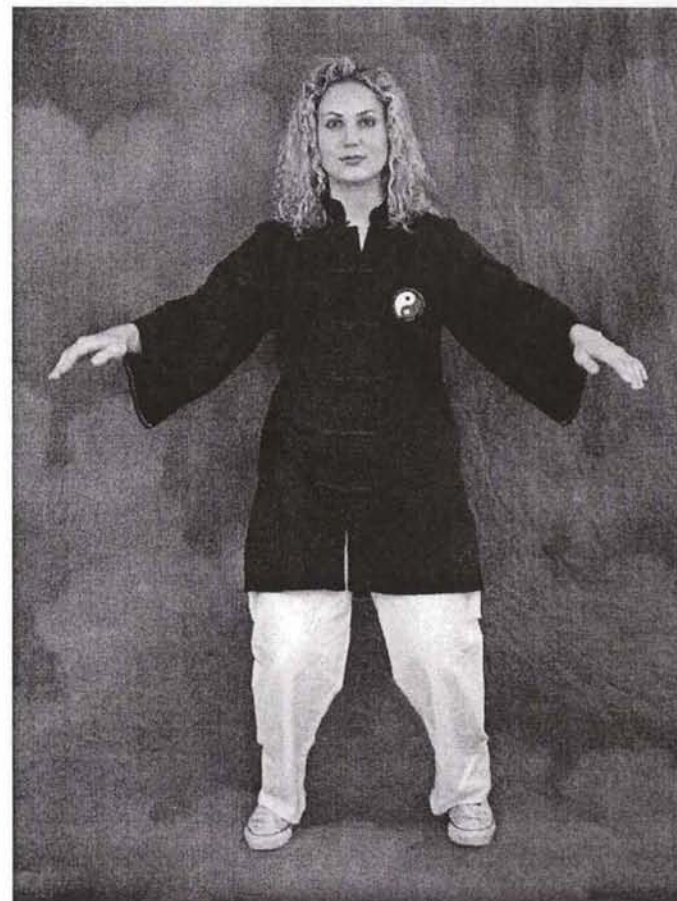
As you inhale, slowly begin to rise in your stance. In harmony with your rising body, raise both arms together as if you are lifting a large ball in front of you—maintain the soft curve of your arms. Continue to rise until your fingertips are at eye-brow level.



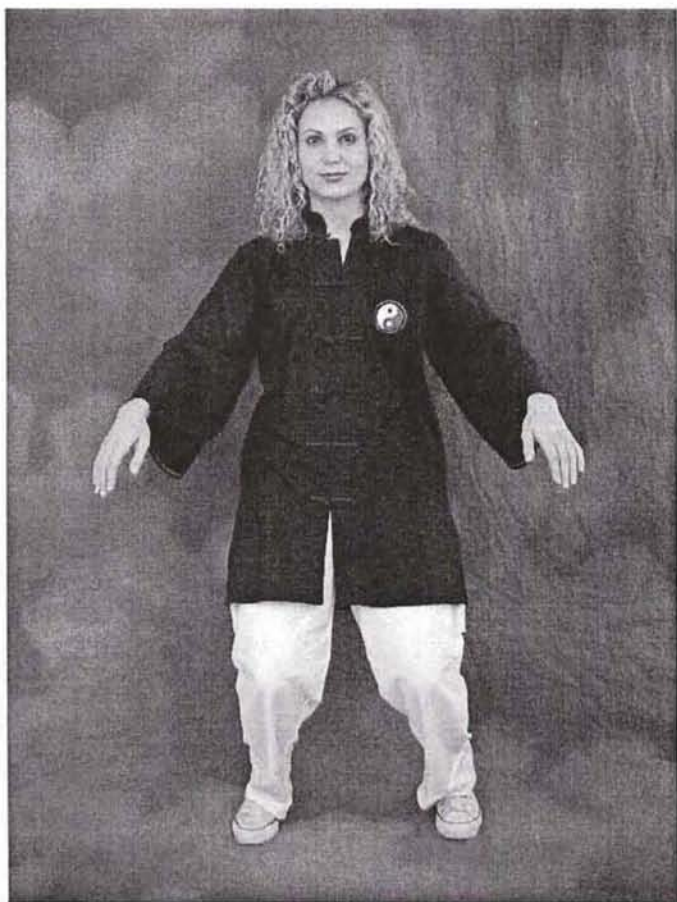
Still inhaling, pull your arms apart evenly and gently as you straighten your legs the rest of the way. (Take care not to lock your knees.)



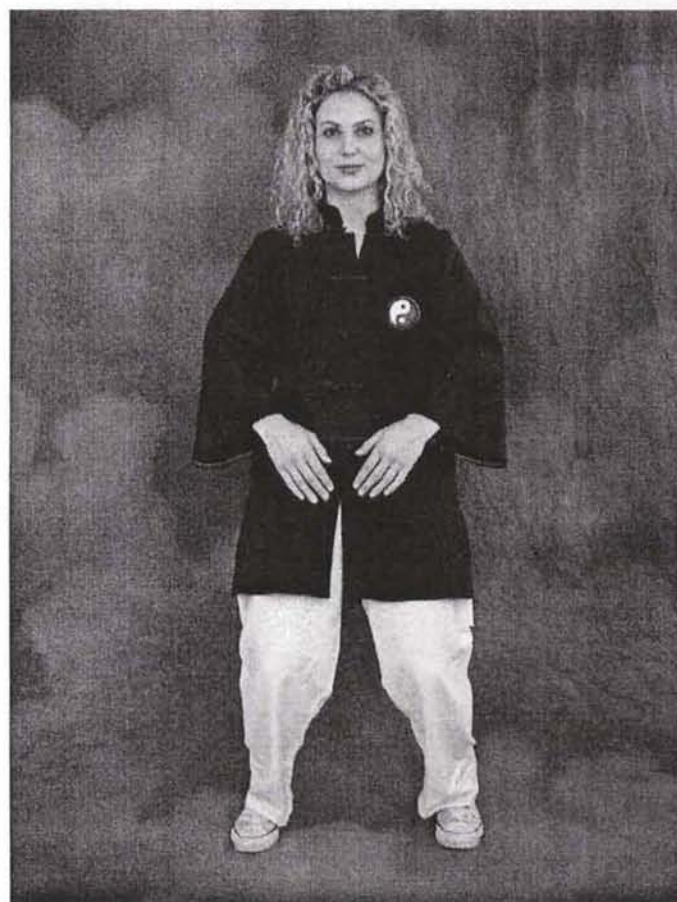
Once your arms are open just past the width of your shoulders, turn your palms to face down. Begin exhaling.



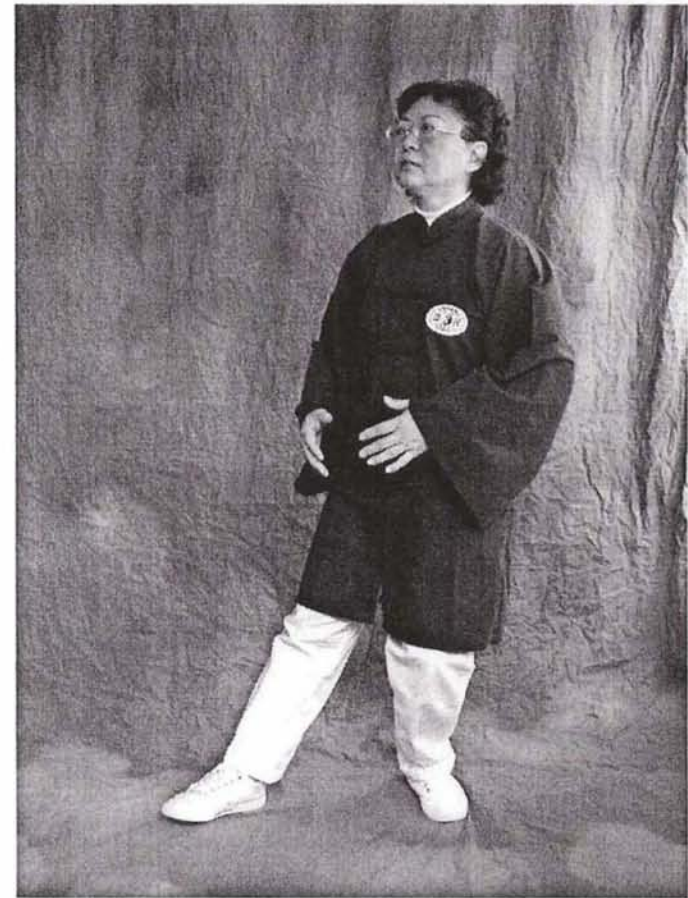
Continue to exhale and sink your body as your arms curve and sink downward—palms facing the floor.



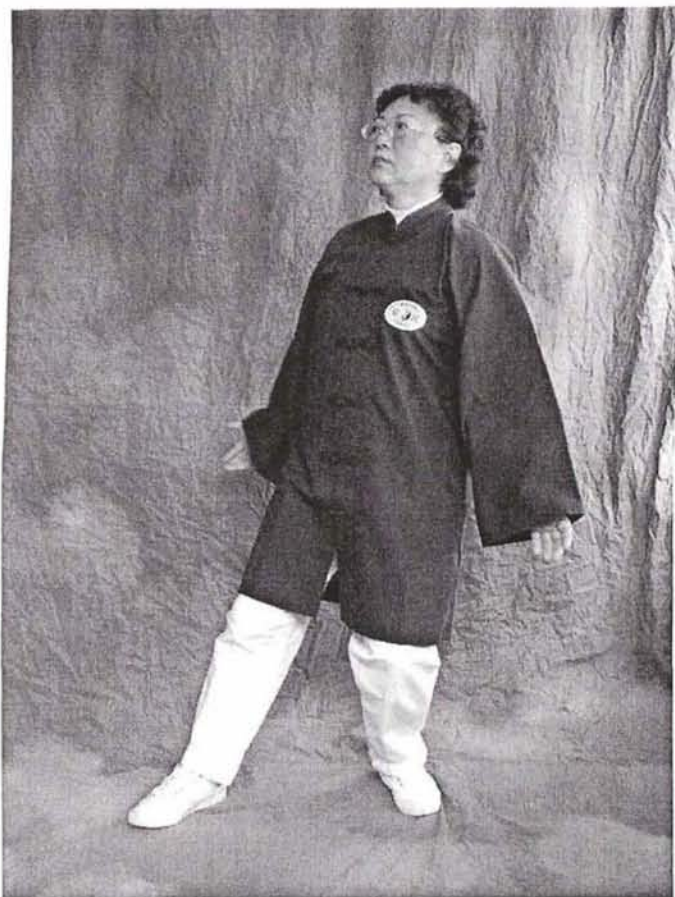
As your arms reach the bottom of their arc, turn your palms to face behind you. Continue to sink in your stance.



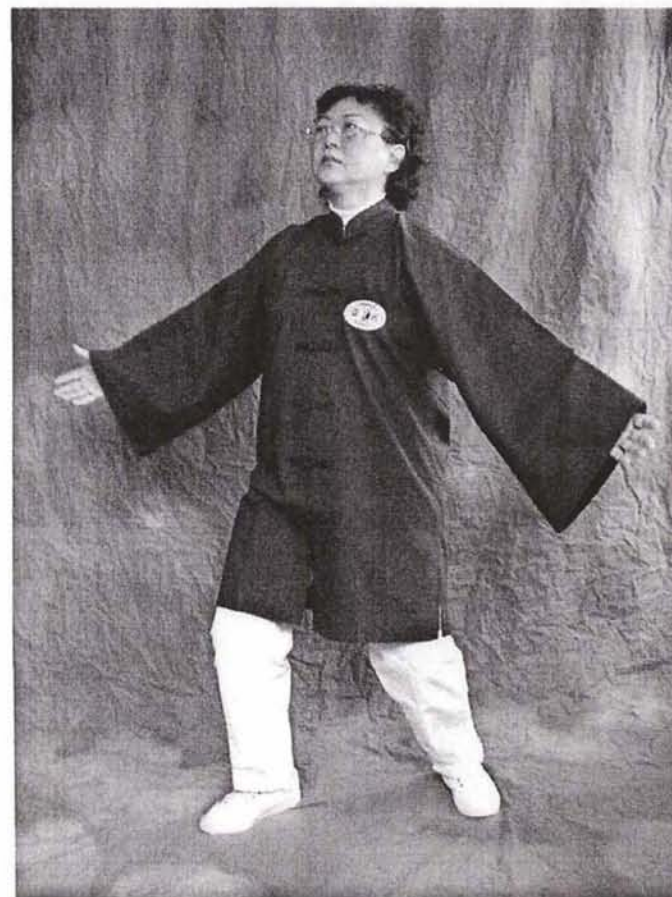
As you finish sinking and exhaling, draw your hands together again in front of your lower abdomen. (Take care not to touch your hands to your body.) Repeat these steps as many times as you wish.



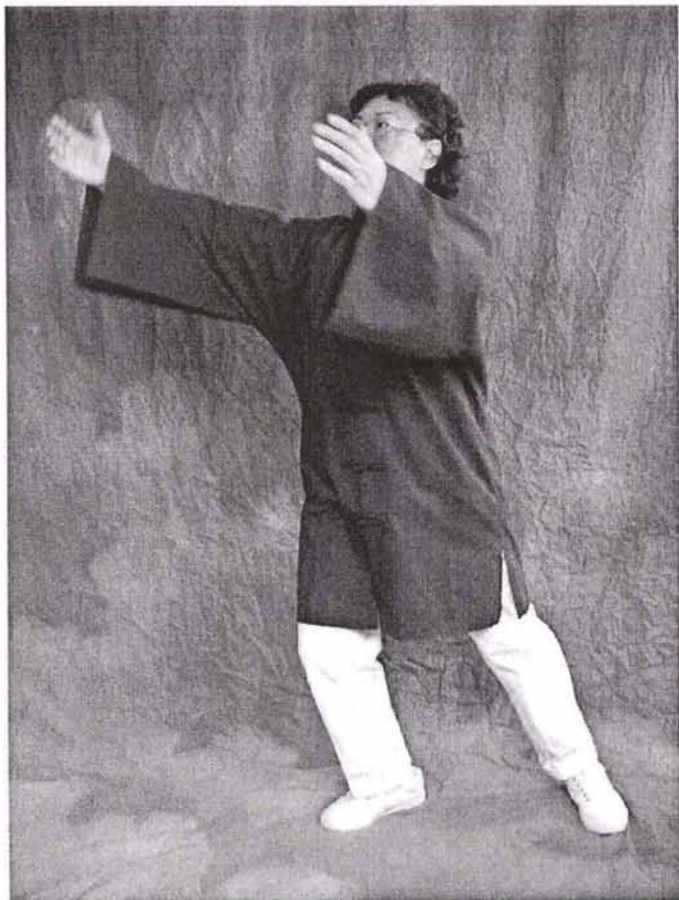
Starting in the same stance as the final step of Inward and Outward (see previous photo), turn one foot outward and to the side at a forty-five degree angle. As you do this, turn your whole body to face the same direction while shifting your weight to your rear foot. Keep your palms facing your lower abdomen.



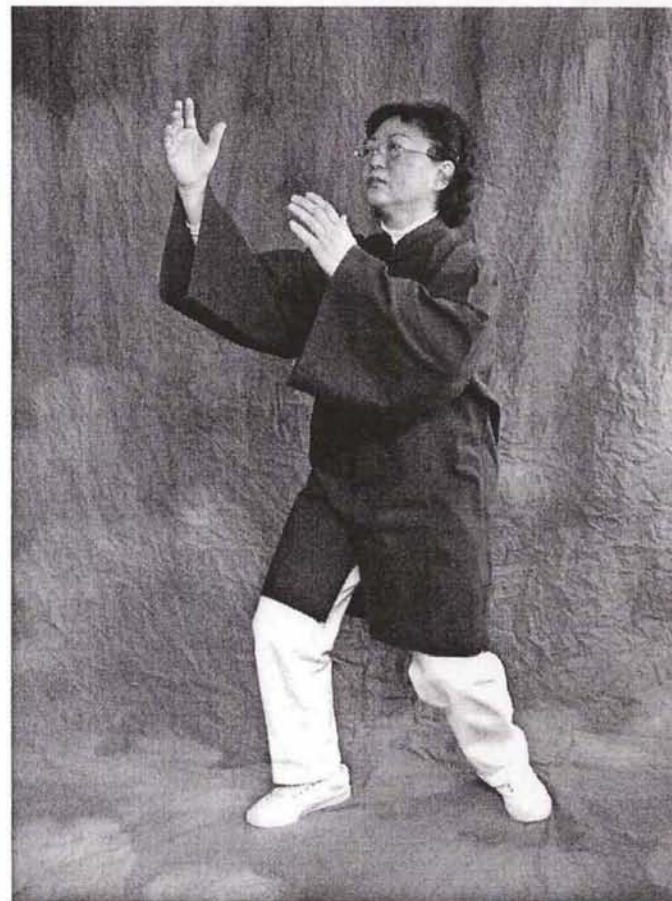
Draw your tailbone slightly back as you inhale and also draw both hands behind you in a sweeping motion. Keep your palms facing forward.



Continue to circle both arms back, then upward and all the way around to your front, as if you are gathering the energy of the whole universe. Continue inhaling. As your arms move forward, shift your weight forward as well. It will look like you are getting ready to give someone a big hug.



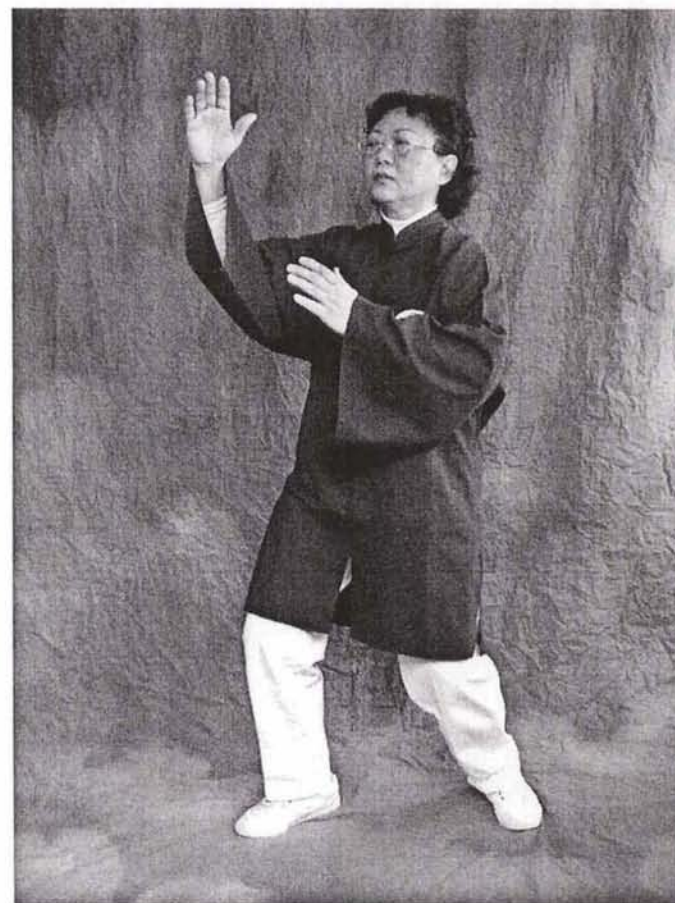
When both arms are in front of you, lift the arm that corresponds to your front foot somewhat higher and farther forward. Allow your opposite arm to remain a bit lower. Remember to keep your whole body relaxed.



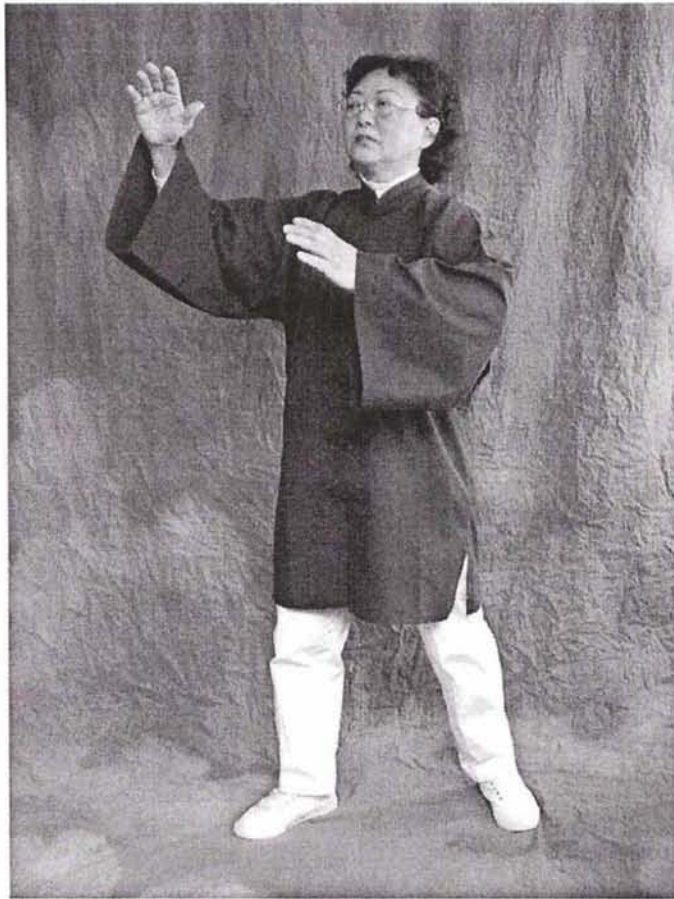
As you exhale, drop both elbows and sink your body. At the same time, draw your arms backward and downward toward your abdomen just a bit. Be sure that the arm that is raised and forward corresponds with the foot that is forward; the arm that is lower and closer to you corresponds with your rear foot.



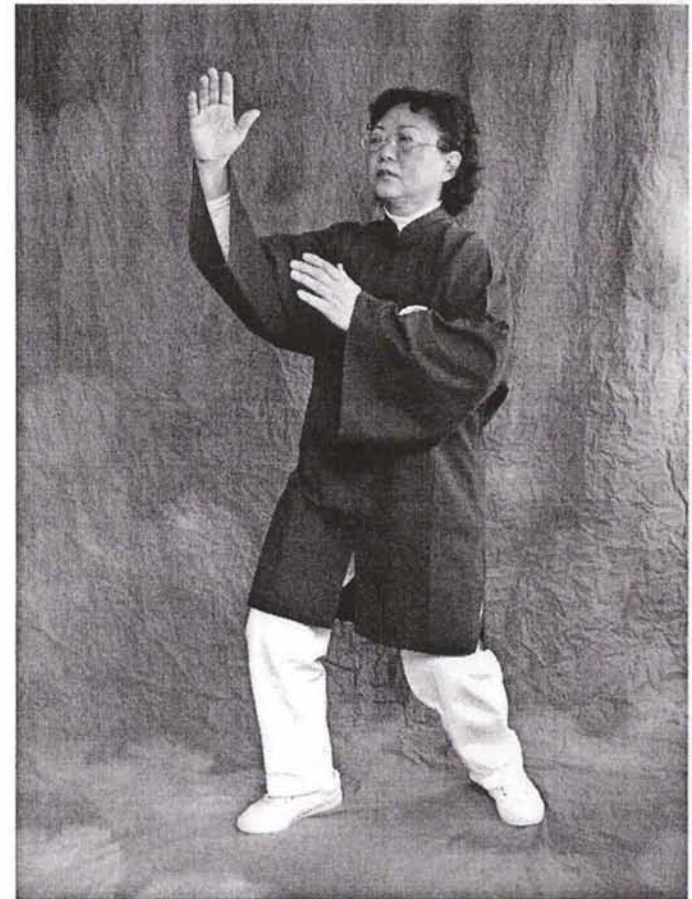
Inhale as you shift forward and upward just a little bit. Extend your arms slightly but you leave your elbows dropped.



Exhale and settle your weight between your two feet, with more weight on your back foot. Directly line up the center of the palm of your lower hand with the inner elbow of your opposite arm. Keep these two points lined up throughout the remainder of the meditation exercise.

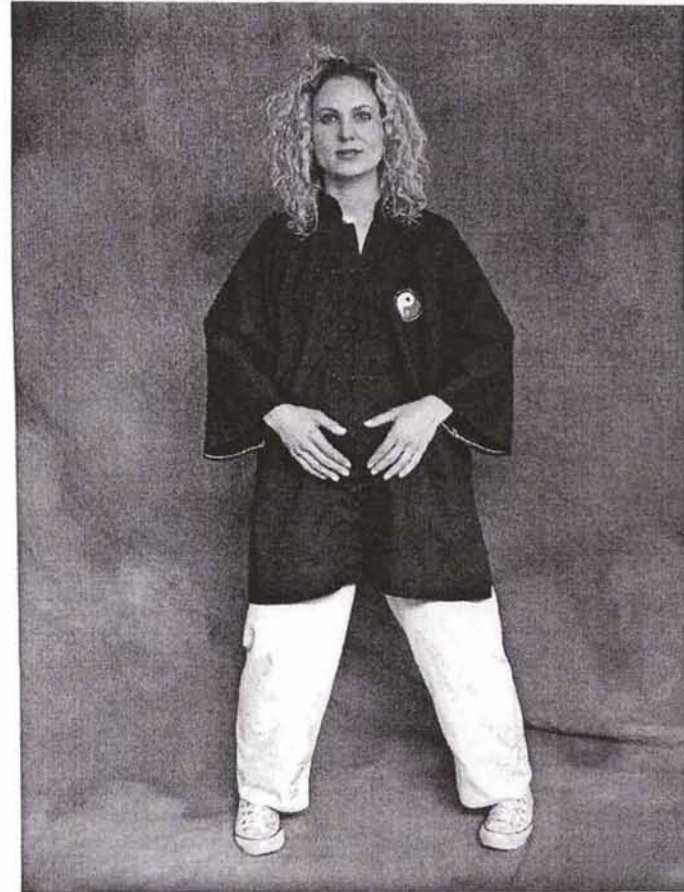


Keeping this posture, inhale and rise slightly while you widen the space between your palm and elbow. Open and separate your arms as if you were playing an accordion. Even though your arms move farther apart, remember to keep the center of your palm lined up with the opposite elbow.

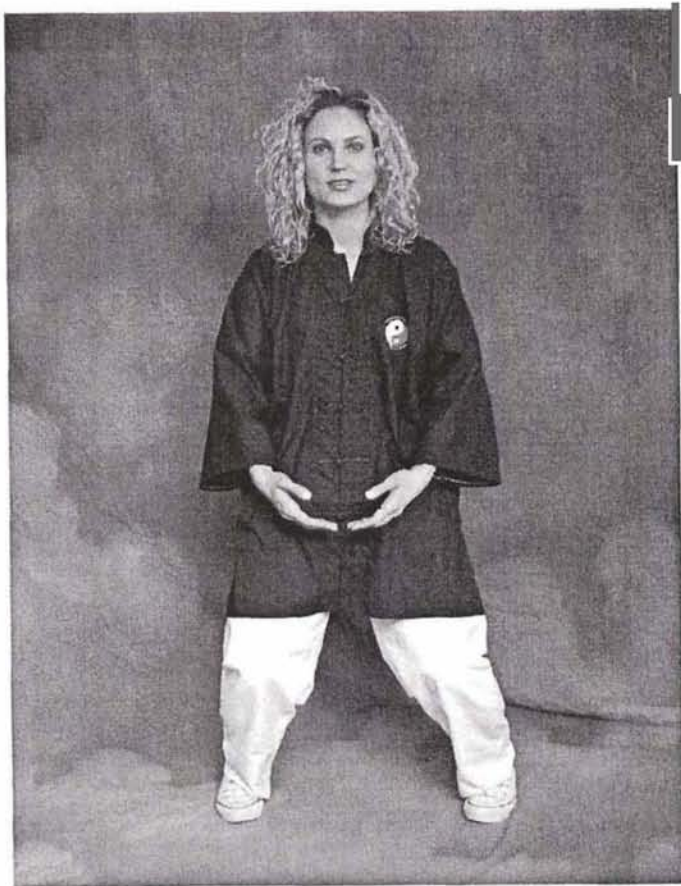


Exhale as you sink in your stance and contract the space between your palm and elbow, drawing your arms closer together again. Repeat this expansion and contraction, rising and sinking, inhaling and exhaling, for as long as enjoyable, then try the other side.

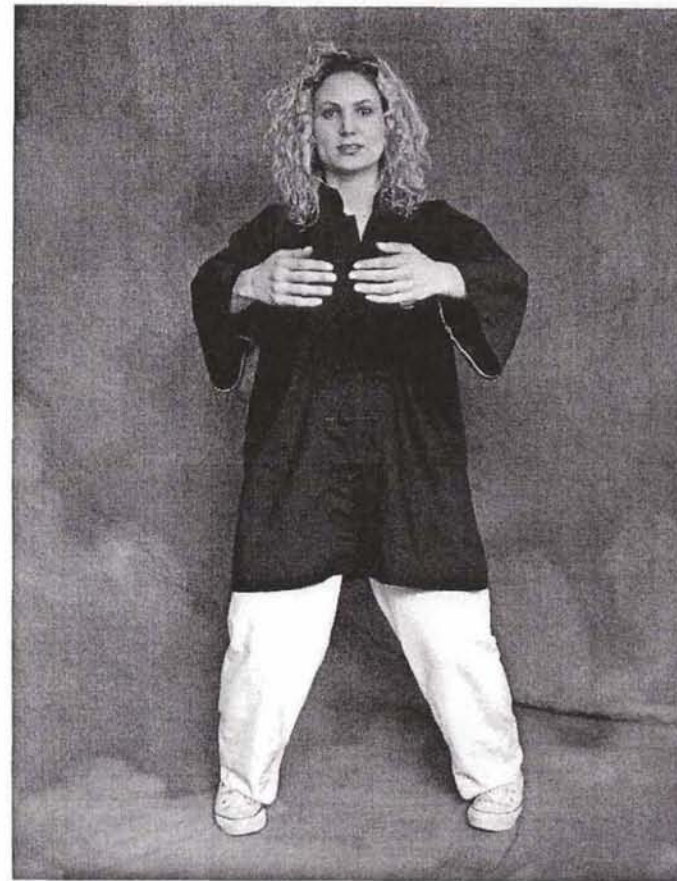
Taichi Stance



Begin with your feet shoulder-width apart and your toes pointed slightly inward. Without touching your body, place your hands in front of your lower abdomen. Point your fingertips inward and downward. Gently bend your knees and sink your tailbone.



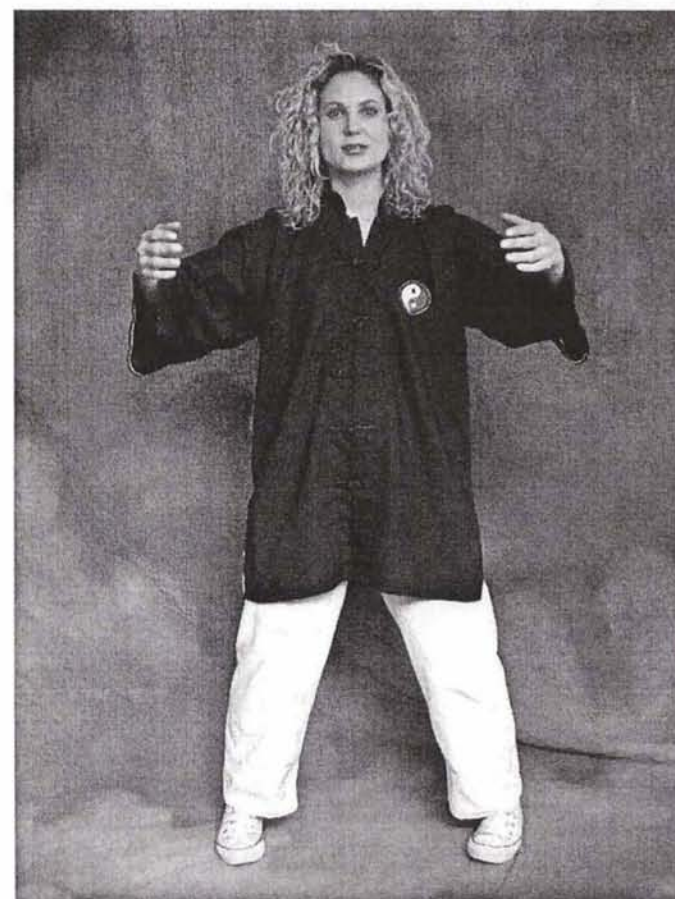
Sink a little in your stance as you turn your palms face-up, just as you did for Inward and Outward.



Begin inhaling. As you slowly straighten your legs to raise your body, harmoniously lift your arms to the level of your lower chest. (Remember never to rise so high as to lock your knees.)



Exhale and sink, maintaining your arms at the same level. It should look as if you are hugging a tree or a big ball in front of you.

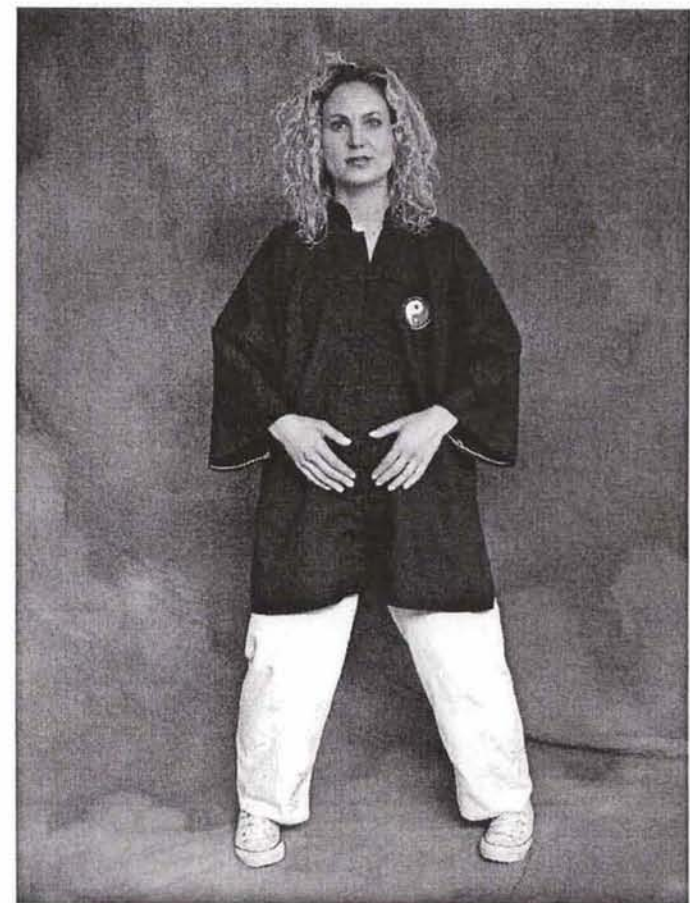


As you inhale, imagine that the ball you are embracing is growing larger as it also helps to push your arms apart. As you inhale and gently part your arms, also rise in your stance.



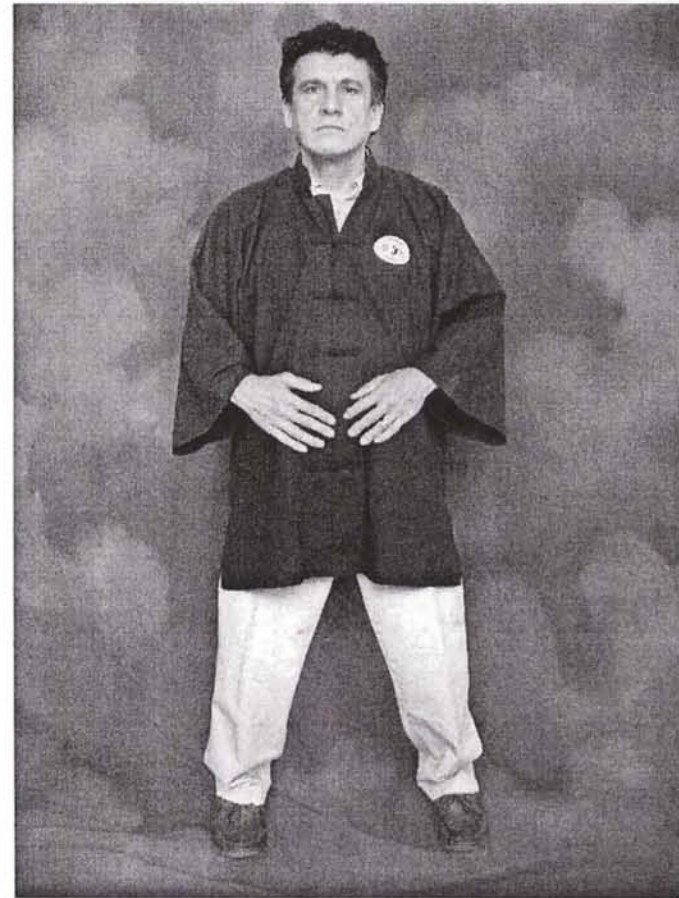
As you exhale, gently sink your body again and bring your arms simultaneously back together in front of you. (Remember, line-up your fingertips, but make certain that they do not touch.)

Continue to inhale, rise and open, then exhale, sink and close. Repeat as many times as you like.

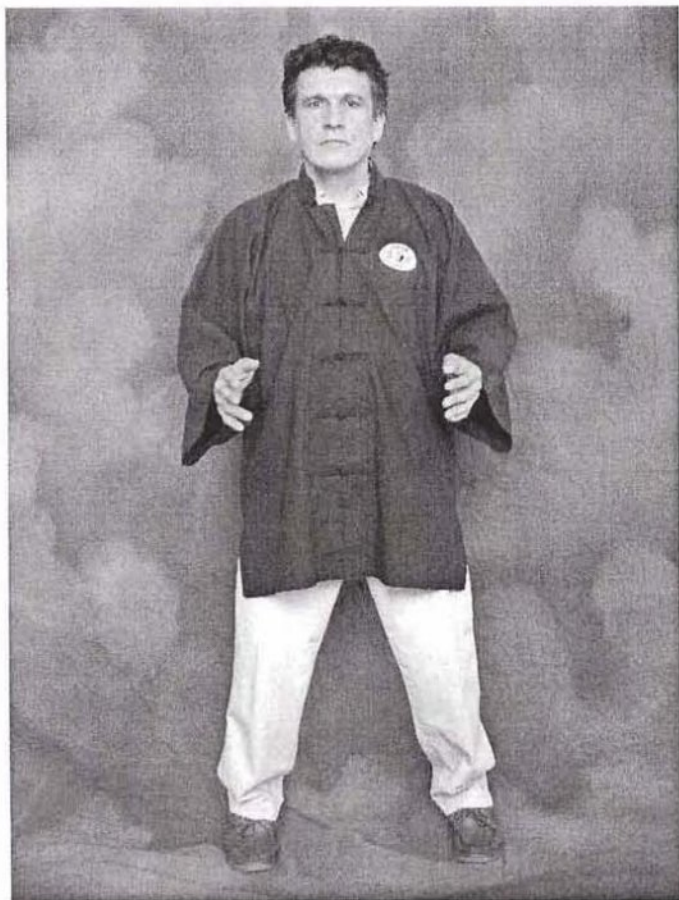


When you are ready to finish, gently drop your arms down and your hands slowly back toward your lower abdomen as if you were pushing that ball of energy inside of you. Take care not to touch your hands to your body.

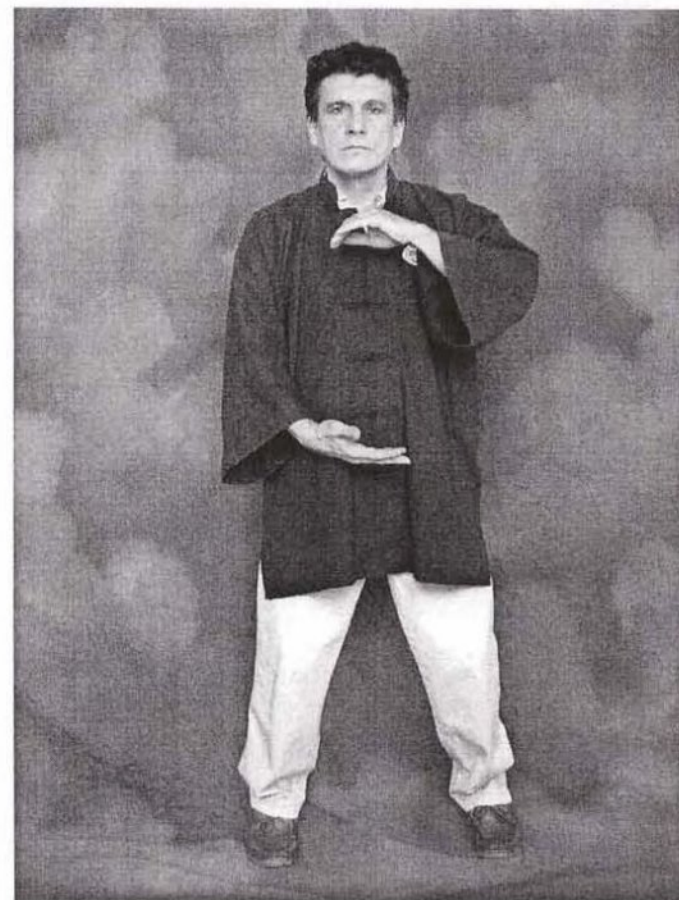
Turning Taichi Ball



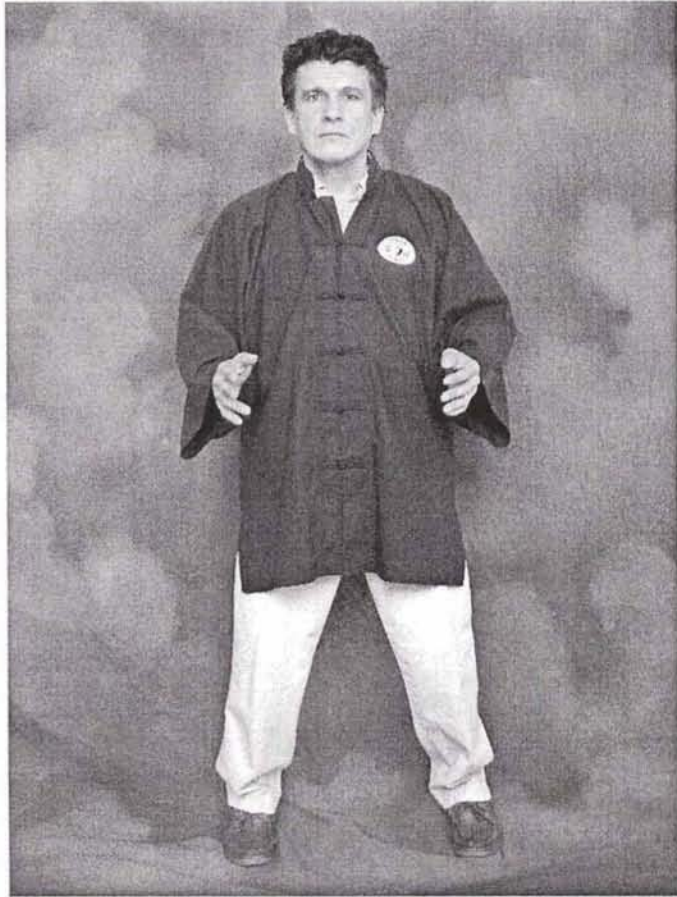
Begin with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed slightly inward, and your knees softly bent. Place your hands in front of your lower abdomen—remember not to touch your hands to your body.



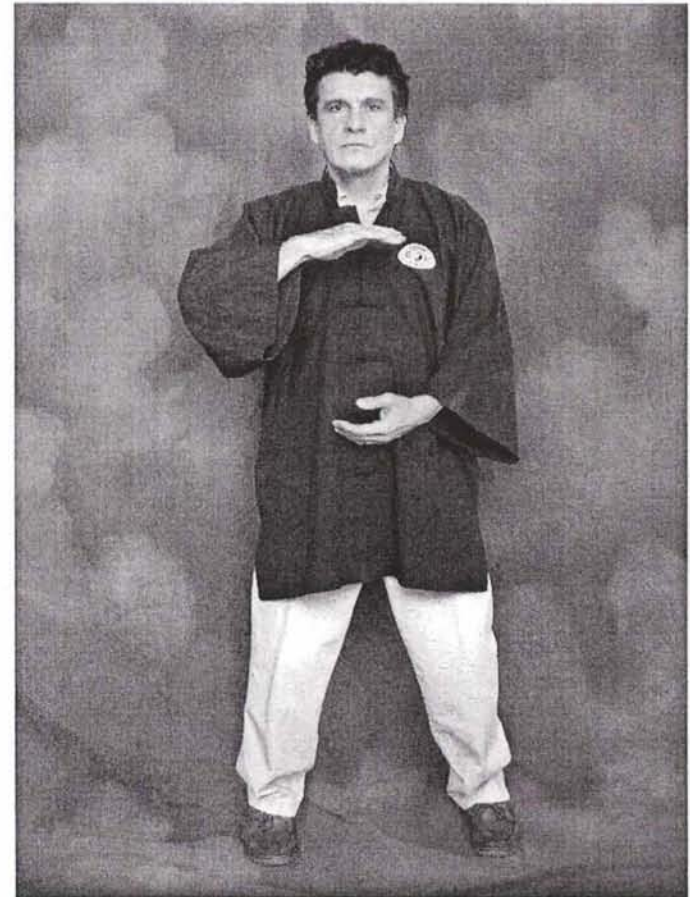
Inhale while you raise and open your hands in front of your stomach until the center of your palms face each other. Imagine you are holding a big invisible ball in front of you. Try to line up the center-point of your right palm with the center-point of your left palm. Then exhale.



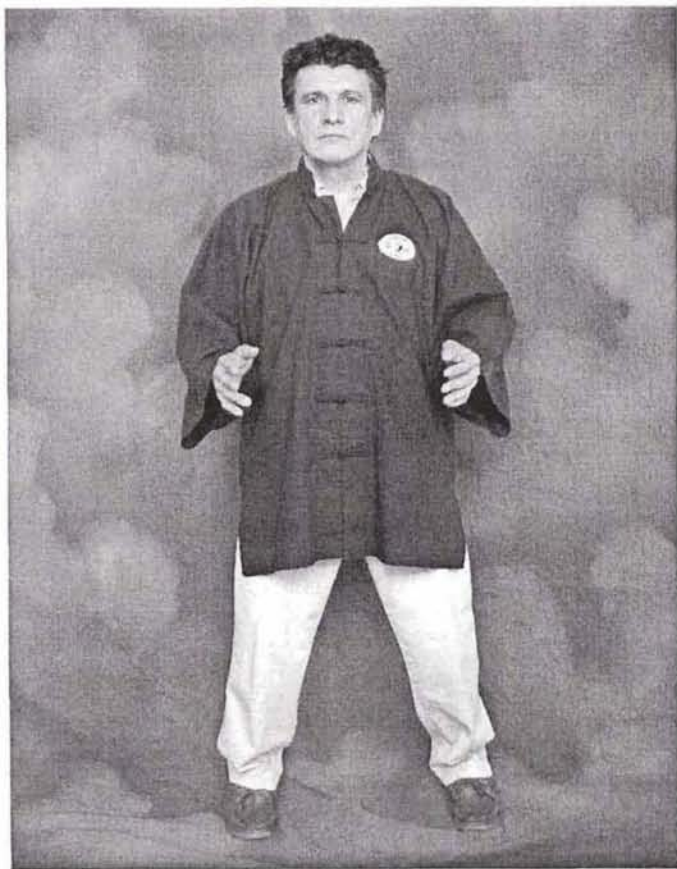
Now you're ready to turn your ball. First, inhale and turn the ball clockwise until your left hand is on top of the ball, and your right is cradling it from underneath. Remember to keep the center of your palms continuously lined up, and keep your ball the same size as you turn it.



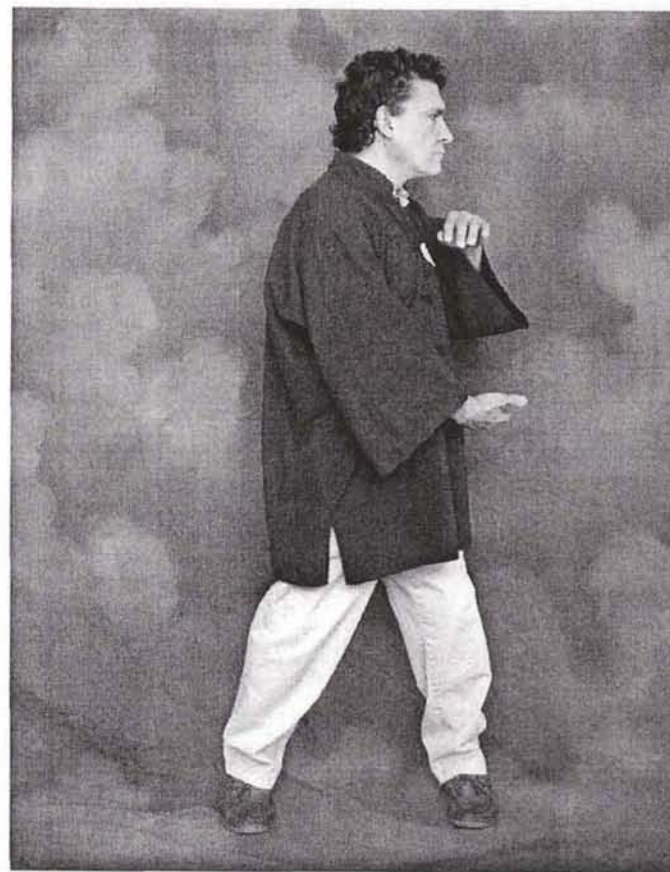
Exhale and return your ball to the horizontal position.



Next, inhale and turn your ball counter-clockwise so that your right palm is on top of the ball, and your left hand is cradling the imaginary ball from below.

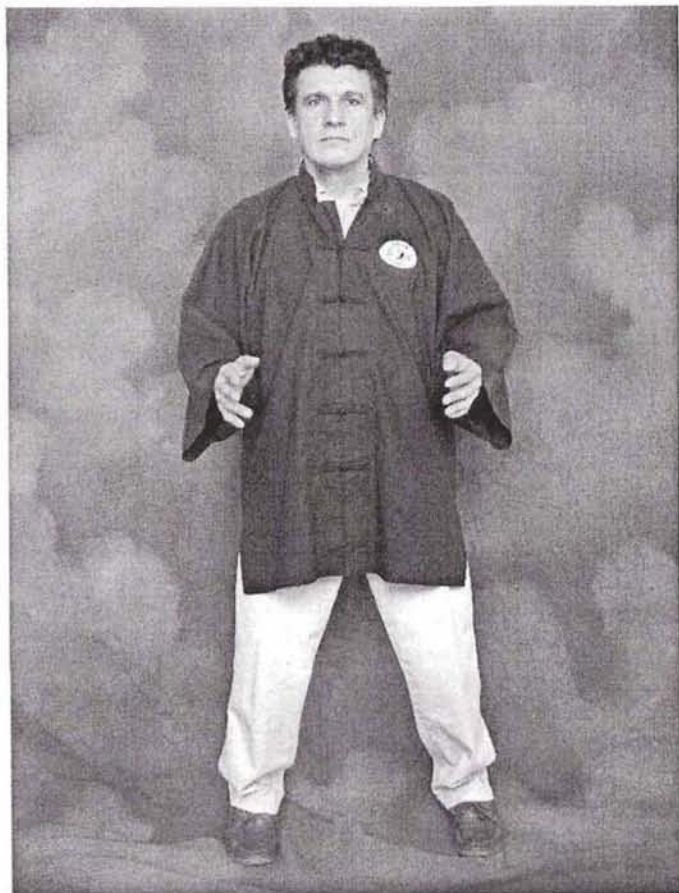


Return your ball to the horizontal position as you exhale. You can repeat this exercise facing forward for as long as you like.

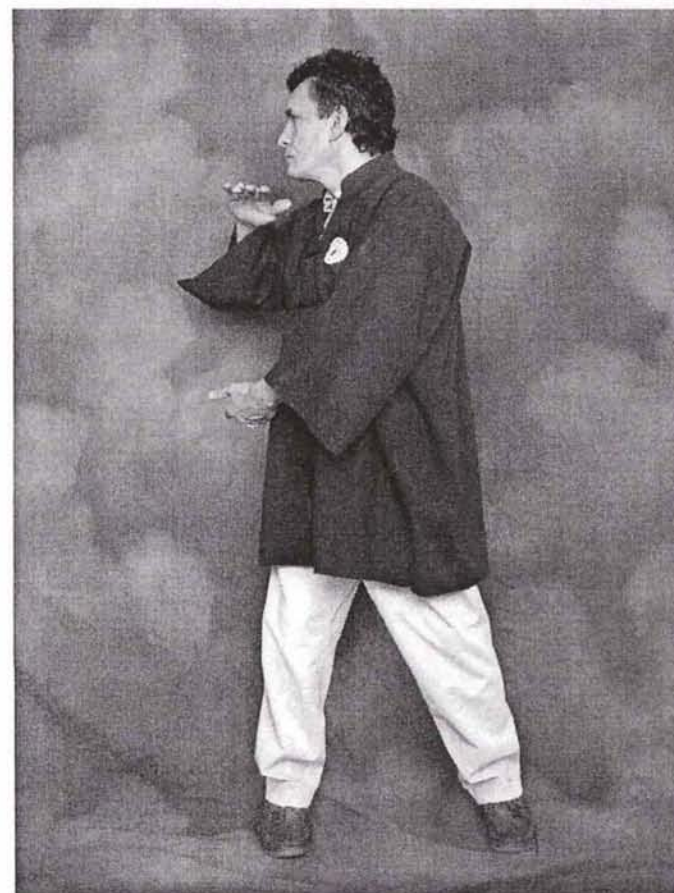


When you feel comfortable, you can also turn your body as you turn the ball.

As you inhale and turn your body to the left, turn the ball counter-clockwise so that your left hand is on top.



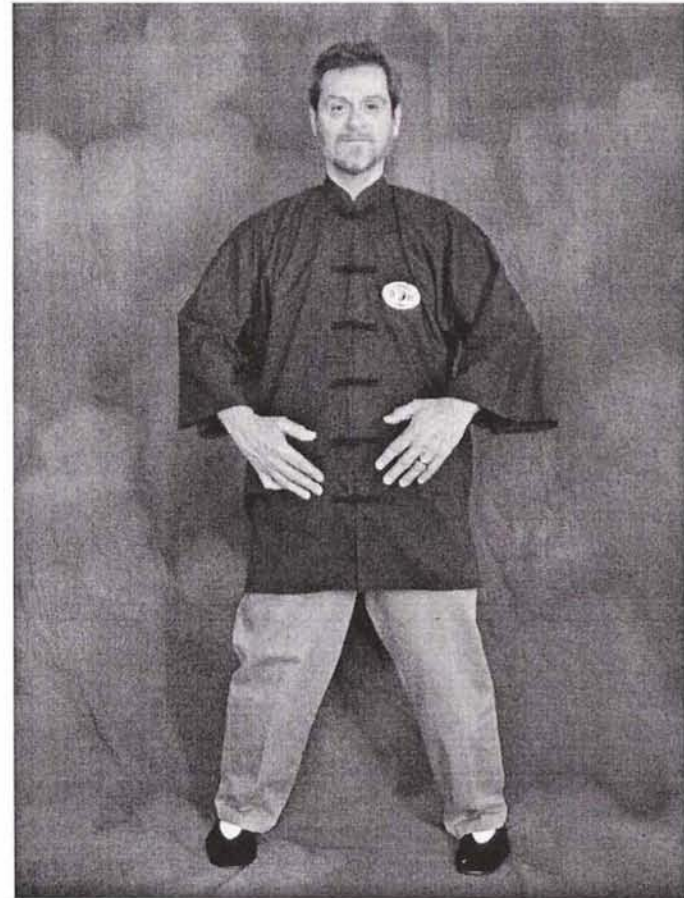
Return to center while you exhale.



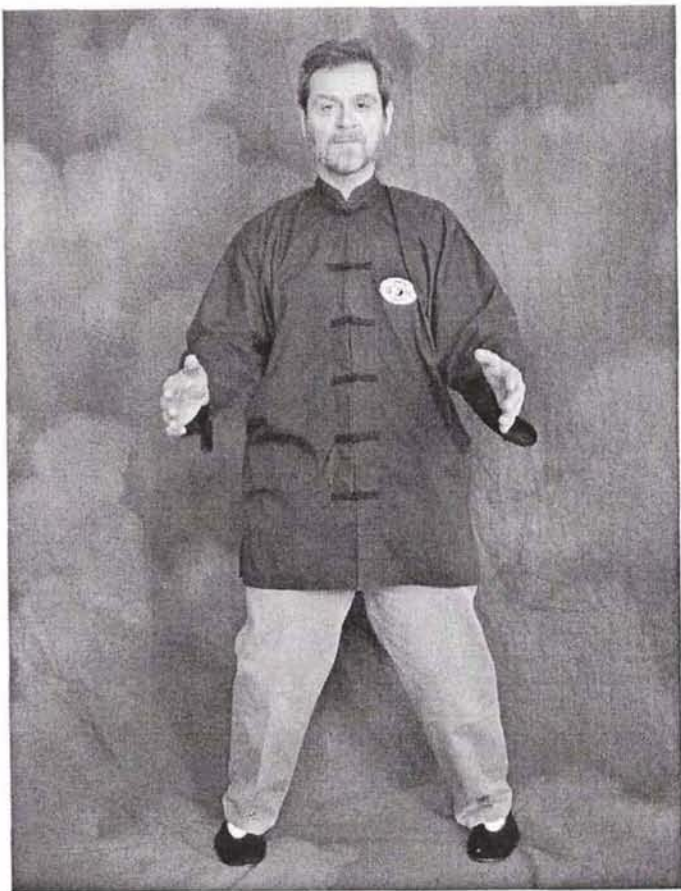
Now turn your body to the right while you inhale, turning the ball so that the right hand is on top.

Return to the center while you exhale. Repeat this as often as you like. At some point, it may actually feel as if you are holding a sphere of energy. That is a sign of newly-awakened Chi awareness.

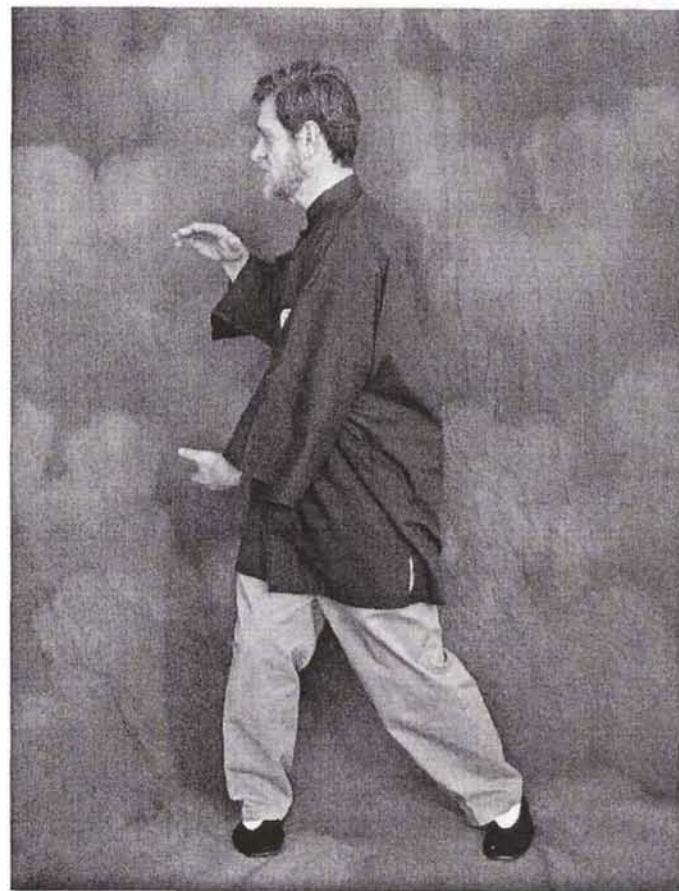
Twist Taichi Ball



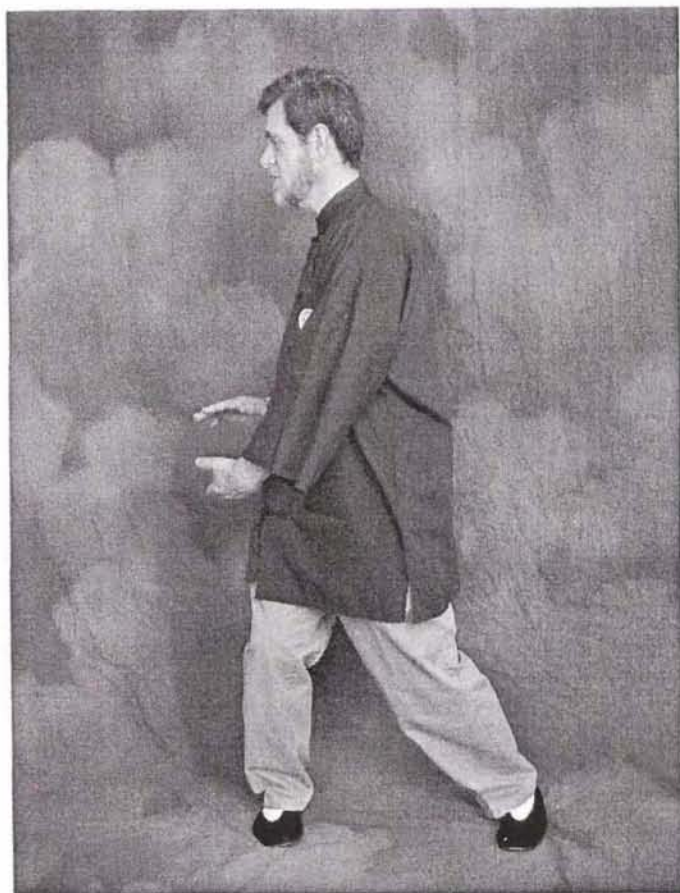
Begin with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed slightly inward, and hands in front of your lower abdomen. (As always, do not touch your palms to your body.)



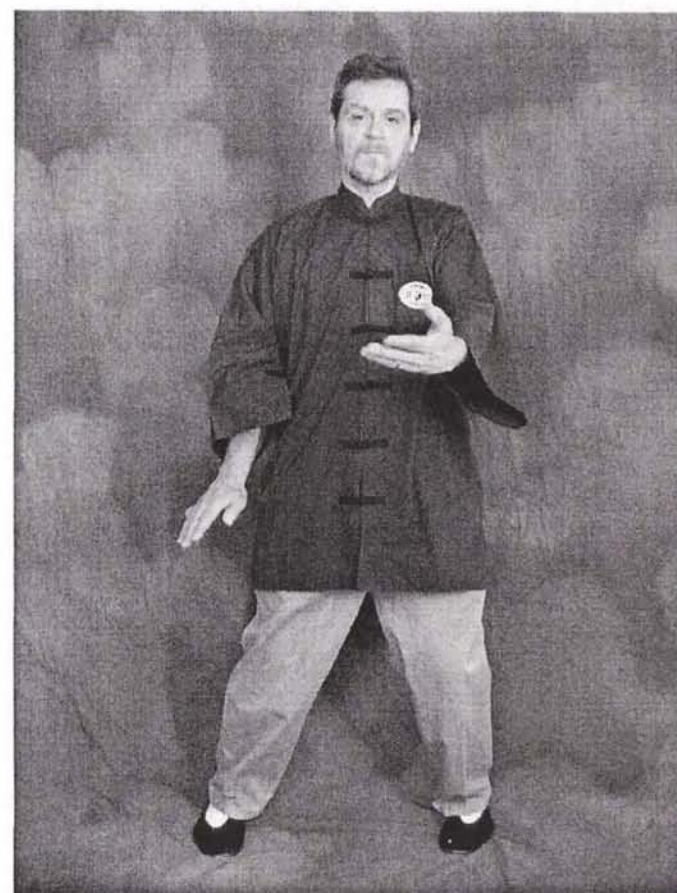
Inhaling, raise and separate your hands until you feel like you are holding an imaginary ball. Line up the center-point of your right hand with the center-point of your left hand—just like you did for Turning Tai Chi Ball. Then exhale.



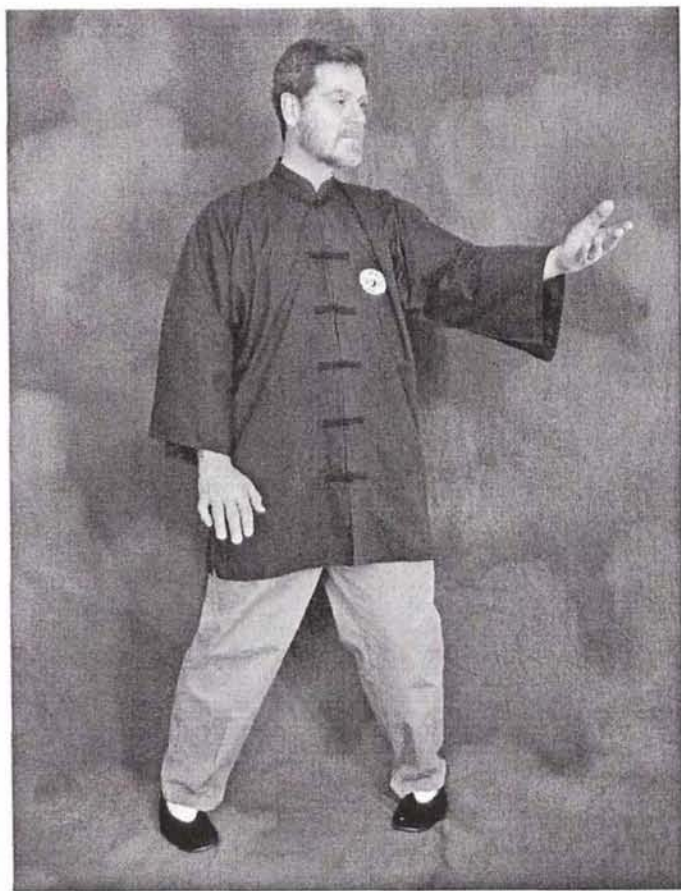
As you Inhale, turn to the right while turning your ball so that your right hand is on top and your left hand is underneath—the same way that you practiced in Turning Tai Chi Ball. Still try to feel the center-point of one palm line up with the other. Simultaneously shift your weight onto your right foot.



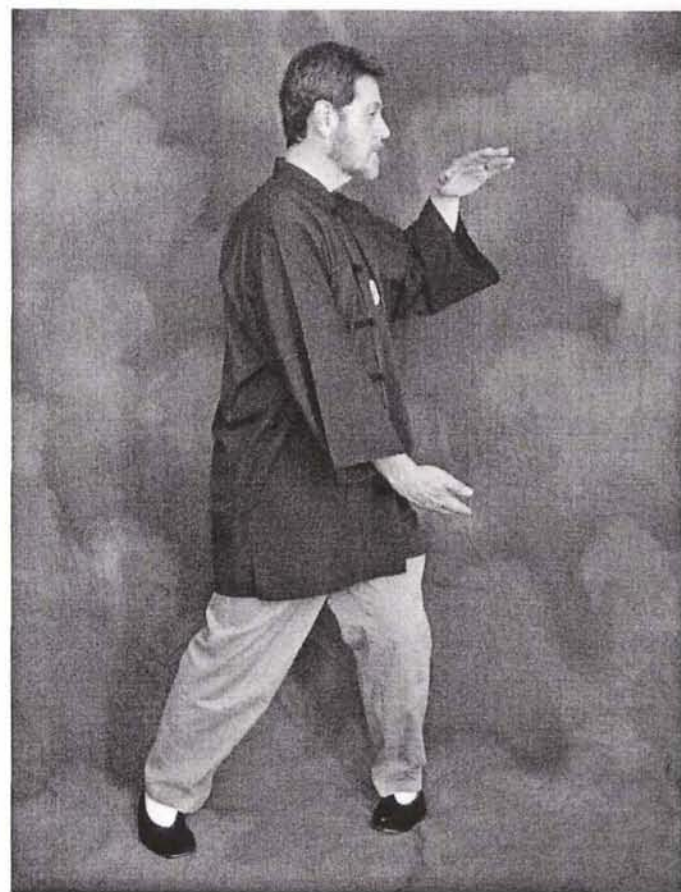
In this position, exhale and sink in your stance while dropping your right hand down to compress the Taichi ball against your other hand.



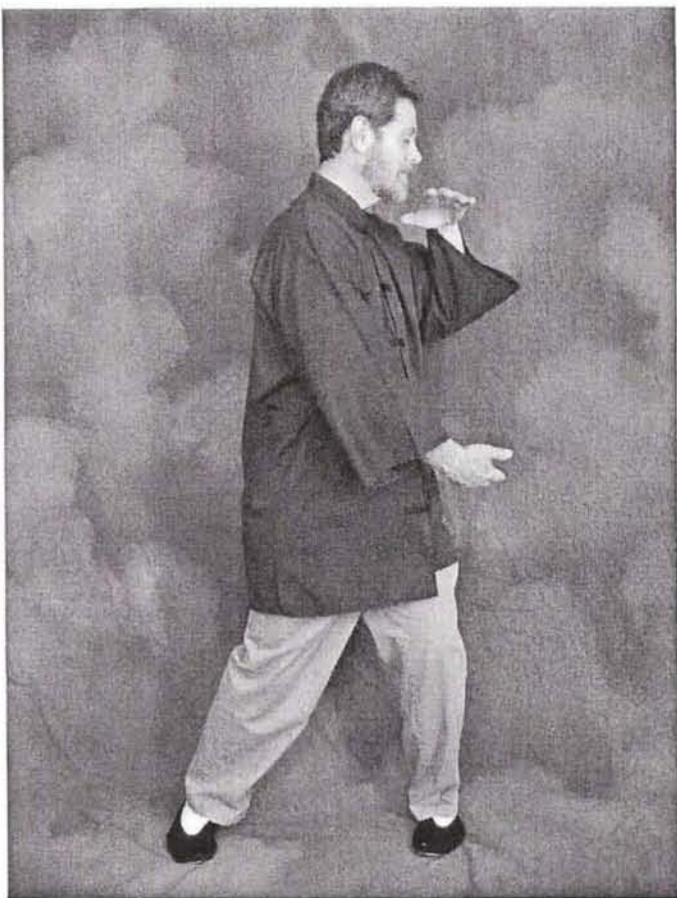
If you were compressing a real rubber ball, at some point the pressure would force the ball to squeeze and pop out from your grasp. Similarly, once you've compressed your Taichi ball, allow it to "pop out" as your right hand continues to push downward and your left hand sweeps in front of you at a forty-five degree angle.



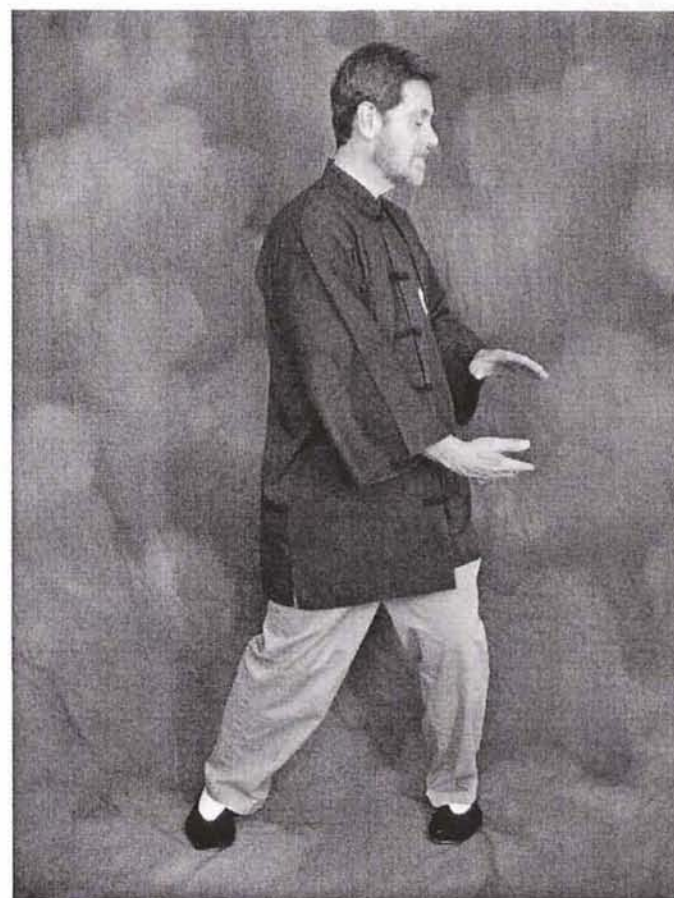
Continue to exhale. Allow your left hand to carry the ball as it floats up and around to the left side of your body. Harmoniously shift your weight to the left foot.



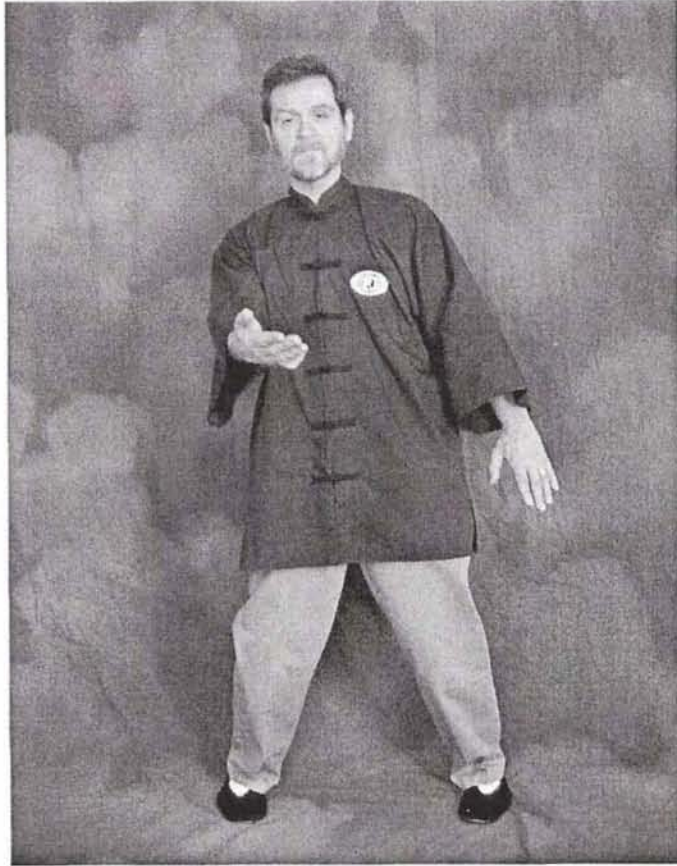
Keep turning all the way to your left. Begin to inhale as you bring your left hand back, around, and over in a smooth, even manner until it is on top of your ball. Simultaneously, as you turn your body, let your right hand gradually scoop until it rests underneath the ball.



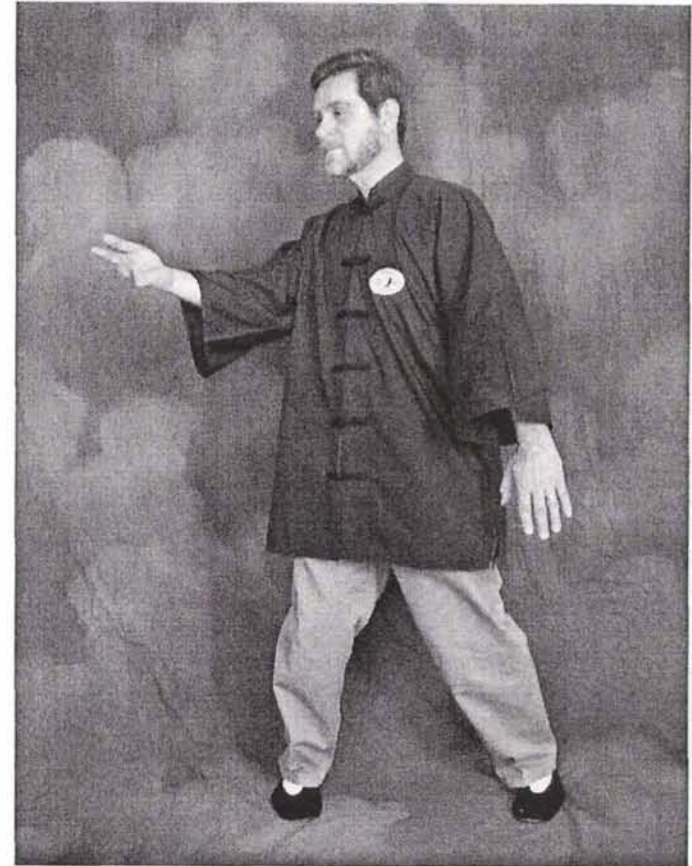
Once you have turned as far as you comfortably can, and your weight has shifted all the way to your left foot, then line up the center-point of each palm. Try your best to feel as though you are once again holding a ball between your hands.



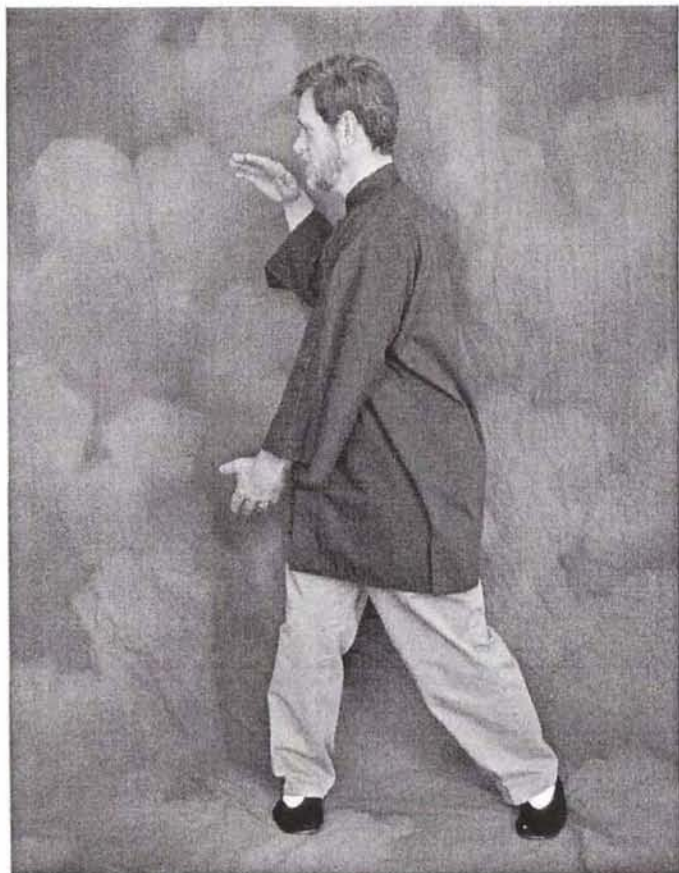
Begin exhaling as you sink in your stance and lower your left hand to compress the Tai Chi ball against your right hand.



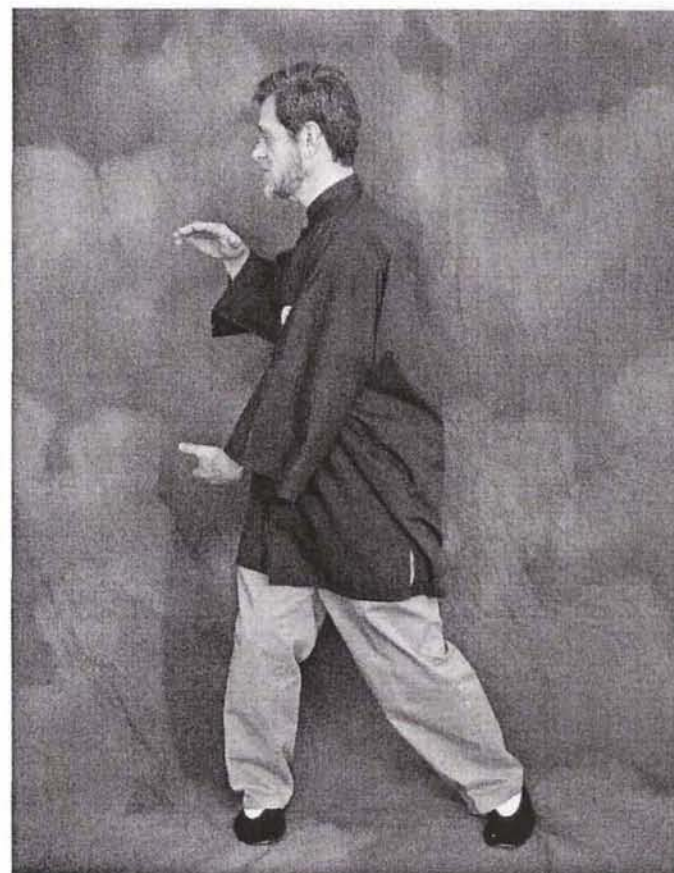
The ball will again flow in front of you at a forty-five degree angle as you turn your body to the right.



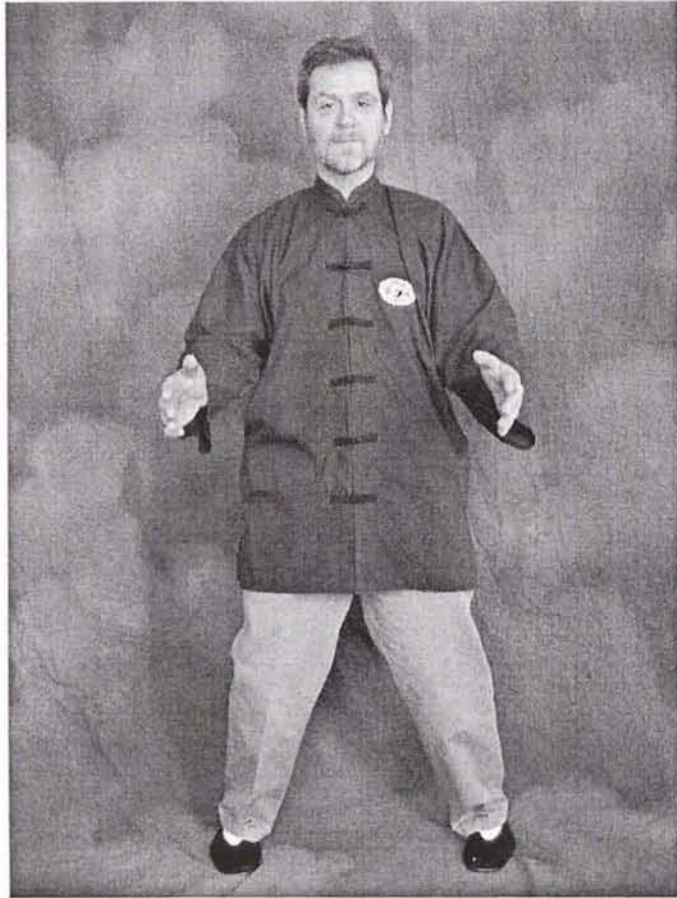
Turn your hands and arms with your body in a unified manner. Stay relaxed.



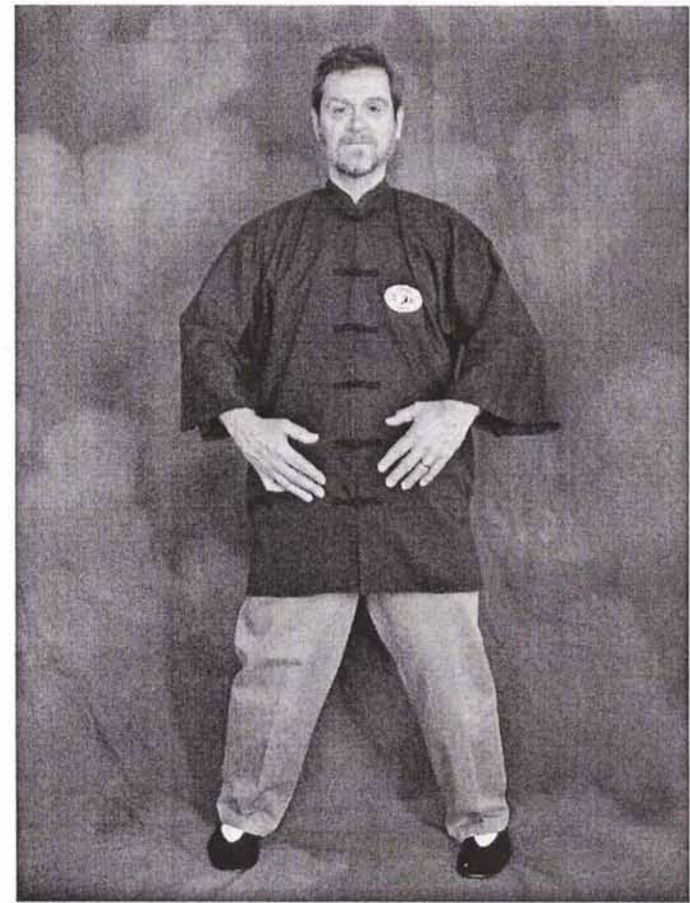
Inhale again as you roll your right hand over on top and scoop your left hand underneath.



Conclude your inhale, trying once again to feel as though you are holding a Tai Chi ball between each hand. You may repeat this exercise as many times as you like.

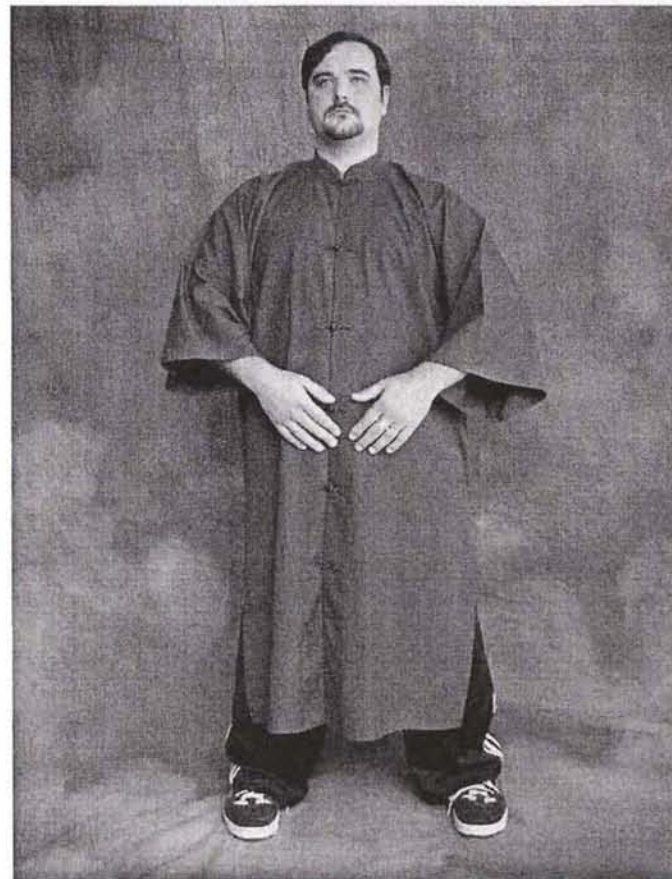


When you are ready stop, return your stance to center and your Tai Chi ball to the horizontal position.

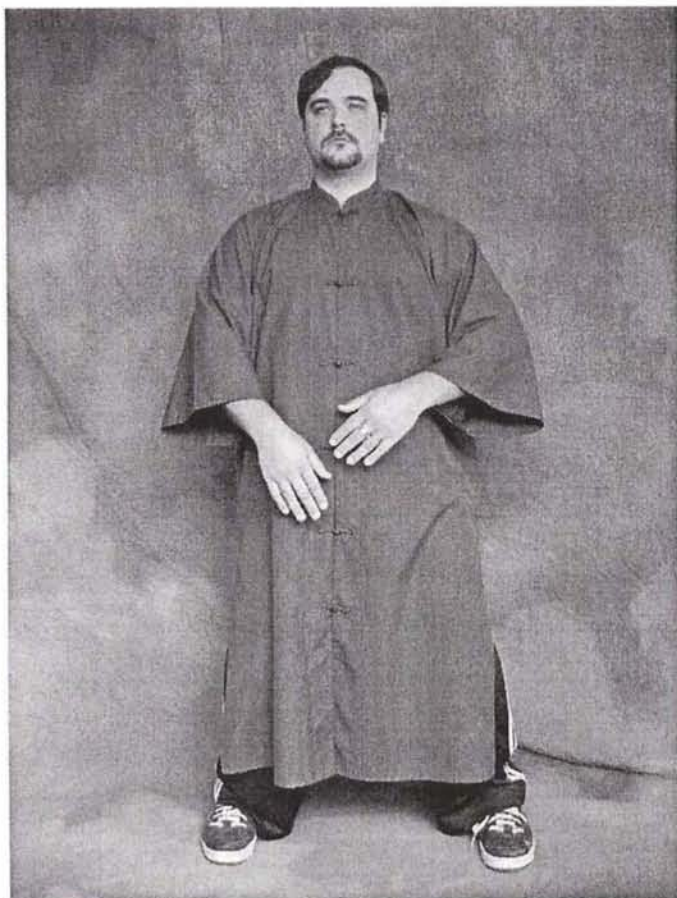


Slowly and smoothly replace your hands to their original position—resting in front of your lower abdomen—as if you are pushing that ball of energy back inside of you.

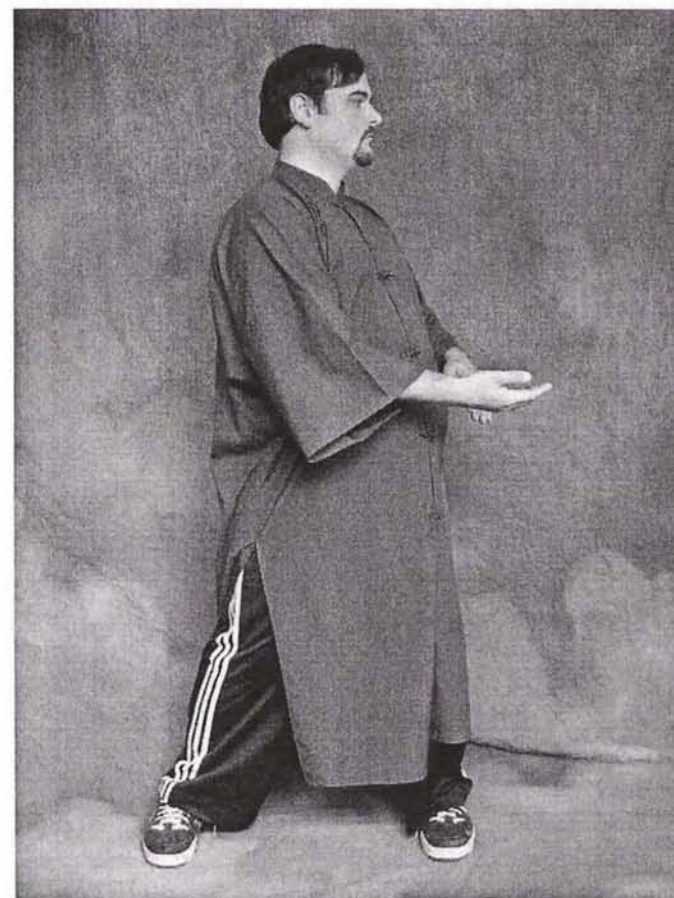
Single Whip and Split



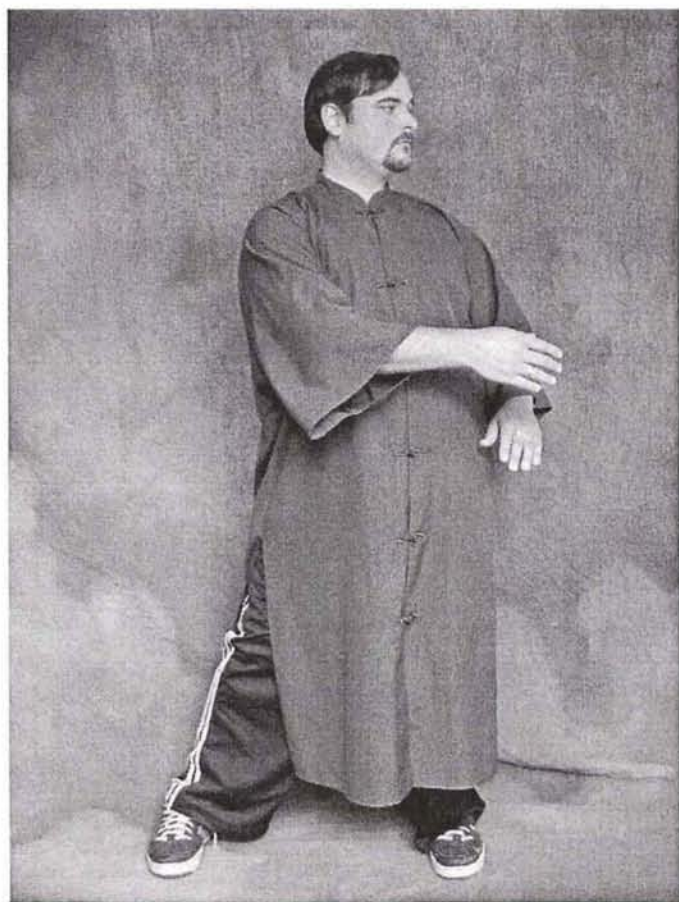
Begin with your feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed slightly inward, hands in front of your lower abdomen.



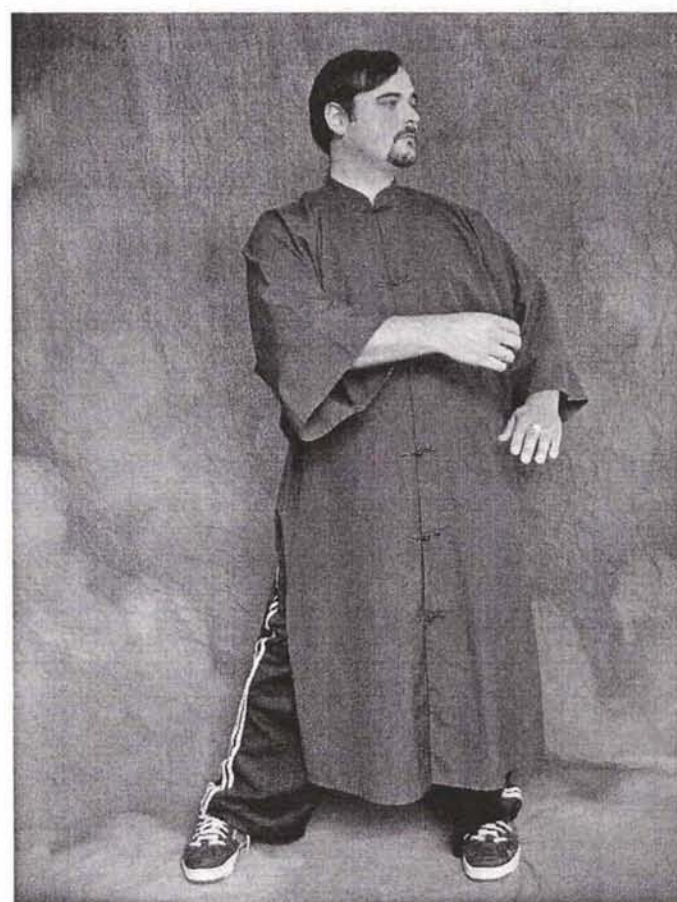
Exhale and shift your weight to the right and extend the right hand downward slightly.



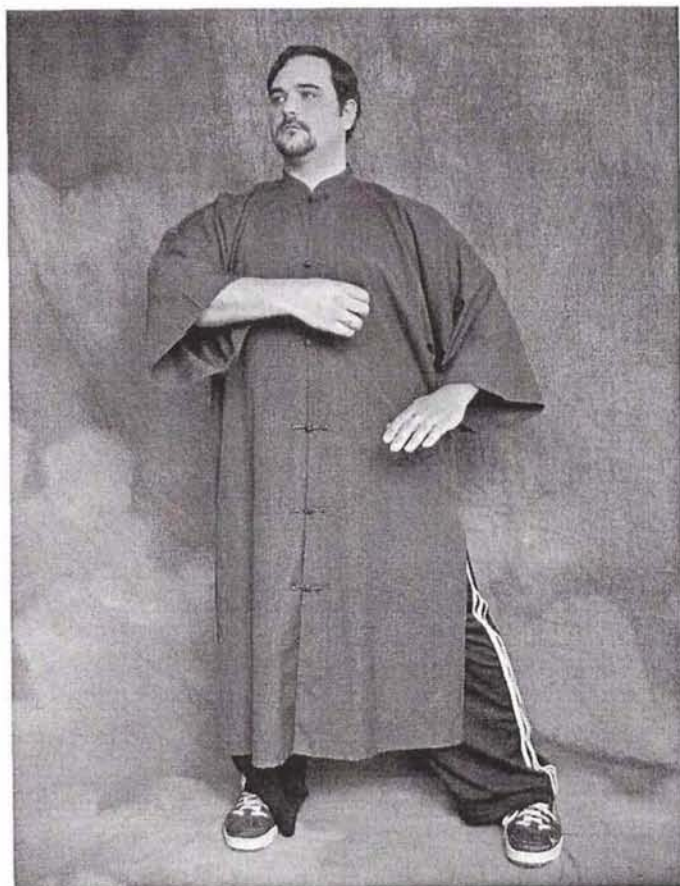
Shift your weight over to the left side while you inhale and scoop your right arm across the front of your body as if you are gathering energy. Your right palm faces upward. Also, turn your head to look in the direction of your reach.



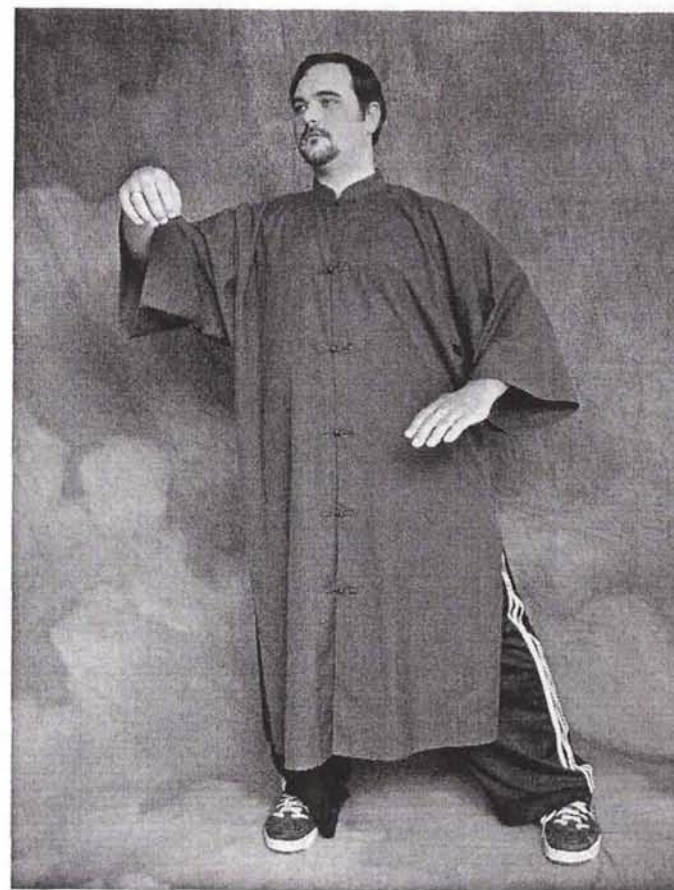
Continue to inhale. Shift your weight completely to your left foot. Then turn your torso to face forward again. Simultaneously turn your outstretched right hand so that your palm faces your body. Pretend as though you are about to pinch and pull a fine string of silk from a cocoon.



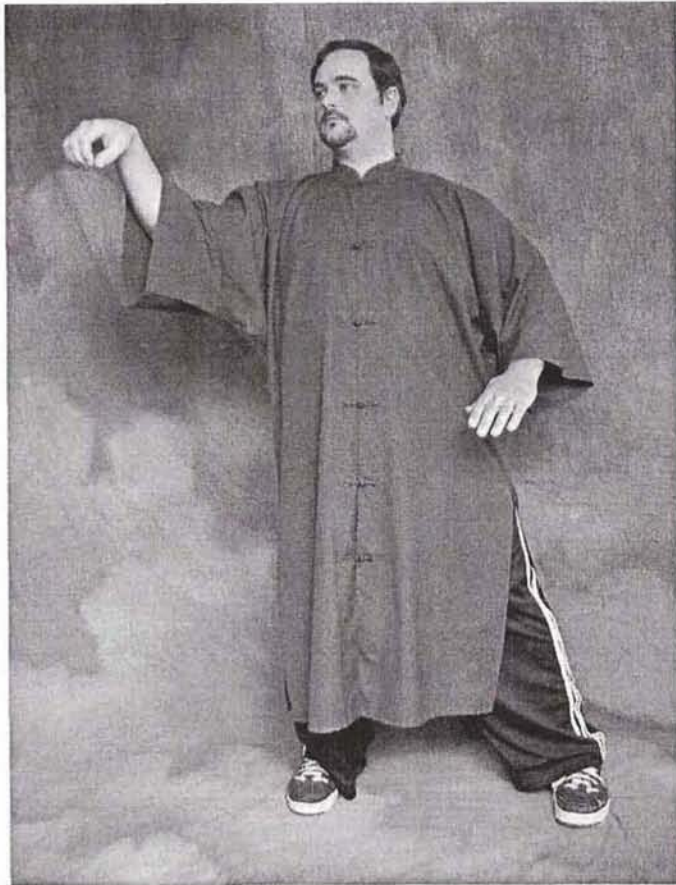
Slowly pinch your fingers and thumbs together until they almost touch, but not quite. At the same time you are pinching, square your torso to face forward.



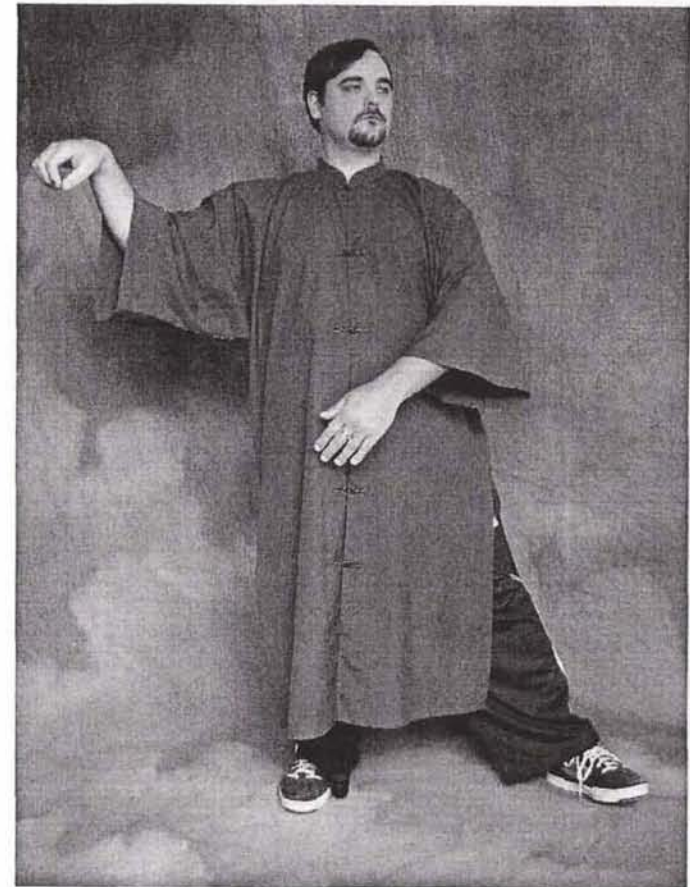
Begin exhaling slowly and shift your weight to your right foot. At the same time, pull your right arm back as if you were still pulling a string of silk. Create this motion by squaring your shoulders and shifting right. Also, turn your head to the direction of your pull. Keep your left arm relaxed and your left palm facing downward.



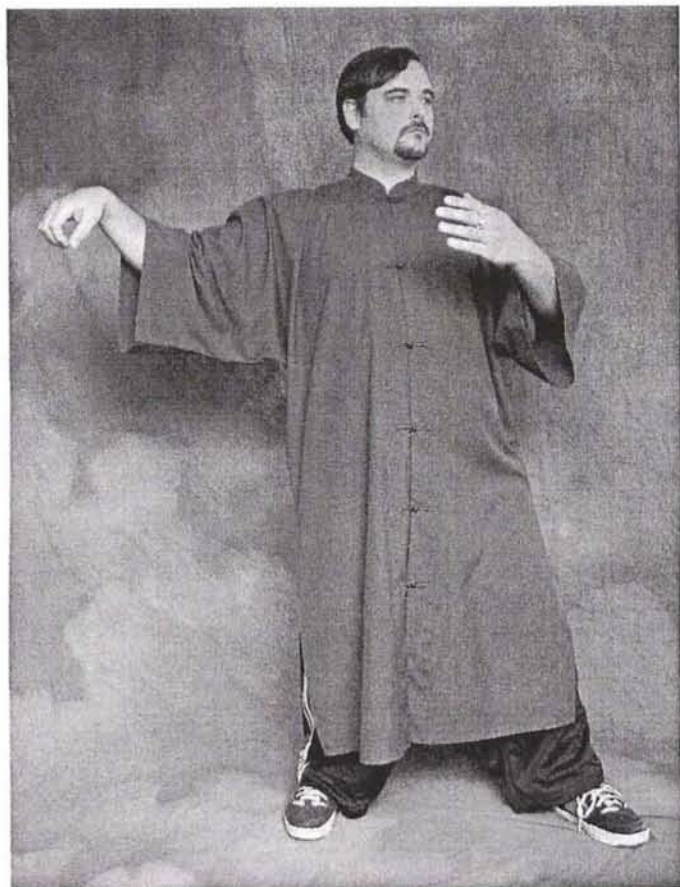
After pulling your shoulder back, extend your elbow up and to the side. Continue exhaling.



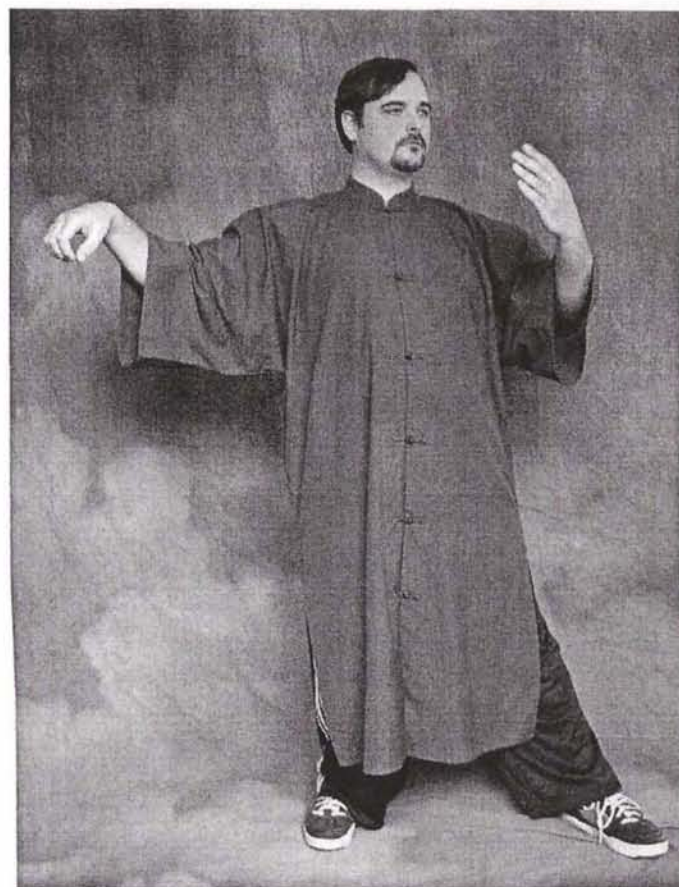
After extending your elbow, extend your wrist upward at a forty-five degree angle and outward at a forty-five degree angle. Leave a gentle bend in your wrist and let your thumb and index finger lightly pinch together. Pinch so lightly that you do not break your fine string of silk.



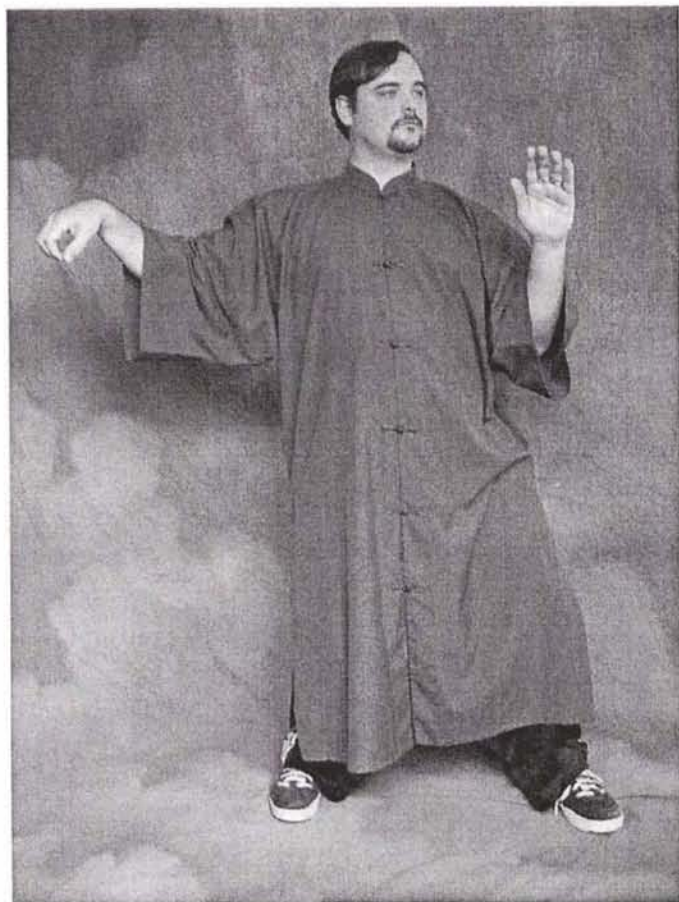
Leaving your right arm extended, turn your left foot outward at a forty-five degree angle. Sink your left hand down in front of your lower abdomen. Begin inhaling slowly.



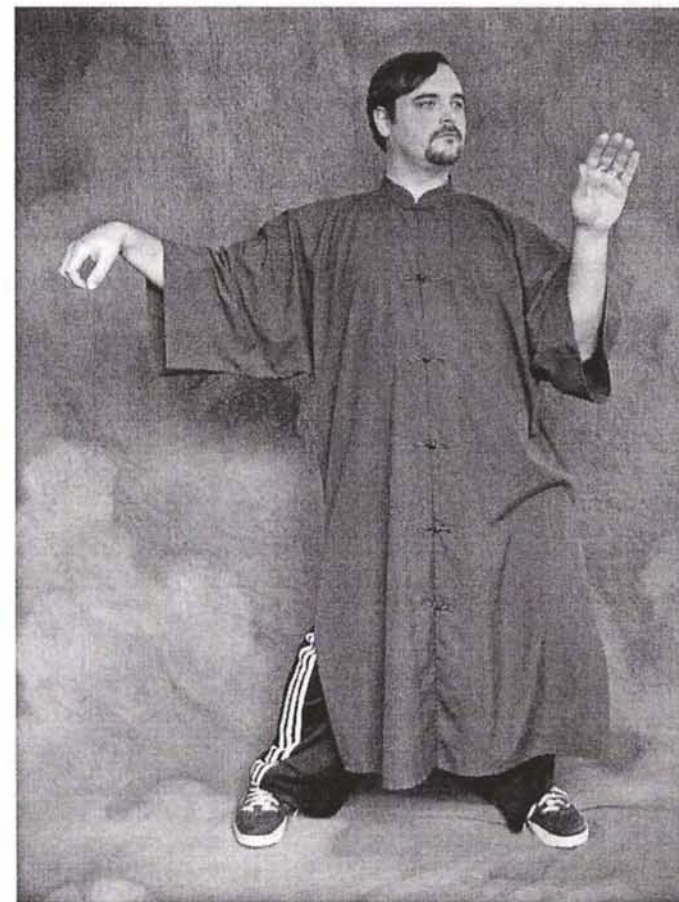
Keeping your right wrist suspended in place, turn your torso to face outward at a forty-five degree angle as you draw your left forearm upward.



Still inhaling, extend your left hand outward while keeping your elbow dropped.



Turn your left hand so that your palm now faces outward at a forty-five degree angle.



Sink your tailbone down a little. As you exhale fully, shift forward onto your left foot. At the same time extend the left half of your body, separating—or "splitting"—it from your outstretched right hand.