

# Exercise #1.

Stand still for a few seconds (or a few minutes if you intend to have a longer training session) in the Infinite Ultimate Stance (*figure 6.1a*). Then move one of your legs to the side to form the Goat-riding or Tai Chi Stance. Simultaneously raise both arms, with your elbows fairly straight, in front of you to chest-level (*figure 6.1b*), breathing in gently through your nose. Then lower your arms gently in front as if you were pressing on water with your palms, breathing out gently through your mouth (*figure 6.1c*).

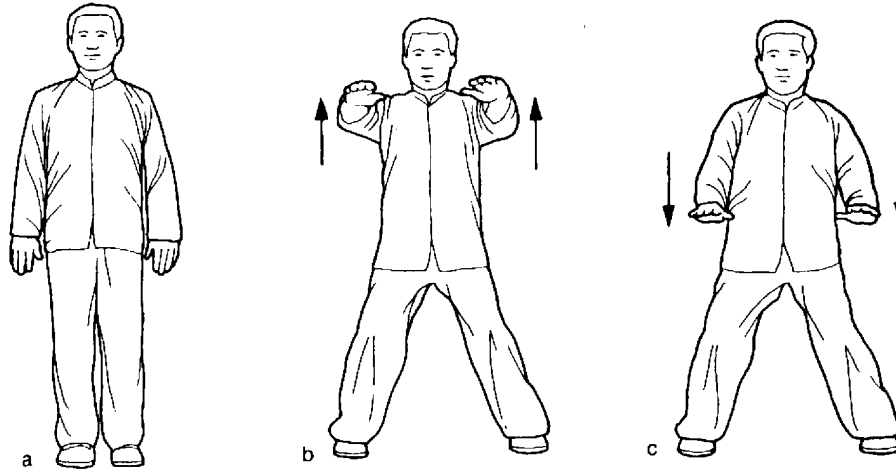


Fig 6.1 Lifting Water

After raising and lowering your arms with the correct breathing between five and ten times, you should have entered a Chi Kung state of mind, a subconscious level. Gently visualize good cosmic energy flowing into you as you breathe in, and your vital energy flowing down your arms into your palms as you breathe out. (Cosmic energy and vital energy are terms generally used to refer to energy outside and inside your body respectively.) It is very important that your visualization be done gently; if you have difficulty visualizing, just a gentle thought of cosmic energy flowing into you, and vital energy flowing to your palms, will do.

After raising and lowering your arms 30 times, with the appropriate visualization and energy flow, gently bring your feet together and remain still in the Infinite Ultimate Stance for a few minutes. You will feel internal force flowing down your arms and legs, and surging inside you. As you progress, increase the number of times you lift and lower your arms to 50 times, then gradually to 100 or more.

You may start with *zhan zhuang* (standing in a stance) and Lifting Water, then follow on without a break to a Tai Chi set, as explained in the next chapter. On the other hand, if your training session is short, you may practise them separately. Notice that both the Infinite Ultimate Stance and Lifting Water are an integral part of any Tai Chi set, which usually begins with them. When performing a Tai Chi set, however, one normally stands in the Infinite Ultimate Stance for just a few seconds, and raises and lowers one's arms only twice. If you practise them as the initial patterns of a Tai Chi set rather than as separate exercises, even though you may spend a long time over them, then they constitute intrinsic Chi Kung training.