

Gun Fa rolling

滾法

Gun fa is one of the hardest techniques to master and takes a lot of practice to get right. When done correctly, it looks very easy and relaxed. This is one of the techniques that must be practised on your rice bag before attempting to apply it to your partner. It took me about 3 months of daily practice to really get to grips with Gun fa on my rice bag, and a further 6 months to become competent on a human body. It is worth persevering though, as it is one of the most commonly used techniques in practice and is renowned for its therapeutic effects.

Gun fa has a deep, penetrating and warming effect and is generally applied to large muscle groups. The best places to start practising are the back and the top of the

shoulders (the trapezius). Gun fa is usually one of the first techniques applied for musculoskeletal ailments to relax the recipient and to soften and warm the muscles. When the technique becomes second nature to you and is flowing effortlessly, you can be very specific with it and focus on small areas, even individual points.

The sequence shown below constitutes one rolling cycle. Repeat this over and over again. Remember that the rolling movement does not start in your hand. Your elbow and the extensor muscles of your forearm propel and power the movement. Your little-finger knuckle should be a focus point; imagine it is glued to one point and cannot be moved. It also helps to think of your arm as a wing moving gracefully and smoothly at all times and your hand as a greasy metal ball.

Practising Gun fa

Initially, practise for 10–15 minutes each day. After 2 days of practising with your dominant hand, introduce your other hand to the movement. From then on, practise for an equal amount of time with both hands – it is important to learn to do Gun fa with both hands. Build your practice up to 20–25 minutes per day and, after 6–8 weeks, your hands and arms will be far more flexible and your muscles stronger. If you feel ready at this point, you may start practising on your partner.

Rice-bag work

Place your rice bag on a table and position the little-finger side of your hand on the bag. Now roll the back of your hand onto the bag. A triangular area between the head of your ulna and your third and fifth knuckles should be in contact with the bag. When your wrist is fully extended and your



Step one

Begin with the little-finger edge of your hand on the bag with your palm and fingers naturally flexed. Then, by extending your wrist, roll onto the back of your hand.

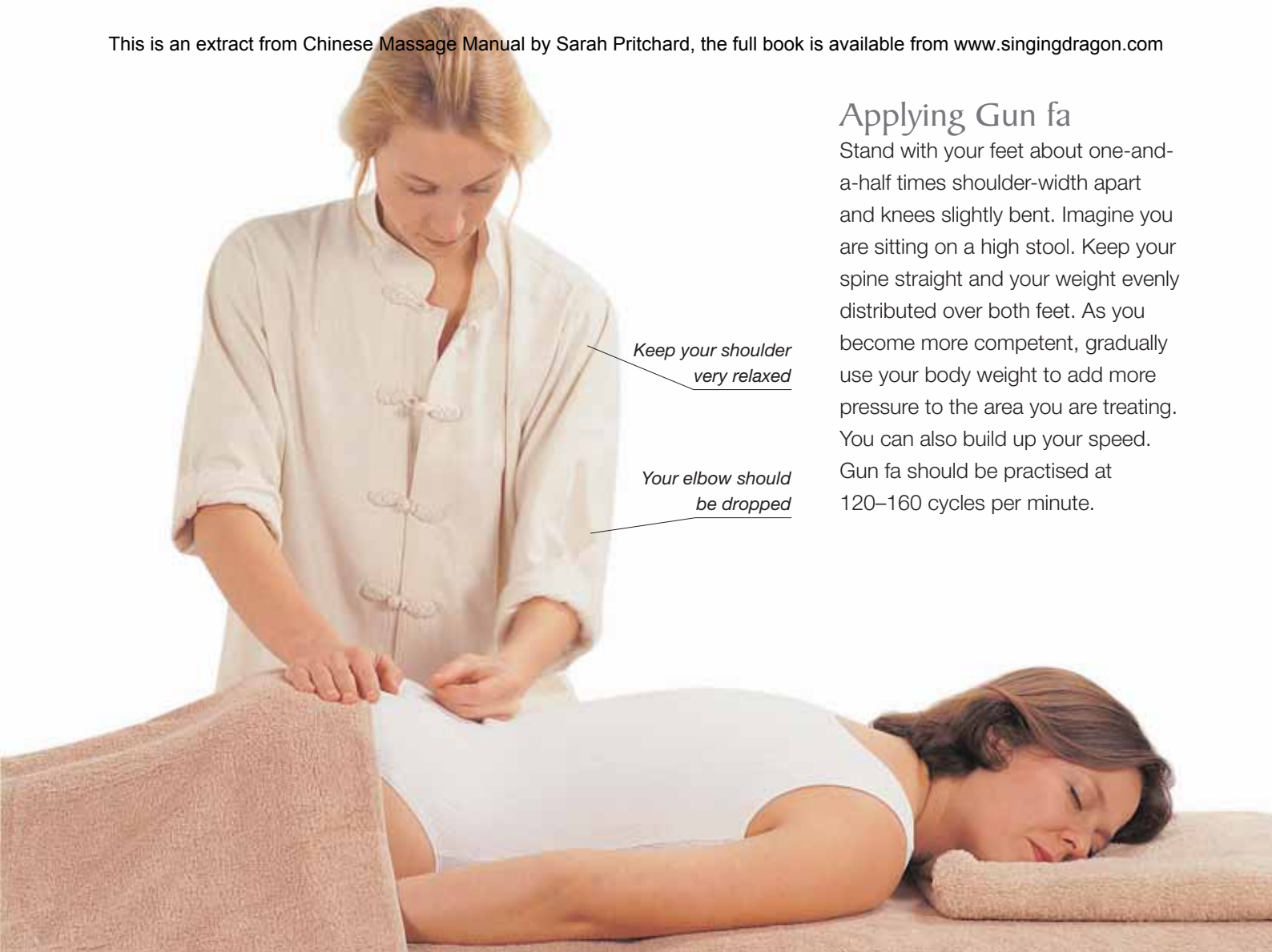
elbow and forearm are away from the side of your body, press firmly onto the rice bag with the back of your hand.

Immediately and smoothly roll

Step two

Keep rolling until your palm is open and facing upwards with your fingers and wrist fully extended. Then roll your hand back to the starting position.

back to the starting position. Your elbow and forearm should move in towards the side of your body. As you practise, you will be able to build up your speed and pressure.



Applying Gun fa

Stand with your feet about one-and-a-half times shoulder-width apart and knees slightly bent. Imagine you are sitting on a high stool. Keep your spine straight and your weight evenly distributed over both feet. As you become more competent, gradually use your body weight to add more pressure to the area you are treating. You can also build up your speed. Gun fa should be practised at 120–160 cycles per minute.

Tips for practice

- Be as smooth and rounded as you can. There should be no jerky movements.
- Observed from behind, the movement of your elbow and arm should look like a wing flying in and out.
- Be consistent in pressure and speed. You can start gently and moderately if working on a painful area, gradually building up speed to between 120–160 cycles per minute.
- Your fifth-finger knuckle should stay in contact with the area being treated at all times.
- Gun fa can be used progressively along an area or meridian.
- Relax, keep breathing and watch your posture: keep upright and avoid hunching.
- Gun fa can be used with both hands working simultaneously.

Where on the body?

Apply to the back, buttocks, legs, arms, shoulders and abdomen. It can be used to stimulate points, but is mainly used on large muscle groups.

What are the effects?

Relaxes the tendons and muscles, warms and clears meridians, expels wind cold and damp, increases the circulation of Qi and blood and removes stagnation and stasis, relieves swelling, lubricates joints, relieves pain.

What can it treat?

Injuries of soft tissues, Bi Syndrome, lower back problems, sciatica, spasm and contraction of tendons and muscles, abdominal pain, abdominal fullness and bloating, frozen shoulder, neck problems, numbness of muscles.

Yi Zhi Chan Tui Fa *one-finger meditation*

一指禪推法 As with the previous technique, Gun fa, Yi zhi chan tui fa is difficult to master and needs a lot of practice on the rice bag before being applied to the human body. This is another essential technique for a Tui na practitioner to acquire. It is used time and time again as it is the main technique for stimulating points along the meridians. Yi zhi chan tui fa is the Tui na practitioner's equivalent of the acupuncturist's needle. A clue to the technique is in its name. 'Chan' means meditation, which suggests prolonged focus and attention in a relaxed manner.

Stimulation of points

To strengthen or tonify a point, use the technique more gently, and propel the movement in the direction of the natural flow of Qi in the meridian concerned (*refer to Meridians, pages 36–43*). Also, visualize Qi coming from the universe, through you, to the tip of your thumb and penetrating the point, giving Qi to where it is needed.

To clear or reduce a point, apply strong stimulation by making the technique powerful and vigorous. Propel the movement against the natural flow of Qi in the meridian concerned. (*Note that in the sequence shown below, movement is directed towards the left.*) Always keep the treatment principle in your mind and imagination.

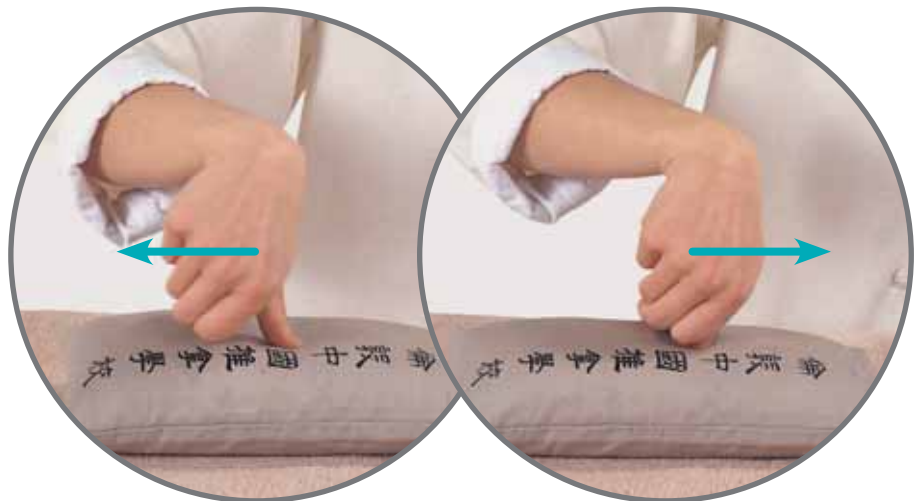
Practising Yi zhi chan tui fa

It is important to learn to do Yi zhi chan tui fa with both thumbs. Start by practising for 2–3 minutes a day with each thumb and gradually increase by 2–3 minutes each week until you reach 20–25 minutes' practice per day. It can feel particularly awkward and uncomfortable when you first start, but after a few months of regular practice it begins to come naturally. Once you have mastered Yi zhi chan tui fa and Gun fa, the other techniques will feel very easy by comparison.

Rice-bag work

Sit with your rice bag in front of you on a table and both feet flat on the floor, about shoulder-width apart. Mark a spot on your bag – this represents a point to be stimulated.

Place either the tip or pad of your thumb on the mark. Whether you use the tip or pad depends on your personal anatomy – if the end joint in your thumb is very flexible, you will



Step one

With your thumb fixed to the spot, use the muscles of your forearm to propel your wrist and relaxed fingers away from your body, extending your thumb fully.

find it easier to use the pad; most people, however, use the tip. Keeping your thumb fixed to the marked point, use the power of your forearm to propel your wrist away from your body, extending your thumb. Then bring your wrist back

Step two

Contract your forearm muscles to roll your wrist back towards your body, bringing your fingers in towards your thumb, which now flexes backwards slightly.

towards you, flexing your thumb backwards a little. This completes one cycle. Repeat this over and over again to get the flow and rhythm of the movement. As you practise, build up your speed.

Applying Yi zhi chan tui fa

Begin to practise slowly for the first few weeks and, as you become more familiar and confident with the technique, start to build up your speed. In practice, this technique should be done at 120–160 cycles per minute. As you become more proficient, add more pressure by using the weight of your arm.

Keep your shoulder relaxed

Keep your spine straight: think of lifting your ribs up and out from your hips

Your elbow should be lower than your wrist

Let your fingers relax in a hollow fist



Tips for practice

- Keep your thumb glued to the point at all times. Do not let it wander around off course.
- Make sure your shoulder is relaxed. Do not let it creep up towards your ear.
- Imagine your arm is resting on a tennis ball in your armpit.
- Keep relaxed and get into a rhythm with the movement.
- Focus your mental attention and your energy on the tip of your thumb.

Where on the body?

Apply to any points and meridians on the body.

What are the effects?

Activates points and therefore the particular actions of the points – for example, it activates circulation of Qi and blood, disperses stagnation, strengthens stomach and spleen. To strengthen or tonify a point, move in the direction of the flow of Qi along its meridian. To reduce or clear a point, move against the direction of the flow of Qi.

What can it treat?

Headaches, insomnia, dizziness, hypertension, abdominal and epigastric pain, period pains, traumatic injuries. It is used for both internal and external ailments.

Rou Fa *kneading*

揉法 Rou fa is a commonly used Tui na technique and can be applied to many parts of the body. You may be relieved to know that it is an easy technique to acquire, especially in comparison to the previous two. There is no need to practise Rou fa on your rice bag, but I would advise you to first practise on yourself just to get the feel of it – try your thigh or forearm.

You can apply Rou fa with your thumb, your middle finger, your fingers and thumb together, your whole palm, the heel of your palm or the tip of your elbow. The

three methods described below are the most common. If you want to use another method, follow the same principles of downward pressure and circular kneading. Try the exercise 'The phoenix spreads its wings' (see page 61) to help improve your technique.

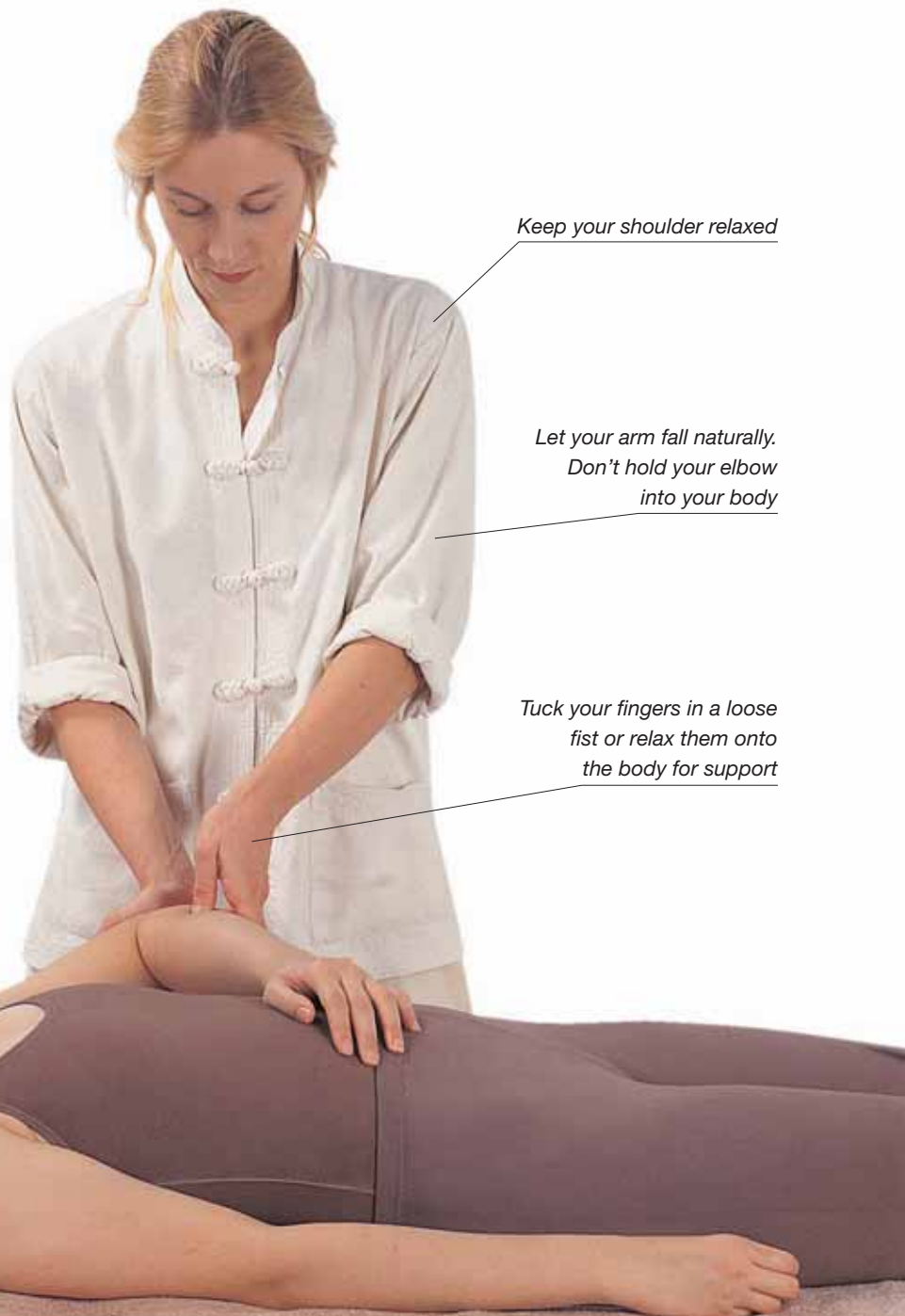
Stimulation of points

Rou fa with your thumb or middle finger can be used to stimulate points. To strengthen or tonify a point, use gentle clockwise kneading. To clear or reduce a point, use anticlockwise kneading and more pressure.

Using thumb

Sit or stand with your spine straight. If you are standing up, have your feet one-and-a-half times shoulder-width apart and knees bent. This gives a solid base from which to work and helps protect your back.

Select a point or area to work on. Put your thumb on the area and bend the end joint backwards slightly so that you are using the pad of your thumb rather than the tip. Apply some strength and pressure downwards with your body weight, then begin to knead the underlying muscles round and round. Start slowly and gently and, as the area softens and warms, increase the speed of the technique until you are doing 100–160 circles per minute.



Keep your shoulder relaxed

*Let your arm fall naturally.
Don't hold your elbow
into your body*

*Tuck your fingers in a loose
fist or relax them onto
the body for support*

Using middle finger

Place the pad of your middle finger on a selected point or area and put your index finger over the top. Attach your thumb to the back of the end joint of your middle finger to give extra support to the technique. The end segment of your middle finger should be bent slightly back. Apply a little pressure downwards

onto the point by relaxing your shoulder and arm and making use of your arm's natural weight. Knead the underlying muscles in a continuous circular motion. Begin slowly and gently, gradually building up speed and pressure as the point or area being worked on begins to warm up.



Using heel of palm

This form of Rou fa is generally done standing up, and is best practised on your partner's back or limbs. Place the heel of your palm on the area to be treated and relax your fingers down onto your partner's body. Keep your shoulder relaxed and apply strength and pressure downwards through your wrist using your body weight. Keeping the heel of your palm fixed to the area, knead the underlying muscles in generous circles.

Tips for practice

- Always move the underlying muscles and do not skim over the surface of the skin.
- Rou fa should feel deep and penetrating but also pliable and soft.
- You can move the technique from one place to another. For example, over a whole muscle group or along the course of a meridian.
- Start slowly and gently, gradually increasing your pressure and speed.

Where on the body?

Thumb and finger kneading is mainly used on points. The heel of the palm or whole palm is used on the back, legs, arms, abdomen and buttocks. The elbow is used mainly on the buttocks.

What are the effects?

Activates points, invigorates flow of Qi and blood, reduces swelling, relieves spasm, stops pain, calms mind, clears meridians, opens chest, relaxes muscles, strengthens stomach and spleen.

What can it treat?

Headaches, dizziness, insomnia, constipation, diarrhoea, epigastric pain, muscular pain, numbness, stiffness and spasm, soft tissue injuries, sprains.