

# Practicing the simple Bear Movement can boost your immunity level

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Long-distance flying, especially trans-Pacific flights can cause [health](#) issues. One person I know of had blood clot after a long flight. Many travellers complain of neck/back stiffness or leg cramps during/after flying too long. To avoid discomfort, I exercise during a long trip. Normally, I practice [Qigong](#) routines, Cloud Hands or Standing Post in-flight. Nevertheless, I feel guilty or awkward when I am in other's way in the narrow aisle. I mentioned this to a [Tai Chi](#) brother during my trip to Taiwan early this year. He recommended doing the Bear Movement instead.



*Unknown and found on <http://www.emwushu.wushuw.com/index.php?m=content&c=index&a=show&catid=23&id=361>. Will update if advised.*

After his quick instruction, I practiced one rotation of the Bear Movement. Even though it was only a few seconds, I felt buoyancy in my fingers and my hands felt warm. My mind also sank into a meditative state quickly as I moved my body gently and slowly from side to side.

The Bear Movement or Hsun Jin has a long history in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Grandmaster

**Cheng Man-Ch'ing** explained that philosopher **Zhuang Zi** (369 – 286 BCE) cited ancient Chinese literature and mentioned the Bear Movement. Famous TCM physician **Hua Tuo** (104 – 208 ACE) developed Wuqinxi or Exercise of the Five Animals from studying movements of tiger, deer, bear, ape and crane. Wuqinxi has amazing healing powers that can help people rid themselves of disease and strengthen the body. The documentation of the detailed movements of Hua Tuo's Five Animals is no longer available. Many TCM and Qigong sages have developed their own version of the Five Animal Movements. Grandmaster Cheng Man-Ch'ing was a prominent TCM doctor and his preferred movement is the Bear Movement. His Bear Movement is quite simple. There are only two movements involved. First, you shift body weight to the left leg. Secondly, you turn your body to the left side. Then you reverse the process. Breathe in as you shift weight and breathe out as you turn. Let the arms and hands drop at the side of body naturally. See a video on the left hand side for demonstration.

In an article published by Chinese Tai Chi Association in Taiwan in 1982, Grandmaster Cheng Man-Ch'ing elaborated the benefits of the Bear Movement. Owing to its simplicity, the Bear Movement is especially suitable for seniors or people with chronic disease who are extremely fragile. Patients can eradicate their illness due to an improved immune system. According to Cheng, the Bear Movement is a movement that a bear does constantly. Therefore, people should practice it often like a bear -- preferably once in the morning, once in the evening and half hour after each meal. People who have poor health conditions can start with 200 or 300 repetitions and gradually increase the exercise volume by adding 5 to 10 rotations every five to seven days. It is sufficient to exercise 10 minutes each time, and never exceed 15 minutes at each practice. People should feel relaxed and cheerful while working out.

Grandmaster reminded people to keep the same posture or body alignment as Tai Chi practice while doing the Bear Movement, which means keeping the head suspended and the body upright. People should feel the energy travel from the tailbone up and reach the crown of the head.

Practicing the Bear Movement is like Tai Chi practice. It is critical to clearly distinguish the solid and the empty foot. When the body turns to the left, the entire body weight should be placed on the left foot and the right foot should be "as light as a feather", advised Grandmaster Cheng. The solid foot needs to be flat on the ground. The Qi needs to sink to the ground. He urged that practitioners use the mind and Qi to safeguard Dan Tian during practice.

**According to Grandmaster Cheng, practicing the Bear Movement not only raises immunity level, but also can help improve Tai Chi skills. It is extremely beneficial for the Repulse Monkey, Golden Rooster and other Tai Chi movements.**

In addition to simplicity, the practice of the Bear Movement does not take up much space. It is ideal as an in-flight regimen or being practiced in a small hotel room. Try it in your home, office, or on the road. However, per **Sifu Dr. Jay Dunbar**, without proper instruction, beginners (and even some who think

themselves advanced) will tend to turn their knees as they turn their hips, which may result in negative impact on knees. So it is important that you work with a trained professional on this exercise as you would do with other forms.

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