

ARM SWING <udefuri> *Method.*

Arm swinging is one of those 'natural' exercises, kids do it, people do it in response to the cold, to loosen their shoulders or relax. In China and Japan it has been found so helpful it has been systematized as a health practice. It may be considered a special approach to physical fitness. Arm swinging is well known for its effectiveness in increasing physical strength and building up resistance disease. It is also therapeutically useful in treating certain chronic diseases such as bronchitis, stomach and intestinal diseases, high blood pressure, depression and anxiety.

The arm swinging exercise is simple and easy to do, can be performed at any time of the day. You can vary the number of swings per session and number of sessions per day to suit your condition and circumstances. It is also a martial training method and the method is adapted according to its purpose there are at least 10 variations.

The instructions below are for:- The most fundamental healing version and the dojo version.

General set up.

Stand with feet shoulder/hip width apart. (*Shizentai*) Place your heels, soles and toes firmly and evenly on the floor. Keep your body straight and let your arms hang naturally. Look straight ahead. Make sure that you feel comfortable. Clothes should be loose.

- Keep your neck loose and your face natural throughout the exercise. Close your mouth and let your lips and teeth touch gently.
- Keep your spine relaxed but upright, your chest straight but comfortable. Keep your waist and stomach loose – don't stick your stomach out. When these requirements are met, you will be centered and feel a certain weight and fullness in your abdomen.
- Keep your shoulders and arms loose, let them hang down. Do not straighten your elbows. Do not hold your arms tightly against your body. Leave some space under your armpits, keep your hands relaxed with fingers naturally apart – do not intentionally close, bend flex or straighten them.

To benefit from practice you must maintain a comfortable and natural posture, keep your movements loose and follow the correct method persistently. According to health and fitness increase the number of repetitions gradually. It is a wrong idea to think 'the more swings the better' or the more force the better. If you ignore your health you will experience some side effects with possibly harmful consequences.

Stay in the natural standing pose for a couple of minutes relaxing your body and calming your mind. Once calmed swing your hands fluidly from front to back. During a set you may find your rhythm changes, do not be concerned simply maintain calm, breathing and fluid movement.

I. Healing form.

Natural posture as above. Put on a happy face it - will help you feel more relaxed. Let your tongue lie flat. Keep your arms hanging down and at the bottom of each swing your palms will be slightly bent and facing your sides. When your arms are extended to the front hands should not be higher than solar plexus. On the back swing little finger should not go higher than your buttocks. Do some short sets of light swings as warm up then some longer sets according to age and fitness very gradually increase set length (to 50) and set number (4-10).

II. Dojo form.

Relax your face, touch your tongue to back of upper front teeth contract sphincter muscles. Generally keep hands completely relaxed but sometimes stretch a little, sometimes close fists lightly - with experience you can use modulations release tensions or intensify certain effects of the exercise. On forward swing hands should not go higher than shoulder, on the back swing let the arms drop freely do not pull back. Day to day practice sets of 200-500 once or twice a day, occasional 500-2000 swing sets <shugyo>.

ARM SWING <udefurú> **Guidelines.**

Your entire body must be relaxed, particularly your shoulders, arm and hands. Relaxation will facilitate the circulation of *ki* (energy) and blood and cause *ki* and blood to flow downward. This way your lower body will become heavy and firm. While swinging your arms you should have a feeling of 'empty top & solid bottom'.

Your arm swinging movement should be accompanied by the movement of your waist and legs. Do not just swing your arms. Waist movement can help strengthen your internal organs and thus produce greater beneficial effects.

Your breathing should be natural. Do not make a deliberate attempt to coordinate arm movement with breathing rhythm. Greatest benefit will be obtained when you learn gradually to breathe from your abdomen <similar to *zazen* & *kihini*>.

Your arms should be loose as chord. Your fingers should be separated naturally. Do not tense your muscles.

Patients too ill or if injured may swing their arms in a sitting position. However they should be careful how its arranged and do not overdo it (little and often).

You should integrate movement and mental quietness. Because Arm Swing consists of simple movements that are performed with relaxation and mental concentration, it provides a natural set up for inducing mental quietness. The effects of Arm Swing are similar to *Ritsu Zen*.

When external movement and internal quietness are fully coordinated, the external movement becomes spontaneous. The result is that you will feel good about and throughout your entire body.

As you are swinging your arms silently count the number of swings. Count each back and forward movement as one swing. The number of movements differs from person to person. It should be increased gradually, do not force yourself to break your own record. If you prefer you can also swing for a set amount of time (no one set longer than 40mins).

Keep your eyes partially closed. Keep your mental focus on your navel or *tanden*. Unite your external movement with internal quietness. Feel heavy and firm in your lower body.

Whenever possible, perform, arm swings in clean air and in a quiet environment. Do not practice if your stomach is full, if weak and stop practicing when there are thunder storms!

When you are doing Arm swings you should feel very relaxed and comfortable during and after the exercise. If you experience any dizziness, chest pain, nausea or extreme fatigue, you should reduce the number of sessions or stop the exercise for the time being, These problems are most often caused by swinging too many times and swinging with too much force. On the other hand if you have not been training persistently you may expect to feel stiffness in the shoulders from lactic acid accumulation – because of your unfit condition! Also do not swing too high to the front or back (see above) or you may get side effects such as dizziness or fever.

After the exercise, you should remain standing for a couple of minutes, then do some relaxing exercises before returning to normal activities.

During arm swinging it is possible that you may feel cold or warm. You may also experience sensations of numbness, swelling, moving pain or insects on your skin. Some people feel *ki* energy surges or circulation within their body and some make involuntary movements. These are normal (not universal by any means) physiological phenomena brought about by the integration of abdominal breathing with motion and mental quietness. The extent to which they occur varies from person to person, some people may not have any of these reactions at all.

These happenings are similar to those that one may experience practising *za-zen*, *ritsu-zen* and various forms of *kinhin*. You should not be overly concerned about them. There is no need to get excited nor to be afraid. Leave these sensations alone, just let them be.

Do not make a concious attempt to produce these or any reactions because such things do not in themselves have any healing effects. Many long term practitioners obtain the desired results without any such reactions. Some people who made a special effort to pursue unusual reactions have experienced nervous tension and other unpleasant symptoms.