

TAI CHI TRAINING CHECKLIST

Use this training checklist as a gauge for your own practice. Challenge yourself and examine which areas of your practice could be improved. If you think you've got the Form, think again!

- I. LEARNING THE FORM
 - a. **Focus on the *Dan Tien***
 - b. **Learn _ of Form**
 - c. **Learn complete Form**
 - d. **Proper Structure – with focus on *Dan Tien***
 - i. *Sung* or relax/loosen the body
 - ii. Proper Bow & Arrow stance, and other stances
 - iii. Weight distribution
 - iv. Sinking of shoulders & elbows
 - v. Proper sinking of chest/spine
 - vi. Suspend the head, tuck in tailbone, open the *kua* (relax the hips)
 - vii. Proper foot, knee, and hip alignments
 - viii. Proper rooting
 - ix. See Yang Cheng Fu's Ten Essential Points for clarification of ideas above
 - e. **Make correction to structural, postural & other flaws in your Form**

- II. APPLY TAI CHI PRINCIPLES TO FORM
 - a. **Physical Body Principles/Structure**
 - i. Sinking (*Sung*) of shoulders, elbows, body, etc.
 - ii. Developing Root: foundation, balance & single-weightedness
 - iii. Loosening of the waist
 - iv. Sink the chest & pluck up the back
 - v. Upright spine: head suspended, tailbone plumb-erect
 - vi. Proper stepping and transitions of weight: empty steps; then transfer weight
 - vii. Shape of hand/fingers and seating of the wrist
 - viii. Unify the body: movement as one synchronized unit
 - b. **Internal Body Principles**
 - i. Focus on the *Dan Tien* – center of energy, initiator of movement, etc.
 - ii. Observance of proper internal structure: sunk, loose, etc.
 - iii. Proper breathing with Form
 1. Opening (inhale) and Closing (exhale)
 2. Rising (inhale) and Lowering (exhale)
 - iv. Be *sung* (relaxed/loose) at all times
 - v. *Ch'i* development/accumulation
 - c. **Mental Principles**
 - i. Maintaining all internal body principles while moving through form
 - ii. Use of "Intent" while moving through postures (to direct the *Ch'i*)
 - iii. Eye usage as focus for intention (direction of *Ch'i*)
 - iv. Imagining of an Opponent
 - d. **Understand the 13 Postures of Tai Chi**
 - i. 8 Movements (energies)
 1. Peng – ward off
 2. Lu – roll-back
 3. Ji/Chi – press
 4. An – push
 5. Tsai/Cai – pull or pluck; big roll-back
 6. Lieh/Lie – split

7. Chou/Zhou – elbow strike
 8. K'ao – shoulder strike
 - ii. 5 Steps
 1. Chin/Jin – step forwards; close space with opponent directly
 2. Tui/T'ui – step backwards; increase space with opponent directly
 3. Ku/Gu – look left; close space with opponent indirectly
 4. Pan – gaze right; increase space with opponent indirectly
 5. Ding – central equilibrium
- e. Read the *TAI CHI CLASSICS!***

III. TAI CHI APPLICATIONS

a. Weapon Forms – an extension of your body

- i. Tai Chi Sword – “Jian”
 1. develop *Ch'i*
 2. extending energy to tip of blade
 3. strengthening of arms/forearms/wrist
- ii. Tai Chi Knife/Sabre – “Dao”
 1. develop *Spirit*
 2. extending energy along blade edge
 3. strengthening of shoulders/back/waist
- iii. Tai Chi Staff/Spear – “Kun”
 1. develop *Fa-Jin*
 2. extending energy to tip of weapon
 3. strengthening back/legs

b. Tui Shou or “Push Hands” – single/double hands, fixed/moving steps

- i. Principles
 1. Understanding of Self
 - a. Become *sung* (relaxed/loose/supple)
 - b. Proper single-weighting
 - c. Use of legs and waist to *yield* and *neutralize*
 - d. Developing internal energy (i.e. ward-off energy or *P'eng Jin*)
 2. Understanding of Opponent – Ting Jing
 - a. *Chan* – Learn to maintain contact with Opponent or *Adhere/Stick*
 - b. *T'ing* – Learn to feel Opponent's energy or *Listen*
 - c. *Ti* – Learn to understand Opponent's energy or *Understand*
 - d. Learn to lead Opponent's energy into emptiness or *Neutralize*
 - e. *Fa/Fang* – Learn to discharge energy at Opponent or *Issue*
 - f. *Chieh Jing* – Learn to attract and toss out Opponent's energy or *Receive*
 - g. Learn other advanced energies
- ii. Applications – Ward off, roll-back, press, push
 1. *P'eng* (Ward-Off)
 2. *Lu* (Rollback)
 3. *Chi/Ji* (press)
 4. *An* (push)

c. Da Lu – Big Roll-back (4 Corners)

- i. Principles of Big Rollback & 4 Corners:
 1. used when Ward-off, Roll-back, Press, and Push have failed (Grasp Sparrow's Tail sequence)
 2. used to re-establish Grasp Sparrow's Tail sequence
 3. includes Tai Chi stepping & body methods
- ii. Applications of:
 1. *Tsai/Cai* (pull - big rollback),

2. *Lieh/Lie* (split - face strike with right arm while left arm adheres),
3. *Chou/Zhou* (elbow strike), and
4. *K'ao* (shoulder stroke)

d. San Shou – Free form sparring