



TAI CHI

Some of the underlying principles of movement in TAI CHI are outlined below. An understanding of these will assist in the learning of the various TAI CHI movements.

Rise & Sink

The upward and downward movements have 3 basic aspects - the legs, spine and ribs.

The rise and sink through the legs is used in daily life so this is in general very easy to comprehend and apply. The requirement for the spine to lengthen - creating a rising power - requires internal focus and a relaxation of various outer muscle layers to directly manipulate the spinal muscles themselves. Finally the ribcage expansion's upward aspect is utilised as the third rising power.

Thus the combination of the legs, spine and ribs can create upwards and downwards movement power in the practice of TAI CHI

Left & Right

The turning of the Lower DanTian at Acupuncture point QiHai - located just below the navel - is the driving force behind left and right movements. As the body is turned from this central point the spine can be rotated like a vertical axle moving the ribcage and upper body as well as rotating downwards through the leg joints. This method of left and right movement via rotation of QiHai allows a smooth rotation of the vertebrae and keeps the centre of gravity lower than turning from the chest.

Forwards & Backwards

The use of a variety of stances and leg work allow the TAI CHI movements to advance forwards or retreat backwards. In the stationary TAI CHI posture the body can be propelled forwards or backwards just by pressing the sole of one foot against the floor. Thus to move backwards you press the sole of the front foot against the floor and the opposite propels the body forward.

The arms can also acquire a forward and backward movement power from this aspect of the ribcage expansion. The rib cage expansion has a 3 dimensional movement power however this can be utilised in both the forward and backward aspect as well as the upward and downward aspect of movement power.

Footwork

In order to adjust the feet in TAI CHI movements the body weight is transferred to the hip and leg NOT being adjusted. Once the body weight has been adjusted the hip, leg and foot that requires adjustment is no longer weight bearing and can be placed effortlessly. Following accurate foot placement the body weight can be readjusted to either the centre or where required for that particular TAI CHI movement.

