

White Birch Traditional Martial Arts

Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan: Beginner

Rank Requirements

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TAI CHI CHUAN REQUIREMENTS

Tai Chi Beginner Requirements

| | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| Basics | See below | See below | See below |
| Techniques | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chin Na 1-6 • Applications 1-4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chin Na 1-12 • Applications 1-8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chin Na 1-18 • Applications 1-12 |
| Form | Yang Long Form Section 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yang Long Form Section 1 (Breathing) • Yang Long Form Section 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yang Long Form Section 2 (Breathing) • Yang Long Form Section 3 |
| Sparring | None required | None required | None required |
| Mental Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History / Philosophy • Fundamentals: 1-2 • 2-page paper on YANG'S TEN IMPORTANT POINTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History / Philosophy • Fundamentals: 1-4 • 2-page paper on THE TREATISE ON T'AI CHI CH'UAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History / Philosophy • Fundamentals: 1-6 • 2-Page paper on SONG OF THE THIRTEEN POSTURES |

Beginner Basics:

| Level | Stances | Blocks | Strikes | Kicks | Movement |
|-------|-------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Horse, Bow, Empty | Inner, Slap, Coiling | Heel Palm, Swordhand, Crane Hand | Lotus | Tai Chi Walking, Brush Knee and Push |
| 2 | Back | Hook, X-Block, Rising | Rising Heel Palm | Crescent | Backwards Tai Chi Walk, Monkey Creeps Back |
| 3 | Twist | Double Outward, Double Outward Coiling | Backfist, Long-range hook | Heel Kick, Toe Kick, Side Kick | Wave Hands Like Clouds, Separate Foot |

Beginner Techniques:

Chin Na:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Straight Wrist Grab, Armlock | 12. Double Rear Shoulder Grab, Bridge |
| 2. Straight Wrist Grab, Hammerlock | 13. Double Rear Shoulder Grab, Armbar |
| 3. Diagonal Wrist Grab, Wrist Lock | 14. Anticipate the Choke |
| 4. Diagonal Wrist Grab, Step Under | 15. Two Hand Front Choke, Attack One |
| 5. Double Wrist Grab, Front | 16. Two Hand Front Choke, Attack Both |
| 6. Double Wrist Grab, Rear | 17. Two Hand Rear Choke |
| 7. Raised Hand Grab | 18. Push |
| 8. Inverted Wrist Grab | |
| 9. Shoulder Grab, Side | |
| 10. Shoulder Grab, Front | |
| 11. Double Front Shoulder Grab | |

Applications:

| | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Yield and Strike | 7. Single Whip |
| 2. Parting Wild Horse's Mane | 8. Lift Arm |
| 3. Lu (Roll Back) | 9. White Crane Spreads its Wings |
| 4. An (Push) | 10. Brush Knee and Push |
| 5. Ji (Press) | 11. Pi Pa (Playing the Lute) |
| 6. Grasping Swallow's Tail | 12. Block, Intercept, and Punch |

Beginner Mental Development:

History / Philosophy:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| The name of our style | Yang |
| My Instructor's Name | Robert LaPointe |
| His Instructor's Name | Liu Chao Chi |
| 5 categories that make up a system | Basics, Techniques, Form, Sparring, History and Philosophy |
| Chin Na | "Grab Take" |
| Wu Chi | "Nothingness" |
| Kung Bu | Bow Stance |
| Tai Chi Chuan | "Supreme Ultimate Fist" |
| Yin | Soft, Passive, Retreating Energy |
| Yang | Hard, Aggressive, Active Energy |

Fundamentals:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. Level Height | 4. Ground Up |
| 2. Six Gates Open | 5. Back Straight |
| 3. Continuity | 6. Circularity |

10 Long-Life Exercises

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Exercise One Part One (yī jiǎ) | Arms start at your sides, raise them to the sides until they are overhead. Interlace your fingers, palms facing the ceiling and lower them along your body until your palms point to the floor. Keep your arms straight, raise them to the front and overhead towards the ceiling again. Separate your hands and lower your hands to the sides towards the ground. |
| Exercise One Part Two (yī yǐ) | Interlace your fingers and point your hands towards the ceiling. Keeping your arms straight, move in a clockwise circle, stretching as high as you can and bending at your waist to get as low as you can, make 5 complete circles. Reverse directions for 5 more circles. |
| Two (èr) | Right arm circles clockwise in front of the body until it points to the right. Then the left arm circles clockwise in front of the body behind it. Both arms cross in front of you. Set your right foot out to the side, heel down, toes up. Bend your right arm and bend at the waist to try to touch your toes with your elbow. Your left arm is straight and stretches behind you and up to the ceiling with a crane's beak. Hold the stretch for 5 or 6 seconds. Reverse direction for the other side. |
| Three (sān) | Hands on your knees, bend your left knee and go as low as you can with that base leg, keeping your heel on the floor. Point your right toes to the ceiling. Hold the stretch for 5 or 6 seconds. Move to the other leg to stretch the other side. |
| Four (sì) | Turn to the left so that your right leg is behind you. Bend your knees, almost touching your right knee to the floor, and rise again. Do this 10 times. Turn and repeat on the other side. |
| Five Part One (wǔ jiǎ) | Legs are wide apart. Slide your right arm down your right leg until it touches the floor, bending at the waist. Make an arc with your right hand, skimming the floor until you get to your left foot. Return with an arc back to your right foot, rise up bringing your hand up your leg. Switch to the other side repeatedly. |
| Five Part Two (wǔ yǐ) | Legs are wide apart, hands are on your hips. Bend backwards as far as you can and hold for 5 or 6 seconds. Bend forwards and hold for 5 or 6 seconds. |
| Five Part Three (wǔ bǐng) | Legs are wide apart. Your right hand grabs your left ankle, pulling your chest to your knee. Hold for 5 or 6 seconds, then switch sides. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Six (liù) | Feet are together, hands gently on your knees. Make a clockwise circle 5 times with your knees, then counter-clockwise 5 times. Put the ball of your foot on the floor and circle your ankle 5 times each direction. |
| Seven Part One (qī jiǎ) | Right leg is back, right hand points to the front, arm straight, hand in a fist. Circle your arm forward 10 times and then backwards 10 times. Switch feet and arms and repeat. |
| Seven Part Two (qī yǐ) | Feet are shoulder width apart. Circle both arms forward 3 times, then bend forward and extend your arms behind you towards the ceiling, both hands in a crane's beak. Hold for 5 or 6 seconds. Circle both arms backwards 3 times and bend backwards with your arms overhead, with fists. |
| Eight (bā) | Both arms are extended to the left side, standing in a left-bow stance. Circle both arms down in a big circle until they're back where they started. Bring your left fist to your hip. Arc your right swordhand across in front of you as you turn to face the other direction in a block, then put your right fist on your hip. Strike towards the right with your left swordhand, then your right swordhand, ending with both arms extended. Switch directions to move to the other side. |
| Nine (jiǔ) | Feet are shoulder width apart, hands are on your hips. Bend backwards and hold for 5 or 6 seconds. Circle both arms overhead, crossing your arms in front of your body. Bend forward with crossed arms and push your elbows towards the floor. |
| Ten (shí) | Sit down in an invisible chair, the tops of your thighs are parallel with the floor, hands are on the opposite knees. Bow your head forward and circle it towards your left shoulder, then back, right shoulder, front and finally left shoulder again. Look back over your shoulder to stretch. Change directions. |

YANG'S TEN IMPORTANT POINTS

**(a) by Yang Cheng-fu (1883 - 1936)
as researched by Lee N. Scheele**

1.) Head upright to let the *shen* [spirit of vitality] rise to the top of the head. Don't use *li* [external strength], or the neck will be stiff and the *ch'i* [vital life energy] and blood cannot flow through. It is necessary to have a natural and lively feeling. If the spirit cannot reach the headtop, it cannot raise.

2.) Sink the chest and pluck up the back. The chest is depressed naturally inward so that the *ch'i* can sink to the *tan-t'ien* [field of elixir]. Don't expand the chest: the *ch'i* gets stuck there and the body becomes top-heavy. The heel will be too light and can be uprooted. Pluck up the back and the *ch'i* sticks to the back; depress the chest and you can pluck up the back. Then you can discharge force through the spine. You will be a peerless boxer.

3.) *Sung* [Relax] the waist. The waist is the commander of the whole body. If you can *sung* the waist, then the two legs will have power and the lower part will be firm and stable. Substantial and insubstantial change, and this is based on the turning of the waist. It is said "the source of the postures lies in the waist. If you cannot get power, seek the defect in the legs and waist."

4.) Differentiate between insubstantial and substantial. This is the first principle in T'ai Chi Ch'uan. If the weight of the whole body is resting on the right leg, then the right leg is substantial and the left leg is insubstantial, and vice versa. When you can separate substantial and insubstantial, you can turn lightly without using strength. If you cannot separate, the step is heavy and slow. The stance is not firm and can be easily thrown off balance.

5.) Sink the shoulders and drop the elbows. The shoulders will be completely relaxed and open. If you cannot relax and sink, the two shoulders will be raised up and tense. The *ch'i* will follow them up and the whole body cannot get power. "Sink the elbows" means the elbows go down and relax. If the elbows raise, the shoulders are not able to sink and you cannot discharge power far. The discharge will then be close to the broken force of the external schools.

6.) Use the mind instead of force. The T'ai Chi Ch'uan *Classics* say, "all of this means use *I* [mind-intent] and not *li*." In practicing T'ai Chi Ch'uan the whole body relaxes. Don't let one ounce of force remain in the blood vessels, bones, and ligaments to tie yourself up. Then you can be agile and able to change. You will be able to turn freely and easily. Doubting this, how can you increase your power?

The body has meridians like the ground has ditches and trenches. If not obstructed the water can flow. If the meridian is not closed, the *ch'i* goes through. If the whole body has hard force and it fills up the meridians, the *ch'i* and the blood stop and the turning is not

smooth and agile. Just pull one hair and the whole body is off-balance. If you use *I*, and not *li*, then the *I* goes to a place in the body and the *ch'i* follows it. The *ch'i* and the blood circulate. If you do this every day and never stop, after a long time you will have *nei chin* [real internal strength]. The T'ai Chi Ch'uan *Classics* say, "when you are extremely soft, you become extremely hard and strong." Someone who has extremely good T'ai Chi Ch'uan *kung fu* has arms like iron wrapped with cotton and the weight is very heavy. As for the external schools, when they use *li*, they reveal *li*. When they don't use *li*, they are too light and floating. Their *chin* is external and locked together. The *li* of the external schools is easily led and moved, and not too to be esteemed.

7.) Coordinate the upper and lower parts of the body. The T'ai Chi Ch'uan *Classics* say "the motion should be rooted in the feet, released through the legs, controlled by the waist and manifested through the fingers." Everything acts simultaneously. When the hand, waist and foot move together, the eyes follow. If one part doesn't follow, the whole body is disordered.

8.) Harmonize the internal and external. In the practice of T'ai Chi Ch'uan the main thing is the spirit. Therefore it is said "the spirit is the commander and the body is subordinate." If you can raise the spirit, then the movements will naturally be agile. The postures are not beyond insubstantial and substantial, opening and closing. That which is called open means not only the hands and feet are open, but the mind is also open. That which is called closed means not only the hands and feet are closed, but the mind is also closed. When you can make the inside and outside become one, then it becomes complete.

9.) Move with continuity. As to the external schools, their *chin* is the Latter Heaven brute *chin*. Therefore it is finite. There are connections and breaks. During the breaks the old force is exhausted and the new force has not yet been born. At these moments it is very easy for others to take advantage. T'ai Chi Ch'uan uses *I* and not *li*. From beginning to end it is continuous and not broken. It is circular and again resumes. It revolves and has no limits. The original *Classics* say it is "like a great river rolling on unceasingly." and that the circulation of the *chin* is "drawing silk from a cocoon " They all talk about being connected together.

10.) Move with tranquility [Seek stillness in movement]. The external schools assume jumping about is good and they use all their energy. That is why after practice everyone pants. T'ai Chi Ch'uan uses stillness to control movement. Although one moves, there is also stillness. Therefore in practicing the form, slower is better. If it is slow, the inhalation and exhalation are long and deep and the *ch'i* sinks to the *tan-t'ien*. Naturally there is no injurious practice such as engorgement of the blood vessels. The learner should be careful to comprehend it. Then you will get the real meaning.

THE TREATISE ON T'AI CHI CH'UAN

**(b) Attributed to Wang Tsung-yueh [Wang Zongyue] (18th Century)
as researched by Lee N. Scheele**

T'ai Chi [Supreme Ultimate] comes from *Wu Chi* [Formless Void]
and is the mother of *yin* and *yang*.
In motion *T'ai Chi* separates;
in stillness *yin* and *yang* fuse and return to *Wu Chi*.

It is not excessive or deficient;
it follows a bending, adheres to an extension.

When the opponent is hard and I am soft,
it is called *tsou* [yielding].

When I follow the opponent and he becomes backed up,
it is called *nian* [sticking].

If the opponent's movement is quick,
then quickly respond;
if his movement is slow,
then follow slowly.

Although there are innumerable variations,
the principles that pervades them remain the same.

From familiarity with the correct touch,
one gradually comprehends *chin* [intrinsic strength];
from the comprehension of *chin* one can reach wisdom.

Without long practice
one cannot suddenly understand *T'ai Chi*.

Effortlessly the *chin* reaches the headtop.

Let the *ch'i* [vital life energy] sink to the *tan-t'ien* [field of elixir].

Don't lean in any direction;
suddenly appear,
suddenly disappear.

Empty the left wherever a pressure appears,
and similarly the right.

If the opponent raises up, I seem taller;
if he sinks down, then I seem lower;
advancing, he finds the distance seems incredibly long;
retreating, the distance seems exasperatingly short.

A feather cannot be placed,
and a fly cannot alight
on any part of the body.

The opponent does not know me;
I alone know him.

To become a peerless boxer results from this.

There are many boxing arts.

Although they use different forms,
for the most part they don't go beyond
the strong dominating the weak,
and the slow resigning to the swift.

The strong defeating the weak
and the slow hands ceding to the swift hands
are all the results of natural abilities
and not of well-trained techniques.

From the sentence "A force of four ounces deflects a thousand pounds"
we know that the technique is not accomplished with strength.

The spectacle of an old person defeating a group of young people,
how can it be due to swiftness?

Stand like a perfectly balanced scale and
move like a turning wheel.

Sinking to one side allows movement to flow;
being double-weighted is sluggish.

Anyone who has spent years of practice and still cannot neutralize,
and is always controlled by his opponent,
has not apprehended the fault of double-weightedness.

To avoid this fault one must distinguish yin from yang.

To adhere means to yield.
To yield means to adhere.

Within *yin* there is *yang*.
Within *yang* there is *yin*.

Yin and *yang* mutually aid and change each other.

Understanding this you can say you understand *chin*.
After you understand *chin*,
the more you practice,
the more skill.

Silently treasure knowledge and turn it over in the mind.
Gradually you can do as you like.

Fundamentally, it is giving up yourself to follow others.
Most people mistakenly give up the near to seek the far.
It is said, "Missing it by a little will lead many miles astray."

The practitioner must carefully study.

This is the Treatise

SONG OF THE THIRTEEN POSTURES

**(c) by Unknown Author
as researched by Lee N. Scheele**

The Thirteen Postures should not be taken lightly;
the source of the postures is in the waist.

Be mindful of the interchange between insubstantial and substantial;
The *ch'i* circulates throughout the body without hindrance.

Be still,
when attacked by the opponent,
be tranquil and move in stillness;
changes caused by my opponent fill him with wonder.

Study the function of each posture carefully and with deliberation;
to achieve the goal is very easy.

Pay attention to the waist at all times;
completely relax the abdomen
and the *ch'i* rises up.

When the tailbone is centered and straight,
the *shen* [spirit of vitality] goes through to the headtop.

To make the whole body light and agile
suspend the headtop.

Carefully study.

Extension and contraction, opening and closing, should be natural.

To enter the door and be shown the way,
you must be orally taught.
Practice should be uninterrupted,
and technique achieved by self study.

Speaking of the body and its function, what is the standard?

The *I* [mind-intent] and *ch'i* are king,
and the bones and muscles are the court.

Think over carefully what the final purpose is:
to lengthen life and maintain youth.

The Song consists of 140 characters;
each character is true and the meaning is complete.

If you do not study in this manner,
then you will waste your time and sigh with regret.