

SPORTS / RECREATION / COMBAT SPORTS

The Five Animals work on your joints and bones that are seldom exercised

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At the sponsorship of Chinese Health Qigong Association (CHQA), Master Miao Fu Sheng of Liao Ning, China, recently conducted workshops in Los Angeles. He elucidated the features of each of the Five Animals movements and their benefits at the workshops. He also taught each movement in details and showed how they work on the joints, bones and muscle which are seldom exercised.



Bird Flying by Master Miao

Violet Li



Violet Li

The **Five Animals** (Wuqinxi) were created by the most renowned Traditional Chinese Medicine doctor **Hua Tuo** (104 – 208 ACE) basing on Dao Yin (leading) and Tu Na (breathing) principles to imitate a tiger, deer, bear, monkey and bird's movements to improve health and longevity. The Five Animals represent the Five Elements – also known as Wuxin consisting of metal, wood, water, fire and earth -- in Chinese philosophy as well as Chinese medicine.

Tigers are the symbol of vigor and bravery. There are two tiger poses: Raising Paws and Seizing Prey, and both are challenging. Master Miao pointed out to attendees that it is important to keep the body in a straight line to keep it balanced. Practicing Tiger movements can strengthen liver function.

Deer are the symbol of agility. There are two Deer poses: Colliding with Antlers and Running. Master Miao called out the importance of correct hand shapes and their changes. He also emphasized the transitions of footwork and using the core/waist to lead the movements. Practicing Deer movements can strengthen the kidneys, which are considered the foundation of vitality.

Bears are the symbol of stability and naivety. There are two Bear poses: Rotating Waist and Swaying the body. Master Miao said people might think bears are clumsy but bears actually move around with a certain degree of playfulness and stability. It is important that we emulate the bear's spirit while doing these poses. Practicing Bear movements can strengthen the spleen.

Monkeys are the symbol of intelligence and vigilance. There are two Monkey poses: Lifting Paws and Picking fruit. Master Miao emphasized the importance of correctly changing hand shape in a swift fashion. He also reminded the workshop attendees about the practice of tensing up and then quickly

relieving the body. The Paw Lifting pose can massage the heart. Picking Fruit is probably the most interesting movement in Wuqinxi with a narrative of a monkey first relaxing to get ready for the action to pick a peach, then moving the arms while looking at right and left, followed by pressing the palms down as if catching a tree branch, swinging the arms in between tree branches, turning the left hand to a hook representing fruit picking, and finally showing off its harvest. The constant changes in the hands, arms, legs and body are beneficial for the heart.

Birds are the symbol of free spirit. There are two Bird poses: Stretching and Flying, and both are good exercises for the lungs. Master Miao advised that it is important to broaden one's perspective while practicing these movements. You can see a demo of Five Animals produced by Chinese Health Qigong Association on the left-hand side.

These workshops were hosted by [Joy of Kung Fu](#). In case your city would like to host Qigong workshops taught by CHQA masters next year, you can contact Joy of Kung Fu for information.

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