

Kai Ming Association Newsletter

call: 07831 743737

<http://www.kaiming.co.uk>

e-mail us: markpeters@kaiming.co.uk

The benefits of Huangs' 5 loosening exercises



Master Huang Sheng-Hsien became one of Grand-master Cheng Man-Ching's most senior students. Through diligent study and his prior high skills in White Crane boxing he developed the 5 loosening exercises to hone what he felt were key aspects of tai chi chuan. Each of the exercises works on one aspect yet giving time to focus on the feelings and principles.



1.segmentation – the classics state 'one part moves, all must move' but this can feel a little robotic. By considering the whole body as a series of parts we can look to move/flow sequentially through each part, each joint, each muscle etc. expand the state to say 'one part moves, all must move, sequentially' and the concept completely changes. By breaking the body into parts (segmenting) - initially legs, body and arms – the sensation of sequential movement/flow can be experienced. From there segment each of those e.g. ankle, knee and hip or foot, lower-leg and upper-leg and so on. In this way the exercise becomes more than just a loosening exercise and begins to add to the feel and flow of your tai chi form.



2.Compression – compression is a natural process that occurs when we release into our muscles, through relaxation, rather than tightening them in preparation of activity. Compression develops a natural feeling of buoyancy rather than sluggishness or tension. By releasing you body weight, gradually (count of 4) an awareness of the sensation of compression and expansion is experienced



3.torque/rotation – Prof. Cheng often referred to swing-return (dong-dang) to being like the wind and release of a spring and how it generates perpetual movement. This is the constant move through energy of movement (kinetic) and stored energy (potential) where one creates the other. By developing and awareness of a single axis and torque (not tension) through the body, the sensation of wind-release can be experienced in a relaxed way.



4.synchronisation through the spine – this exercise opens and closes the chest, whilst working through the spine. Each part of the exercise is designed to mobilise the spine in all directions.



5.vertical circle/sinking – sinking involves working with gravity, almost as if falling off one leg into the other. The natural under-up action causes a vertical circle in the movement. This exercise has two parts (1) releasing from one leg to the other to transfer weight (2) sliding the free leg heel-toe to experience relaxed/released stepping

By focused training of the 5 loosening exercises, an awareness of relaxed free body movement can be experienced in readiness for application in the tai chi form. To explain each exercise, in words, could be a book on their own therefore it is essential they are experienced through training with a knowledgeable teacher. There are video clips of Huang on YouTube and they are beneficial in developing your understanding but not as effective as direct instruction. We have included Huang's 5 loosening exercises on our tai chi form DVD for ease of reference.



Inner Peace: This is so true

If you can start the day without caffeine,
 If you can be cheerful, ignoring aches and pains,
 If you can resist complaining and boring people with your troubles,
 If you can eat the same food every day and be grateful for it,
 If you can understand when your loved ones are too busy to give you any time,
 If you can take criticism and blame without resentment,
 If you can conquer tension without medical help,
 If you can relax without alcohol,
 If you can sleep without the aid of drugs,

...Then You Are Probably

The Family Dog!



And you thought I was going to get all spiritual..... Submitted by Clive



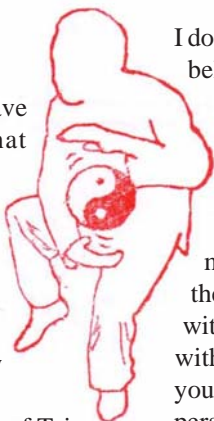
What the Hell is this Chi Business, Anyway?

Let's face it: most of us will have heard some variation of that question, possibly followed by an assumption that we believe in it. Because that's what Tai Chi is, right? You have to believe in all that unscientific energy and meridian stuff. That silly Daoist nonsense. How very pagan.

I've tried three different forms of Tai Chi, under a number of instructors, whose beliefs have ranged from total "chi-hugging", to a complete rationalist denial of the existence of chi. One thing seems certain to me: you really don't have to believe in chi, meridians, or any aspect of traditional Chinese medicine, to practise Tai Chi, or to be good at it.

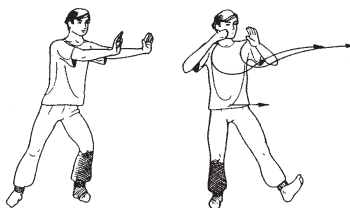
Johann Sebastian Bach was deeply religious, and his faith informed most of, if not all of, his musical output, yet rendition, interpretation, or appreciation of his music is not limited to those of religious faith. You won't mess up The Well-Tempered Clavier because you're an atheist. You will make a complete dog's dinner of it if you're a crap pianist. Likewise, you won't have a shaky Single Whip because you are unable to, or refuse to, feel the "chi"; you will be unbalanced and unstable if you don't follow the cues your body gives you.

In the 16th century, when the original Chen style was being developed, and medical knowledge was extremely limited by today's standards, sensations encountered during exercise routines, such as warmth in limb extremities, slight buzzing sensations, or pleasant tingling,



will have been best explained using concepts common in prevailing folk medicine, philosophy and religion. Terms involving mystical energies flowing along body pathways. These explanations worked well. So well in fact, that they've lasted the course, and are still used today. I have seen the illustrious national treasure that is Stephen Fry scoff at the idea of the word "energy" being used in anything other than the strict scientific sense. And he may well choose to use his extensive education and knowledge to poke fun at the idea of chi and similar concepts. He was, however, unarguably overweight and unfit when I saw him make these comments. Thanks to Tai Chi, I no longer am either of these things. And I don't even believe in chi. It might even be remotely possible that Stephen Fry does not know everything. Imagine that, if you can stomach the blasphemy.

I don't think it really matters whether you believe in chi or not – what matters is what effect Tai Chi has on your physical and mental state. If thinking of it in terms of chi gets you through the night, it's all right. If it doesn't, and like me, you like to think of it as mechanical and chemical processes in the body, that's fine too. I can tell you with absolute conviction that if you stick with it, work at it, and are patient with it, you will be a better, fitter, and calmer person. And, given time and money, I'm sure I could prove scientifically that this is the most likely outcome. I could also probably beat Stephen Fry in a fight. You don't have to believe in chi to be good at Tai Chi, but it helps. Possibly.
By Pete Dumont – Handsworth Student



THE QUIET CORNER

To have some deep feeling about Buddhism is not the point;

We just do what we should do, like eating supper and going to bed.

This is Buddhism.

Shunryu Suzuki

TAI CHI RHYTHM AND GRAVITY

Coordinate—to adjust the relations or movements of: to combine or integrate harmoniously: to harmonise. *Definitions taken from Concise English Dictionary.*



To a great extent, our movements and balance are a natural reaction to the force of gravity.

As babies we learnt to stand and walk and eventually run naturally. No one really needed to teach us how to do these actions (just encourage us to get back up after a few tumbles in the initial stages). We were conditioned to stand and walk using our lower body and limbs. As you grew older you had to recondition many upper and lower body movements.

In Chinese culture there were some 'thinkers' who found more efficient ways to do this. They were used extensively in many of their arts and trades, like opera singing, calligraphy, and of course, martial arts. Incidentally, many famous Tai Chi Masters were very cultured artists and calligraphers etc because these things involve the same body and mind coordination and rhythm, especially in Chinese opera and acting.

The uniqueness of the movements is that whole body coordination is focused on muscular "turn on, turn off" ability, so reserving power and strength for when it is actually needed, and becoming efficient at 'muscle economy'.

Efficient use of mind and body is the key to health and longevity it is believed. (Along with less sausage rolls and ¼ pounders, but the addition of copious amounts of alcohol!)

Tai Chi Ch'uan goes one step further to create a rhythm, so that the whole body muscles learn to be attracted by the gravitational pull and the whole body compresses. At the end of the natural compression, it bounces back against the gravitational pull. Hence, the rhythmic movements are like the springing action of a coil or the bouncing of a ball.

This coordination is very different from our daily movement, which always pushes against the gravitational force and uses muscle contractions. Ice skating has some

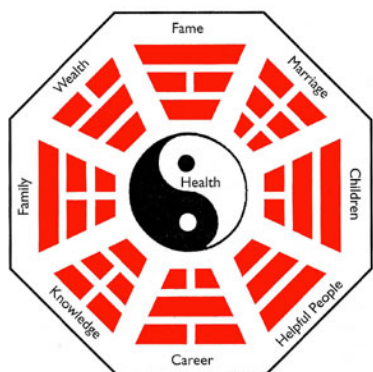
similarity of rhythm and alternate contraction and relaxation in a series of body movements.

Tai Chi has other elements however as it has been related to I Ching (Chinese book of numerology) and the various acupuncture points in the movements.

So a good Tai Chi move can be slow, but it MUST have RHYTHM and FLOW.

The traditional way of teaching this art emphasizes slow correct moves. It can be likened to teaching someone how to sing by showing them how to speak slowly and loudly. After that, rhythm is taught.

For some it may seem a very frustrating learning process, but this is the way most masters learned their art, and therefore a proven method. Then you will learn to use the body and the mind intention correctly. It sounds great to develop rhythm and the tai chi approach is to use mindfulness to develop an awareness of your natural body/mind rhythm and from there how to harness it usefully for daily life. Gravity is a wonderful thing, we just have to stop resisting it and harmonise with it.



FENG SHUI (See if it works for you)

The underlying principle of Feng Shui is to make sure the energy surrounding you is utilized in the best possible way to enhance your life. To achieve this you must live in harmony with your environment or the energy may just work against you.

This issue will contain some Feng Shui steps to try and improve your home or office and life in general by just making some simple adjustments.

1. Stand at your front door and look outwards. See if you can identify any large structure or object pointing towards you, these are sometimes referred to as "secret arrows". It can be a long straight road aimed at your front door, a line of telegraph poles "charging" down the street to your door, a satellite ariel, or a church spire.

If there are do not be alarmed, you do NOT have to chop them down etc.! You can deflect these "arrows" of baleful influence by placing an eight-sided PA KUA mirror over the front door, facing outwards.

You must however NEVER use a Pa Kua mirror inside the house.

2. Next, repeat this process at the back door, and all major windows.

3. Examine your entrance way and make sure nothing blocks the smooth flow of energy through your front door and hallway. Obstructions and clutter should be removed.

Also it is an added bonus if your path from your gate to your front door is curved.

4. You can use wind chimes in halls to slow down the flow of "fast energy"

5. Decide which of the eight Aspirations listed on the Pa Kua that you wish to enhance (energize).

Maybe you wish to improve your prosperity sector which is in the South-east, on the Pa Kua you find that Wood is the Element associated with the South-east. Stimulate this sector therefore by placing Wood within it (i.e growing plants)

(Or you could also energise this area with the Element Water which helps 'produce wood')

Don't energise too many areas at once or you may be "overwhelmed" by an abundance of success.!!!

6. Check your kitchen.

You need to make sure that your food preparation area does not involve you or your partner standing with your back to the door.

If it does then try to re-arrange so that the door is visible to you when standing in the main food prep area.

Make sure also that your Fire and Water elements (stove,- fire, sink, -fridge, water) are not directly facing each other which will cause conflict. If they are it may be possible to re-arrange.

7. Keep the toilet seat down and plugs in plug holes to prevent energy being unnecessarily 'flushed away'.

8. Hang bamboo flutes on overhead beams to counteract negative energy pressing down on the room below.

9. Place a fountain or an aquarium in the South-east area of your house to activate the Wealth area.

The best fish to use are goldfish, eight gold and one black or two gold and one black are auspicious combinations.

10. It is better not to have a mirror facing your bed (apart from giving you a shock when you sit up in bed before your face has had time to 'fall' back into place) it can reflect negative energy back at you.

If your energy flows well and accumulates, you have good feng shui, but if it flows too quickly or if it stagnates, you have poor feng shui. Maybe worth giving some of these tips a go, you have nothing to lose.



DONG YINGJIE –THE PATIENCE OF LEARNING

Taken from the book TAIJIQUAN SHIYI (Explanation of Taijiquan) by Dong Yingjie. Translated by BARBRA DAVIS.



Dong Yingji was a leading student of Yang Chengfu it is said he wrote or recorded much of Yang's book Taijiquan Shiyongfa (1931)

"When you begin to study boxing, don't think about theory. Nevertheless, you must listen to what the teacher instructs. Most importantly, don't use strength. The whole body must be relaxed. Study just one or two moves each day, not too many. After 3 months of study, you can finish study of the whole form. For the next 3 months, practice and correct the postures.

風水

When you have gotten them 80 to 90% correct, then you will be able to make your movements soft.

If you want the treasure of good health and want to advance to the next step, study another 3 months. Know the form correctly; the sequences must have the idea of “taiji” within them. Take another 3 months to study taijiquan “ jin”. Then and only then will you enter the door and proceed toward understanding taijiquan. You cannot, however, reach this goal in a year without the instruction of a good teacher.

After 6 months of studying boxing, then you may study the beginning moves of push hands practice.

The first month of this (as with the solo form) is also (about) not using force.

First study the two- person (exercise of) sticking and circling. In the second month, study the four methods of peng,tu,ji and an (Ward off, Rollback,Press,Push).

In the third month (of push hands) study neutralization (hau jin). (Within this) first study neutralization of the elbows, then the yao, and then the shoulders.

You must be even more relaxed and smooth (in your movements).

You then study neutralizing with you whole body as in “following the opportunities and responding to the changes”

In the subsequent 3 months, you will learn how to apply peng,lu,ji, and an.

After this, you study neutralizing jin and counterattacking.

In this period of a year, you can also study taiji sword in your spare time.

If you, friends, use effort, then the period of study for these three basic areas of taijiquan, push hands, and sword will be about a year and a half.

This should be regarded only as a lower level that will give you the basic beginnings of the art. With this, you will obtain good skills and good health.

As for the next year and a half: in this period you can study taiji spear and other hand methods besides push hands. In this year and a half, practice diligently.

Now you will be at 3 years of study.

You will be proficient in the techniques and methods of boxing, sword, and spear. Your body is strengthened, you protect your health, and you can defend yourself with some skill.

You thus have boxing, the short weapon of the sword, and the long weapon of the spear.

These are more than enough for one lifetime’s work (gongfu). This can be called the middle level.

After 3 years, the methods of practicing boxing are different again.

You must now study the practice of concentration.

You must again make painstaking investigation with the guidance of a skilled teacher.

Refine the essence (jing) and transform the qi.

Refine the qi and transform the spirit (shen).

Refine the spirit and return to emptiness.

You ascend to the door of the upper level

- 1 Taiji push hands is divided into 3 levels. In the beginning level of push hands, you do large circles.
- 2 At the middle level, you study neutralization in small circles.
- 3 The upper level is about how to neutralize and counterattack without circles, as within the circles are circles.

The skills of striking without neutralizing and striking with neutralizing are precisely the big circles, small circles, and small circles changing to non-circles.

This is exactly”wuji begets taiji, yin and yang, bagua, waxing; a thousand changes and myriad transformations return to one. The skill exhibited in the upper level is “I have no enemy anywhere”.

I don’t dare suggest that there is a schedule for this several-year period of study.

It all simply depends on your own heavenly-given intelligence and effort.

It goes without saying that learning is without limits.

In any case, it always involves effort. Your skills are refined with daily effort.

I encourage you, friends, to have patience in your refinement of your boxing.

To attain the state of mind of spiritual transformation is not difficult.”

We should be very grateful to Barbara Davis for her translation of this informative book and others who take the time, trouble, and have the patience to give us access to the thoughts and skills of the masters by doing this.

Barbara also runs the Cheng Man Ching biography site at:

<http://chengbiography.blogspot.com/>



The shops are full of pumpkins all set for the American madness of Halloween, but why waste a fantastic and tasty item by just scooping out and throwing away. How about Pumpkin pie?

For the pastry

sweet short crust pastry case (or a packet of ready made sweet short crust pastry with 40g/1½oz crushed pecans mixed in.)

For the filling

- 1 450 g/1lb prepared weight pumpkin flesh, cut into 1in/2.5 cm chunks
- 2 2 large eggs plus 1 yolk (use the white for another dish)
- 3 3 oz/75g soft dark brown sugar
- 4 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 5 ½ level teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 6 ½ tsp ground allspice
- 7 ½ tsp ground cloves
- 8 ½ tsp ground ginger
- 9 10 fl oz/275 ml double cream

Preparation method

- 1 Pre-heat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4.
- 2 Use a shop bought sweet crust pastry case, about 9 inch/23 cm diameter and 1½ inches/4 cm deep.
- 3 To make the filling, steam the pumpkin then place in a coarse sieve and press lightly to extract any excess water.
- 4 Then lightly whisk the eggs and extra yolk together in a large bowl.
- 5 Place the sugar, spices and the cream in a pan, bring to simmering point, giving it a whisk to mix everything together. Then pour it over the eggs and whisk it again briefly.
- 6 Now add the pumpkin puree, still whisking to combine everything thoroughly.
- 7 Pour the filling into your pastry case and bake for 35-40 minutes, by which time it will puff up round the edges but still feel slightly wobbly in the centre.

Remove the pie from the oven and place the tin on a wire cooling rack. Serve chilled (stored loosely covered in foil in the fridge) with some equally chilled crème fraîche, but warm or at room temperature would be fine.