

TAI CHI POSITIONS

A faint, light-colored illustration of two people in Tai Chi stances is visible in the background. One person is in a standing posture with arms extended, while the other is in a seated or crouching posture with hands held in front of them.

This page describes the position for the various expressions you will hear in our Tai Chi class.

The shoulders should always turn with the hips. Avoid letting your shoulders turn past your hips.

The box shape is to place your feet at shoulder width on the outside edges and the inside edges are parallel. It is the most common foot frame-work for our Tai Chi movements.

Half Circle: This is to hold the right or left hand in front of your heart, palm facing your body and elbow high with a relaxed curve to your arm.

Big Ball: This happens on the right or the left side. On the right, your right hand is in front of the right shoulder, palm open facing downward. The left hand is at the right hip, palm open facing upward as if you were holding a large ball in front of your hip. Reverse the hands for the other side.

Small Ball: This is done in front of the heart with the right hand in the half circle, palm facing you. The left hand is behind the right or closer to your body with the palm facing forward and your left elbow is held close to your ribs as if your holding a grapefruit sized ball. It's used in the Ward Off Right position.

The Hook or Claw: This is always in the right hand with fingers together, pointing down as if dropping a penny.

On Guard: This is to hold either the right or left hand vertical in front of the shoulder. The palm is open and held on edge or the right palm would be facing left.

Cradle the Baby: This is done on either side with one hand on guard and the other hand is held palm open and up but horizontal to the body so that the fingers touch the inside elbow of the vertical arm.

Grasp the Bird's Tail: This happens on either side with the upper arm reaching out palm down 45° from shoulder high. The other arm reaches across the body, waist high with the palm open and facing up or sometimes down and on this hand fingers are pointing up at the elbow of the extended arm.

Press: This is as if you were holding the small ball and compressed it until your hands were gently touching in front of your heart and there is a triangle made up between your hands and elbows. This is just a few inches in front of your heart.

Push: With your hands, palms forward in front of your shoulders, elbows down your slowly push your hands out at shoulder level until yours are flat to the ground when your arms are extended. Often this move is down with the hands staying where they are in space and the body is being pushed backward.

(See Tai Chi stances)