

SUBJECT 1: The Energy System

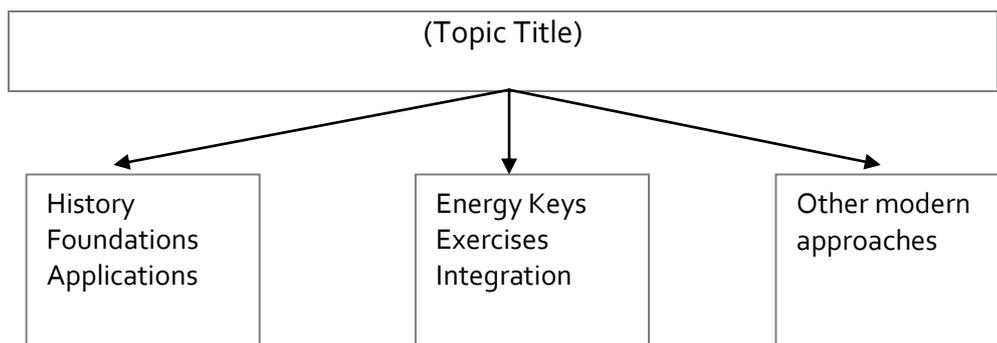
1. OUTLINE OF THE SUBJECT

Introduction to the energetic system.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SUBJECT

1. Know the basic foundations, theory, applications and history of the Energy system
2. Practise first techniques to get in touch with you own energy
3. Beginning of set training in relation to the techniques showed
4. Finding powerful and quick ways to develop Energy Keys
5. Get in touch with body-mind approach through sensing yourself

3. OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS



4. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENTS

1. Energy

- 1.1. Concept of energy in traditional and modern societies
- 1.2. Energetic fields in Chinese and Hindu traditional medicine
- 1.3. The keys of energy work: mind, breathing, body and intention
- 1.4. Other approaches to Energy work

1.1. Concept of energy in traditional and modern societies

Introduction

It is quite far for many of us at the beginning the concept that we all have an energetic body. We common feel body as a machine that works itself and it is at our disposal. But sadly our body gets tired, it produces some kind of trush and it also gives us sometimes pain and even illness. At the end, no matter what we do, think or try, body will stop and life finishes.

At the same time we know we have a "mind". We give to it the wheel of our life and therefore sometimes our mind controls us. We are slaves of our mind and not their boss. Thoughts begin to appear in forms of fears, anger, rigidity, fixed ideas about people and circumstances. Although we think too much... we usually don't think properly. Our mind was created by believes that others put into us... They put us a name, a nation, and in most of cases a behaviour. Even they put us dreams to live and goals to reach. From that beginning... it is easy to see that mind can handle us in many occasions.

It is quite simple to discover that thought is separate from the body most of the times. We live disconnected in ourselves.

For most cultures we are not only a body with a mind... we are also energy beings, life force beings that interact with people, nature and the essence of all things.

Energy, despite being an awkward concept it is a precise one. Many medicines, art, techniques, meditations, body-mind approaches are based in this concept. They are of course, practical and efficient as they are based in a long term experience and study.

Energy can be felt and developed. Its study and training can provide us a better connection between mind and body, a better health, a well being sensation, a precise control of our inner and outer states. It also can help us to reach better physical skills, recover easily from efforts, sharpen our reflexes, stretch our sport career and in a simple way, be better without ourselves.

We don't have to believe in energy. We only have to train it and do it as if it is real. Brain does not matter about true or false things...

If you see a string and you believe it is a snake... your body reacts as if you have seen a snake producing maybe fear, acceleration of heart rate, adrenaline, etc...

If you see a snake and you believe it is a string... maybe it bites you or maybe not.

If you see a snake as a snake despite your beliefs you are in the better position to handle that situation.

Brain works that way. We need to use our tools to get what we want. Any gesture, thought or circumstance can be used to any need we wish.

Therefore we are going to train and work with energy related to our activity: Top Refereeing. Therefore our main goal is focused to what happens in the field of play.

Before practising some exercises we need a theoretical model and a historical view of energy. The following pages can seem far from what we are going to train and develop. I remind you that it is just an introduction to set up all the system we are going to handle.

Energy in ancient and modern cultures

One of the cultures that is more influenced by the concept and use of Energy is the Chinese. Due to historical, political, language and economical reasons this concept was highly developed and tested until modern days.

Unlike other cultures ancient knowledge was not destroyed but proved. For that it is part in 2008 of their medical, art and culture manifestations.

Qi is the Chinese word for “life energy.” According to Chinese medicine, we say that qi is the animating power that flows through all living things. It is also the life energy one senses in nature.

Ken Cohen in his book “The way of Qi Gong” explains it this way: “A living person is filled with it. A dead person has no more qi—the warmth, the life energy is gone. A healthy individual has more than one who is ill. However, health is more than an abundance of qi. Health implies that the qi in our bodies is clear, rather than polluted and turbid, and flowing smoothly, like a stream, not blocked or stagnant.

... When we appreciate the beauty of animals, birds, flowers, trees, mountains, the deep ocean, and floating clouds, we are sensing their qi and feeling an intuitive unity with them. Human beings are part of nature and share qi with the rest of the earth.”

Working and developing energy is a technique very well known in ancient China. Its modern name is Qi Gong. Qi means “life energy” or “vital force” while Gong means “Work” or “benefits acquired through perseverance and practice.” Therefore, Qi Gong means working with the life energy, learning how to control the flow and distribution of qi to improve the health and harmony of mind and body.

Qi Gong is a holistic system of self-healing exercise and meditation. It is an ancient, evolving practice that includes healing posture, movement, breathing techniques, visualization and meditation.

We can use several exercises taken out from Qi Gong expertise to improve our abilities in sports performance such as refereeing.

As we were talking Life Energy was the key concept in all Chinese manifestations but we find that relation in many other cultures.

In Hebrew tradition God breathes the “breath of life” (ruach) into Earth to create the first human. The Hebrew name “Adam” is derived from the same root as Adama, Earth. The Breath of God is synonymous with the power of Spirit.

In the holy scripture of Islam, the Koran appear the words nafas, meaning Allah’s own breath, and ruh, meaning Allah’s own soul, “are used to mean the human breath and human soul—confirming the fact that we are originally from Allah, of Allah, for Allah, and in the end will return to Allah.”

In old Greek, the vital breath is called pneuma, a word first used by the philosopher Anaximenes (ca. 545 B.C.). Anaximenes said that life begins with the breath. All things come from it and dissolve into it at death. The soul is breath and is that which controls and “holds together” (prevents the disintegration or decomposition of) human beings. As air or wind, it endoses and maintains the world.

Hippocrates (460—377 B.c.) considered the founder of medical science, believed that the forces of Life, like qi, must flow.

Among the Kung San, the indigenous people of Africa’s Kalahari Desert, life energy is num. The num is stored in the lower abdomen and at the base of the spine and can be made to “bou” through ecstatic dance.

Australian aborigines were cultivating life energy as a key to healing and spiritual power. Like the Chinese, the aborigines concentrated on an energy center four inches below the navel (Called Dan Tien by the Chinese, Hara by the Japanese)

Native American tribes recognize and live with the existence of a subtle healing energy. The Navajo say that the Winds (nilch'i) gave life to human beings and all of nature.

In the Lakota (Sioux) language, the word for soul, woniya, is derived from the word for breath, ni.

In Hawaii, the most powerful healers are known as Kahunas "Masters of the Breath." The sacred healing breath, ha, can be absorbed at power places in nature (heiau), through dance (such as the hula), and deep breathing exercises.

In India, the life energy, prana, is described as flowing through thousands of subtle-energy veins, the nadis (meridians in Chinese). One of the goals of Yoga is to accumulate more prana through breath control exercises (pranayama) and physical postures (asana). The student is also taught to conserve prana, not to waste either his inborn, genetic store or that acquired through meditation.

In modern therapies such as Bioenergetics, Quiropractic, Gestalt psychotherapy, Osteopathy energy is the key concept of their techniques.

Now western science is interested in the vital force or "bioelectricity," as a source of healing. Scientists have shown that we can control this energy to an extraordinary degree.

It is time to reincorporate these techniques of health, self control and vitalism to our practise.

1.2. Energetic fields in Traditional Chinese and Hindu medicine

The purpose here is to show you a brief description of the concept of energy related to space and time.

As we saw before all cultures had concepts, techniques and exercises to develop life energy. But the one we, due to precise reasons, could keep this knowledge awoken and useful along with the development of science is Chinese culture.

For that reason we can see in Asian countries or old communist countries integration between traditional and modern concepts of health, illness, exercises and life force.

In the Chinese tradition, Life Energy flows inside the body along channels called Meridians.

These channels communicate up and down, left and right, front and back and inside to outside. From that perspective Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) takes out diagnosis and syndrome study.

For us we only have to know that channels have directions that go along or against the flow of energy as river streams.

The main channels are related with internal organs and in the surface of the body the condition of these organs can be seen.

Main channels are:

Lungs — Large intestine — Stomach — Spleen — Heart — Small Intestine — Bladder
— Kidneys Pericardium — Triple Burner — Gall Bladder — Liver.

The cycle of the flow of energy in the 12 channels is as follows (solar time – add 2 hours to your time):

Lung channel: 3—5 am

Large Intestine channel: 5—7 am

Stomach channel: 7—9 am

Spleen channel: 9—11 am

Heart channel: 11 am — 1 pm

Small Intestine channel: 1—3 pm

Bladder channel: 3—5 pm

Kidney channel: 5—7 pm

Pericardium channel: 7—9 pm

Triple Burner channel: 9—11 pm

Gail Bladder channel: 11 pm 1 am

Liver channel: 1 - 3 am

That cycle called Circadian Rhythm teaches us about the correct moment to improve our health related to these organs.

For us we just have to know that the flow of channels is improved by:

- Lack of tension
- Spiral movement
- Deep breathing
- Concentration in the “here and now”
- Energy keys activation
- Positive thinking
- Open heart states

Therefore with exercises we want to achieve a better flow connection, and increasing energy level that allows us to have a higher awareness with a calm state in a relaxed but fit body.

In a near future we can go deeper in these concepts and understand better this theoretical model of body mind health.

1.3. The keys of energy work: mind, body, breathing and intention

In energy practises as Qi Gong we often say: "Body don't lie". Anything that we eat, think or do has a direct effect in our body. Therefore if we want to know us better we can learn to listen our body.

Listen to our body is not only an injuries prevention matter... It is the key to well being, self control and intense life.

In Energy Performance Area we can say: "I feel, therefore I am".

What you feel is what it is important in this work. Because you may not control your body or your mind easily, take a look at what we feel can make our way easier.

If we are able to open and develop our senses we can handle more information and thus choose the suitable option for us.

That is of course true in any activity but we can see its importance in refereeing.

What would happen if your eyes were able to catch more images per second?

What would happen if your reflexes get better?

What happens if you know despite the sight the dimensions of the field of play?

What happens if you know how to keep calm and centred in an aggressive situation?

In difficult situations body, mind, breathing, sensations are separated.

In beautiful and charming circumstances we all feel as a whole, as a flowing being in a flowing state.

Integration of body, mind, breathing and intention is vital to any performance in life, and sports performance is not the exception.

How can we do that?

By training them first separately and then get them together in exercises.

Let's explain the basic meanings in our context of these words:

Body is not only your physical body. It includes all you can feel by your senses.

For that purpose we show two standing body stances designed to give you more information about your body. That helps you in any physical movement you make.

Mind is the total sum of thoughts you have at a precise moment.

By conscious gestures, breathing or visualization we learn how to focus mind in one thing and not in the thousand things as Chinese said. Then our thought goes in accordance to what we feel.

Breathing is always referred to conscious and proper breathing.

Breathing is subconscious but it can be conscious and it has a direct effect in our emotions, posture and thoughts. We learn natural breathing and alternate breathing methods to set our body in the proper mood and state.

Intention is a way of doing things, an strategy. It usually takes the form of a visualization. It does not matter if it is true or false, beautiful or ugly. The goal is to be effective and reach higher performance levels. We learn visualizations in the field of play to protect ourselves, to diminish conflictive situations, to help us in our decisions, etc.

In all exercises proposed from now and on you will see references to these four topics: body position and attention to what you feel, precise or absence of thoughts, conscious, relaxed, alternate breathing and visualizations, strategies, believes to do the exercise.

Some points to consider and follow:

- Always practise with minimum physical tension
- Never force breathing or body position
- Have always positive and calm attitude
- Do not think while you practise unless some specific thought is required.

- Try to feel yourself and develop your sensations
- Be patience with your practise
- Don't look for sudden results. Better enjoy day by day with yourself

These techniques are time tested. We indeed have tested in professional dancers, sportsmen, raped women, martial artists and body guards.

Please don't believe in them as a fool but on the other hand don't be arrogance in denying them.

Let yourself experience, learn, enjoy and find your energy, improve you refereeing body language, increase your reflexes, achieve easily states of high but not stressed awareness and apply them to your daily life for your own benefit and the ones who are around you.

5. ACTIVITIES

Proposed Exercises

In this section we show first exercises. These exercises are called the "keys".

1. Tongue in the upper palate
2. Peripheral vision (1, 2 and 3)
3. Energy ball
4. Abdominal breathing
5. Whole body position

At the beginning we practise them separately and lately within your practise all come together as a whole. Please proceed gradually and be patience.

Training Setting:

In the first two months try to practise keys 1, 3 and 5 every day. It will take you no more than 15 minutes.

Practise key 2 3 times per week for 5 minutes each exercises.

Practise key 4 5 times per week for about 10 minutes. Before sleeping could be a good moment to practise these key.

Key 1. Tongue in the upper palate

Sit comfortably in a chair.

Loose your body.

Keep your spine vertical. If it is too hard for you place your back touching the wall of the chair. Review that hips are higher than knees in your sitting position. If not, back pain easily appears.

Contact with your inner world no matter what this means to you.

Relax for some seconds.

Close your eyes

Feel your body sensations specially any sensation of vibration, warmth, inner movement...

Put your tongue in the hard palate for a minute as if you were saying the word "la"

Feel your sensation keeping the tongue in that position.

Put your tongue down and feel your body.

Proceed again for another minute with tongue up.

Put your tongue down again.

And again put your tongue up for about a minute.

Put it down.

Now put your tongue up and say to yourself silently "I feel energized and powerful" while you keep attention to body sensations.

Key 2. Peripheral vision

Exercise 1

Take a pen and hold it vertically in front of you. Move your pen slowly to your right side and keep looking front. Be aware of your right side while keeping eyes and head to the front.

Go back with the pen slowly until it reaches the middle line.

Proceed with the left side.

Now do the same movement to the right but eyes follow the pen. Head still points front. Go back slowly.

Proceed with the left side.

No eyes and head look to the pen as it moves to the right. Go back slowly.

Proceed with the left side.

Do this exercise 3 times. It trains you three different kinds of looking while it enhances your concentration.

Exercise 2

Look at the front and preferably read something that it is about 5 meters away from you.

Move your head towards what you are looking as if you were a duck. Read and look for details in what you see. Even think about it.

Gradually and slowly move your head back while you open your peripheral vision to the sides trying to see without looking the widest range of vision you can handle.

Do it 10 times and feel the difference between beginning and final position.

Exercise 3

With a partner.

One person moves in a line 90 degrees opposite to you.

Look at a person A who is in front of you at maybe 7 meters.

A moves to your right while you keep head and eyes in same position. When A disappears from your sight field tell him to stop and move in opposite direction.

Then A moves to your left and proceed the same.

Now as A moves to your right move yourself to the left accordingly to his movement but trying to see him with peripheral vision, that is, not looking at him directly.

When A moves to your left move yourself to your right accordingly to his movement.

Do it for about 2 minutes and repeat.

Without a partner

Do it with a pen. As pen moves right you move left and try to see it peripherally. As pen moves left you move right and try to see it peripherally.

This 3 exercises sharpen your reflexes.

Key 3 Energy ball

Place your hands over your legs in sitting position looking up.

Feel your finger one by one. Take 15 seconds to feel each finger.

Feel the center of the palm. Feel the back of the palm. Feel the skin. Feel the bones inside your hands. Feel the nails.

Feel the whole hand... Your hand is not a hand, it is your hand plus the whole sensation of life in it.

Form a ball between your hands. Feel it. Any warm, tingling, itchy, vibration, pulse sensation is welcome. Stay there. Do not think, do not doubt, do not criticize... just enjoy and feel a ball like a gas or electric light balloon between your hands.

Move your hands from left to right 3 – 4 times while feeling the ball

Move them up and down

Move them one up while the other down

Turn and rotate fingers and wrists and form the ball

Open and close the ball with eyes closed. Feel as much as you can.

Then while feeling the ball for one minute say to yourself "I feel energized and centered".

Put your ball slowly inside your belly. Feel your abdominal area and stay there for a minute or two.

Key 4. Abdominal breathing

Sit comfortably in a chair and loose your body.

Keep your spine vertical. If it is too hard for you place your back touching the wall of the chair. Review that hips are higher than knees in your sitting position. If not, back pain easily appears.

Contact with your inner world no matter what this means to you. Relax for some seconds and close your eyes.

Put your tongue in the hard palate.

Concentrate inside your belly like if there were a balloon that goes from the belly to the back (lumbar area L3).

As you inhale slowly through the nose expand slowly the balloon. As you exhale let it go back to its normal position. Breathe in and out with the balloon and keep concentrated in it. Do it for about 10 minutes.

In the last 2 minutes say to yourself as you keep breathing: "I feel centered and calm".

Move your arms and legs slowly, take a deep breath and slowly open your eyes.

Key 5 Whole body exercise

Stand up and close your eyes.

Move yourself slowly from the heels to the toes as if you were hanging.

Try to feel all your body at the same time...

Take notice of the changes of pressure in the muscles as you move.

Open a little bit your armpits and feel the sensations in hands and arms

Relax chest and shoulders

Be aware of your breathing.

Try to be as much vertical as possible. So, stretch from your occipital bone to the sky as if a thin string is pulling you. At the same time feel the sacrum very heavy pulling you to earth.

Move your pelvis a little bit front and observe how spine reacts.

Look for whole sensations of warmness, vibration.

Then without losing inner sensations be aware of any noise, smell and skin sensation as if you could sense everything around you. Proceed gradually.

Do it for 5 minutes.

In the last minute say to yourself "I am centered and open to everything"

Go back to normal awareness by moving muscles. Take a deep breath and slowly open your eyes.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beinfeld Harriet and Efrem Korngold (1991). Between heaven and earth: a guide to Chinese medicine, Ballantine Books.

Hammer Leon (1990). Dragon Rises, red Bird flies: psychology and Chinese medicine, Station Hill Press.

Alexander Lowen (1975). Bioenergetics, McCann and Geoghegan.

Rolf Ida (1977). Rolfing: the integration of human structures, Harper and Row.

7. EXERCICES OF SELF-EVALUATION AND ANSWERS OF SOLUTIONS

Practise with this training setting:

Training setting:

In the first two months try to practise keys 1, 3 and 5 every day. It will take you no more than 15 minutes.

Practise key 2 3 times per week for 5 minutes each exercises

Practise key 4 5 times per week for about 10 minutes. Before sleeping could be a good moment to practise these key.

Then after a month answer this questions:

1. Describe your sensations with every key. Just a briefly report.
2. Describe what were you main difficulties in your training.
3. Describe any experience you had related with tongue position, peripheral vision, ball of energy, abdominal breathing or total body position you may consider interesting.
4. Evaluate yourself in your training from 1 to 5 (being 5 excellent and 1 no good)
 - concentration
 - confidence in the exercise
 - posture
 - breathing
 - visualization
5. Write about any application you have found yourself related to the keys in your training

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Qi, prana: life energy

TCM: Traditional Chinese Medicine

Meridian: channel were Energy flows according to TCM