



# AYURVEDA ELEMENTS

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## The Five Tibetans

Easy Energising Exercises

by Rama Prasad & Caroline Robertson

Do you wake up feeling tired, struggle to summon the energy to face life's demands and lag through the hours like a car low on petrol? Are you ready to access your personal powerhouse by shifting into a new gear towards health and vitality? If the answer is "yes" then, read on.

Practice of the Five Tibetans will refuel your energy reserves, unleashing your dormant potential for physical and mental vitality. As with many effective and simple life-enhancers, the Five Tibetans are easy yet deeply potent and only take ten minutes to complete. Considering the broad range of benefits to be gained this will prove an invaluable investment

### Sacred Origins of the Five Tibetans

Originally termed the "Five Rites of Rejuvenation," by author Peter Kelden, the Five Tibetans were brought to the West by a retired British army colonel who learned them from Tibetan monks in a secluded Himalayan hermitage. Traditionally practiced by a particular sect of Tibetan monks for thousands of years, the Five Tibetans were largely unknown due to the isolation and rough terrain of the monks lamasery. Fascinated by stories that these monks had found the secret to longevity, the colonel spent years seeking them out. After discovering their location he was amazed to see their youthful appearance and strength despite their advanced years, qualities they attributed to their diligent practice of the Five Tibetans combined with a simple diet and spiritual observances. After obtaining personal training in the Five Tibetans the colonel claims to have felt and appeared fifteen years younger, inspiring him to share this gift with the rest of the world.

### Reaping the Rewards

*"Wholesome physical exercise reconstitutes energy, stemming the aging process, making the body light and firm, while safeguarding against fatigue and inducing cheerfulness" - Sushruta Samhita.*

Testimonials at the opening of Peter Kelden's book "Ancient Secret of the Fountain of Youth" would have you believe that the Five Tibetans are the panacea for all life's problems. Accounts of curing hair loss, memory failure, wrinkles, insomnia, excema, obesity, arthritis, sinus, pain and fatigue are just some of the statements made by practitioners of the Five Tibetans. Such therapeutic claims are yet to be conclusively trailed yet one benefit felt by all the students we have taught the Five Tibetans to is a marked increase in vitality, flexibility and mental clarity.

In order to appreciate the benefits of the Five Tibetans one must understand the Tibetan view of subtle physiology and anatomy. The human body is viewed as a complex system of interdependent interacting energies. The main power station supplying the body with these energies is the seven chakras or energy vortexes. Conversant with Yogic Science, the Tibetans assert that the rate at which these vortexes spin on their axis combined with the unimpeded flow of their energy through the fine channels of the body determines an individual's psycho-physical health status. The chakras correspond to specific nerves, glands and tissues in the body. An increased rate of chakra rotation is said to cause hyperfunction of the related anatomy whereas a slower rate of rotation leads to slow function in the corresponding body regions. According to the Yogic philosophy, blockage of the energy flow combined with irregular chakra rotation are the main cause behind illness and aging. By normalising imbalances in the seven main chakras, the Five Tibetans are said to offer the key to lasting health, youth and vitality. These exercises awaken the largely dormant flow of energy through our main chakras thus enlivening all corresponding nerves, organs and glands. As author Peter Kelder explains, our current flow of energy can be likened to a small garden sprinkler whereas we have the inherent potential energy of a Niagra Falls.

Unleashing this power creates an extraordinary level of stamina as well as dispelling disease, preventing future disorders and allaying the aging process. The physical benefits become clearly evident after twenty-one days consistent practice.

The impact of the Five Tibetans reaches far beyond merely physical benefits. Increased mental clarity and expanded awareness are felt soon after commencing the practice. The spinning motion of the first Tibetan alters one's limited perceptions, creating a shift in consciousness that allows a heightened awareness of deeper layers of reality. This may explain why the Sufi Whirling Dervishes and children enjoy a good spin. Muscular flexibility and strength are created through the other Tibetans which also have a specific sacro-cranial pump action, increasing the flow of cerebro spinal fluid through the spine to the brain. This contributes to one's sense of balance and mental alertness.

Practicing the Five Tibetans ten minutes daily you will reap all these rewards and enhance your life and longevity far beyond measure.

### Guidelines to Practice

The Five Tibetans are ideally performed in the morning before eating. They can also be performed at night at least two hours away from eating but be aware that the energy they generate may produce insomnia or restless sleep. The response varies between individuals, experiment to see which works best for you.

- Try to wear lightweight, loose clothing made of natural fibres such as cotton or linen.
- Choose a well-ventilated room, preferably with carpet or use a yoga mat or rug for comfort.
- As you become familiar and confident with the exercises you can practice them with your eyes closed (except posture 1) to gain amplified inner awareness and calm.
- While pregnant, menstruating, feverish or suffering from lower back problems only practice under the supervision of a Yoga instructor or Ayurvedic physician.

### The Postures

Although similar to some Yoga asanas, the Five Tibetans are unique in their positions and action. Optimum energetic effects are gained by practicing each posture twenty one times. Greater repetitions are said to be unnecessary, as is often the case, more is not always better. Moderation is the key to this ancient rite.

Many will find it difficult to practice twenty-one repetitions at first so it is advised to start with 10-12 repetitions and build up at your own pace. Remember that the exercises are meant to be enjoyable as well as beneficial, don't push yourself beyond your comfort zone.

Maintain an awareness on your breathing throughout the practice. Observe a Yogic breathing rhythm, that is, as you breath in your abdomen and chest raise and expand then breathing out your abdomen and chest fall. Inhale and exhale deeply through your nose. If your nose is blocked you can breath through your mouth. Practice this by itself until it becomes easy and automatic.

We have given the classical postures for those able to start from that standard. For those who have difficulty with these we have devised an easier variation which over time, will eventually lead you to easily perform the classical version.

### Tibetan One

<b>Starting position:</b> Stand with your feet slightly apart, body relaxed and in alignment. Inhale and exhale deeply through your nose. Fix your gaze on a point at eye level to help maintain your balance.	<b>Classical exercise:</b> Raise your arms by your sides to shoulder level, keeping your arms straight. Keep your fingers together, palms outstretched and facing downwards. Spin your whole body full circle in a clockwise direction (to the right side.) Each time you pass the frontal direction quickly fix your gaze on the point of reference. Continue spinning until you feel a little dizzy and then fix your gaze to regain balance. Work up to twenty one spins over time. Breath naturally and comfortably
<b>Easier variation:</b> Inhaling, raise your arms by your side to shoulder level, keeping them straight and palms facing downwards. Exhaling, turn your body from the waist to the right side moving your arms in the same direction. Inhaling bring your body back to face the front and exhaling rotate to the left side. Inhaling return to face the front. Repeat this up to twenty one times.	

## Tibetan Two

<b>Starting position:</b> Lie on your back with your arms by your sides, palms facing downwards, fingers and legs together. Make sure your head is aligned with your spine and your arms and legs are fully extended. Feel your whole body relax and melt into the supporting surface. Inhale and exhale deeply into your abdomen and chest cavity.	<b>Classical exercise:</b> Inhale as you simultaneously raise your head and legs off the ground. Tuck your chin in allowing it to touch your chest. Keep your legs straight at a 90° angle perpendicular to the floor, facing your toes skyward. You can bring your legs back further but your sacrum must remain resting on the floor. Exhaling, lower your head and legs. Repeat this up to twenty one times.
<b>Easier variation:</b> Inhale as you first raise your head off the ground to a point that is comfortable, you may choose to keep a large pillow under your head for support. Raise your legs to a comfortable angle, slightly bending your knees. Lower your head and legs while exhaling. Repeat as many times as is comfortable. Working towards the classical version.	

## Tibetan 3

<b>Starting position:</b> Kneel with your knees slightly apart and your spine erect. Resting on the balls of your feet and arms by your sides, inhale and exhale deeply.	<b>Classical exercise:</b> Place your palms below your buttocks, ready to support your arching back. Bring your head forward so the chin touches the chest (if possible.) Inhaling bring your head back as far as comfortable and arch your spine. Exhaling bring your head forward, chin to chest. Repeat this procedure in an easy flowing rhythm up to twenty one times.
<b>Easier variation:</b> Bring your head forward as far as is comfortable. Feeling the gentle stretch at the back of your neck. Place your palms on your lower back and inhaling gently bring your torso back and stretch your head back to look at the sky. Exhaling bring your head to stretch forward once more. Repeat this as many times as you like and with time you will be able to easily perform the classical posture.	

## Tibetan 4

<b>Starting position:</b> Sit with your legs outstretched in front of you and your torso erect. Your feet are about 12 inches apart and slightly flexed, keeping your palms flat on the floor beside your hips. Your fingers are together with fingertips facing the feet. Bring your chin forward to meet your chest or as close as possible.	<b>Classical exercise:</b> Inhaling let your head fall back and bending your knees raise your body from the ground. Bring your body to a position where the lower legs and arms are perpendicular to the floor while the thighs, torso and neck are parallel to the floor. You may prefer to let the head fall further back than is illustrated. Try not to let the feet slide and avoid bending your arms. As you exhale lower your torso to the ground, straighten your legs and bring your trunk to the upright position. Repeat this up to twenty one times.
<b>Easier variation:</b> Allow your hands to fan out slightly if this is more comfortable. Brings your hands slightly further back than the hip region and you can slightly bend your knees. Inhaling gently lift your torso off the ground and look up to the ceiling, slightly arching your neck. Your buttocks may be lower than your chest and knees. You can end your legs slightly. As you exhale lower your buttocks then legs to the floor and come back to the original starting position. Repeat this three to twenty one times, gradually coming to the classical exercise over time.	

## Tibetan 5

<b>Starting position:</b> Get on all fours like a cat. Your body is supported by the balls of your feet, your knees and the palms of your hands. Keep your hands and feet about 2 feet apart, fingers together.	<b>Classical exercise:</b> As you inhale straighten your legs and arms, raising your torso off the floor. Your buttocks are in the air as your legs and arms form two sides of a triangle with the floor. Try to keep your heels flat on the floor and your head between your arms or tucked towards your chest. Exhaling lower your torso and legs to the floor, keeping your arms and legs straight. The body is sagging towards the floor but never touches the floor. Rest your head back as far as possible. Inhale once more and come to the original triangle pose. Repeat this up to twenty one times being careful not to end your arms or legs and touch the floor with your torso.
<b>Easier variation:</b> Inhaling, almost straighten your legs by lowering your buttocks and bringing your torso forward, arching your back towards the floor. Allow your knees and upper thighs to rest on the floor while you look up to the ceiling. Exhaling return to the starting position. Repeat this up to twenty one times. Each time try to lift your knees from the ground slightly.	

### **Removing Obstacles to Progress**

The old Chinese proverb stating that " the longest journey starts with the first step" reminds us that any endeavour requires an initial motivating impetus. Try to approach your practice with a vision of your ideal self-manifesting. Repeat to yourself mentally " These exercises are the tools of positive transformation in my life. All health, vitality and youthfulness is flowing into my life through the practice of these exercises." By focusing on the positive results of the 'journey' we are less likely to self-sabotage our progress with negative blocks such as self-talk saying " They're too hard "or "I'm too tired."

You may find you experience mild headaches or muscle aches at the onset of your practice of the Five Tibetans. This is generally a good sign that toxins are being mobilised from your deeper tissues, getting ready for excretion. A light, high fibre diet combined with plenty of warm herbal tea will help to facilitate their elimination. Ayurvedic purification treatments are also an effective way to speed up the detoxification process.

If symptoms persist seek guidance from a Yoga therapist or Ayurvedic physician.

Keeping a diary of your progress can act as a strong motivator to continue practice of the Five Tibetans. Note the problems you experience at the beginning of practice and as time passes record the positive changes that have occurred. May these exercises bring you true health, harmony and longevity.

**A video of The Five Tibetans is available from Ayurveda Elements**