

Tai Chi Fundamentals



1. Tai Chi requires practice with a focus on the details of body alignment and weight shifts. Following all the steps will take time so be patient with yourself.
2. Focus on your breathing. Breathe deeply and try to coordinate it with your movement.
3. Unless specified, always keep your upper body upright as if the crown of your head is suspended from above. Make sure your head, shoulders, and hips hang in alignment.
4. The box shape is a foot position and used to measure the distance between the outside of your feet relative to the position you are in. The inside edges of your feet should be parallel.
5. Nearly all turns and weight shifts are done from the hips or your Chi which is the center of your body two inches below your navel. This is the body's center of gravity.
6. As you learn the movements, focus some attention on keeping your body relaxed. Shoulders, elbows, and hands are relaxed. Avoid locking the knees or elbows.
7. Hand positions are specific to levels such as the top of the head, throat high, or the plane of the shoulders, heart high, hip high, and thigh high.
8. Weight shifts are from one leg to the other either sideways or front to back. The weight shift limits are 100% on one leg, 70-30%, 60-40% or 50-50%
9. Arm angles to the shoulder are straight forward, 45% outward or 90%, (straight out).
10. Foot angles to each other are parallel, (the box shape), 45%, 90% or 135%
11. The stance or width between your feet is usually measure between the heels if your feet were parallel. A narrow stance is with your heels lined up. A wide stance is the shoulder width apart on the outside.
12. Sometimes a foot will step behind the front foot with the toes lined up With the heel of the front foot.

(Next see the positions page)