

# Overview for Beginner's Class:

Each class consists of:

- Warm up, stretching exercises;
- Learning the Tai Chi 24 Short Form;
- Learning QiQong exercises.

## Stretching:

The purpose of stretching exercises is to improve range of motion and mobility and to prevent injury. We do a variety of low-impact, gentle stretching exercises. The guideline is to start where you are and improve. None of the exercises should be painful. Back off a little bit if a stretch is uncomfortable.

### Neck –

Face forward and inhale;  
As you exhale, turn head to the right and gently stretch the limit of motion;  
Inhale as you return head to the center;  
Exhale, turn head to the left and gently stretch at the limit of motion;  
Inhale as you return head to the center;  
Repeat several times.

### Shoulders –

Roll the shoulders in a backward circle;  
Inhale as you rotate the shoulders forward and upward;  
Exhale as you rotate the shoulders backward and downward;  
Repeat several times;  
Reverse direction  
Roll the shoulders in a forward circle;  
Exhale as you rotate the shoulders forward and downward;  
Inhale as you rotate the shoulders backward and upward;  
Repeat several times.

### Torso Turns –

Legs shoulder width apart, slightly bent, knees face forward through the exercise, arms hang limp at the side;  
Turn the torso to the limit of motion to the right, allowing arms to swing with the momentum of the turn;  
Turn the torso to the limit of motion to the left, allowing arms to swing with the momentum of the turn.  
Repeat several times.

### Knee Rotations –

Feet together and adopt a “sit down” posture;  
Slowly rotate the knees in a clockwise circle above the ankles, breathing out on the outward half of the circle and in on the inward half;  
Repeat several times;  
Reverse direction to counterclockwise and repeat several times

### **Leg Swings –**

Raise left knee to be even with hip, allow leg to swing freely and return;  
Repeat several times, trying to work up to 20 repetitions without losing balance.  
Repeat with right leg.

### **Hip Rotations –**

Feet shoulder width apart, rotate hips outward to the left and back to the right. Exhale on the outward half of the circle and inhale on the inward half. Repeat several times. Reverse direction and repeat several times.

### **Waist Rotations –**

Feet together and repeat the hip rotation sequence.

### **Floor Stretches –**

#### *Leg and Back Stretch:*

Sit with feet spread as far apart as possible;  
Try to reach your left foot with both hands;  
With each exhalation, try to extend the stretch a little further;  
Hold the maximum stretch a minimum of one minute;  
Repeat at the outside 45 left, inside 45 left, center, inside 45 right, right leg and outside 45 right.

#### *Cat Stretch:*

Get on hands and knees;  
On exhale, relax and let gravity sink the spine;  
On inhale, arch the back;  
Repeat several times.

#### *Cobra Stretch:*

Lay on stomach;  
Push up with hands, keeping pelvis flat on floor into a half push-up position;  
Turn head and gaze to left and right.  
Return to face down position and repeat several times.

**The 24 Yang  
Short Form:**

N	The Opening of Tai Chi
W	Parting of the Wild Horse's Mane L-R-L
W	Stork Cools its Wings
W	Twist and Brush Knee L-R-L (half step up)
W	Chinese Lady Plays Guitar
W	Repulse the Monkey R-L-R-L (steps retreat - face W, step E)
W	Ward Off L, Roll Back, Press and Push
E	Ward Off R, Roll Back, Press and Push
W	Single Whip
N	Cloud Hands (face N, step to left - left foot steps three times)
W	Single Whip
W	High Pat on the Horse
W	Circle block, Right Foot, Toe Down Kick
W	Box Opponent's Ears
E	Heel Thrust Kick
E	Serpent Creeps Down Left
E	Golden Cock Stands on Left Leg
E	Serpent Creeps Down Right
E	Golden Cock Stands on Right Leg
SE	Fair Lady Works the Loom Right
NE	Fair Lady Works the Loom Left
E	Needle at the Bottom of the Sea (faces east, but steps back)
SE	Fan Through the Back
W	Chop Down, Parry and Punch
W	Apparent Close, Push
N	Close of Tai Chi.

## Tai Chi Walk

This is how we move through the form. It is important to practice the walk by itself. Trying to learn the moves and the walk together can be very confusing.

### **Basic rules:**

Step to the side, toe first. Step forward, heel first. Step to the back, toe first.

Never shift foot position with weight on the foot. Empty the weight to the other leg and then shift position. There are some exceptions to this, but all the exceptions are cheating to one degree or another.

### **Basic Stance:**

Basic Yang stance is to have feet shoulder width apart with the lead foot straight ahead and trailing foot at 45°. This is a very solid defensive posture.

### **Walking forward:**

Step forward to shoulder width, foot straight ahead, taking care not to commit your weight to the step until the heel makes contact. As the heel makes contact, gradually shift the weight from the trailing foot to the lead foot taking care not to flex the knee past being even with the base of your toes. To prepare for the second step, gradually shift the weight back to the trailing foot and when the lead foot is empty, rotate the lead foot on the heel to 45° and then shift the weight back onto the lead foot. When the trailing foot is empty, step forward, shoulder width apart, foot straight ahead and repeat the process. This can be practiced on one foot square tile flooring as a way to keep the stance at shoulder width and to help get a sense of the 45° angle for the trailing foot.

### **Turning left:**

Shift the weight to the left foot.

Rotate the right foot to the 45° for the new direction.

Shift the weight to the right foot.

Step forward in the new direction with the left foot to shoulder width, foot straight ahead for the new direction. Make sure not to commit the weight to the step until the heel makes contact.

When the heel makes contact, gradually shift the weight from the 45° foot to the lead foot straight ahead. At this point you will be in a basic Yang stance heading to the left.

### **Common errors include:**

Getting into an “L” stance where the trailing foot goes to 90°.

Having a more narrow stance than shoulder width. Check the width of your stance by drawing the lead foot back to being even with the trailing foot. If they come back together, it's too narrow.

Flexing the knee past the base of the toe.

Forgetting to complete the weight shift before moving the empty foot.

Another common hurdle for the person learning Tai Chi is remembering to keep the pace of the footwork at the same deliberate pace as the movement of the hands, arms and body.

## **Tai Chi Breathing**

Basic breathing for beginning Tai Chi is abdominal breathing. On inhale the stomach gently expands and on exhale the stomach returns to its original position. This is a breath of relaxation. Babies breathe this way instinctively. Stand comfortably and place one hand on the abdomen and one hand on the chest to verify the correct breath. The abdomen should move, the chest should remain still. Tai Chi players adopt this method of breathing at all times.

### **1. Opening of Tai Chi**

Face North, relax, feet together, knees slightly bent, arms loose at side, butt tucked in  
Slowly step left foot to shoulder width, toe first  
Slowly settle the weight onto both feet  
Allow the hands to float up at arm's length like the rising sun  
At eye height, the hands cycle closer to the body and float down to waist high.

(this can also be repeated as a QiQong)

### **2. Parting of the Wild Horse's Mane**

#### **To the left:**

From the end of the Opening of Tai Chi move: Raise the right hand to form the top of a soap bubble. At the same time, shift the weight to the left foot and pivot the right foot to be at 45 degrees for heading to the west. The visualization is that the rising right hand is connected to the right foot as with a string and it "pulls" the foot to its new position. Settle the weight to the right foot, emptying the weight from the left foot. As the weight settles, grasp the bottom of the soap bubble with the left hand. Torso at this point should be facing the same forty-five degree angle as the right foot. With the weight on the right foot, the left foot steps on the heel, aimed due west. Then simultaneously: The torso turns from the forty-five to face due west. As that is happening, the weight shifts from the right foot to the left foot which goes from contact with the heel only to fully flat on the floor. The right hand drops from the top of the soap bubble to waist high, while the left hand pivots from the bottom of the soap bubble to a strike aimed at the unseen opponent's throat. The arms stay with the torso as it shifts from the northwest "45" to due west during the move. So, the final position is: right foot at 45 degrees pointing northwest; torso square facing due west; left foot flat on the floor pointing due west; left hand in an upward throat strike; right hand waist high, controlling an arm of the unseen opponent; weight shifted to the forward left foot. All of these parts reach this final position simultaneously.

**To the right:**

Shift the weight from the lead left foot back to the trailing right foot. With the left foot empty, pivot it out to the southwest 45 and shift the torso to match the 45 to the left. As you shift back, the upper hand (left) forms the top of the new soap bubble and the right hand turns to support the bottom of the soap bubble. Shift the weight forward to the left foot, step with the right foot on the heel straight ahead due west. As you turn the torso to due west, the left hand drops from the top of the soap bubble to waist height and the right hand pivots from the bottom of the soap bubble to a strike aimed at the unseen opponent's throat and the weight settles onto the right foot as it moves from contact with the heel to fully flat on the floor, again, all parts reaching the final position at once. This is a mirror image of the parting of the wild horse's mane to the left.

**To the left:**

Shift the weight from the lead right foot back to the trailing left foot and repeat the same as the first one.

**3. Stork Cools its Wings.**

Begin just as if you were going to do a fourth Parting of the Wild Horse's Mane. Shift the weight from the lead left foot back to the trailing right foot. With the left foot empty, pivot it out to the southwest 45 and shift the torso to match the 45 to the left. As you shift back, the upper hand (left) forms the top of a new soap bubble and the right hand reaches to support the bottom of the soap bubble, but with the palm facing down. Step forward with the right foot - placing it at 45 degrees to the right (as an exception to the normal forward step). Then, simultaneously, the left hand drops to control the unseen opponent's attack to waist height, same as in the Parting of the Wild Horse's Mane, while the right hand performs a rising block. The hand is open, and ends facing away from the forehead, above and slightly ahead of the forehead, with the hand higher than the elbow to deflect any blow to the head). The movement of the rising block pulls the left foot forward to an empty step ahead of the right foot. Left hand, right arm and left foot all reach final position at the same time.

**Rotate both hands so that left palm is up and the right palm faces the forehead.**

**4. Twist and Brush Knee.****Brush left knee.**

Keeping the weight on the trailing right foot, turn torso to match the 45 of the trailing right foot. As this shift in position occurs, the left arm performs a sweep in front of the face, while the right arm redirects the attack of the opponent, even with the right ear. As the left arm sweeps in front of the face it chases the right arms redirection for a bit and then continues the sweep back close to its original waist high position. As the left arm breaks off its pursuit of the right arm, plant the left heel on the floor straight ahead, toe up and begin the weight shift from the trailing right leg to the left leg and turn torso from the 45 left to end straight ahead.. As the weight shift takes place, the left arm completes its circle to its starting position while the right hand pushes out from the center of the chest and the weight settles onto the left foot, now flat on the floor. The left hand sweep, the right hand push, weight shift, torso turn to the front, foot becoming flat on the floor, all reach their final position at the same time.

### **Brush right knee.**

Footwork and weight shifts are identical to those in Parting of the Wild Horse's Mane - shift weight to the trailing right foot, pivot left foot to the forty-five. The right arm performs a sweep in front of the face while the left arm rises to redirect the attack of the opponent and reaches to be even with the left ear. As the right arm continues its sweep, the right foot steps straight ahead, heel first and the left hand pushes out from the center of the chest. The right hand ends waist high, controlling the attacker's hand as the weight shift completes to the forward right foot. The right hand sweep, the left hand push, weight shift, torso turn to the front, foot becoming flat on the floor, all reach their final position at the same time, in a mirror image to the movement in Brush left knee.

### **Brush left knee.**

Shift weight to the trailing left foot, pivot right foot to the forty-five. The left arm performs a sweep in front of the face while the right arm rises to redirect the attack of the opponent and reaches to be even with the right ear. As the left arm continues its sweep, the left foot steps straight ahead, heel first and the right hand pushes out from the center of the chest. The left hand ends waist high, controlling the attacker's hand as the weight shift completes to the forward left foot. The left hand sweep, the right hand push, weight shift, torso turn to the front, foot becoming flat on the floor, all reach their final position at the same time, in a mirror image to the movement in Brush right knee.

## **5. Chinese Lady Plays Guitar.**

Shift weight to the trailing right foot. As the weight shifts, align the right hand and arm with the left arm, both palms parallel to each other with the left palm forward and the right palm opposite the left elbow. As the weight shift completes, the arms perform a slight sweep in an arc, passing from the left side to the right side back to the left side of the body as they raise into a ward off position, palms parallel still and maintaining the orientation with the right palm opposite the left elbow. As the sweep is performed, the motion of the arms pulls the left foot up slightly and it settles to an empty step, heel touching the floor as the sweep completes.

## **6. Repulse the Monkey.**

There are four of these. Repulse the Monkey is a reverse strike. The steps retreat. The hand opposite the retreating step pushes forward. The power of the strike comes from the hip opposite the striking hand. As the weight settles onto the retreating foot, the hip provides an extra little oomph to the striking hand.

**Repulse with the right hand.** Four motions occur simultaneously (slowly, fluidly and together) to begin the move:

- a. The left foot steps to the rear on its toe.
- b. The torso turns 45 to the right.
- c. Left hand turns over palm up.
- d. Right hand cups behind the right ear.

At this point, all of the weight is on the right foot. Then to complete the move, simultaneously (slowly, fluidly and together):

- a. Weight shifts to the left foot, which settles forty-five to the left;
- b. Right foot ends empty with heel on the floor.
- c. Torso turns straight ahead.
- d. Right hand pushes forward.
- e. Left hand pulls back, waist high, palm up.

As the last weight settles onto the left foot, the left hip kicks back, driving the right hand forward, giving power to the strike.

**Repulse with the left hand.** Four motions occur simultaneously (slowly, fluidly and together) to begin the move:

- e. The right foot steps to the rear on its toe.
- f. The torso turns 45 to the left.
- g. Right hand turns over palm up.
- h. Left hand cups behind the left ear.

At this point, all of the weight is on the left foot. Then to complete the move, simultaneously (slowly, fluidly and together):

- f. Weight shifts to the right foot, which settles forty-five to the right;
- g. Left foot ends empty with heel on the floor.
- h. Torso turns straight ahead.
- i. Left hand pushes forward.
- j. Right hand pulls back, waist high, palm up.

As the last weight settles onto the right foot, the right hip kicks back, driving the left hand forward, giving power to the strike.

**Repulse again from each side repeating the above motions.**

## 7. Ward off Left.

### Ward Off.

To begin, the right hand raises to form the top of a smaller soap bubble (soccer ball sized) above the right hip, the left hand returns to support the bottom of the soap bubble at waist high as the left foot draws back to an empty step, toe down, just ahead of the right foot, torso turns 45 to the right – all arriving, smoothly and simultaneously.

Step forward with the left foot, heel down. As the weight shift begins from the right foot to the left, rotate the ball so that the left hand is forward. As the weight shift continues, the left hand leads, the right hand chases it, the torso turns forward. As the weight shift completes, the hands reach a ward off position to the left, right hand opposite the left elbow. Weight ends up on the left foot flat on the floor. All arriving simultaneously.

### Roll Back.

Weight shifts back. Torso returns back to 45 to the right. Right hand draws back to waist height. Left hand chases the right, holding the soap bubble horizontally. Left foot returns to heel up empty step. All weight ends up onto the trailing right foot. All reach final position simultaneously.

**Press.**

Weight shifts forward. Torso turns forward. Left hand leads. Right hand chases. As the weight shift completes, the left hand stays horizontal and the right hand catches the left, palms together locked at right angles to each other into a press.

**Push.**

Weight shifts back. Torso stays facing west. Hands unlock as they draw back, palms facing down, fingers lightly cupped as if holding the top of the small soap bubble. As the weight shifts to the back foot, the forward foot returns to the heel down, toe up position. The hands roll down around the bubble, going from the top of the bubble to being low on the bubble facing straight ahead, still. Weight then shifts back to the forward foot and the hands push slightly upward uprooting the center of the unseen opponent.

**8. Ward off Right.**

First, shift the weight back to the trailing foot, palms facing down. To turn 180 degrees to face due east, first the lead foot turns to anticipate its position as the trailing foot when the turn is complete, facing 45 to the left for the east facing direction. This puts the left foot into a reverse “T” stance relative to the front foot and the torso, with the palms still facing down and the arms still extended, reaches at this point, due north. After the left foot reaches the 45, shift the weight onto the left foot and begin the ward off.

**Ward Off.**

To begin, the left hand raises to form the top of a smaller soap bubble (soccer ball sized) above the left hip, the right hand returns to support the bottom of the soap bubble at waist high as the right foot draws back to an empty step, toe down, just ahead of the left foot, torso turns 45 to the left – all arriving, smoothly and simultaneously.

Step forward with the right foot, heel down. As the weight shift begins from the left foot to the right, rotate the ball so that the right hand is forward. As the weight shift continues, the right hand leads, the left hand chases it, the torso turns forward. As the weight shift completes, the hands reach a ward off position to the right, left hand opposite the right elbow. Weight ends up on the right foot flat on the floor. All arriving simultaneously.

**Roll Back.**

Weight shifts back. Torso returns back to 45 to the left. Left hand draws back to waist height. Right hand chases the left, holding the soap bubble horizontally. Right foot returns to heel up empty step. All weight ends up onto the trailing left foot. All reach final position simultaneously.

**Press.**

Weight shifts forward. Torso turns forward. Right hand leads. Left hand chases. As the weight shift completes, the right hand stays horizontal and the left hand catches the right, palms together locked at right angles to each other into a press.

**Push.**

Weight shifts back. Torso stays facing east. Hands unlock as they draw back, palms facing down, fingers lightly cupped as if holding the top of the small soap bubble. As the weight shifts to the back foot, the forward foot returns to the heel down, toe up position. The hands roll down around the bubble, going from the top of the bubble to being low on the bubble facing straight ahead, still. Weight then shifts back to the forward foot and the hands push slightly upward uprooting the center of the unseen opponent.

**9. Single Whip.**

First, shift the weight back to the trailing foot, palms facing down. To turn 180 degrees to face due west, first the lead foot turns to anticipate its position as the trailing foot when the turn is complete, facing 45 to the right for the west facing direction. This puts the right foot into a reverse “T” stance relative to the front foot and the torso, with the palms still facing down and the arms still extended, reaches at this point, due north. After the right foot reaches the 45, shift the weight onto the right foot, extend the right arm, forming a bird’s beak with the fingers while gathering the left arm horizontally in front of the torso and the left foot going to an empty step, toe down. Step due west with the left foot, heel first, and keep the right arm extended in the birds beak. The left arm maintains its position relative to the torso as the torso turns toward the west. At the last possible moment, as the torso turn completes and the weight shifts to the forward foot, the left hand flips over, palm facing west.

**10. Cloud Hands – aka Wave Hands Like Clouds.**

Shift the weight to the trailing foot. Simultaneously launch the first wave with the right hand, while turning the left foot to be due North. Focus of attention stays on the waving hand. At the same time, the left hand returns to a “your dance space” position. As the right hand waves down to waist level, transfer attention to the left hand as it rises. Torso turns to the left, right hand rides the waves at waist level, left hand is at face height. Weight shifts from the right to the left, with the right heel rising as the weight is removed. As the left hand waves, it draws the right foot in to step, to first next to the left, the right hand rises in front of the face and the torso turns to the right and the left hand rides the waves. We do three sets of these – counting each step of the left foot.

**11. Single Whip.**

After the third step of the left foot and completion of the cloud hand, pivot the right foot to a 45 heading west and repeat the Single Whip as in step 9, above.

**12. High Pat on the Horse.**

Simultaneously draw the left foot back into an empty step, toe down, while raising both hands to simulate patting the shoulder of a large draft horse.

**13. Circle block, Right Foot, Toe-Down Kick.**

Both arms follow an outward circle to waist level, and then rise to the carry tiger to mountain position, crossing at a point between the eyes. At the same time, the left foot steps in place, heel first. The motion of bringing the arms up draws the right leg up to a chambered position, thigh parallel to the floor, toe pointed down. The arms split, the right arm extending out over the

raised thigh, the left arm yielding by the left temple and torso turning to 45 left as the right foot kicks upward, toe down due west.

#### **14. Box Opponent's Ears.**

Following the kick, the right leg returns to the chambered position, thigh parallel, foot toe-down. At the same time, both hands draw back to soft tai chi fists, chambered at waist height. Step forward with the right foot and bring both fists together on the ears of the unseen opponent directly in front to the west.

# QiQong

## **Emitting Chi:**

This is as simple as it gets.

Stand in the horse stance. Hands facing each other, but not touching in front of dantien. The left hand stays stationary. On the inhale, the right hand floats away from the right hand, maybe a foot to a foot and a half away. On the exhale, the right hand returns to face the left hand, but again, not touching. As you repeat, feel the energy between your hands. It may help to visualize that the air is a thick, viscous liquid that your hand is moving through. At first, this may seem like the dumbest thing you ever spent time doing. With practice, you will begin to feel the energy. At first the sensation is similar to the resistance you feel when pushing the same pole of two magnets together. Eventually, the feeling is much more substantial, like pressing on a balloon that is expanding and contracting with your breath.

## **Swimming Dragon:**

Start with feet together, with hands on dantien (about 3“ below navel).

Bring hands to prayer position (hands remain pressed together throughout the exercise).

Tuck head between arms as the arms track a half circle from left to right, arms extended, shoulder high.

As hands reach the end of the circle bring the hands under the chin across the body from right to left.

As the hands pass under the chin to the left, the hips and the gaze go to the right.

The hands then pass across the body at mid-level to the right.

As the hands pass across the body to the right, the hips and the gaze go to the left.

The hands then pass across the body at knee level to the left.

As the hands pass across the body to the left, the hips and the gaze go to the right.

The hands then return across the body to the right at mid-level.

As the hands pass across the body to the right, the hips and the gaze go to the left.

The hands then return across the body to the left under the chin.

While the hands pass across the body to the left, the hips and the gaze go to the right.

As the hands finish the pass to the left, they extend straight up.

As the hands extend straight up, stretch high on tip toe.

Return hands to dantien.

Repeat two additional cycles.

## **Harmonizing the Breath:**

Start with feet shoulder width apart, hands at side, hip height, palms down. Exhale.

Inhale slowly as you:

Sweep arms upward, crossing at eye height, to the sky and back to shoulder height.

Exhale slowly as you:

Continue sweep, hands flipping back and forth, to the six o'clock position.

Inhale slowly as you:

Repeat upward sweep, crossing at eye height to the sky.

Exhale slowly as you:

This time begin exhale at the 12 o'clock position and continue to 6 o'clock.

Inhale slowly as you:

Upward sweep. At the 12 o'clock position, the back of the hands touch.

Exhale slowly as you:

Form bird's beaks with hands, with arms extended forward, bend at the waist and the knees and expel all the old stale air as you bring arms down and sweep high behind you as you bend.

Long inhalation slowly as you:

Reverse direction and return to standing posture as the hands travel upward to head high and back down to shoulder height.

Exhale slowly as you:

Push outward with the hands.

Inhale slowly as you:

Draw the hands toward the face

Exhale slowly as you:

Hands sweep downward to starting position.

Repeat two additional cycles, slowing the pace of breath through each additional cycle.