

T'ai Chi

Fundamentals

TAI CHI FUNDAMENTALS PROGRAM: Yang Style Cheng Man-Ch'ing Lineage

Reminders for Practicing Tai Chi Fundamentals

In Class:

Focus upon what is happening now.

This is the single most important aspect of this training. Bring your attention into the present moment. As you redirect your attention to the process and guidelines presented in class, you can develop increased mental focus and experience a profound sense of relaxation.

Do the movements seem too complex?

Keep your attention on one aspect of the process. For example, stay focused on the movement of your hands, the position of your feet, or changes in the direction you are facing. Notice your breathing, your alignment. Relax.

Are you feeling frustrated because you can't remember the movements?

Keep in mind that this is not a performance! Your own process is what is important. Just breathe and relax into this moment. These exercises are for lifelong practice. There is no rush. You will be able to remember the movements over time and through regular practice.

At Home:

Establish a regular time and place to practice.

Try practicing routinely, mornings before eating & evenings before retiring.

Practice every day.

The duration of practice is not as important as the regularity.

Each time before beginning, notice your posture, breathing and surroundings.

You can do this anytime to enhance your appreciation of this moment of life.

Spend as much time relaxing into the flow of the movements as you do checking for accuracy.

May you become strong as an oak, flexible as a willow, and as clear as still water!

The Tai Chi Fundamentals Program by *Tricia Yu*

From *Tai Chi Fundamentals for Health Care Professionals and Instructors*

Tai Chi is a slow, graceful Chinese exercise that enhances relaxation skills, mental focus, and physical alignment while building leg strength, endurance, and stability. Also written *t'ai chi ch'uan*, *taiji*, or *taijiquan*, it is ideal for increasing stamina, flexibility, and coordination. Tai chi promotes efficiency of movement and economy of effort. Its principles apply to all activity. Tai chi is a form of *qigong*, a Chinese term for energy cultivation.

Tai chi was originally developed by Chinese martial arts experts in order to advance their skills. Traditional tai chi forms incorporate highly complex movement patterns throughout the entire sequence that are based in blocks, kicks, and punches. Most traditional forms take 12–20 minutes to perform and over one year to learn. Tai chi incorporates principles for health of body, mind, and spirit. These principles promote harmony in human interactions as well.

The Tai Chi Fundamentals Program offers a simplified, systematic approach for mastering tai chi basics that maintains the integrity of traditional form and principles. The program introduces components of tai chi practice that foster health of mind, body, and spirit. This program can serve as a complete exercise program and can provide solid basic training for those who wish to progress to the more complex forms of traditional tai chi. The program is taught in three sections, incorporating the most basic and essential functional movements in the first section, and progressing to more complex patterns in the later sections.

The program includes the following components:

1. **The Movement Patterns** are a series of twelve exercises that train important functional movements repeated throughout Fundamentals Form. Expressive arm movements and elements of *qigong* energy cultivation enhance the health benefits of these exercises. Each Movement Pattern is practiced repetitively as a vehicle for training tai chi skills. They are also enjoyable, expressive, complete, and challenging as an exercise program on their own. They take 4–12 minutes to perform, depending on the number of repetitions.

2. **The Fundamentals Form** is a simplified version of tai chi. It modifies or eliminates problem areas that students consistently encounter in learning tai chi and presents a clear sequence for learning the movements of this ancient health exercise. It also eliminates some of the more difficult details of the traditional form that relate specifically to martial arts applications. This step-by-step method provides an accessible approach for developing skills necessary for performing the entire sequence and a vehicle for clearly learning the movements. It takes less than five minutes to perform.

3. **The Mind/Body Principles** describe elements of tai chi practice that enhance physical and emotional well-being. These principles are guidelines for healthy human interaction as well.

Names of Tai Chi Fundamentals Form and Basic Moves

Form

Section One

1. Preparation
2. Beginning
3. Ward Off Left, Press, Push
4. Ward Off Right Press, Push
5. Step Forward

Section Two

6. Repulse The Monkey
7. Cloud Hands
8. Single Whip

Section Three

9. Snake Slides Down
10. Golden Pheasant Stands On One Leg
11. Separate Arms And Kick
12. Brush Knee and Twist Steps
13. Punch
14. Withdraw and Push
15. Cross Hands
16. Closing

Basic Moves

Section One

1. Posture and Breathing
2. Arm Swinging
3. Crane Takes Flight
4. Open and Stable Move
5. Bear Rooting
6. Bear Walk

Section Two

7. Basic Bear
8. Holding the Moon
9. Ski Move

Section Three

10. Flying Crane
11. Softball Pitch
12. Dancing Crane

Resources

The following materials are available at

The Tai Chi Center 301 S Bedford St, Ste 219, Madison, WI 53703

Uncharted Country Publishing 408 S Baldwin St, Madison, WI 53703

Telephone: 608-280-9730, Fax: 608-280-9736, Web: www.taichihealth.com

Videos

Tai Chi Fundamentals: Simplified Exercises for Beginners, with Tricia Yu, teaches a systematic approach for mastering tai chi basics, suitable for a wide range of abilities and experience. Also available on DVD.

Tai Chi Fundamentals: Training for Health Care Professionals and Instructors, with Tricia Yu and Jill Johnson, PT, includes the entire program from the above video. In addition, a physical therapist analyzes the movements, their clinical applications, and functional benefits using Western medical terminology.

Energize: Daily Warm-Ups for Flexibility and Strength, with Tricia Yu, includes short routines which range from simple, short stretches to more advanced exercises for tai chi practitioners.

Books

Tai Chi Mind and Body, by Tricia Yu, is an ideal companion to the *Tai Chi Fundamentals* video or DVD, and provides beautifully illustrated, step-by-step instruction in the Fundamentals form. Published by Doris Kindersley Publishing, this book is also available in bookstores nationwide.

Tai Chi Fundamentals: Training for Health Care Professionals and Instructors, with Tricia Yu and Jill Johnson, PT. Includes an analysis of the movements, their clinical applications, and functional benefits using Western medical terminology.