# Shibashi qigong

**the 18 movements of Taiji Qigong, step by step**

Shibashi qigong is a flowing set of 18 movements, also called Taiji Qigong, done in a fixed order at the pace of your breath. One round takes about 20 to 25 minutes. All 18 are written out below.

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The person in these photos does not exist. The images were made with AI. Why?

**Before you start.** Move slowly and only as far as feels comfortable. Stop if you feel pain, dizziness or shortness of breath. If you have a medical condition, have had surgery, are pregnant or are unsure, ask your doctor first. This page does not replace medical advice or instruction from a qualified teacher.

## What are the 18 Shibashi movements, in order?

| # | Common name |
|---|---|
| 1 | Commencing Form |
| 2 | Broadening the Chest |
| 3 | Dancing with Rainbows |
| 4 | Separating the Clouds |
| 5 | Rolling the Arms |
| 6 | Rowing a Boat |
| 7 | Holding a Ball |
| 8 | Gazing at the Moon |
| 9 | Pushing Palms |
| 10 | Cloud Hands |
| 11 | Scooping the Sea |
| 12 | Pushing the Waves |
| 13 | Flying Dove |
| 14 | Punching |

| # | Common name |
|---|---|
| 15 | Flying Wild Goose |
| 16 | Spinning Wheels |
| 17 | Bouncing a Ball |
| 18 | Pressing the Palms |

The order and directions follow an English manual, checked against a posted copy of Lin Housheng's text. Where they differ, we mostly follow Lin: 12 and 13 run 6 times (manual: 12), hands cross at the knee in 11 (manual: at the foot), 16 starts upright (manual: bent over), 17 has no bounce, and punches start left (manual: right). In 15 we keep the manual's soft knees, because Lin asks for a deep squat.

# How do you do Shibashi step by step?

Start with feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft, arms at your sides. Horse stance here means feet shoulder-width or slightly wider, knees more bent but never past the toes. If you feel unsteady, read the easier versions further down first.



## 1 Raise and lower the arms

**Inhale:** float arms forward to shoulder height, palms down.

**Exhale:** bend knees and lower arms.

**6 times**



## 2 Open the arms wide

**Inhale:** raise arms to shoulder height and open them sideways.

**Exhale:** close to shoulder width, bend knees and lower arms.

**6 times**



## 3 Sway, one arm overhead

Raise both arms overhead.

**Inhale:** shift right, lower the left arm sideways, palm up, keep the right overhead and look left.

**Exhale:** switch sides.

**6 times per side**



## 4 Cross wrists, circle arms

Bend knees and cross wrists low in front, palms up.

**Inhale:** rise and lift hands overhead.

**Exhale:** part hands and circle arms down.

**6 times**

## 5 Turn, roll the arms back

In horse stance, hold both arms forward, palms up.

**Inhale:** turn right and circle the right arm down, back and up to the ear.

**Exhale:** face front, push it forward as the left draws back, then switch.

**3 per side**



## 6 Row both arms

**Inhale:** rise and circle arms back and up overhead.

**Exhale:** bend knees and sweep arms down in front, past the thighs.

**6 times**



## 7 Lift a palm across

**Inhale:** turn left, lift the right palm across the body to shoulder height, put your weight on the left foot and raise heels slightly.

**Exhale:** lower heels and arm, face front, then switch.

**3 per side**



## 8 Turn, look at the raised hand

**Inhale:** turn left, reach the left arm up and back, right palm near the armpit, look at the left hand, heels down.

**Exhale:** face front, lower arms, then switch.

**3 per side**



## 9 Turn, push one palm

Hold the left hand at the waist, the right at the shoulder.

**Exhale:** turn left, move your weight left and push the right palm forward.

**Inhale:** face front and draw it to the right waist, then switch.

**3 per side**

## 10 Pass the hands sideways

In horse stance, hold the left hand at throat height, the right at waist height, palms in.

**Inhale:** turn left and swap heights.

**Exhale:** turn right and swap again.

**6 times per side**



## 11 Scoop down, lift up

Step the left foot half a step forward, bend over it and cross hands in front of the left knee, palms up.

**Inhale:** shift back, rise and lift hands overhead.

**Exhale:** part hands and bend forward again.

**6 times**



## 12 Rock, push both palms

Left foot forward, hands at the chest.

**Exhale:** shift forward, lift the right heel, push palms out.

**Inhale:** shift back, lift the left toes, pull hands in.

**6 times**



### 13 Rock, open the arms

Arms forward, palms facing.

**Inhale:** shift back, lift the left toes, open arms wide.

**Exhale:** shift forward, lift the right heel, close arms.

**6 times**



### 14 Punch in horse stance

Bring the left foot back, bend your knees, fists at the waist, palms up.

**Exhale:** punch the left fist ahead, turning it palm down.

**Inhale:** pull it back, then punch right.

**3 per side**



### 15 Rise on toes, arms out

**Inhale:** lift heels slightly and float arms out to head height, palms down.

**Exhale:** lower heels and arms, knees slightly bent.

**6 times**



### 16 Circle arms and torso

Stand upright, hands in front of the lower belly.

**Inhale:** turn left and sweep straight arms up that side and overhead.

**Exhale:** sweep them down the right side, bending forward only as far as is comfortable (3 circles, then 3 the other way).



### 17 Lift hand and opposite knee

**Inhale:** put your weight on the right foot, raise the right hand and left knee, then set the foot down softly.

**Exhale:** do the other side.

**6 times per side**



### 18 Raise palms, press down

**Inhale:** lift palms, facing up, to face height.

**Exhale:** turn them down, press to the waist, bend knees (6 times). End standing still, hands on the lower belly.

## Who created Shibashi?

Lin Housheng (林厚省, also written Lin Hou Sheng), a qigong researcher in Shanghai, created this first set in 1979. Shibashi (十八式) means "eighteen forms." A second set followed in 1988.

## How can you adapt it?

Options without a source are our adaptations and sit outside the published form.

- **Less range:** Do fewer repeats or smaller versions. Skip the heel lifts in 7 and 15, and bend only to knee height in 11 and 16.
- **Balance:** In 17, keep the toes of the lifted foot on the floor and one hand on a chair back.
- **Bones:** In people with osteoporosis, bending forward and twisting at the waist can raise the risk of broken bones in the spine, Mayo Clinic says. Skip 11 and 16 and ask your doctor first.
- **Seated:** An NHS handout shows the whole set seated as well. On a firm chair, do the arm parts of 1 to 10, 14 and 18, a short selection we made. See qigong for seniors.

## How do you start in the first weeks?

Learn the first 3 movements, then add 3 at a time. New to this? Read qigong for beginners and is qigong safe.

## Is there a free Shibashi video?

Yes: Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi, part 1 (15 minutes) and part 2 (14 minutes), the videos that go with the manual. For effects, see qigong benefits.

## What next?

- **Follow along:** Tai Chi Qigong Shibashi, part 1, the video that goes with the manual.
- **Shorter set:** the Eight Brocades, eight movements in a set order.
- **What studies report:** qigong benefits.