

Chinese Yoga Staff

In selecting this form we were looking for a staff routine that avoided the excessively martial aspects of many staff forms.

Normally tai chi and similar activities, aside from the warm-ups, emphasise *extending without over stretching*. Yoga postures, on the other hand, *move into a stretch and hold* it for a period of time.

In this *Chinese Yoga Staff* form the emphasis is 95% on relaxation through movement, with stretches normally held for 3 seconds, and is about breathing even more than the movement.

The DVD illustrations show a short staff. With minor modifications the form can be done with anything from a walking stick to a normal (eye brow height) tai chi staff.

Do a number of stretching and staff warm-up exercises before beginning the form. Work with the breath and maintain a smooth relaxed movement.

Work with your breath, breathing in while lifting, breathing out when lowering or relaxing—*let your breath move you*—and always relax into the stretches!

The Queensland Weapons Act does not seem to categorise a staff as a weapon in the same way as a sword. However you should take care that your carrying or use of a staff does not appear threatening to others.

These illustrations have been taken from the instructional DVD: **Chinese Yoga with Staff** by Grandmaster Shifu Jiang Jian-ye. In 2015-16 the DVD was available through the American Tai Chi Magazine (tai-chi.com), SKU#7673, US\$49.99 plus shipping, but the magazine now appears to be defunct.

1 Yin-Yang in One



Start half pace back from staff with feet together. Step up to staff with tai chi salute, relax, feet together, hands at side.



Left arm sweeps out and up to circle in front of face and down to dan tien. Repeat on right side.



Step left foot out to horse-riding stance while extending both arms out to side and up above the head (wild goose). Whole body relax as arms come down, to side.

(Read columns down)



Lean forward to grasp staff, legs straight.

2 Getting Qi from Four Directions



Raise staff over head, arms straight, eyes look at staff, stretch whole body.



Lower staff to chest level, bend knees at same time.

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(Read columns down)



Push staff up, look down, push arms, fingers tight, stretch neck.

Lower staff to chest level, bend knees at same time.



Straighten legs, push staff down, torso lean forward, legs straight.



Pull back staff, straight legs, arms straight overhead, look up.



Drop down staff, knees bend same time.



Shift, step right foot out, push staff to left side, stretch arms and torso.



Center staff overhead, arms straight, shift, step right foot in, drop staff to chest level, knees bend same time.

Repeat right side, ending staff overhead, step left foot in (horse riding stance), drop staff to chest level.

3 Dragon & Phoenix flying & dancing



Turn right and swing staff around with end tucked under left arm, step right foot in and continue circling down and to left.



Step left foot out (wide horse riding stance) and circle second time.



Complete second circle with turn to 90° and extend arms.

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(Read columns down)



Keep arms extended and transfer weight back to full stretch as far back as possible.



Left bend to upright position, circle staff through and up to repeat stretch on left side with staff under right arm.



Circle staff under right arm, step left foot in and repeat circles to stretch on right side.

4 Rainbow dancing and shadow moving

Key to posture: arms straight.



Circle staff under left arm for one complete circle to overhand stretch right side.



5 Embracing the moon

Key to posture: arms straight.



Circle staff through one complete vertical circle with straight arms, eyes look at staff.



Move balance left.



Right leg up and full body stretch.



Circle staff right to full vertical circle and repeat other side.

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(Read columns down)



Drop down staff to center at waist level.

6 Blue Dragon turning head back

Key to posture: arms straight.



Both hands up to shoulder level.



Turn body left with staff at shoulder height, opening left fingers as turn progresses.



Left fingers open and stretch back along staff with torso stretch.

Re-grip staff on return to front, repeat other side, arms straight, maintain staff at shoulder height.



Turn left again, this time stretch further as open left fingers and stretch torso, maintain staff level.

Repeat other side, then return to front and lower staff to waist, still with arms straight.



Full body relax.

7 Phoenix spreading wings



Push staff up while stretching left toe (heel up).



Drop down staff, full body relax.



Push up staff, stretch right toe (heel up). Drop down staff, right heel same time, full body relax.

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(Read columns down)

8 Double swallows gently brush butterfly



Step left to left bow stance.



Torso forward, left toe up, staff reach as far as you can.



Body forward and up to full body stretch, look at staff and arch back.



Weight forward and up.



Stretch full body, look at staff.



Sweep up with staff, under left hand and arm, circle down.



Drop down staff as low to left toe as you can.



Forward, keep staff flat, circle staff left and up.

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(Read columns down)



Continue circling, left foot in, staff down and full body relax.
Step right foot out and repeat right side.



Bend to place staff on ground and return to upright stance.

9 Colored butterflies dancing in the air

Key to posture: arms straight.



Circle arms back and up to shoulder height raising heels, then drop arms and heels, lean forward and repeat three cycles.

End body upright, knees slightly bent, full body relax.

10 Qi sinking to dan tien



Palm touch palm, touch dan tien, make three circle, knees slightly bent.

Then drop down arms, left foot in and return to upright stance, full body relaxed.

Step back and tai chi salute to close.

Notes: