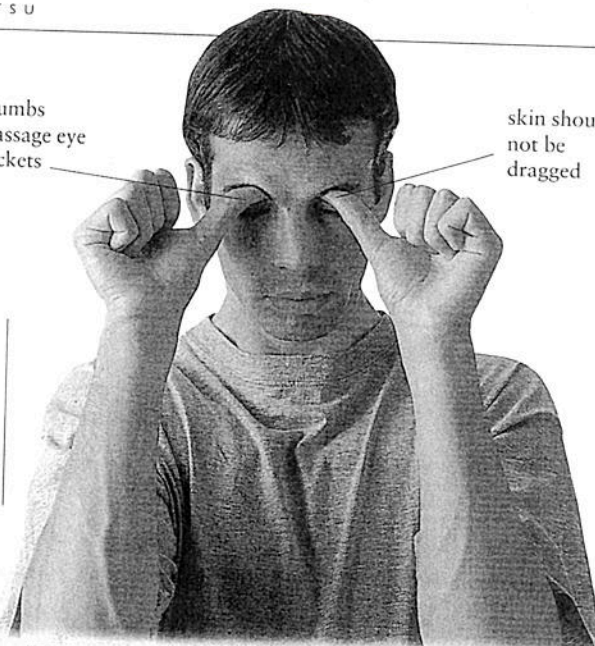


## 2 Do-in or Self-Shiatsu

**D**o-In or self-Shiatsu is an energizing routine that can be used at any time of day. There are several different versions with lots of variations, but the one I like is an invigorating tapping routine following the meridians.

thumbs  
massage eye  
sockets

skin should  
not be  
dragged



## Facial Do-in

**D**o-in on the head and face area is really good for relieving scalp and facial tension. By tapping the head you can stimulate blood flow to the scalp, promoting healthy hair growth and discharging excess energy. Many of us tense our face muscles unconsciously for much of the time, causing unsightly worry or frown lines on the forehead, while jaw-clenching is a frequent cause of headache. Working around the eyes makes them feel more awake and the pressure activates the lymphatic system, removing toxins that show up so easily in the skin quality of this sensitive area. Nasal congestion and sinus problems can be relieved by pressure at the end of the nostrils and under the cheekbones.

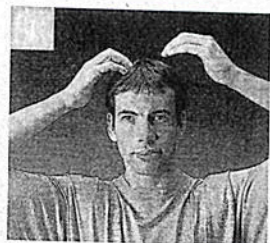
**3** As in the facial Shiatsu routine, stimulate points around your eye socket with your thumbs, being careful not to drag the skin



Rub your cheeks and the end of your nose – both actions are good for the circulation.



Press into LI20 at the bottom outside corner of the nostrils and then work with thumbs under your cheekbones out as far as your ears.



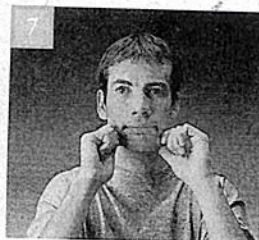
Start by tapping with your fingers on the top of your head. If you keep a loose wrist you can tap quite hard. This exercise helps to wake up the brain in the morning!



Pull your ears up, down, back and forward, and rub all over – again, good for circulation.



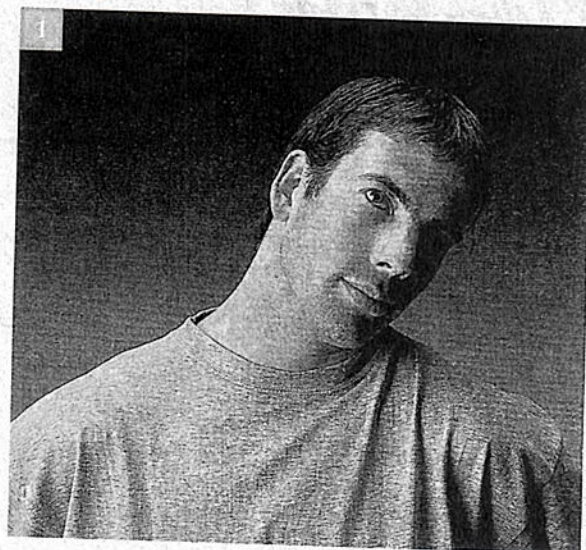
Then smooth across your forehead, followed by making circles at your temples with your fingertips. Squeeze along your eyebrows.



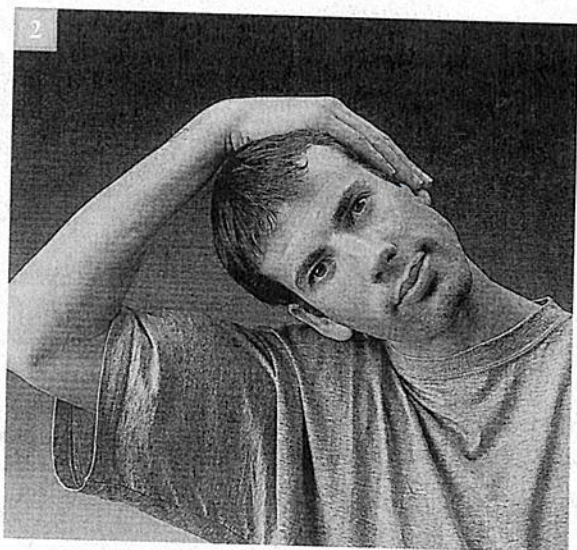
Pinch along the lower jaw, allowing your thumbs to linger on any little nodules or lymph glands so as to squeeze out the toxins.

# Neck and Shoulders

All the Yang meridians in the body pass through the neck and shoulders, so stimulating and stretching here is useful to activate them and ensure there is no building of excessive Ki. The neck and shoulders have a complex muscular structure designed to hold up the relatively heavy weight of the head, and are therefore prone to tightness and stress. Stretching and rotating (gently) can release tense muscles as well as promoting Ki flow in the meridians. Be careful, however, if you suffer from spondylitis, osteoporosis, or any other neck problem: for you it is better not to rotate the neck as in Exercise 1, but work a variation of Exercise 2, stretching the neck in each direction and then coming back to center.

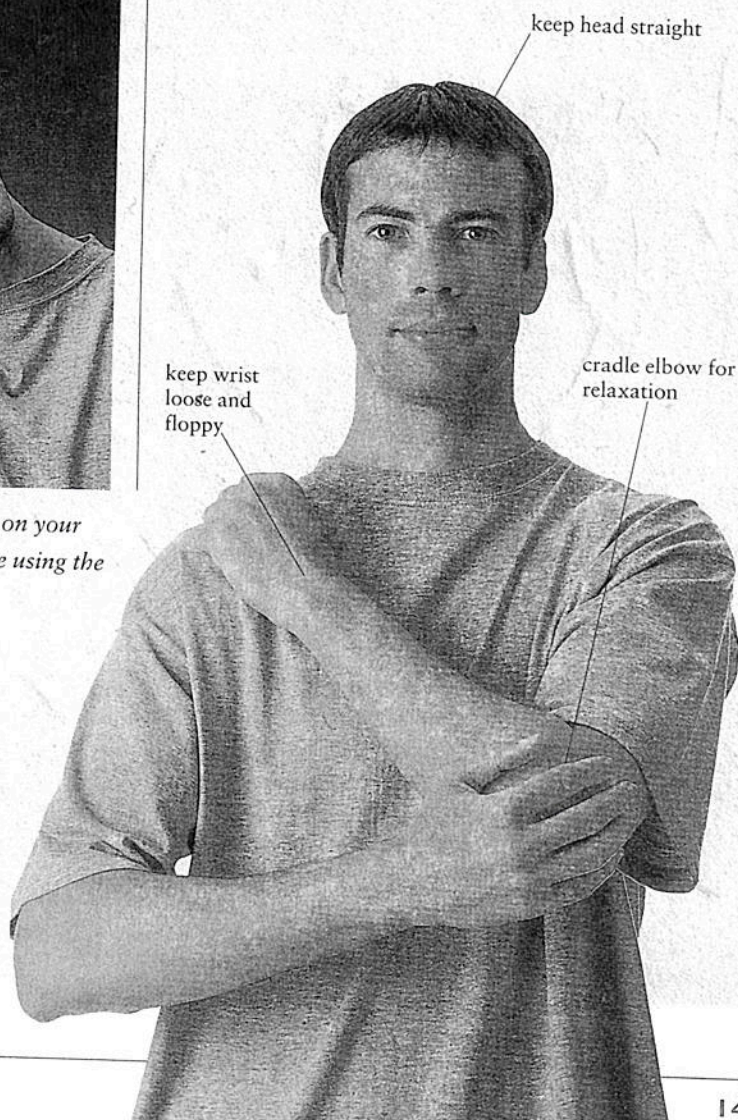


Going as far as you can comfortably, rotate your head in a circle slowly one way and then the other.



If any position is sore, then place your hand on your head and gently stretch the neck in that place using the weight of your hand to pull the head down.

3 Making a loose fist, tap on each shoulder in turn. The shoulders often hold a lot of tension, and a good pounding here can release long-held stress.



## Chest and Arm

Many people tend to collapse the chest forward causing constriction in their breathing and tightness in the pectoral muscles. Tapping here opens the chest and encourages full breathing. Our arms are so often overused; stimulating them dispels tension and prevents the buildup of toxins.



**1** Tap all over your chest (though avoid breast tissue if you are a woman); this can loosen up mucus and make you cough it up. For even greater effect do it with a "Tarzan" yell!

**2** Continue tapping on the arms: up the Yin meridians on the inner arm from shoulder to hand.



**3** Turn your arm over and come down the Yang meridians from the hand to the shoulder.

**4** Squeeze and pull each finger in turn and stimulate LI4 and HG8 (look back to the Basic Sequence on page 100 or farther on in this part for the exact locations).



## Back and Leg

The back, buttocks, and thighs are common sites of postural tension that can be alleviated effectively by pounding with a loose wrist.



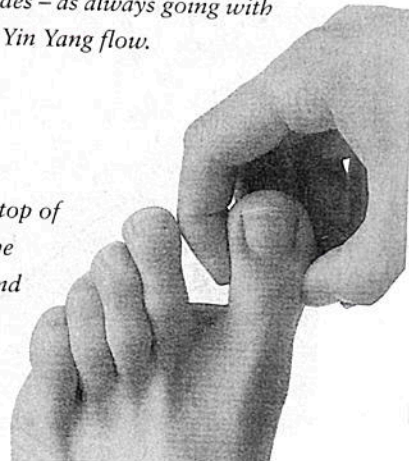
**1** Bend forward and, starting as high up on the back as you can, pummel down either side of the spine from the shoulderblade to buttocks. Again, you can give yourself a good thump if you keep a loose wrist – this stimulates the Bladder meridian.

**2** Now pound away on the buttocks to disperse those extra ounces.



**3** Continuing to tap with a loose fist, work down the outsides of the legs, and up the insides – as always going with the Yin Yang flow.

**4** Sit down. Rub the top of your foot, tap all over the sole, and then squeeze and pull each toe in turn. Press in on KD1.



# Hara Massage

Getting in touch with your hara is important to help center and ground your energy. Physically mobilizing this area encourages Ki to circulate and ensures that the stagnation so often

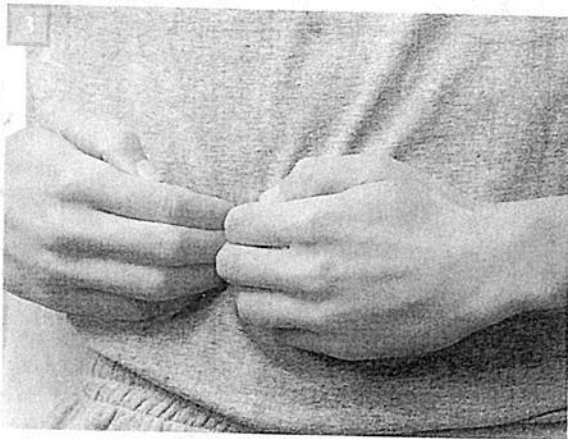
associated with the abdomen is less likely to occur. You can work on such problems as constipation, indigestion, and menstrual cramps by massaging the hara regularly every day.



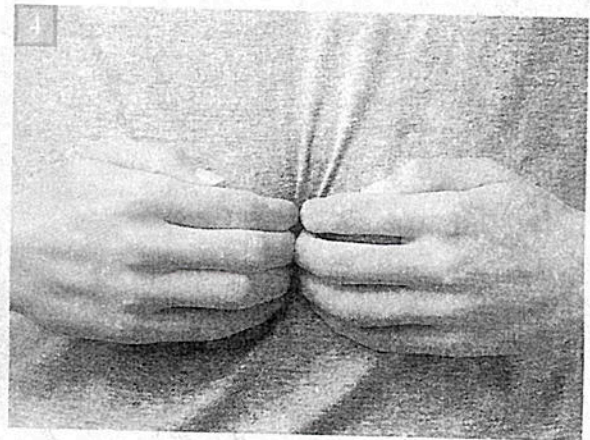
Lie down with your knees bent up. Lacing your fingers together, rock your hara from side to side in the same way as we did in the Shiatsu sequence. Do this for several minutes.



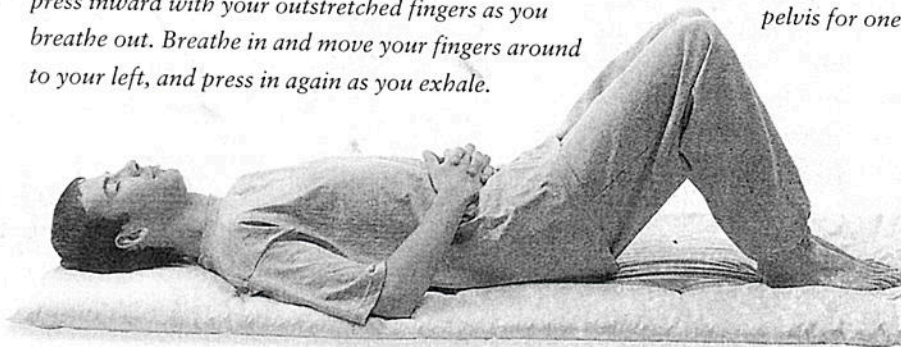
Begin by rocking gently, then go more deeply if this is comfortable. Remember not to rub, but simply to let the intestines move under your hands. Rock lightly before finishing.



Now starting at the top of the hara at the solar plexus, press inward with your outstretched fingers as you breathe out. Breathe in and move your fingers around to your left, and press in again as you exhale.



Continue right around the hara just inside the ribs and pelvis for one and a half circuits.



Finally, lay your hands over the tanden and let yourself rest for several minutes.

## 3 The Makko-ho Stretches

The Makko-ho stretches are a series of meridian-opening movements that are practiced widely by Shiatsu practitioners and students.

They are useful not just because they stretch each pair of meridians, but also because you can monitor the state of your own meridians by the ease and flexibility with which you can get into each position.

Some of the poses are similar to ones used in yoga, but the way of working into them is different. With the Makko-ho exercises, the attitude is a relaxed one: take a breath in, move into the stretch as you breathe out, and relax. Staying in position, breathe in, and as you exhale, try to relax a little further down into the stretch. Don't bounce or try to push yourself into the pose, just go down as far as is comfortable. We usually do three long exhalations for each stretch, and the order in which they are done is in accordance with the Chinese clock cycle (see p. 65).

Each of the Makko-ho exercises stretches a pair of traditional and supplementary (Zen Shiatsu extended) meridians. In addition, the pose either expresses the psychological aspect of the meridian pair or activates a part of the body that is involved in that expression.

### Lung/Large Intestine

This stretch opens the chest and focuses on the LU/LI function of "intake of Ki." As well as stretching the LU and LI traditional channels in the arm (especially if the thumbs are linked and index fingers pointed), the supplementary (Zen) LU and LI meridians on the back of the leg are opened by bending forward.

1 Stand with feet hip-width apart, link your thumbs behind your back.

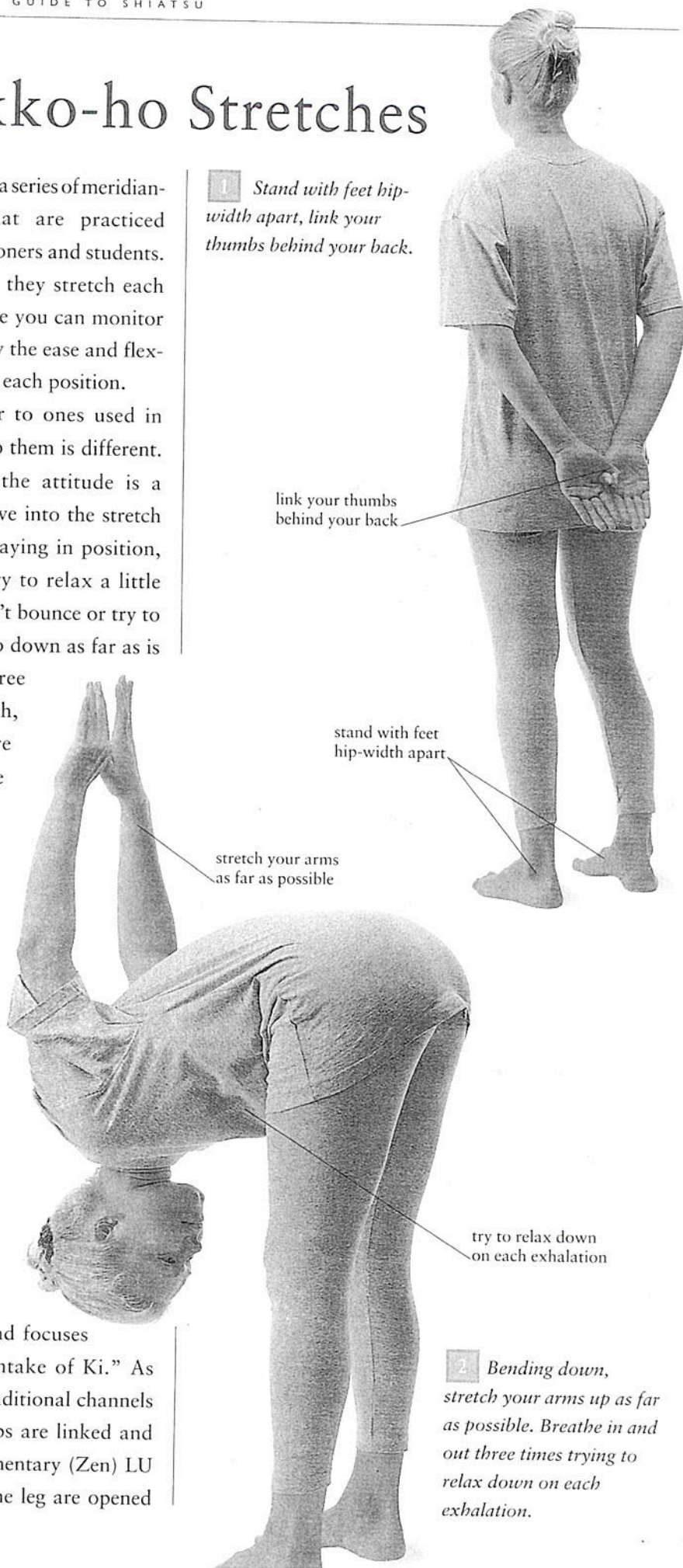
link your thumbs behind your back

stand with feet hip-width apart

stretch your arms as far as possible

try to relax down on each exhalation

2 Bending down, stretch your arms up as far as possible. Breathe in and out three times trying to relax down on each exhalation.



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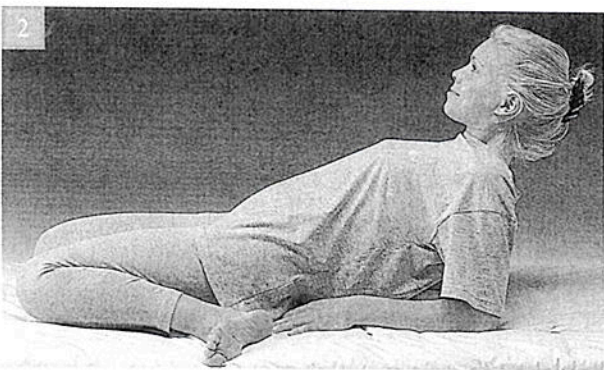
3  
down  
Breat

# Stomach/Spleen

The attitude of ST and SP is to do with “grasping food.” Imagine someone holding food just out of reach in front of you; or picking up windfall apples; or pulling up carrots – all the emphasis is on the front of the body as you gather the food. The ST/SP stretch takes that front of body concentration of Ki and activates it by stretching the thighs and torso. This is a strenuous exercise so be careful to go only to the stage that is comfortable for you.

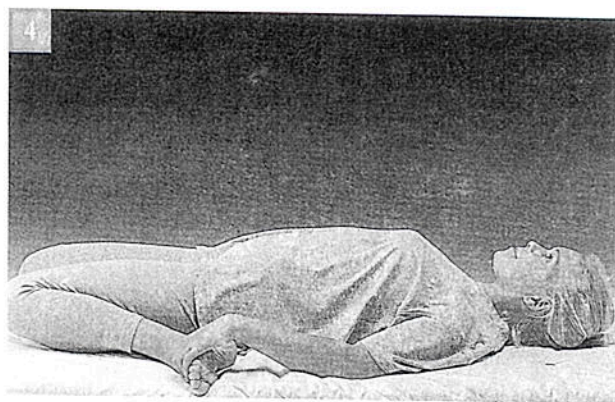


1 Kneel down with your bottom between your feet. This is similar to sitting in seiza. Feet should be tucked back parallel to the body.

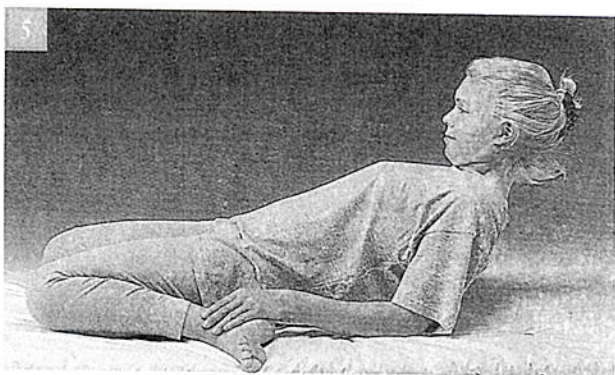


2 Breathe out, and lean back onto your elbows.

3 If this is comfortable, on the next exhalation go right down to the floor and raise your hands over your head. Breathe in and out three times.



4 Get ready to come up in the same stages. First, grasp your ankles.

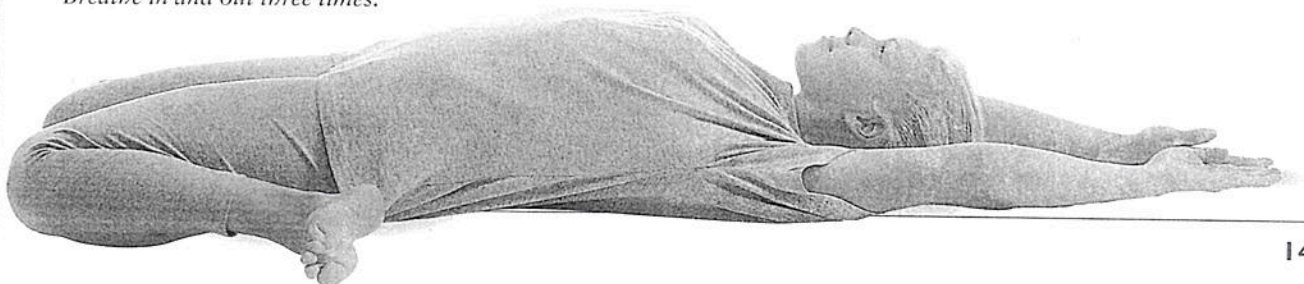


5 Continuing to grasp your ankles, tucking your chin to chest and push up strongly on your elbows to bring your back off the floor.



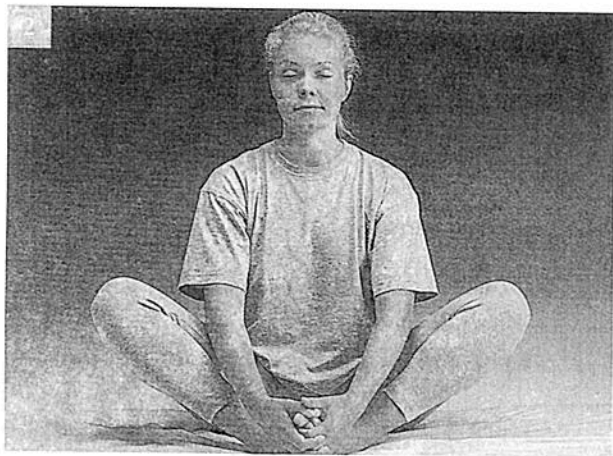
6 Tuck your feet under your buttocks and then bend forward to counteract the back bend.

7 If you find this sequence too difficult, sit in seiza, place your hands behind you, breathe out, and raise your hips. Hold for three long breaths to create a stretch on the Stomach and Spleen meridians in the front of the thigh.



# Heart/Small Intestine

The Heart is the center of awareness, spirituality, and the emotional interpreter of our environment. Small Intestine deals with assimilation, both physically and mentally, in conjunction with the interpretation of the Heart. By sitting in this position, we become more centered and tranquil. Bending forward activates the protected inner surfaces where HT runs, and stretches the Small Intestine pathway.

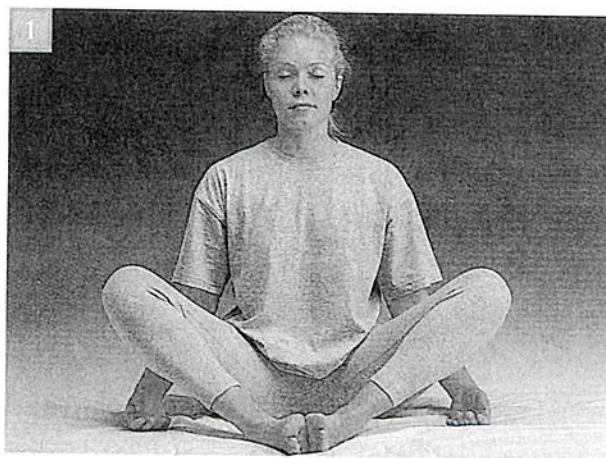


Clasp your feet in front of you, with elbows outside your shins, and relax down toward the floor, trying to keep chest and hara open.

# Bladder/Kidney

The forward bend of the BL/KD stretch puts you in touch with your back and the back of the legs, aptly expressing the function of “going forward in life” provided by the purification of Bladder and the impetus of Kidney.

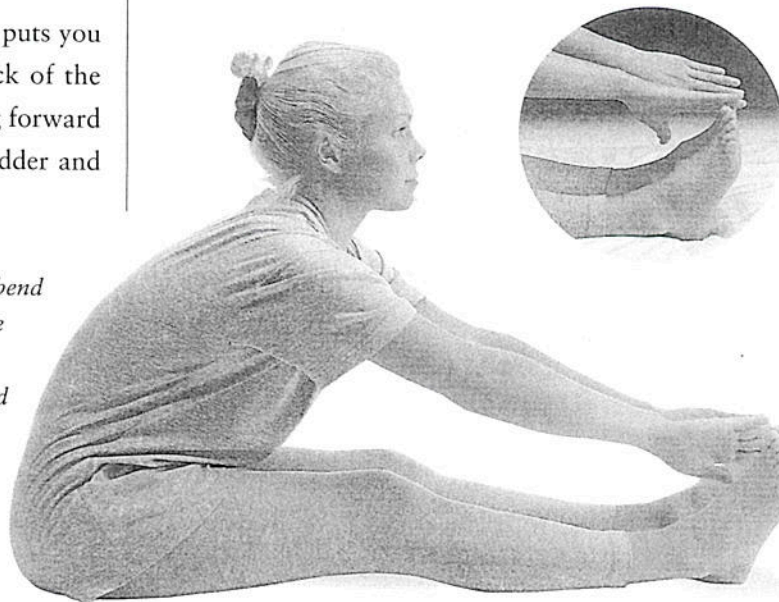
With your feet straight out in front of you, bend forward from the hips and push your hands (little fingers uppermost) between your feet if you can reach them. If you can't reach your feet, then hold your ankles or shins just as far as you can go. Breathe and relax down. For the first two breaths look forward between your feet; for the final one, tuck your head down toward your knees to stretch the back of the neck.



Sit with the soles of your feet together, drawn up as close to your groin as possible.



Again, hold the position for three breaths, relaxing down a little on each exhalation.



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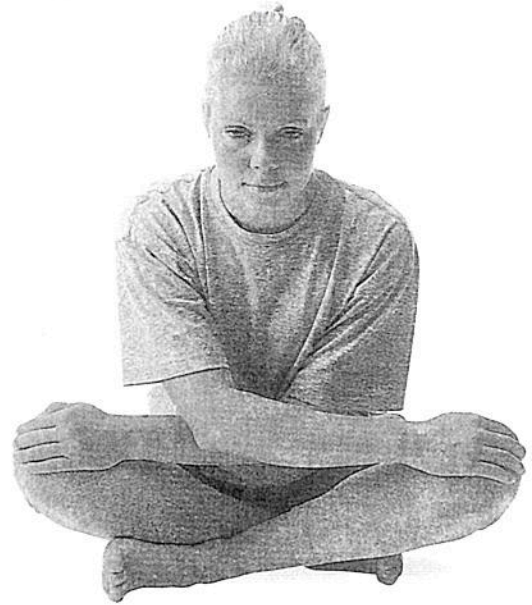
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# Heart Governor/Triple Heater

This pose embodies the protective attitude of both Heart Governor (also known as Heart Protector) and Triple Heater. It reminds me of a clam shell on the beach, where the harder outer layer, in this case the exposed Triple Heater, protects the soft inner Heart Governor channels.

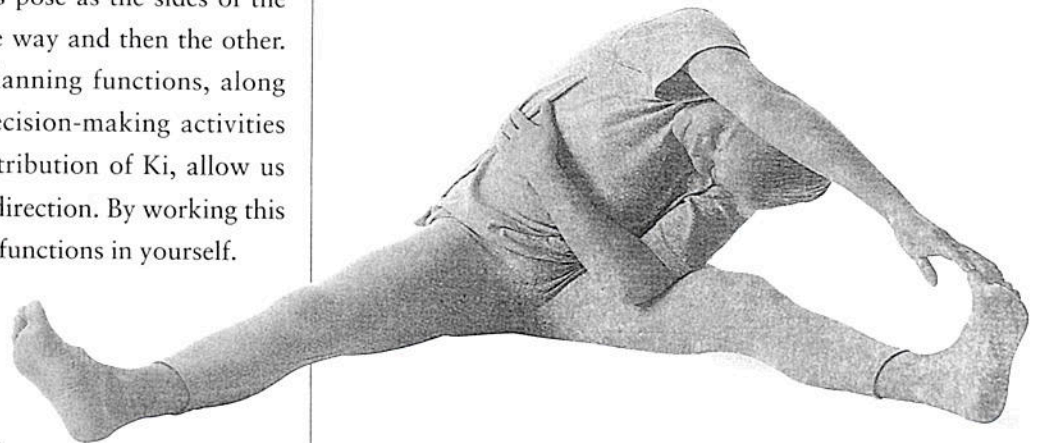
**1** Sit cross-legged and cross your arms the other way, clasping your knees. Breathe out and stretch forward, pushing your knees down. Again, take three breaths, then reverse legs and arms, and repeat.



# Gall Bladder/Liver

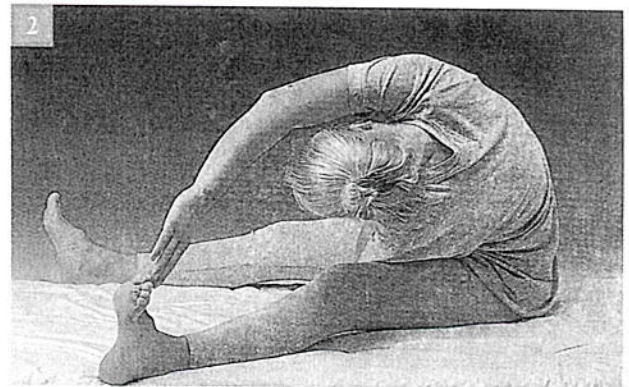
“Which direction to go?” is the physical question being asked in this pose as the sides of the body are stretched first one way and then the other. The Liver’s control and planning functions, along with the Gall Bladder’s decision-making activities controlling the smooth distribution of Ki, allow us to take action in any given direction. By working this stretch you’ll activate these functions in yourself.

**1** Sit with your legs as wide apart as possible, imagining that you have your back to a wall. With your right arm stretched up and your left by your side, stretch down to the left as if sliding down the wall and trying to touch the floor behind your left foot with your right hand. Hold for three breaths.



## SUMMARY

Although these stretches take no more than five minutes to do, they are a most effective way of keeping you fit and supple, not to mention helping you feel how each pair of meridians is acting in your body. The Makko-ho exercises can be done every morning and night. Remember, however, that you will be stiffer in the morning, and work accordingly.



Come up and reverse arms, and slide over to your right in the same way. Remember to keep your back straight and don’t collapse your hara. Come back to the center and then, clasping your hands in front of you, bend from the hips straight to the front. Again, take three long breaths as you relax into the stretch.