

STANDING MEDITATION

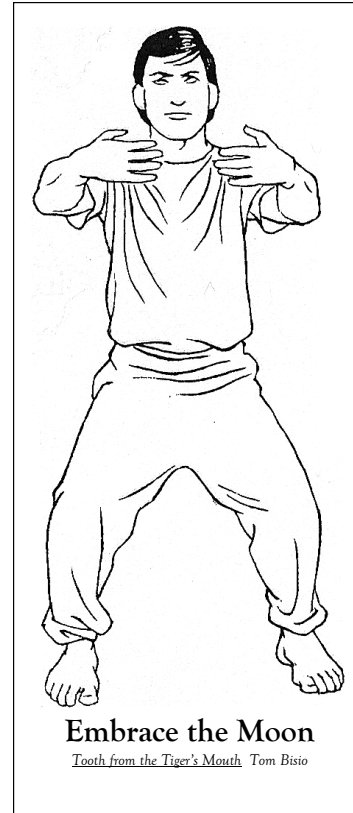
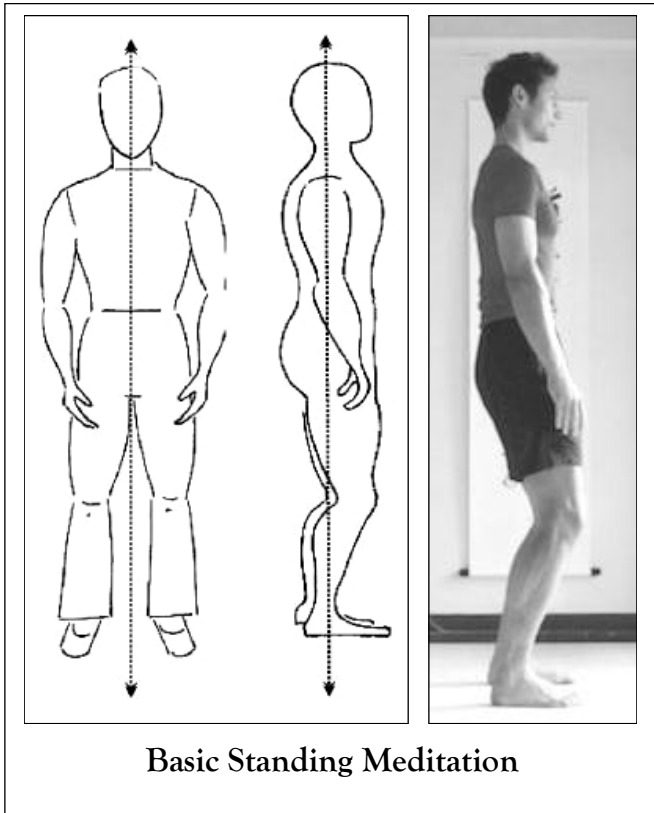
If you have excessive discomfort in seated meditation or if you are lethargic and unfocused, standing meditation can be a good alternative. Additionally, you can practice standing meditation throughout the day. Think of all the moments you spend standing and waiting for something; for a bus, on the telephone, in a line to purchase something, at an elevator. Consider bringing attentive alignment to your body and greater awareness to these moments.

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, your body weight spread equally between both feet.
2. Gently, without forcing, tuck your tailbone under.
3. Soften or slightly bend your knees. Soften the crease between your thighs and abdomen.
4. Imagine a string suspended from the top of your head up toward the ceiling or sky. Feel a sense of elongation in the spine.
5. As the spine extends upward and the head reaches for the sky, your chin falls softly toward your chest.
6. Keep your shoulders relaxed, heavy, and your chest *hollow* without excessively rounding the shoulders.
7. Close your lips.
8. Breathe through the nose.
9. Place the tongue against the upper palate, just behind the ridge of your upper teeth. This reduces saliva and allows for proper *qi* circulation.
10. Take several expansive breaths, filling your chest and abdomen completely. As you exhale, root through your feet into the ground.
11. Like a feather gently falling, allow your attention to settle in your lower belly. This area of the body is called the *dantian* (Chinese) or *hara* (Japanese). It lies 2-3 inches below the navel and several inches deep into the body.
12. Breathe comfortably and naturally. When distracted, gently bring your awareness back to the *dantian* or *hara*. Breath counting can be done in standing posture.
13. As you stand, you may notice tension cropping up in your shoulders, knees, hips and buttocks. Soften the tension and return to your breath. For alternatives to a basic standing posture, you can also experiment with *Embrace the moon* posture as shown below.

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