



Vertebral column (Dragon body- Snake)

Curves

Viewed laterally the vertebral column presents several curves, which correspond to the different regions of the column, and are called cervical, thoracic, lumbar, and pelvic. The cervical curve, convex forward, begins at the apex of the odontoid (tooth-like) process, and ends at the middle of the second thoracic vertebra; it is the least marked of all the curves.

The thoracic curve, concave forward, begins at the middle of the second and ends at the middle of the twelfth thoracic vertebra. Its most prominent point behind corresponds to the spinous process of the seventh thoracic vertebra. This curve is known as a

kyphotic curve.

The lumbar curve is more marked in the female than in the male; it begins at the middle of the last thoracic vertebra, and ends at the sacrovertebral angle. It is convex anteriorly, the convexity of the lower three vertebrae being much greater than that of the upper two. This curve is described as a *lordotic curve.*

The pelvic curve begins at the sacrovertebral articulation, and ends at the point of the coccyx; its concavity is directed downward and forward.

The thoracic and pelvic curves are termed **primary curves**, because they alone are present during fetal life. In the early embryo, the vertebral column is C-shaped, and the cervical and lumbar curvatures are not yet present in a newborn infant. The cervical and lumbar curves are *compensatory* or *secondary*, and are developed after birth, the former when the child is able to hold up its head (at three or four months) and to sit upright (at nine months), the latter at twelve or eighteen months, when the child begins to walk.

Vertebral canal

The vertebral canal follows the different curves of the column; it is large and triangular in those parts of the column which enjoy the greatest freedom of movement, such as the cervical and lumbar regions; and is small and rounded in the thoracic region, where motion is more limited.

The Lower Spine (lumbar) Ming Men- Gate of Vitality.

Dan Tian Breathing stimulates the kidneys, **the lower spine**, and the important **acupuncture point ming men** "the **gate of vitality**". Ming men controls the proper functioning of the kidneys and, when stimulated, increases the body's overall vitality and energy level. Dan tian Breathing primes the body's major energetic pump so that Qi (Energy) can spread more efficiently throughout the body.

Ming Men Bai Hui, Ming Men and Wei Lu are three acupuncture cavities that play a big role in Tai Chi Chuan training and practice. Among the three, Ming Men is of the most important.

so-called the **internal Kung-Fu** or **internal energy**, almost without exception, they first obtained the techniques how to **exercise their Ming Men** and penetrate the Qi (Chi) into the backbone. Tai Chi Chuan is **focus on working the spine**. These are the words telling you how to do it. These three words are generally regarded as “the **inside** secret of training”. Once you understand the meaning of these words you'll be able to put them into practice and benefit from the results.



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Bai Hui Xuan means the crown of head suspending from above. Have your head standing on your shoulders instead of sitting there. As long as your head is lifted up so does your spirit. The entire body becomes light and agile when the crown of the head is suspended from above. To suspend head properly and to keep neck straight, you tuck in your lower Chin slightly as if to conceal your throat. You will find that your neck is a little bit stretched and your shoulders relaxed. This also makes your head be on alert and under the protection of Qi. There is a saying in the classics, “Conceal your throat and challenge all the heroes in the world”.

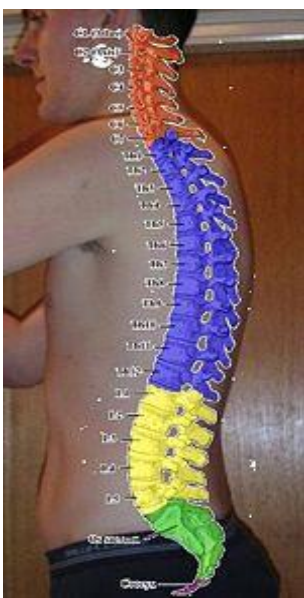
Ming Men Tu means convex “the **small of the back**”. Ming Men is “the small of the back”. Tu means convex. The more frequently used phrase is Kai Ming Men that has the same meaning as Ming Men Tu. Ming Men in Chinese stands for “the **door of life**”. Kai Ming Men means **open the life door** to stay alive. Ming Men as an acupuncture pressure point is located on your spine where the most concave spot is. To open Ming Men refers to convex “the small of the back” and make it **bow out**.

As the name implies the meaning, Ming Men has significant importance in Tai Chi Chuan and Qi (energy) training. It is said in the classics, “The life and liveliness of each of the movements originates at the center of waist”(**Pelvis**). To make sure Ming Men function well, it is important to make sure that the Ming Men area is light and agile. The **waist up goes up and waist under goes down (Pelvis)**. There should be not much weight or pressure on Ming Men. Each disk should be separated from each other not one on the top of the other.

Wei Lu Shou means to tuck in the last tailbone. Wei Lu functions like a steering that decides the whole body posture and movements correct or not. It is said in the classics, “The tailbone is tucked in and centered, and the head is up with spirit, the entire body becomes light and agile when the crown of the head is suspended from above.

Wei Lu also serves as the ending point of the torso bow (one of the five bows of body, the other ending is Ying Tang, the third eye) and always tucks in when prepares to shoot.

Just remember, **bow out your Ming Men** and tuck in your Wei Lu whenever you do reverse exhaling (this is the time when you finish each movement in your solo practice or when you make punch or take punch).



Dan Tian (lower Abdominal) Diaphragmatic-

There is a repeated saying in the classics, “Exercise your Dan Tian and obtain internal Kung-Fu”. So, what is Dan Tian and what does it mean? Literally, Dan is the essence of life and Tian is the field. The Ancient Chinese regard the Dan Tian as the place where the Qi is generated, cultivated and stored.

Dan Tian is located in your lower abdomen, (Diaphragmatic-Breathing)

Anatomy tells us that Dan Tian is the place where your small intestine, colon and reproduction organ reside. It’s the place where life begins and life ends. (“The death begins at colon”)

Da Tien Breathing (Diaphragmatic Breathing)-

Natural Breath inactive (Ying) and reverse Breath-Active -(Yang) Dan Tian Reverse Deep Breathing is to activate, initiate or to get the feeling of Dan Tian. The purpose is to generate the Qi. It is reverse that means it’s not natural or normal. You contract your Dan Tian when you inhale and expand it when you exhale. You exercise your



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Dan Tian instead of diaphragm. The deep means you go to extreme by inhaling to its full extent and exhaling until nothing left within. The so-called “the **inside** secret of breathing” is “inhaling to Dan Tian and exhaling to Yongquan” and “the immortal breathes with his feet”.

Dan Tian rotation is to mobilize your Dan Tian and to circulate Qi (Energy). The purpose is to cultivate and develop the initial Qi generated through Dan Tian Breathing in order to **fully oxygenize and nourish your internal organs**. It’s also called the **internal organs deep massage. Tai Chi Chuan as an exercise is to make you becoming your own massager and chiropractor**. As to Dan Tian rotation exercise, we have the so-called the “Mi Zi Gong” or “the Practice of the Mi (Rice) Character”. We have the horizontal, vertical and diagonal circulation of Qi. **Most important is to have Mingmen or “the small of the back” get enough exercise.**

Dan Tian manifestation is to coordinate your internal movement with your external movement. Dan Tian becomes the center of the body and source of power that drives the external body function. We have a sequence of 24 different circling movements working on the Yin Yang symbol. There are three circles in the Yin Yang symbol, small, medium and large. Accordingly, we have small circle pivot on the wrist. Medium circle pivots on the elbow and large circle pivots on the shoulder joint. All the movements are driven by Dan Tian and coordinated with it.

Peace be with you, N M S
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