



The Pain-Free Back: 54 Simple Qigong Movements for Healing and Prevention

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Easy-to-follow exercises make this an invaluable book for those who seek a path to healing.

Back pain is a common occurrence that frustrates and limits many people. It can be extremely debilitating, with causes that are not always understood and treatments that are often not effective. In *The Pain-Free Back: 54 Simple Qigong Movements for Healing and Prevention*, Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming shares information on the causes and treatments of back pain from both Western and Eastern perspectives as well as a series of exercises to improve back function and eliminate pain through the manipulation of qi.

The book starts with a fascinating explanation of the Chinese approach to medicine and to back pain specifically. This is a general introduction that will be new to many Westerners, and it offers unique insight into the concept of health and well-being in Chinese culture. The book then goes into the various causes of back pain, compares how the Chinese address back pain with how it is treated in the West, and explains how qigong can be used to treat back pain. After describing the various exercises, it concludes with a glossary of Chinese terms and an extensive list of the author's other publications.

Perhaps because the spine is central to all of the functions of the human body, this book shares information on qigong practice that is incredibly complex, with details about the eight vessels and the twelve channels through which qi moves and about the anatomical structure of the back and spine. There is also a brief explanation of how the central nervous system functions. Though this material is a little intimidating, Yang's explanations are very straightforward, and the information is necessary to understand how and why the suggested exercises work.

The exercises offered here are gentle and intended to be done with mindfulness and while relaxed. The author explains

Qigong teaches you how to regulate the mind to a calm, profound, and concentrated meditative state. It also teaches you how to use your regulated mind in coordination with deep breathing to lead the qi circulating in your body.

This practice is bound to appeal to those who live with pain. The exercises are carefully and thoroughly explained; black-and-white photographs show each motion, with helpful arrows illustrating how to move.

The Pain-Free Back offers hope for relief to anyone who has ever suffered from back pain. The straightforward yet thoughtful presentation of information, coupled with easy-to-follow exercises, makes this an invaluable book for those who seek a path to healing beyond what standard Western therapies have to offer. It also serves as a solid introduction to qigong practice, which may be helpful in others aspects of healing.

CATHERINE THURESON (June 12, 2017)

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