

Yang Short Form & Tai Chi for Health Handout

1 TAI CHI STANDING AND SITTING POSITION

STANDING

1. Feet planted on the ground. Feel the ground supporting you.
2. Knees unlocked, soft.
3. Feel that you are supported by a thread pulling up from the top of the head. Allow your body to respond to that image. Let the spine to drop downwards, and the whole body relax

SITTING

1. Sit forward on the edge of the chair with both feet flat on the ground.
2. Feel the chair seat supporting most of your weight and the ground supporting your feet.
3. Feel that you are supported by a thread pulling up from the top of the head. Respond to that image.

2 YANG WARM UP EXERCISES

TURNING SIDE TO SIDE

1 Standing in Parallel stance, feet still, turn the whole body side to side, transferring your weight to the direction you are turning towards. Allow opening in the 'empty' hip to avoid twisting at the knees. Try not to control arms, let them move if they want to.

2 Whole body turns again, this time weight transfer to the opposite side (turning to right, weight goes to left) pivot on the heel so that the whole body and leg can turn together.

3 Begin with arms out to sides in centre, feet parallel. Turning to the right, transfer to left foot and pivot on ball of right foot. Drop arms as you turn so they swing past the body. Return to centre as arms swing back out to sides and continue to left side.

4&5 Turning body in R/L Bow Stance, turning right, weight changes onto right and vice versa.

TAN TIEN CIRCLES

Standing with feet a little apart, and knees unlocked, begin to make a circle clockwise with your Tan Tien, allowing the upper body to follow the circle. After a few circles in this direction, change direction to anti-clockwise at the lowest point. As you rise up to your right, allow the left palm to rest lightly in the right palm. Slowly decrease the size of the circles when you want to stop, bringing your hands to rest in front of your chest together.

SHIFTING WEIGHT FORWARDS AND BACKWARDS

Stand in Bow and Arrow stance. Transfer weight between the feet, slowly at first paying attention to where the weight is. As you move a little faster, the arms may want to start swinging. Just allow them to do what they want, keeping as relaxed as you can in the shoulders. Change to the other side. Repeat the exercise with steps – step forward then back, with left foot, leaving right foot planted. Change sides stepping back and forth with the right. Take care to ensure that you maintain shoulder width stance throughout, when keeping feet still, and when stepping. Try to let feet relax into the floor. If heel or toe are tending to lift as you step, check that your stance is a comfortable length, not too long for relaxed stepping.

ELBOW CIRCLES

Have a comfortable distance between the feet. Bring your weight to left foot. Make a soft fist with the right hand and circle the tip of the right elbow. Leave the right shoulder relaxed, trying to avoid lifting it to join in the movement. Have your weight on left leg with left hand resting on the hip. Circle in both directions. When learning this exercise you may want to rest the left hand gently on the right shoulder to see if it is lifting. Repeat circles on left. Three circles each way is a fine number.



PUSH HAND WITH WEIGHT CHANGE

Stand in Bow and Arrow stance, starting with left foot forward, then work with right foot forward. With weight on back foot, have the same hand resting palm up near the hip, then come forward with weight and push with hand, coordinating weight change and push. As weight comes back, left hand takes over.

WAVING HANDS IN CLOUDS

Stand in Parallel stance. Start facing front and have the left hand palm facing you around the level of the upper chest. Turn whole body to the left, coordinating the body turning with a soft rotation of the left hand so that it is palm down when you complete your turn to the left. With the turn to the left, shift weight to be mostly on the left foot. Now, keeping the weight on the left, bring your mind into the right hand and begin turning body back to your right. As you do so, the right hand rises so that when you face forward, it is palm facing the upper chest, directly opposite your centre line, fingers pointing left. As you continue to turn right, weight can begin to move onto the right foot, and the right hand rotates to be palm down by the time you complete your turn. The hands remain aligned with the centre of the body and the arms do not turn independently of the torso throughout.

STANDING IN HORSE STANCE

Stand in a comfortable Wide Parallel stance (Horse Riding Stance). With shoulders relaxed, have your palms facing your body, fingers pointing towards each other, at about heart level. The arms are rounded, joints are all soft, with the wrist joint straight. Taking care of your knees that they don't collapse inwards, have the feeling of sitting down into the posture. Remember the Golden Thread suspending your body from the top of the head and feel your spine falling down from there. Especially allow the lower spine to relax downwards. Keep relaxing shoulders and everything else.

KNEE CIRCLES

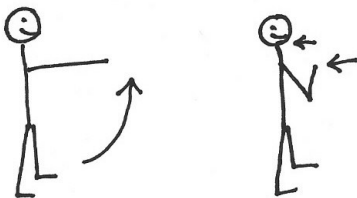
Stand with your feet and knees close together, touching if possible, and bend your knees a little. Rest your hands just above your knees, but do not put any weight on your hands, just rest them lightly. Now take your knees in a circle, first to the right a few times, then back the other way.

HEEL CIRCLES

With the toe resting on the ground, circle the heel a few times, then change direction.

3 TAI CHI FOR HEALTH WARM UP EXERCISES

NECK 1



arms up sink elbows, hand and chin back

NECK 2



head follows hand

SHOULDERS 1



lift shoulders up slowly, slowly down

SHOULDERS 2 (Calm Down)



circle up, breathe in



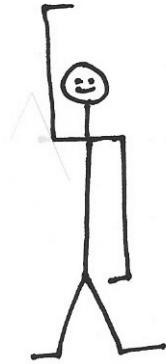
palms down
breathe out
and sink



relax and repeat

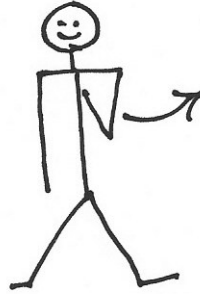


BACK 1



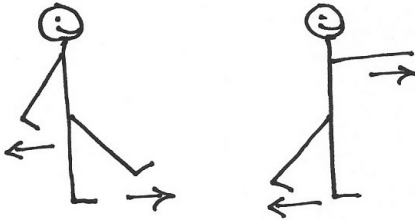
palm up to ceiling, palm down to floor

BACK 2



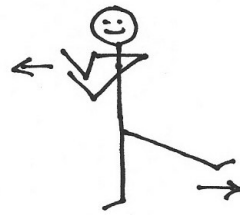
upper body follows hand, hips face forward

HIPS 1



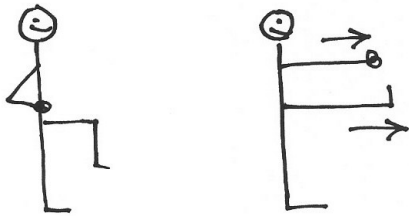
leg straight, arms counterbalance

HIPS 2



push the wall, leg out to side

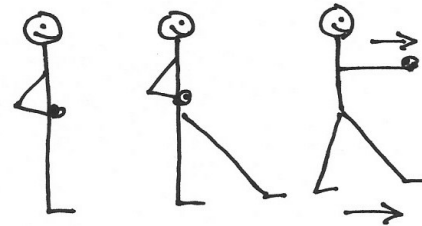
KNEES 1



gentle fists rest at hips
punch
palm up, lift leg
opposite leg

opposite fist, opposite leg

KNEES 2



1 sink weight, 2 step

3 transfer weight,
opposite fist,

ANKLES 1



heel touch, toe touch

ANKLES 2



toe rests on ground, circle ankle, both ways



4 TAI CHI WALKING

1. **Sink** Bring all your weight into one foot, when you think you're done, continue sending even more weight into the 'full' leg, feel the other leg becoming 'empty'
2. **Lift** the 'empty' foot and
3. **Place** the foot, heel first, then flat on the ground with no weight (you will need to bend supporting leg to do this) then
4. **Transfer** weight and sink, continuing with 1 above.

5 SHORT COOL DOWN EXERCISES

1. Grounding: Lift knee, gently drop fist onto top of your thigh, lift other knee etc.
2. Rise Up: Rise onto toes and make soft fists as you do so. Raise your heels only as far as you feel stable. Hold for short time and RELEASE. Repeat three or more times.
3. Calm Down: Circle arms out and up, then, with palms down and fingers pointing towards each other, let hands move down front of body. Three times is a good number.

6 TAN TIEN BREATHING

Establish your best Tai Chi standing position, knees unlocked. Relax and let your energy settle. Place right hand then left on Tan Tien. Have the centre of your palms aligned with the Tan Tien. As you breathe in, imagine drawing in good Ki Energy from the air and fill the belly area under your hands with it. Each time you breathe out, let yourself relax a little more. Can be done standing, sitting or lying down.

7 STANCES



Parallel (Shoulder Width)



Bow and Arrow (right)

The 'T' stances have either the ball of the foot, or the heel resting in a comfortable position on the ground without any weight.

Horse Riding stance is a little wider than Parallel Stance

Goat Stance has toes pointing inward. Take great care not to be double weighted in this stance. Always have your weight clearly on one foot or the other.



8 YANG SHORT FORM LIST OF POSTURES

1	Attention, Preparation, Beginning	15	Rollback, Press, Push and Single Whip	29	Bring Down
2	Ward Off Left, Ward Off Right	16	Punch Under Elbow	30	Punch (2)
3	Rollback, Press and Push	17	Step Back to Repulse Monkey	31	Kick with Heel
4	Single Whip	18	Diagonal Flying	32	Brush Right Knee and Push
5	Lifting Hands	19	Waving Hands in Clouds	33	Brush Left Knee and Punch Downward
6	Shoulder Stroke	20	Single Whip	34	Ward Off Right R P P
7	White Crane Spreads Wings	21	Squatting Single Whip	35	Fair Lady Weaves the Shuttle
8	Brush Left Knee and Push (1)	22	Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg	36	Ward Off Left..... R P P
9	Play Guitar	23	Separate Right Foot	37	Squatting Single Whip
10	Brush Left Knee and Push (2)	24	Separate Left Foot	38	Step Forward to the Seven Stars
11	Punch (1) (deflect downward, intercept & punch)	25	Brush Knee and Push	39	Step Back to Ride Tiger
12	Withdraw and Push	26	Needles at Sea Bottom	40	Turn and Sweep Lotus
13	Crossing Hands	27	Iron Fan	41	Bend Bow to Shoot Tiger
14	Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain	28	Turn Body, Chop and Push	42	Punch (3)
				43	Withdraw and Push
				44	Crossing Hands, Completion

9 RECOMMENDED BOOK, DVD & CONTACTS

Angus Clark (2002) **Illustrated Elements of Tai Chi**, Element Books

A previous edition of this book is:

Angus Clark (2001) **The Complete Illustrated Guide to Tai Chi**, Element Books

DVD of Yang Warm Up Exercises and Short Form available from Alison £8

Recommended Sword Form book - Petra and Toyo Kobayashi (2003) **Classical Tai Chi Sword**

See www.taichiforeveryone.co.uk for online ordering links and further resources

Contact Alison
alison@taichiforeveryone.co.uk 01296 420297



10 HISTORY AND BACKGROUND TO TAI CHI

Angus Clark's book has a very good history of Tai Chi, going back to the earliest origins.

In modern times, Cheng Man Ch'ing (1900-1975) is one of the major figures in Tai Chi. He was responsible for introducing many, many people in the West to Tai Chi. He taught Tai Chi at first in China, then Taiwan, and later in New York in the 1960s and 1970s. Cheng Man Ch'ing studied Tai Chi with a very famous Yang Family member, Yang Chen-Fu (1833-1936). Cheng Man Ch'ing as a busy university lecturer felt that the Yang Family Long Form he had studied was too long for busy people so he created a Short Form using key elements from the longer form, and removing some of the repetition of moves.

Dr Chi Chiang Tao (1920-1994) studied Tai Chi hand and sword forms with Cheng Man Ch'ing and later studied with other teachers including Chen style and sword forms. The Form we are studying is Cheng Man Ch'ing's Short Form, with a small modification to include extra postures from the Yang Long Form which Dr Chi felt were beneficial. We are fortunate that Dr Chi shared his experience and knowledge of Tai Chi with a number of great teachers including Alan Peck of Natural Way Tai Chi School with whom I first learned the Short and Long Forms and Tai Chi Sword. Angus Clark also spent time with Dr Chi and has written a very clear book describing the Short Form in detail.

11 WORKING SAFELY WITH TAI CHI

Performed correctly, Tai Chi is very good for health and is a very safe form of exercise. Care must be taken however to ensure that your body is in the correct position to avoid strain on the any part of the body, especially the knees. Always work well inside your comfort zone. The advice is to work within 70% of your comfort zone. In this way you can relax without going near any movements that will cause you pain or discomfort. This is also the most powerful way to develop your Tai Chi and much more effective than over-reaching or straining. People with arthritis or other joint problems should keep the body moving, avoiding standing still in one stance at the beginning. Everyone should consider adapting their form to suit their body condition. For example, adding extra steps to make a big turn easier on the joints, or working with a shorter step, more upright stance.

KNEE SAFETY

It is especially important to ensure correct position of knee and ankle, especially on the weight bearing leg to avoid straining the knee joint. Later, by working with the correct positioning of knee and ankle in both the legs, one is also working on opening and closing the hip joints too.

TWO WAYS TO CHECK CORRECT POSITION

1 Knee within the footprint: Standing in Parallel Stance check that, looking vertically down at the knee of your weight-bearing leg, you can still see the tip of your toe sticking out, and the knee is within your footprint. This way, the weight of you body can flow down directly to the floor without passing through a twist at the knee.

2 Ankle and Knee Joint aligned: Another way to approach correct position is to consider the angle of the ankle joint and the knee joint and keep them in the same plane.

Younger people should take particular care to set up a habit of good knee position because their stronger muscles and more springy connective tissue may allow them to get away with poor posture without feeling discomfort. Older people and those with joint problems may well feel more discomfort from poor knee position and so get immediate feedback from the body.



