



CBIA Internal Manual

Internal Core
Internal Level 1 Phase 3

Spinal Refreshment Exercise

Fang Song

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Spinal Refreshment Exercise

The Spinal Refreshment Exercise is a series of stretches and movement put together by Chen Bing, 19th Generation Chen Family Tai Chi Chuan.

In Chinese Martial Art etc. there is the term Tao Yin. Tao Yin is in some ways like a Chinese Yoga. Tao Yin refers to leading the qi for circulation. These exercises can be done by holding the stretch 10 seconds or higher. So depending on how long you hold. You could take a half hour to do the sequence. I would recommend you start out just holding the positions for about 10-15 seconds and build from there slowly.

Most of these exercises move slowly like Tai Chi but then you usually have a holding stretch during the sequences.

Breathing deeply should be used on each technique especially using the exhale timing it with the areas that are tense or painful. Try to relax the muscles that are in pain or very tense. This method is quite productive toward getting the body more relaxed.

Fang Song has importance in that the degree you can improve your body and make the joints more relaxed while in a structure, the joints are moved in a special pattern allowing the body to open and relax.

The more the joints and body are loosened the greater the potential for one's Tai Chi Body to improve.

Spinal Refreshment Exercise

Safety for this exercise is moving slowly and responding with breathing if a muscle is too tight. Be cautious with extreme stretching. It is fine to push new positions especially in a more gradual manner.

Do not cut the knees back and forth. When you are turning as in the Back Twist exercise, be careful not to let the hip move out. Doing this when moving to the right or left in the Wuji posture will put the wrong pressure toward the knees.. Learn to move your waist separate from your hips.

Another important safety matter is the way you will squat down. Try and keep the knees over the feet and in line with the direction the feet are pointed. When squatting make sure your crease is folding in and the energy is down through the legs to the floor and not concluding at the knees. If you squat and the knee is pushing forward then the energy will not be kind to the knee with the outward moving force.

Done accurately this exercise can be a great help to your body and play a significant role for the in the efforts you are making in the internal arts.

Neck Rotation



Now Reverse. Bending sideways to side position looking forward. Then to the back position and then to the other side position. Next back to the front position bent over and then slowly up to Wuji and then bring feet together to finish first exercise.

Neck Rotation

In all neck bending one must be careful to maintain some space in the neck joint. This is done by stretching gently from the top of the head. So if you are bending forward as in the first one in this exercise, you don't start by crunching and bending the neck sharply down. This is done in a more whole body unitary way. The stretch maintains space and also prevents a sharp bend of the neck.

This exercise bends the upper torso and the neck together. The hands will almost be hanging in front of the knees. When you get to the final bent forward position you should then carefully release the muscles around the neck that hold the head and melt into a totally relaxed position. For a long time I did this exercise still holding my neck up at the end and not realizing I had not relaxed.

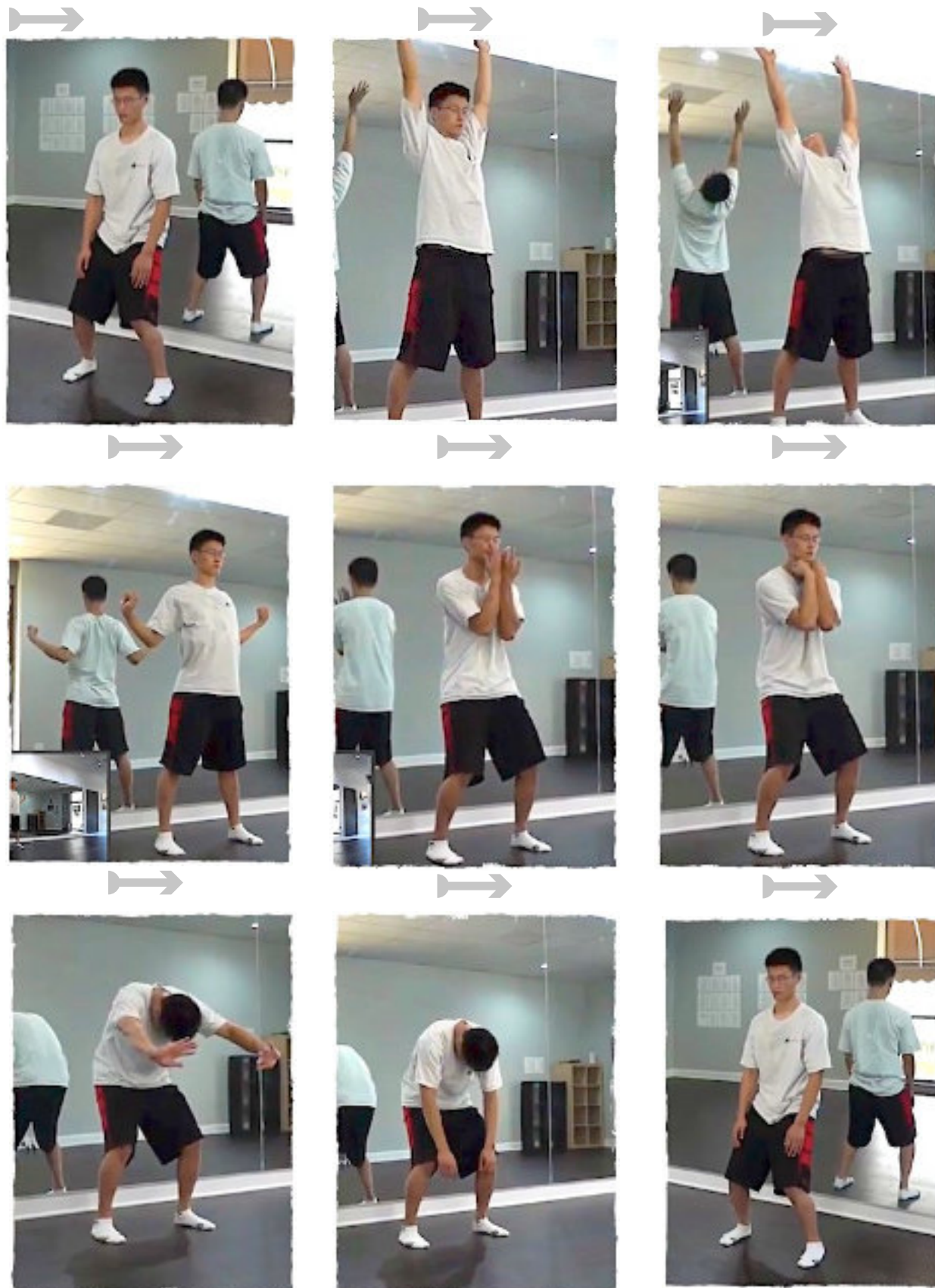
When you start to move again, the head and neck will be moving over to the side position. Put the peng body state back into the neck until you get to the side position and then carefully relax again.

Now if you have had any neck issues you should be careful and asks your doctor if you should be doing this based on your neck condition.

This can be done safely by doing it as described above for most people without neck issues.

It also helps to warm the body up a little bit before doing the kind of stretching in this entire exercise. Even a little walking will serve the purpose.

Waist - Chest & Back Stretch



Waist - Chest & Back Stretch

The sequence of all these exercises should be followed from left to right in the photos and top to bottom.

To get from photo 1 to photo 2 just lift your arms similar to the first movement in the Tai Chi form but continue over the head and straight up. Next arch back and look up to the ceiling.

Open arms apart a little bit and make a fist with both hands. Pull the fist down in front of the shoulders and arch back stretching and gently pushing the sternum forward.

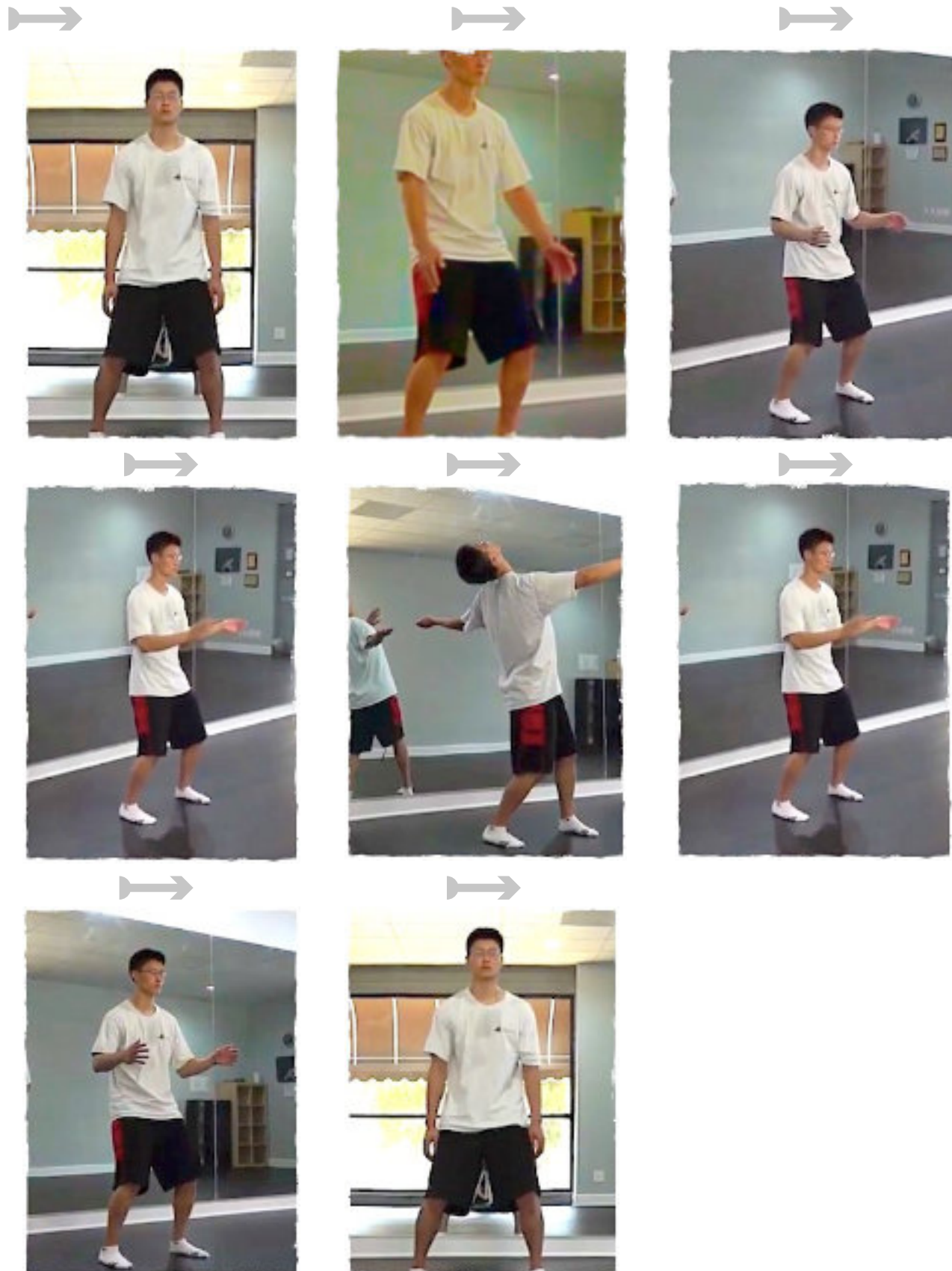
Bring the forearms together in front of the body. Then push your palms forward in a horizontal position as you bend over and squat looking forward. After a moment drop your neck down carefully and hold position. Then release it in the hanging position. Hold for a while.

Then release arms and let them swing by your side and down in front of you like a pendulum release. This time the body should be squat so that your hands are as low as the middle of your shins.

Next slowly bend knees and straighten body back up to the Wuji position to finish.

All these exercises can hold the stretches for 15 seconds or a couple of minutes. So the total set can take 6 to 7 minutes or 30 minutes depending on how long you hold the positions.

Back Twist



Back Twist

This exercise like the neck movement should be done with caution and very slowly.

Raise hands like Tai Chi beginning again but stop the raise of the arms at chest level. Turn palms toward each other and pull in closer to the body. This is like standing post.

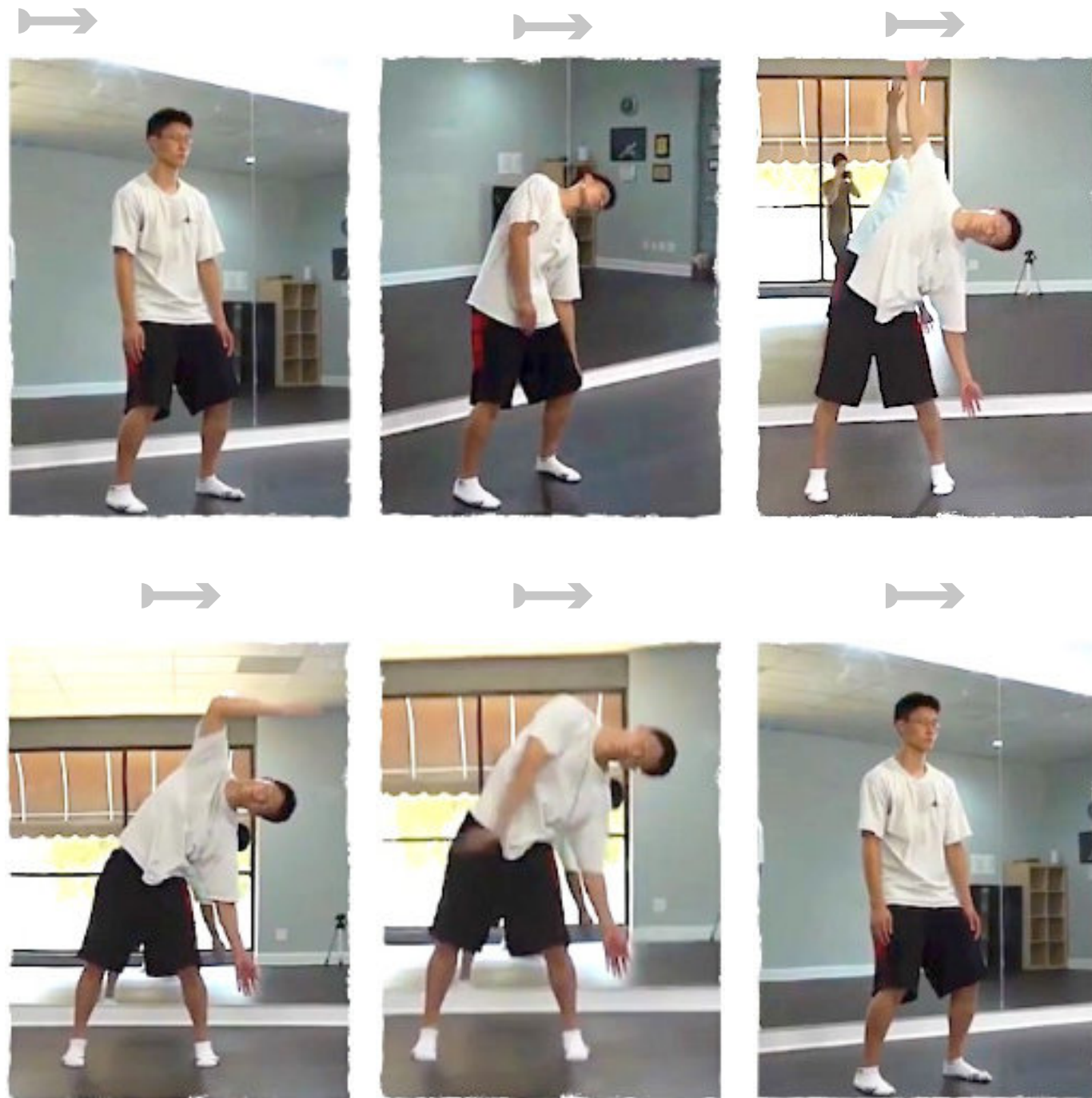
Do not turn *hips*, but turn waist to one side. As you do this you will separate the arms. If you are turning in the Wuji posture to the left then the left hand is palm up and the right hand is horizontal with little finger on top. Pull apart to stretch the chest. Then be very careful to bend backwards from that position. Hold position.

Come back up to Wuji still turned to the left.

Then turn back to front and then release and swing arms down to the sides. Repeat by turning to the right etc.

Some of the positions in this exercise may create a lot of pain as you are moving. When there is a sharp pain, then you will stop momentarily and take a deep long inhale and then a deep long exhale. On the exhale try to relax the area that is hurting. Maybe take another breath or two. If the area eases up, then keep moving in the exercise. By dealing with the stiffness and pain in this way progress can often be made.

Sideward Waist Stretch



Sideward Waist Stretch

This one is a very strong sideward stretch of the body. Make sure to keep spine extended with the upward lift when stretching sideways.

Go slowly to one side letting the arms hang naturally and limp. Turn lower hand palm forward. While maintaining your side position raise the other hand up so it also has the palm forward. The arms should form a straight line when you get to the stretch. Hold position.

After a hold, let the top arm drop very slowly crossing the body which gives the shoulder a little stretch. When your arm gets about chest level release the arm letting it swing down in front of you like a pendulum release.

Hold position and then slowly move back up to the straight position keeping the spine extended and lifting from the top of your head all the way to the end.

Usually you will feel pretty unbalanced. The side stretched will feel a lot different than the other side.

Repeat exercise on the other side and then when you come back up from the side you are finished. In between exercises you can take one of the deep breaths. Breathing in the internals is often deep, long, soft and continuous not holding the breath.

Bolo Back Stretch



Bolo Back Stretch

This exercise begins the same way with a side position stretch. Make sure in side position that your face is looking and facing to the front and not downward.

Hold the position and then slowly lift your elbow straight up and over your head on the central line directly to the rear behind you. Just prior to getting straight over top, the back does an overturn. Again this needs to be done with great caution. None of these things should be done at the extreme especially while learning them and getting the body familiar with the movement and stretch.

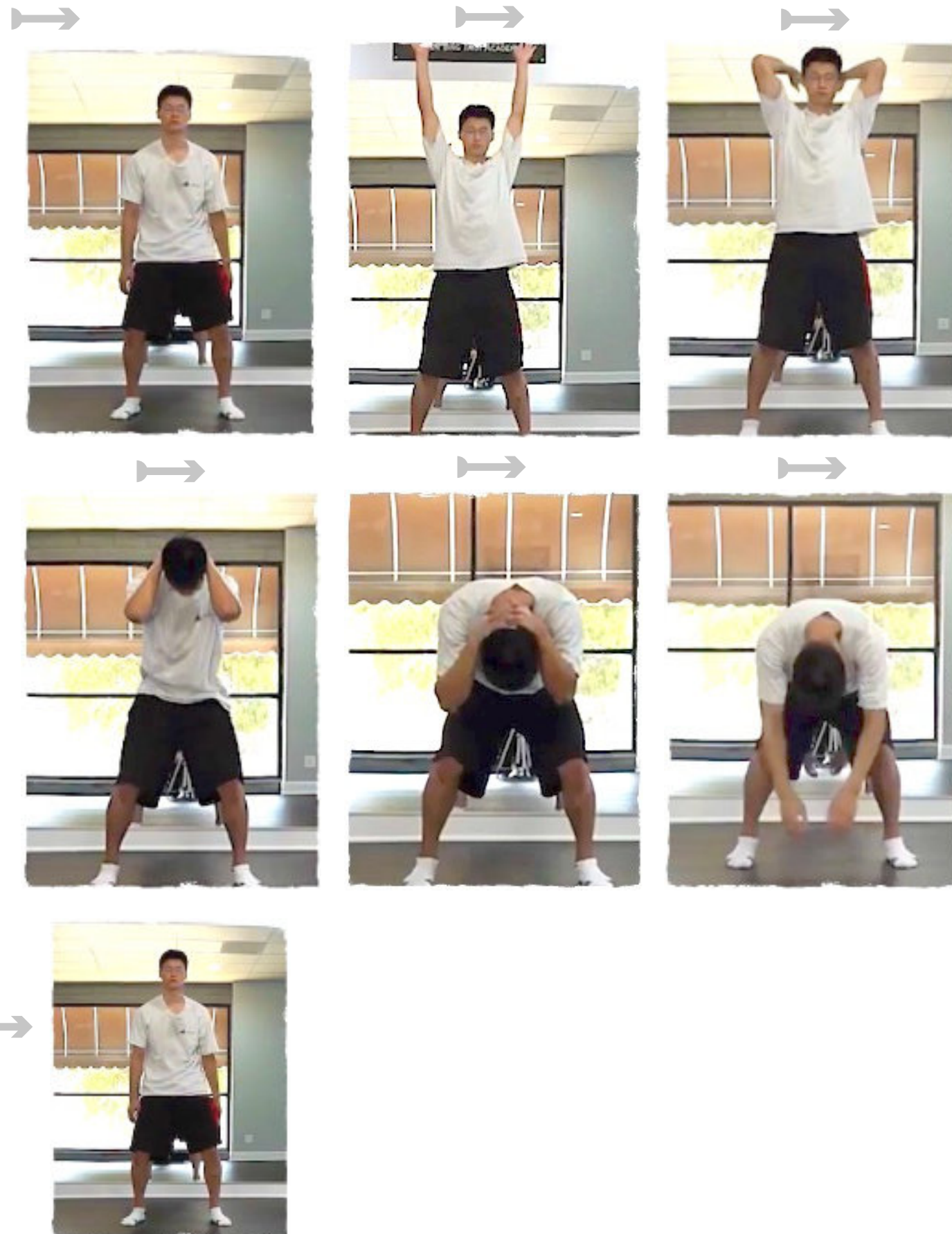
Right after overturning get the back straight again in that turned position. As the back gets straight let the arm just fall behind you and run into the leg.

Turn back to the front and repeat on the other side bending to the opposite side position and then lifting the opposite elbow from before.

This one is a bit shorter but has a critical spot in it when the back overturns. Move very slow and be careful.

I don't think anyone with back issues should be doing this. When healed great caution when trying to learn it.

Rolling Deep Medium Squat



Rolling Deep Medium Squat

Start in Wuji and then slowly lift hands as in Tai Chi but continue up overhead to stretch straight up. This time don't bend the neck back but keep looking forward.

Slowly drop hands behind while keeping the elbows up.

Loosely interlock fingers together and put behind upper neck.

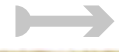
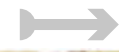
Drop neck down. Don't put a lot of pressure on your neck while lowering the head.

Next squat squat down deep and take elbows toward your knees. Hold position.

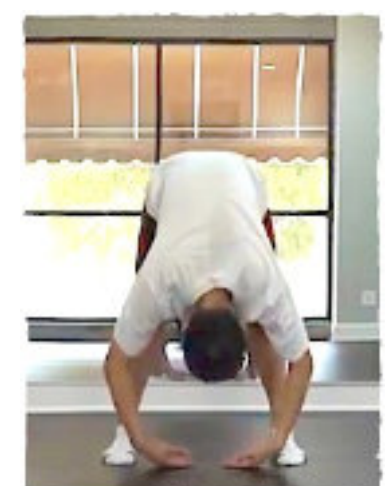
Release arms off of neck and let them fall straight down. Relax your neck and just hang. Your fingers will be near the floor when arms are dropped.

Bend squat deeper bending knees and slowly rise unfolding all the way up to Wuji posture.

Sit Down Squat & Stretch



Sit Down Squat & Stretch



Sit Down Squat & Stretch

Begin in Wuji posture. Raise arms up over the head to stretch and rise up on your toes. Your stance should be as wide as you need to come down and do a perfect squat as if sitting on the ground.

Drop hands and begin to squat down slowly still on the balls of your feet. When you get at the bottom, then sit back a little flattening your feet and let your rear end drop closer to the ground. Also making sure your knees are on the perimeter lines and drop your head and wrap your arms around your knees. Hold position.

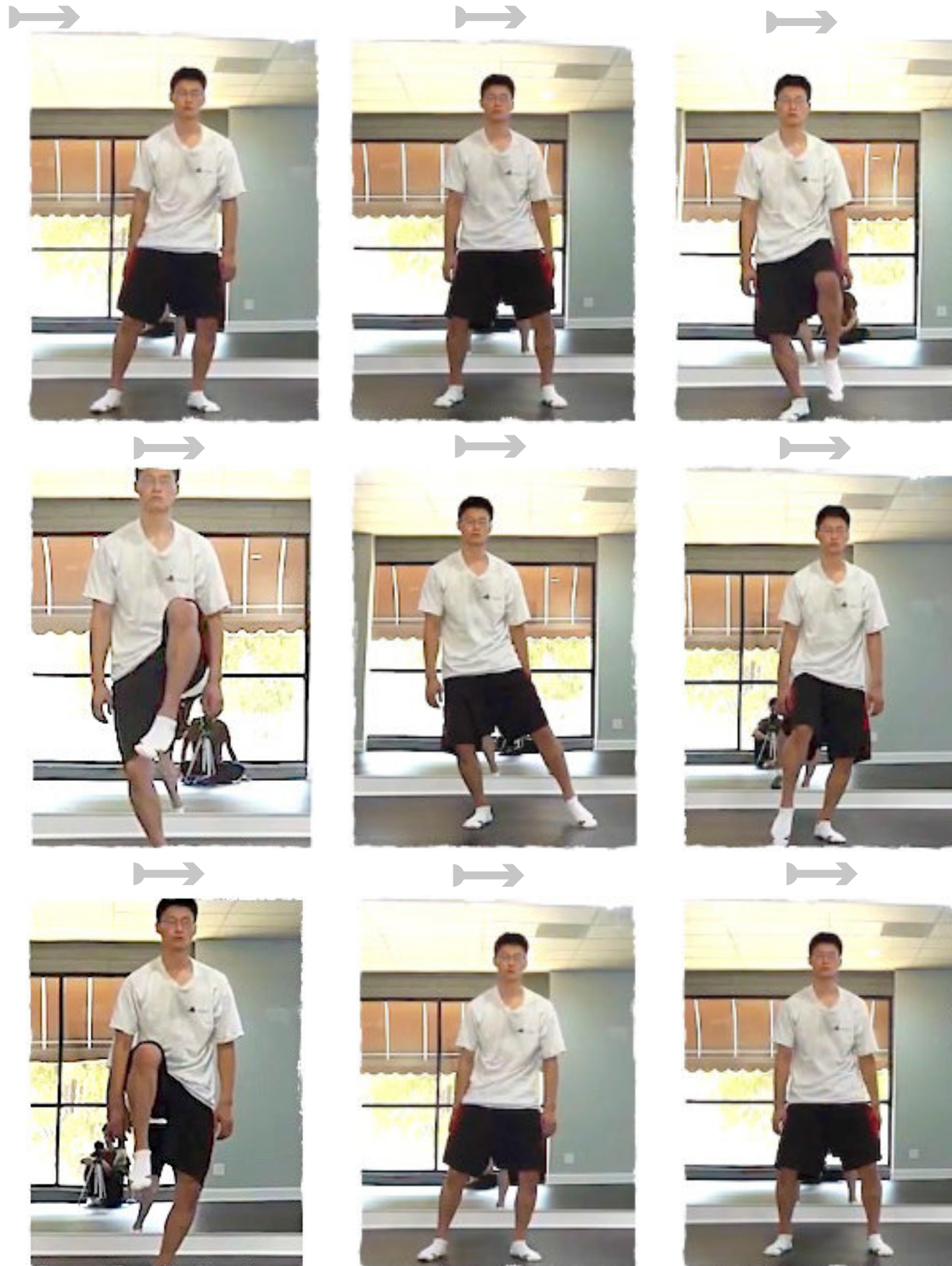
Put hands on knees in preparation to rise. Rise a little bit but bring your rear end up first and look forward .. Upper body horizontal to floor.

Drop head downward and reach back down to the ground and touch hands to the ground. Turn from the waist to one side and stretch using the arms on that side and then go to the other side and do the same thing.

Go back to the center position and then begin a long slow rise bending the knees and then unfolding all the way until you are in the standing Wuji.

On this exercise be very careful in squatting while on the balls of the feet. If you don't have very strong legs that keep the pressure off of the knees, you should probably not squat on the balls of the feet.

Standing on One Leg



Sit Down Squat & Stretch

Begin by stepping out into a Wuji posture.

Shift to right leg and pull left leg a little closer..

Slowly lift your knee and hold your balance. Your arms are to your side and take some breaths to relax upper body.

After holding position for a while, slowly lower leg back down and step out left with the left foot. Shift to the left foot and pull right foot in front of other foot slightly.

Lift the right knee slowly up and hold.

Slowly lower the leg and step out to the right with right foot and then shift weight into the center.

Stand in Wuji to calm down and that will pass for one full time.

Test for Level 1 Phase 3

Here is a list of the Spinal Refreshment Exercise. Describe and show how to do each.

Neck Rotation

Waist - Chest & Back Rotation

Back Twist

Sideward Waist Twist

Bolo Back Stretch

Rolling Deep Medium Squat

Sit Down Squat and Stretch

Standing on One Leg