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## Meditative Movement in Daily Life

**Meditative Movement (MM)** is not just an exercise to be practiced from time to time. Qigong shows you HOW to do everything you do anyway in daily life, only better!

The real aim of MM is to integrate with daily life; daily practice is only a support for this goal, and not a goal in itself. If the demands of life do not allow you to take 10 minute or half an hour a day to practice, no problem! Every moment of your waking hours is an opportunity. Practicing MM in daily life simply means that you do whatever you are doing, but you use your knowledge of MM to become more centered and at ease in the midst of your life.

### **Standing, sitting, lying, moving, interacting**

Standing, sitting, lying, moving, interacting—these are the five basic MM “postures”. So any time in the day that you are doing any of these, you can practice MM.

Any time you are standing, like in line at the supermarket, at the copy machine, or waiting for coffee to brew—do the basic standing practice. Release your legs deep into the ground, your head and spine up to the sky, and let your shoulders broaden and your arms float lightly at your side. Feel the support of the ground, open your awareness to space, and feel your connection to everything around you.

When you are sitting, at the computer, at a meeting, or just waiting—feel your sit-bones and feet connecting with the earth; let your spine float up; your back can be supported by the chair or just floating up without support. Awareness can open up all around you, and you can feel your breathing flowing full and free. Each moment of sitting is a moment of practice.

Lying down, you can focus on the delicious feeling of letting your weight be completely supported by the ground. You can feel your back lengthening and widening, and each exhale brings deeper release. A great way to regenerate.

We are almost always moving in one way or another. In MM we learn to move from the center; to move in an integrated way rather than separating the parts of our body. You don't need to know T'ai Chi or do special exercises; any everyday motion is an opportunity to practice these principles. Reaching for the doorknob, we can extend our arm from the center. Lifting a suitcase, we can save our shoulders by lifting from the center. Pushing something heavy, MM shows us how to channel the power of the whole body, so normally difficult motions become easy. Moving from the center makes us feel more integrated, more present, no matter what we are doing.

Interacting with other people is often the greatest challenge! MM teaches us how to remain centered and grounded in the midst of relationships; how to stand our ground without tension, how to accommodate without

losing our integrity, how to confront without aggression or fear, and how to be vulnerable and open without being hurt.

### **Body, Breath and Mind**

Our body is always with us. Grounding, lightness and openness keep the body young and healthy; we can use MM to remind ourselves not to tighten or cramp the body, to move effortlessly, and to release bad habits which can bring premature ageing.

We are always breathing. The rhythm of our breath coordinates our movements and sustains our life. MM reminds us to let go of the breathing and to allow the breath to sink deeply into the belly as well as the back. At any moment we can use the knowledge gained through MM breathing to replenish our energies and to release unwanted tension. A gentle awareness of the breath in the lower belly is one of the best strategies for reducing stress and staying calm under challenge.

Our awareness is the most precious thing we have. MM shows us how to keep our awareness clear, open and fresh. We always have the choice to be more fully engaged with the present moment, and this is perhaps the most profound gift that MM offers.