TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI
Department of Kinesiology
Taiji

Kine 1133.001        Instructor: Paul Bystedt
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Spring 2020          San-Bao@Juno.com
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Taiji

Course Description:
Taiji  Kine 1133
Instruction and practice in a short Taijiquan form and exercises. Solo and partner
practice. An introduction to Chinese martial arts theory and practice. Introductory Qigong
meditation practices for martial applications and health benefits.

Learning Objectives:
The student will learn:
1. Learn basic exercises and stretches from Chinese martial arts.
2. Learn Taiji walking.
3. Learn the 24 movement Taiji form.
4. Learn basic Qigong exercises.
5. Learn basic push hands exercises.
6. Learn martial applications of the Taiji postures.
7. Learn basic concepts of Chinese culture, Taoism and yin/yang theory.

Major Course Requirements
Attendance and participation: 50%
Tests:
   Midterm:    10%
   Final:      30%
Magazine article or book report - typed 10%
The report should be on a related area, Taiji, Qigong, Chinese medicine or Chinese
philosophy. The article can come from a book, a magazine or the internet. If from the internet,
print out the first page of the article and hand it in with the report. The report should be one page,
double spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font. One-inch margins.

Recommended Readings
The textbook adopted for this course are:
"A Guide to Taijiquan: 24 and 48 Postures with Applications"
By Liang Shou-Yu and Wu Wen-Ching.
State Adopted Proficiencies/TExES Competencies (COE)
N/A

Course Policies
Attendance/Tardiness
Students are allowed two unexcused absences. Each non-excused absence is worth 3% of your final grade. Being late to class three times will count as one absence. Nonparticipation will count as an absence (exceptions possible for injury or illness). Ten or more absences that are not made up may result in failure with the exception of University approved absences.

Late work and make-up exams
There are options for making up approved University business and pre-approved absences. Students have two weeks to make up an absence, after that the absence may count against their grade. Students are allowed one week to make up missed exams.

Cell phone/electronic device usage
No using cell phones or any other electronic devices during class. Students must put away all electronic devices and any notes before accepting tests. Failure to do so will result in a zero for that test.
No food or gum during class.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.).

In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test may result in one or more of the following:
1. Written reprimand.
2. Requirement to re-do work in question.
3. Requirement to submit additional work.
4. Lowering of grade on work in question;
5. Assigning grade of 'F' to work in question;
6. Assigning grade of 'F' for course;
7. Recommendation for more severe punishment, such as dismissal from the program or from the University.
See the University Catalog for more information.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometime occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the
best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Classroom/professional behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Statement of Civility
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high-quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost.

Disabilities Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability
requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

Tentative course schedule:
1-22 to 1-31 History, theory, posture, stance, Taiji walking, Section I.
2-03 to 2-14 Section II
2-17 to 2-28 Section III
3-02 to 3-23 Section IV
3-09 to 3-13 Spring Break
3-27 Midterm
3-30 to 4-03 Section V
4-06 to 4-10 Section VI
4-13 to 4-17 Section VII
4-19 to 4-29 Section VIII
5-04 Review for final
5-06 Final

Evaluation and grade assignment:
A. Methods and Percentage of Final Course Grade Each Assessment Constitutes

| Attendance and participation: | 50% |
| Tests: | | |
| Midterm: | 10% |
| Final: | 30% |
| Magazine article or book report - typed | 10% |

The report should be on a related area, Taiji, Qigong, Chinese medicine or Chinese philosophy. The article can come from a book, a magazine or the internet. If from the internet, print out the first page of the article and hand it in with the report. The report should be one page, double spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font. One-inch margins.

B. Grading Scale
You will teach yourself Taiji. An instructor can only offer instructions, their experience and an example. The responsibility for learning belongs to the learner.

Sam Masich.

Taijiquan is a kind of martial arts, and its functions of attack and defense must not be forgotten. In practice, the movements are outwardly ‘soft’ but inwardly vigorous. Otherwise, it is not Taijiquan but calisthenics.”

Yang Zhendou, fourth generation leader of Yang family Taijiquan.

**Taijiquan Foundations.**

Taiji is a traditional Chinese internal martial art. Martial or Wu in Chinese is made up of two words. Zhi meaning to stop and Ge meaning spear, so Wu means to stop the spear. Shu means techniques. Wushu are techniques used to top the spear, or to stop aggression. Taiji means the grand ultimate. Quan means fist and is used to refer to Chinese martial arts. Taiji was named during 1800’s. Ji also means utmost point. It refers to the ridgepole that supports the center of a tent. The spine must be like the ridgepole, upright, strong and flexible. The arms and body drape or are suspended from this center point. So Taiji can refer to the large pole that supports the center of a big tent.

The Taiji roots comes from the I-Ching (a 5000-year-old book), Daoism and Buddhism. It is falsely said that the Indian Buddhist monk, Bodhidharma began the tradition of merging the physical training with spiritual practice around 500AD at the Shaolin temple in China. Many people trace their roots back to him because antiquity lends an authenticity.

**Daoism** is based on the book the Dao de Jing, written by Lao-tzu between the 6th and 4th century BC. The Dao de Jing was probably written by different authors over a period of time. Buddhism was introduced into China in the first century AD. Dao means the way. Daoism teaches that a person should live simply and in harmony with nature. Chinese medicine and qigong both spring from Daoist principles.

Buddhism is an Indian religion from the 6th century BC. Buddhism is the search for enlightenment to escape from the cycle of reincarnation. Buddhism was introduced into China in the second century AD.

Confucius was a Chinese philosopher from the 5th century BC. Confucianism was established as the state ideology by 200 AD. Their goal was to achieve harmony by behaving correctly with others. Its philosophy is used in Chinese martial arts, dictating the relationship between an instructor and students.

Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism were originally taught as philosophies. Later, they became religions. All three were influenced by each other’s philosophies and beliefs.
Many claim that Taiji came from Zhang San-Feng, a mythical person from around 1100 AD although there is no physical evidence of this person. The techniques, postures and basic principles are said to have been in existence by 500 AD. **Chen style** was the first form of Taiji. Chen style was developed in the 1600's. Chen style derived from Jiang style, before this history is unclear. **Yang Lu Chan** (1799-1872) learned it from the Chen family in the 1800's. Yang taught what eventually became known as **Yang style** Taijiquan. He became known as “Yang the invincible” because he was never defeated in a fight. Taiji was introduced to the public in 1926 by Yang Chen-Fu (1883-1935). Yang Chen-Fu modified his father’s postures, and this became the large posture Taiji that most Yang style Taiji uses today. Yang Chen-Fu’s form was called the big frame style because of its extended and natural postures and its slow and even movements. His uncle, Yang Banhou’s style was called small frame which used smaller movements and is considered more martial.

**Yin and Yang.**

In Chinese theory **yin** and **yang** are two polar energies that are the cause of the universe. Yin represents heaven and yang represents earth. Yin and yang are in a continuous process where what is yin eventually becomes yang and what is yang is becoming yin. All things and situations are from a combination of yin and yang energies. Yin represents cold, dark, water and female energies. Yang represents brightness, warmth, fire and male energies. Each of these two energies at their extreme begin to change into their opposite.

**Wu-Hsing - the five phases or elements.**

The five elements or energies are symbols for certain characteristics of matter. Wu-Hsing means the five phases of change or moving forces. The five are **water, fire, wood, metal** and **earth**.

The phases can help or hinder each other. Wood creates fire, fire creates earth (the ashes), earth creates metal and metal creates water (in ancient China if you left metal outside overnight, condensation would form on the metal. The Chinese believed water came from the metal) and water creates wood. Water can stop fire, fire can destroy metal, metal can destroy wood, wood can stop earth (the roots of trees can hold earth or grow into crevices in rocks and break them apart) and earth can absorb or block water.

In Chinese medicine the five elements relate to different organs. The wood element represents the liver and its negative emotion would be anger. The liver (wood) strengthens the heart (fire) or is weakened by an overactive lung (chopped by metal). The water element represents the kidneys and its negative emotion would be fear. The kidneys are strengthened by the lungs (metal) or weakened by the spleen (earth).
In Taiji the five elements are used to reflect different aspects of movement. To advance is metal and to retreat is water. Looking right is fire and to gaze left is wood. The center is earth. The energy of each movement should relate to the element it represents.

**The Health Benefits of Taijiquan**

Taiji is used in Chinese medicine to improve or cure asthma, cardiovascular problems, arthritis, digestive disorders, skin problems, cancer and many other health problems. Taiji helps with low back pain, loosens stiff joints, increases flexibility, strength and aerobic capacity. It strengthens the ligaments, tendons and muscles, improves cardio health and function of the internal organs. Taiji is thought to delay aging and prolong life. Proper Taiji practice improves posture and balance.

Chinese medical theory states that all illness is due to blockages of or excess concentrations of Qi (energy). Regular practice of Taiji will help to keep blood and Qi flowing smoothly in the entire body, improve health and help to prevent disease. The emphasis on proper posture and relaxation in Taiji allows the muscles to relax so that circulation is improved. The slow and circular movements open the joints in the body and strengthen and stretch the muscles. The reduction in tension increases the amount of useful energy you have for healing and other activities. The smooth, slow non-jarring movements of Taiji make an excellent recovery exercise for regaining health. Research in China confirms that qigong and Taiji with other therapies, shorten recovery time and strengthen treatment results.

The Chinese have the five elements and the ancient Greeks had four. The Greeks believed that health was brought about by the balance of the four vital fluids. Like Chinese medicine, excesses, insufficiencies and imbalances led to personality disorders, like depression and poor health. They also believed like the Chinese that hot and cold, wet and dry, needed to be balanced.

A 190lb Taiji practitioner can burn up to 690 calories per hour. The “heart rate was elevated more for (advanced) practitioners than for beginners.”¹ As you improve in Taiji, your exercise intensity tends to increase. “Heart rate was elevated up to 60-80% of the maximum heart rate when Tai Chi was practiced” with low stances, “but less than 60% of maximum heart rate in”² higher stances. A study at Shizuoka University in Japan by the department of physical education found that practicing the short form three times in a row produced a max heart rate of 156 bpm and a median heart rate of 129.7 bpm.

Taiji and qigong have been shown to be beneficial to patients with high or low blood pressure. “The fluid, focused movements will reduce the blood pressure in eight out of ten

¹ Putai, Jin.

² Galante, L.
hypertensive patients.” The Wushu Research Institute study found an increase in the blood volume of the heart and a positive influence on the regulation of heart rates. Studies consistently show Taiji helps with cardiac and stroke rehabilitation.

“Postural stress (caused by faulty alignment of body segments) is a major factor in development of muscular skeletal pain and premature degenerative arthritis.”4 “Tai-chi Chuan...is a frequently prescribed exercise for arthritis sufferers in China.”5 Taiji is recommended by the Arthritis Foundation and the American College of Rheumatology for arthritis sufferers. Studies done at the Research Institute for Sports Medicine in Peking state that “people who practice Tai Chi were found to have stronger skeletal systems.”6

“Tai Chi builds neuromuscular fitness - that’s coordination, balance and agility,” says Ralph LaForge, M.Sc., exercise physiology professor at the University of CA, San Diego. A 12-week study found significant improvements in balance, muscular strength, endurance, and flexibility. The study concluded Taiji improved balance, upper and lower body strength, endurance and upper and lower body flexibility. The circular and flowing movements provide dynamic stretching. A key practice in Taiji is structural alignment. It helps to develop biomechanical efficiency.

“Tai Chi was found to reduce the risks of multiple falls by 47.5%” in seniors. Tai Chi “is a valuable form of strength and balance training. This study restored older subjects to the balance and strength status of individual 3-10 years younger.”7 Taiji also reduces the fear of falling in elderly practitioners. Individuals who practiced Taiji walked significantly more than people who did not. “Tai Chi Chuan . . . is especially suited for the aged and for patients with chronic disease because of its moderate intensity, steady rhythm and hence the low physical and mental tension produced.”8

Taiji can improve your mental health because it relaxes and strengthens the nervous system, creates a sense of well-being, and harmonizes the body and mind. The shifting back and forth produces a mental flexibility to adapt to circumstances. Push hands exercise teaches you to move in harmony and work with others rather than into confrontation.

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3 Yin, J.H.

4 Hammer, Wl.

5 Kirsteins, A.E. MD.

6 Yin, J.H.

7 Journal of the American Geriatrics Society.

8 Xu, SW.
Dr. Wang, the director of the Center for Complimentary & Integrative Medicine at Tufts Medical Center found Taiji “can improve both physical and psychosocial health.” Other studies found increased flexibility, interpersonal sensitivity, lung capacity and quality of sleep. Decreases in symptoms of depression, anxiety, phobias and hostility.

Research at UCLA found that elderly Taiji practitioners reduced their levels of depression or achieved remission by practicing Taiji for at least two hours a week. Taiji develops mindfulness, an awareness of the current moment by focusing on body posture, movement and breathing. This helps to alleviate symptoms of depression, PTSD’s and addiction problems. It has also been shown to be helpful for anxiety, schizophrenia and ADD.

A study at the Wushu Research Institute in Beijing found that Taiji practitioners had a marked increase in alpha-wave activity. After practice they felt “balanced, relaxed, mentally alert and focused.” Studies have found an increase in feelings of self-worth and happiness and improved mental control. The relaxing movements of Taiji reduce tension, depression, anger, fatigue, confusion and anxiety.

Taiji is recommended for patients with dementia or Parkinson’s disease. A recent 8-month study on Parkinson’s from the University of South Florida and Fudan University in Shanghai found that seniors who practiced three times a week increased their brain volume and improved their scores on tests of memory and thinking. A study published in the “Journal of Alzheimer’s Disease” found Taiji practitioners experienced ½ of one percent brain growth over eight months. A study in the “New England Journal of Medicine” found significantly improved gaits, posture and fewer falls.

People continue to build new neurons throughout their life. The best way to build new neurons is not crossword puzzles but physical activity. Regular physical activity will increase the rate of neuron production in the brain.

Taiji practitioners scored better on tests of memory and thinking. Other studies found Taiji practitioners had greater connectivity among brain regions, improvements in decision making, multitasking and attention. They showed improved cognitive performance, attention and increased processing speed.

A study in the “British Journal of Sports Medicine” found Taiji can improve blood glucose levels and immune system response in patients with type two diabetes. Preliminary evidence shows improved kidney function.

The symptoms of fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome were reduced, and the health of the practitioners improved, their related quality of life also improved in a study of Taiji practitioners.

**Taiji Components.**

The physical side has:

1. The thirteen postures.
   A. The eight doors.
      2. Lu - Roll back.
      3. Ji - Press (also called squeeze).
      4. An - Press double, usually called push.
5. Cai - Pluck.
6. Lie - Split or rend.
8. Kao - Bump, usually called shoulder strike. You can bump your opponent off balance with your shoulder, hip or any part of your body.

B. The five directions.
1. Forward.
2. Backward.
3. Right side.
4. Left side.
5. Center.

II. The thirty-seven postures. From the 37 postures come the different forms. Each of the postures has many different applications, called yung-fa in Chinese for how to use. Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming knows over 400 self-defense techniques from these 37 postures. These applications can be divided into three different areas:
   A. Punching & Kicking.
   B. Wrestling.
   C. Qin Na (joint manipulation).

III. Push hands.
   A. Single hand. Eight variations.
   B. Four hands - the eight changes.
   C. 3-3 stepping.
   D. 3-2 stepping.
   E. Da Lu.
   F. The Taiji symbol.

IV. The fighting sets.

V. Sparring.

VI. Weapons.
   A. Sword.
   B. Sabre.
   C. Spear or staff.

Disease (dis ease) is a lack of ease (relaxation).

**Stances**

When standing your weight should be divided evenly between these three points. If there is too much weight on just one or two of these points you will be unbalanced. By evenly distributing the weight between these three points your weight will be centered over Yongquan.
Yongquan (bubbling well) is the acupuncture point K-1 (kidney-1). Sink into this point. You should feel a connection to the ground through this point. By feeling this connection, it will help you to “root”. This rooting will allow you to strike harder or be able to push or pull larger opponents off their balance.

**Neutral Stance.**

Also called the mountain climbing stance. In the bow stances, 60-70% of the weight is on the front leg. The front foot points inward 15°. The feet are less than hip width for moves like Fan Through the Back and Single whip. Feet are hip width for postures like Brush Knee and press, Fair Maiden Works the Shuttle and Grasp the Sparrows Tail. The feet are slightly more than shoulder width for Part the Wild Horses Mane.

**Xie Gongbu**

**Slant Bow Stance**

**Straight Bow Stance**

**Zheng Gongbu**

**Horse Stance**

*Mabu*

This stance is used in wave hands like clouds. It is also used for strong side to side movement. Place the feet parallel and slightly wider than your shoulders. The knees line up with your toes and your weight is evenly distributed over both feet.

**Empty stance** - Xubu - cat stance. The front foot is on the heel or toe. This is a defensive stance. The front foot is used here to kick an opponent.
**Back stance** - Zuobu. This stance is done with 60-90% of the weight on the back leg. It is used in repulse like monkey, roll back and in transitions during stepping.

**Half squat stance** - Pubu. This stance is used for low attacks and defense.

**Golden rooster standing on one leg stance.** The single leg stance is where you are standing on one leg. The leg you are standing on is straight (not locked). The other leg is usually used for kicking an opponent.

**Foot work practice.**

Practice the Taiji walking regularly to improve your Taiji form. Taiji walking is a form of qigong that will improve your health and Taiji. These exercises will improve your balance and lower body strength.

1. From a bow stance shifting forward to an empty stance.
2. From right bow to left bow stance walking forward.
3. Stepping backwards as in Repulse the monkey.
4. Sideways from Wave hands like clouds.
5. Changing directions as in Grasping the sparrow’s tail.

When stepping forward, as the back leg comes forward it “agrees” (points in the same direction as) with the other leg until you get to the balance point in the center position. Then the stepping leg should naturally move out if the hip is relaxed. When stepping, step out from the ear. You use shorter steps with higher stances and longer steps in deeper stances. When you step the toe wants to point outward, you have to pull the toe in slightly to get it to point forward. When you step forward you hold the body as you step. If you release the body as you step forward, you will fall forward.

The hand movements are smaller with higher stances and larger with lower stances.
Hands

The palm strike is done by settling the wrist. If the wrist is extended up to far, you cut off the circulation, by sinking the wrist the angles are not as great. Taiji generally uses a vertical fist. When striking with the fist you use the last three knuckles - the middle, ring and pinky finger knuckles. The fist is held lightly. When striking the fist closes momentarily but the fingers are relaxed to allow qi to circulate.

The Ten Essentials or Guidelines of Taijiquan.

1. Vitality of the spirit leads to the top of the head. The head suspended as if from above.

   Stand straight and hold the head and neck naturally erect. This raises your spirit of vitality, firms your center and elevates your spirit. It will make your body alert and nimble. It will improve your balance. The baihui cavity should feel as it is being suspended as if from above. It should be aligned above the huiyin.

2. Eyes focus with concentration.

   Your eyes move first to express your intent (yi).

3. The tongue gently touches the roof of the mouth. Relax the legs and waist to have power in the postures.

   The jaw is relaxed. The tongue connects the conception and governing vessels. All movements depend on the action of the waist. Tension in the waist will break the flow of power. A relaxed waist can neutralize a strong attack.

4. Body centered and upright.

   Proper alignment relaxes the body, prevents undue tension and improves the circulation of blood and Qi. It will help your energy ascend smoothly. Jiaji.

5. Arc your chest and round your back.

   Naturally arcing and rounding your chest allows you to breathe easier and deeper. It helps massage the internal organs. It will allow your qi to sink to your dan tien and increases your power.

6. Loosen your waist and hips.

   The waist connects your upper and lower body, it is the center of your body and the locus of control for all movement. Exercising your waist stimulates your kidneys. It increases your speed and power. Mingmen and shenque.

7. Sink the shoulders and drop the elbows toward the ground.

   Lifting your shoulders will cause tension, raise your Qi and make it easy to unbalance you. Dropping the elbows protects some cavities. Allows power to be emitted naturally. It will allow your energy to extend through your arms to your hands. It will increase the integration of your movements. Jianjing and quichi.

8. Extend the fingers and settle the wrist.

   Settling the wrist brings your attention to your fingers, leading your Qi to your fingers. Settling your wrist increases the speed and power of your strike.

Allows you to shift weight with agility and smoothly. Substantial implies firmness and stability, not rigidity. Insubstantial implies the ability to change. Avoid double-weighing. Transfer bodyweight from leg to leg - 60-70% on one leg and 30-40% on the other. Keeping the empty and the solid will allow you to move your body easily and without effort. Motion is rooted in the feet, released through the legs, controlled by the waist and manifested through the fingers.

10. Upper and lower body follow each other.

Integration of the entire body. When one-part moves, all the other parts also move.

Posture and Mechanics.

Make sure to complete each posture before you start the next one.

To move to one side, just fall toward that direction by relaxing the muscles on that side of the body. You do not want to push to the side because this creates extra tension. When stepping you should drop down slightly and through the hip rather than up and over it. To draw the right foot up you should turn your right shoulder slightly to the left to create space or a pull to the heel. This pulls the foot through the stretching of the quadratus lumborum. There is a slight turn of the waist to the left, this will bring your weight to the leg thigh.

The arms move in an area of around 45° from the body. When your arms are held straight out from the body, there is tension in your chest. If the arms are held straight in front there is tension in the back. If your arms are held at 45° from the shoulders they are relaxed. The elbows and shoulders are always sunk and relaxed. If you raise your elbows there is tension in the shoulders.

When you are walking, sitting or standing, practice dropping your shoulders, feel the head suspended as if from above and relax the lower back.

Vision.

Keep your eyes on the movement or where the action would be. Lead your hands while you do Taiji rather than looking at the walls and other reference points. This will help you to find your center of gravity. Use a soft vision, do not look far out (like at the horizon). People use the walls to tell them which direction is up to stay in balance rather than finding their true center of balance. Occasionally practice Taiji with your eyes closed.

Keep your head erect, do not look at your feet. When distracted or thinking about other things the vision tends to drift off or down. When you have a problem with your balance you tend to look down. Do not just pick a spot on the wall or out in front of you. Your eyes move as you move.

Breathing

Initially you should just breathe naturally while practicing Taiji. As you improve you should practice normal abdominal breathing (Buddhist or Diaphragmatic breathing) when doing Taiji for health and relaxation. The reverse abdominal breathing (Daoist) is for when you are doing Taiji for martial arts or physical activities.

Normal abdominal breathing expands the abdomen as you inhale and collapses as you exhale. You breathe into the lower dantien (sea of qi).
Reverse abdominal breathing **contracts** or draws in the abdomen as you inhale and expands the abdomen as you exhale.

Abdominal breathing can increase your air intake four or five times. Proper breathing is important because the brain requires 20% of the body’s available oxygen. Brain cells consume 12 times more oxygen of other cells. The blood vessels in the lower lungs do 80% of the work, so deep abdominal breathing is very important. It strengthens the abdominal muscles, improves circulation and massages your internal organs which helps with digestion. Abdominal breathing reduces tension in the neck and shoulders.

**Form.**

When practicing the form rather than thinking about applications you should work on sinking, settling and coordination. Rather than looking at the outside form, feel what is going on inside the body.

The 24 is more linear and the 103 is more circular. The 24 should be done in 5-7 minutes. The 103-posture form is done in 18-40 minutes depending upon the instructor. You should practice it slower when working on different energies and very quickly to work on fa-jing. If you are practicing Taiji as a martial art, once you have achieved fluid Qi circulation you should practice the form at least once a day with speed and power. Practice it consciously to really see inside the form.
24 Movement Short Form.

This form was created by the Chinese National Sports Committee in 1956. It was created to make it easier for beginners to learn Taiji. They eliminated many of the repetitive movements. It keeps the same flavor as the original Taiji in a shorter and more balanced form.

Section 1
1. Commencing.
2. Part the wild horse’s mane (3).
3. White crane spreads its wings.

Section 2
5. Playing the (lute) pipa.

Section 3
7. Left grasp the sparrow’s tail (ward off, roll back, press and push).
8. Right grasp the sparrow’s tail.

Section 4
10. Wave hands like clouds (3).
12. High pat on horse.
13. Right heel kick.
14. Double wings to ears. Strike to ears with both fists.
15. Turn body and left heel kick.

Section 5
16. Left lower body then stand on one leg.
   Snake creeps down left side.
   Golden rooster stands on left leg.
17. Right lower body then stand on one leg.
   Snake creeps down right side.
   Golden rooster stands on right leg.
18. Shuttle back and forth.
19. Needle at sea bottom.
20. Fan through back.
21. Turn body, deflect, parry and punch.
22. Apparent closure.
23. Cross hands.
24. Closing.
Martial Application - Yung-fa (how to use).

In Taiji you receive an opponent’s force. You want to lead an opponent’s force into emptiness - not block them.

Hard styles, like Tiger claw use a hard jing and it is like getting hit with a hardwood staff. The snake, dragon and cranes styles are a soft/hard style that is like getting hit with a rattan staff. Yang Taiji is a soft, internal style and strikes like a whip. Chen style Taiji is between the soft/hard and the soft styles. The hard styles do external damage when striking an opponent, while the internal styles do more internal damage (to organs). Taiji uses short range fighting and specializes in cavity strikes. This way you need little power. Taiji uses low kicks. Taiji is 60-70% grappling.

Partner Application drills.
1. Brush knee and press against a kicking partner.
2. Three white crane spreads its wings against three brush knee and press.
3. Repulse like monkey against an advancing and striking partner.
4. Grasp the sparrow’s tail against a strike.
5. Wave hands like clouds against an advancing and striking or kicking partner.

Push Hands - Tu’ei Sou.

The goal is to make the opponent lose their balance and then strike, throw or lock them. The form in Taiji teaches you to center into the self. It strengthens the legs and develops your lines of power. Push hands takes you out of the center, you must try to keep your center while doing push hands. If you do the form mostly and less push hands the form will look good on the outside, but it will be hollow. If you do push hands mostly you will use speed to win but you will not have good form.

During push hands use your forearms to connect (and fill space) to your partner so that you can use your hands to strike. You can use your forearms to off balance your partner.

Push hands is mid-range grappling. You use it to get close to an opponent to strike, throw or lock them. You can also use it to get away from an opponent’s attempts at strikes, throws or locks.

Mutual benefit by mutual improvement. We both improve by helping each other. Give them a clean clear push that they can handle. The coach’s job is to maximize athletic performance. Partners in push hands are both coaches.

In push hands there are four forms of movement or engaging.
1. Roll.
2. To transfer or exchange. Exchanging is where you switch contact from one limb to the other.
3. Folding.
4. Pivoting.

Push hands - single hand.

These are Dr. Yang’s first four.
1. Horizontal.
2. To coil. Drop your elbow as you coil your hand over the opponent’s hand.
3. Circle up and to the inside.
4. Same as three but circle inside and back first and then circle up.
This is the set that Sam Masich does. His set includes 8 basic single hand exercises.

2. Two hand. Level/circular, stick and adhere (Peng vs An).
7. Single hand. Fold up (spear).

**Four hands.**

During Four hands there are four basic movements:

1. You ward off
2. The opponent rolls back
3. You press
4. The opponent pushes.

**The Eight changes.**

1. **Cross hand reversal.** Change at top. Four versions. Change by stopping the hand or the elbow and releasing the other. Slight squeeze and release.
2. **Replace spiral reversal.** Change at bottom. As they do push you change with bottom hand rather than spiraling with the top hand. You can do the change anywhere in the circle, just do a small circle to reverse direction.
3. **Rolling reversal.** As you push at the bottom when they attempt to spiral. You should hinder the spiral hand and release outward. Then push them and the circle will change direction.
4. **Sitting wrist return.** As they push the top hand settles the wrist. Instead of spiraling you let they push out the elbow side. Then push toward their face and it will change direction. Don’t hook.
5. **Hinder spiral.** This one is like three but instead of hindering you just stop their elbow from spiraling. Release slightly and push to reverse direction.
6. **Lower hand reversal.** They are pushing and the bottom hand circles their hand out and around and then places it back on your wrist and the circle changes direction. Sink back, withdraw to lengthen their arm. The circle is not a real circle.
7. **Chop reversal.** As they push you roll out into arm lock. This is like three and four of the single hand exercises. Not a firm lock. As you push back in the circle changes direction.
8. **Flat palm fold.** As they spiral your hand will pivot rather than rolling. Your hand ends up palm to palm with theirs. Your bottom hand hinders their elbow. Change by releasing either hand. It depends upon the initial direction as in one of the four hands exercises.
9. **Universal Change.**
Qigong

Most Qigong information was kept secret until the 1980's. Qigong is over 4000 years old. Qigong involves the coordination of thought or intention, breath, posture and movement. Qi means **energy** and gong means **study or work**. So, Qigong is the study of energy or energy work. You should practice Qigong until it becomes a natural part of your life. Your breath is always regulated. When standing or sitting you are always in a proper posture.

Chinese medicine is based on Taoist theory and principles. There are **four sections or divisions in Chinese medicine - acupuncture, massage, herbs and qigong**. There are two categories of qigong. **External qigong** usually involves more movement and strengthens the limbs and body. **Internal qigong** is usually less physically active, like the sitting meditations in Zen.

Qigong can also be divided into three categories based on the reason it is practiced. There is **Spiritual** which includes **scholar qigong** for maintaining health by balancing the emotions and **religious qigong** for enlightenment. Scholar qigong is based on the theory that illness is caused by mental and emotional distress. **Healing** which includes **medical qigong** for healing and personal health qigong. Qigong focuses on treating the person rather than the disease. By restoring a person’s overall wellness, you are able to fight off many health problems. The last is **Martial qigong** for developing fighting power and abilities (mental and physical).

### Balancing the Emotions Qigong

**The Lungs.** Large Intestine  
Nose  Metal - White  Autumn  
**Inhale** - Yi - dignity, courage and integrity.  
**Exhale** - anxiety, sorrow and grief.

**The Kidneys.** Bladder  
Ears  Water - Blue  Winter  
**Inhale** - Zhi - wisdom, clear perception and self-understanding, self-confidence and inner strength.  
**Exhale** - release all fears, stress and loneliness.

**The Liver.** Gall bladder  
Eyes  Wood - Green  Spring  
**Inhale** - draw in the feeling of Ren - kindness, benevolence, human heartedness.  
**Exhale** - release anger or jealousy.

**The Heart.** Small intestine  
Tongue  Fire - Red  Summer  
**Inhale** - draw in contentment and tranquility.  
**Exhale** - nervousness and excitement.
The Spleen. Stomach
Mouth Earth - Yellow Late Summer
Healing sound: W-H-O-O-O-O-O
  Inhale - Xin - trust, sincerity and openness.
  Exhale - obsessiveness, pensiveness and self-doubt.

Eight Pieces of Brocade
This set is for health.

1. Two hands reach skyward to balance the triple burner.
   This exercise balances the triple burner - which is responsible for respiration, digestion and elimination.
2. Open bow to shoot a hawk.
   Horse stance and draw the bow. This exercise strengthens and stimulates the lungs.
3. Raise each arm to regulate the stomach and spleen.
   This exercise improves stomach, spleen, pancreas and liver function. Good for diabetes.
4. Look behind to cure fatigue and distress.
   This exercise loosens and strengthens the neck, it improves posture, stimulates cerebral circulation and improves vision.
5. Bend over and wag the tail to cure heart fire.
   This exercise banishes excess “fire” caused by worry, stress and overwork. It restores balance to the heart and nervous system.
6. Bend over to dissipate disease.
   Breathe into the kidneys and spine. It stimulates the kidneys. Massage the hamstrings and calves.
7. Punching with intense gaze to increase Qi and strength.
   Horse stance, do not lock elbows. This exercise stimulates the liver.
8. Seven disorders & hundreds of illnesses disappear.
   Stand on toes, inhale and hold for count of three. Exhale, drop and hold for three.

Taiji Qigong Set
As always, the movement is generated from the legs and directed upwards through the hands. You should feel that your body is connected from the bottom of your feet to the tips of your fingers. This set is for health and martial arts.

1. Stand.
   Stand still to regulate the breathing. Calm your mind and concentrate. You may use normal or reverse abdominal breathing.
2. Big python softens its body.
   Move your body around slowly. The motion starts at your feet and flows upward in a wave through your legs, body, chest, shoulder, arms and finally reaches your fingertips. Move naturally and comfortably. Practice for a few minutes until your body is soft and comfortable.
3. The Chi is sunk to the dantien.

Using your mind to lead the Chi to the lower dantian. Inhale and turn your palms towards each other and lift them to shoulder height. Then turn palms downward and lower them to waist level while you exhale. As you lower your hands lead your Chi to the lower dantian. You also use your legs and waist.

4. Expand the chest to clean the body.

Circle your hands up in front of you and out to the sides. Inhale as they rise and exhale as they sink out to the sides. Visualize that you are expelling dirty qi and air from your body and lungs pushing it away from your body.

5. Pour the Chi into the Baihui.

Visualize that you are taking in chi from the heavens, in through your baihui and pushing it down through your chest to the lower dantian and finally through the bottoms of your feet into the ground.

6. Left and right to push the mountains.

After you have cleaned your body and absorbed chi from heaven, you start building chi internally and using it for training. Inhale as you bring your hands in front of your chest. Exhale and push sideways with your palms as if you were pushing two mountains away. Inhale and bring hands back in. Exhale as you push palms down.

7. Settle the wrists and push the palms.

Inhale as you bring your hands in front of your chest. Exhale and push forwards with your palms as if you were pushing a car or some other heavy object. Inhale and bring hands back in. Exhale as you push palms down.

8. Large bear swimming in the water.

This is similar to the breaststroke in swimming.

9. Left and right to open the mountain.

This is similar to the last exercise, but you only use one hand at a time.

10. Eagle attacks its prey.

This is the reverse of the 8th exercise.

11. Lion rotates the ball.

This is the same as the 10th exercise but you only use one hand at a time.

12. White crane spreads its wing.

This form is used for recovery. Exhale as the arms extend. At the end drop your hands to your sides and inhale and exhale ten times. Feel the Qi flow throughout your body. Rock back and forth on your feet a few times.

Rocking Taiji Qigong

1. Embracing Arms. Eagle attacks its prey.
2. Ward off and roll back.
   5. Brush knee and press.
   6. Wave hands like clouds. 1 or 2 breath.
8. *Chop with Fist.*