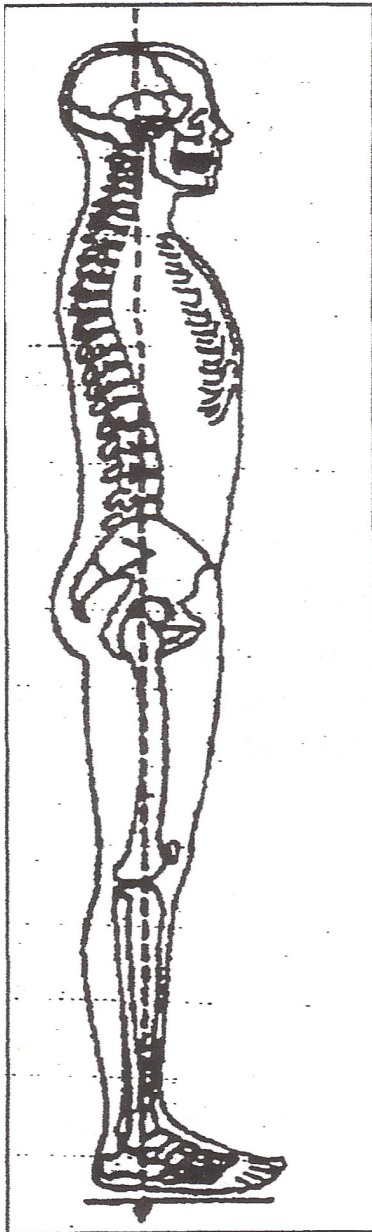


# Posture and T'ai Chi Chih

Developed by Marie Dotts, Accredited Instructor

When we do T'ai chi chih, we want to be mindful of our posture. The upper body remains upright throughout all the movements without leaning forward or backward. Imagine a straight line running from your ear to your shoulder to your hip, then down to the middle of your foot.



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Whether you are in the resting pose or are shifting your weight forward-and-backward or side-to-side, the straight line remains.

Here are some things to imagine:

- The crown of your head is suspended from the above and you are suspended, hanging straight up and down.
- Your rib cage is a bell and you want the clapper of that bell to hang straight down the middle.

**Avoid ringing the bell!**

- Your pelvis is a basin filled with water  
**No spilling**

The more you move with T'ai Chi Chih the easier keeping straight posture will become. It's best to start out with good habits. Be aware and mindful, move slowly. Do not allow your arms to "pull" you forward or off-center. Instead, imagine that the motion generated from the center of your body is allowing your arms to "float" out, around and back.

Be gentle with yourself.

There is no need to rush.

Be balanced, centered and calm.

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# The Principles of Relaxation and Postural Alignment

Developed by Marie Dotts, Accredited Instructor

Relaxation is the first and most important T'ai Chi Chih principle the practitioners must learn. To maintain a state of complete relaxation, all tension and restraint must be emptied from the mind and body. By relaxing completely and centering the mind on the tan t'ien, our weight sinks to the feet.

Postural alignment plays an important part in how to move in T'ai Chi Chih. The head and body must be aligned with the sacrum. The diagram below shows the proper alignment. The spine is held straight but in a relaxed manner. Chin is slightly lowered to relax the neck and allow the breath to flow with ease.

Head and body must be held straight. The chest is drawn in to allow chi to sink to the tan t'ien



The shoulders must be sunk and the elbows dropped naturally.

Weight is sent to the feet.

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