



Khor Tai Chi Movement Set — Levels 1-3

The Academy's Khor tai chi set is a series of *postures* and joining *movements* based on the Yang tai chi martial art tradition. While similar postures and movements (usually performed much faster and with considerable force) can be found in most of the martial arts, tai chi emphasises an internal focus, which encourages inner calm, balance and smoothness of movement.

In a very real sense there is no 'right' or 'wrong' to tai chi, only individual 'improvement' as we work on coordination, balance and breathing as much as form.

We all perform the set slightly differently each time we do it... as we gain experience (skill and relaxation) and concentrate on different aspects (breathing, form, balance, posture, internal focus, etc.) or are influenced by the locale and other external events.

Tai chi is all about focussing on what we are doing, rather than what's happening around us. It's being relaxed, and a good tai chi experience brings pleasure from a relaxed and enjoyable 'moving meditation'.

These notes provide an outline of the first three levels of the tai chi set. Along with my videotapes they will hopefully inspire you to continue with tai chi beyond our 60s & Better classes. I know from experience that exercise is very easy 'not to do', but is also very important to our health.

Relax and enjoy,

Lynn Zelmer, Special Needs Instructor

Movement Tips

All tai chi movements begin in a relaxed position, breath even and deep, knees slightly bent. Breathe through the nose, with the tongue resting on the roof of the mouth and breathe out fully, rather than trying to take in a big breath.

In the *bow stance* the feet are almost shoulder width apart but one is ahead of the other; weight is balanced, and the back foot is positioned at roughly 45° to provide maximum balance.

An *empty stance* is similar to the bow stance, except that most of the weight is on one foot and the feet are closer together in preparation for a kick.

Chinese tradition locates the body's store of energy in the *tun tien*—the lower abdomen (behind and below the belly button).

The *zen* position has the feet parallel and shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent and weight balanced, with the hands on the *tun tien*. We often take this position for warm-ups and quiet meditation.

Many tai chi movements work much better if you *sink* into them by bending your knees and relaxing. This lowers your centre of gravity and enhances balance.

Finally, your balance is enhanced if you maintain an upright body posture—imagine yourself as a puppet hanging from a string attached to the top of your head!

The illustrations here are only a guide to the form—I'm learning and improving my form too.

Level 1

Preparation, separate feet

Start relaxed, feet together, knees slightly bent and back straight, head upright. Several deep breaths (from the bottom of the *tun tien*) help to relax.

Commencement, raise and lower arms



Holding the Ball, on right



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Grasping the Bird's Tail, in left bow stance



Pull Back, in right bow stance



Single Whip, in left bow stance



Holding the Ball, on left



Press, in right bow stance



Concentrate on palm of hand, weight shifts for feet to rotate.



Ward Off, in right bow stance



Push, in right bow stance



Finish with hook and block



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Play Guitar, in left empty stance



Brushing knee, in left bow stance



Slant flying, in left bow stance



Level 2

Shoulder stroke, with right shoulder



Play guitar, in right empty stance



**Forward deflection, with right fist
Kick and thrust, with right heel**



White crane spreads its wings, in right empty stance



Block back, in right empty stance



**Parry, with left hand
Punch, right fist in left bow stance**



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Close the door, in left bow stance



Cross hands, central stance

Level 3

Embrace the tiger, in right bow stance

Slash out as you turn and block

Needle at sea bottom, in left empty stance



Fan to back, in right bow stance



Snake creeps down, left crouch stance



Seven star punch, in right empty stance



The Jade Lady seems complex... but it's simply a series of four 'hold the ball and block/push'. Start with your weight back in the Seven Star Punch; and remember left toe into right instep as you turn.

Jade lady shuttles to four corners, hold ball and turn



Punch under the elbow, in right empty stance



Close, feet together

We always use the standard close to return to the starting position and indicate the set's completion.

Practice

Although each movement flows into the next, it helps to pause (relax and sink) momentarily at the end of each posture/movement.

- Maintain an upright stance
- Coordinate balance, breathing and weight transfer, aiming for a smooth flow of movement
- Don't push beyond your balance or strength/energy limits—use tai chi to relax, not as 'punishment'.