

TAI CHI SHORT HAND FORM

CLASSICAL YANG STYLE

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During my 17 years learning of tai chi with Tony I have developed the following notes, both to help myself and hopefully others to be able to carry out further and more useful practice at home. Basically, in my view there are two big obstacles to overcome:

1. Learning the sequence of moves. Take it a little at a time and use my notes below to help you to practise at home all that has been covered in your lessons. Like riding a bike, it really does eventually just happen by itself. I have tried to outline all the moves below. You may find it easier to have someone read them to you as you do it.
2. Practise turning at the waist and empty stepping. Your tai chi will not look right and will be more difficult to perform until you crack this one. So, you do need to do a combination of these two as you progress through the form. The exercise that I have found most useful follows:

Suggested Exercise:

Part 1

- Stand upright with both feet spaced at shoulder width.
- Sink your weight into your left leg. Note that your weight must remain in that leg throughout this part of this exercise.
- Now drag the other foot in to touch the foot of your left leg with your toe just touching the ground. This is called the '*post position*'.
- Step the empty foot forward a short distance and touch the ground with the heel. This is called '*empty stepping*' as no weight goes into it. Then return the foot to '*post position*'.
- Now, keeping upright turn your waist 45° into the '*right diagonal*'. This is called '*turning on the pole*'.
- Step the empty foot sideways to shoulder width and touch the ground with the toe then return the foot to '*post position*'.
- Repeat the whole thing a few times then change legs and repeat the exercise by turning to the '*left diagonal*'.

Part 2

- Now repeat the same as before but this time after each '*empty step*' you then exchange the weight from one leg into the empty one. The first step forward should be easy but try not to sway sideways when shifting your weight. The second step requires an extra turn of the waste back to the original forward direction as you sink your weight into it. The trick is to do this by '*turning on the pole*' - without swaying sideways. You have now actually stepped backwards without realising it.

Common rules:

- All movement must be instigated by a turn of the waist.
- Leg movement is instigated by turning the hips whilst remaining upright on a pole down the centre of the body and sinking into one leg so that the other leg becomes empty and can therefore be picked up.
- All steps forward are heel then toe. All steps sideways are toe then heel. There are no steps backwards as you must turn your waist first so they become steps sideways, although the result is a step backwards.
- Arm movement is usually from the wrist and elbows with the shoulders and upper arm remaining fixed in position and relaxed. Wrist and arm movements are driven by and therefore at the same time as turning the waist.
- When hands are held in front of the body they must always be in line with the centre of the body and move up or down this centre line.
- When hands are held to the sides of the body they must never go behind the body.

Key:

- N, S, E, W, NE, etc. = compass directions to indicate final position of each move; CW/ACW = clockwise/anticlockwise. You might find editing this document to use clock-face positions in place of compass directions more to your liking.
- Blue text denotes moves that are repeated throughout the form.

These notes are kept brief and may not be entirely accurate. They are intended as a memory aid to help you to practise what is covered in more detail in your lessons.

1. **Attention (Wu Chi) Posture** - Stand to attention facing forward (N), body relaxed, knees slightly bent, shoulders dropped, arms hanging loose at side of body 'holding golden apples under armpits' and palms towards body, head suspended, tongue on roof of mouth, pole down centre of body, weight in balls of feet.
2. **Preparation** - Sink down into right hip and step out sideways, toe then heel to left (W). Feet must be at shoulder width and body facing forward (N). Turn waist to right-diagonal (NE) and both wrists finishing palms upwards. Turn to face forward again (N) while rotating both hands at wrist to finish with fingers pointing down, palms facing behind you.
3. **Beginning** – By movement from the elbows only, raise both hands to shoulder height with fingers pointing down, draw them in towards you slightly and then lower them back down with fingers up. Finish by dropping fingers down at previous forward position. Most of the movement being at wrists and elbows, shoulders remaining stationary and relaxed.

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4. **Ward-Off Left** - Turn waist to right-diagonal (NE) raising right arm to shoulder height (holding a wine glass) and left hand moves to protect groin. Sink completely into right leg cupping left hand under at waste height (holding a large beach ball) and pull left foot in to right foot with toe touching the floor (post position). Turn slightly and step left leg out empty and on heel in front of forward position (N). Continue turning back to the original forward position (N), sinking forward into left foot while raising left hand up the centre line of the body and right hand dropping down the centre line of the body to protect groin (ward-off left - photo 1).
 5. **Ward-Off Right** – Sink fully into left leg and turn to right-diagonal (NE) with hands turning to hold beach ball as before. Step right leg out empty and on heel to E. Turn, sinking into right leg, and raising left hand to point to palm of right hand at shoulder height and in line with the centre of your body. You are now facing at 90° to where you started (E) with weight in your right leg.
 6. **Rollback** - Yield to right by sinking more into right hip and right hand turning up (to grasp sparrows tail). Sink weight back totally into left leg while turning to the left-diagonal (NE). At the same time your left hand drops slightly (as if pulling someone by the wrist) and your right arm spirals and rolls up high (as if rolling up an opponent's arm). Both hands must move and remain in line with your centre. Left hand finishes in line with right elbow.
 7. **Press** – Keeping your weight in your left leg, turn waist back to (E) raising and swivelling left hand over the top of your lowering right hand to end with palms crossed on your centre line at shoulder height. Sink forward (E) into your right leg to press. Do not extend your arms.
 8. **Split** - Sink back into left leg opening both hands out to shoulder width.
 9. **Push** - Sink forward into right leg with palms facing forward to push. Do not extend your arms.
 10. **Single Whip** - Sink back into left leg lowering both hands from shoulder to chest height. Turn your waist again to left-diagonal (NE) dragging your right foot around with you in the same direction and a bit further if you can. At the same time your left hand lowers to waist height and turns palm upwards and your right hand drops at the wrist to form a whip immediately above it, both hands moving inwards to your centre line. All your weight should now be in your left leg. Turn your waist N sinking fully back into your right leg, left hand forms ward-off left in front of you, right arm is flung out to E at shoulder height. Sink further into right leg, pulling left leg into post position while turning to face W. Step out left leg to W, turn left hand over for push and shift weight forward into left leg, as right foot adjusts to point NW. This one move has turned you completely around, a full 180°.



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11. **Lifting Hands** – Turning to the right diagonal (NW) open both hands at shoulder height ‘to accept gifts’. Lift right foot and place down on heel. Turn N while left hand drops down centre to be level with right elbow. Imagine you have a wrist gripped in your left hand and an elbow in your right hand.
 12. **Shoulder Stroke** - Turn NW lowering both hands together as if pulling your attacker down in front of you. Turn N lowering right hand to protect groin and shift weight into right leg to nudge your attacker away.
 13. **White Crane Spreads Wings** – Sinking further into right leg, turn NW raising right hand to form ward-off right and left leg drawn in to post position. Continue turning to W raising right hand to forehead height and lowering left hand to brush left hip, both hands swivelling to face palms outwards (photo 2). Yield to left diagonal raising left hand towards right elbow. Turn to forward position (W) while sweeping left hand up right fore-arm. Turn to right diagonal (NW) lowering right hand to shoulder height and raising left to perform a rollback.
 14. **Brush Left Knee and Push** – Empty step left leg forward to W, left hand lowers to brush left knee and right hand goes into push position as weight shifts forward into left leg (photo 3).
 15. **Play Guitar** – Turn to right diagonal (NW) with a slight step up with right leg, left hand raises to grab elbow (with palm up) and right hand to grab a wrist (with palm outwards). Sink back into right leg turning back to face W with both hands turning to ‘play guitar’ in line with pole and left foot remains forward on heel. Yield to right.
 16. **Brush Left Knee and Push** – (See 14 above + photo 3.)
 17. **Step Forward, Deflect Downwards, Intercept, Parry and Punch** – Drop weight back into right leg dropping right hand forming a fist and turning to left diagonal (SW). Shift weight forward into left leg raising both arms and pulling right knee up high. Turn right 90° and step down to NW with right fist shielded by left hand. Sink into right leg dragging left leg into post position. Turn and step left leg forward to W punching forward under left hand as weight sinks forward into left leg.
 18. **Withdraw and Push** – Cup right elbow and slide hand up forearm whilst sinking weight back into right leg. With both hands now in push position sink weight forward into left leg.
 19. **Crossing Hands** – Turning to right diagonal (NW), sink into right leg, and raise right arm to chin height. Continue turn to N, sinking into left leg, and raising left hand to chin height. Turn to right diagonal (NE) stepping right foot sideways to E and sweeping both hands out and down. Turn back to face N sweeping both hands up to cross hands at chest height.
 20. **Embrace Tiger and Return to Mountain** – sink into left leg dropping left arm slightly. Step around heel then toe a full 135° to SE, pushing with left hand while right hand turns to face palm out then in to finish as ward-off right.



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21. **Rollback** to E (See 6-9 above but all compass points now 45° further clockwise.)
 22. **Press** to NE
 23. **Split**
 24. **Push**
 25. **Diagonal Single Whip** to NE and finishing NW

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26. **Punch Under Elbow** – Sink back into right leg, turning, and adjusting left foot to face W. Turn NW opening left hand. Sink into left leg, step right foot to W and swing right wrist (to hit a head or chin). Sinking into right leg, turn NW, form a ‘bow and arrow’ stance with both arms and drag left foot into post position. Turning W, empty step left foot onto heel and punch with right fist under left elbow (low to kidneys).
 27. **Step Back To Repulse Monkey** (L), (R), (L) – Small yield to right raising right hand, then return to W with both hands level and facing forwards at shoulder height. Turn SW and empty step behind with **left** leg, while lowering hands slightly and positioning as if to grab an opponent’s wrist and elbow. Turn back W, sinking into left leg, turning left hand over (turning opponent’s wrist) and pressing right hand down and forward (on opponent’s elbow to lock arm). Small yield to left. Repeat with the **right** leg then again with the **left**.

28. **Diagonal Flying** – Turn SW scooping right hand down to hold beach ball. Turn and step right foot around CW to finish facing N, raising right hand to throw a Frisbee and lower left hand to brush left hip.
29. **Waving Hands in The Clouds** (L), (R), (L), (R), (L) – Step up with **left** leg to shoulder width raising left hand and lowering right hand. Turn NW, sink into left leg and adjust hands to hold beach ball. Turning N, raise right hand to pass inside as left hand lowers and step up with **right** leg. Turn NE, sink into right leg and adjust hands to hold beach ball. Turning N, raise **left** knee and step out to side W while left hand rises (closest to body) and right hand lowers. Turn NW, sink into left leg and adjust hands again to hold beach ball. Repeat again with **right** leg stepping up and then again with **left** knee stepping out. Finish sinking and holding beach ball to NW.
30. **Single Whip** – Empty step with right leg to N cupping left hand and forming a whip with right hand in front of body. Continue to finish with a push W as in 10 above.
31. **Squatting Single Whip with White Snake Creeps Down** (photo 4) – Turning NW, turn left hand over and forward to W, turn back sinking into right leg keeping left hand open. Turn N moving left arm with body until parallel to right arm. Squat down and turn NW whilst lowering left hand. Turn back N and lower hand further to brush left knee.
32. **Golden Rooster Stands on Left Leg** – Turn W sinking into left leg, as you rise and raise right knee high while right hand swings up from elbow to form a vertical chop above knee at chin height.
33. **Golden Rooster Stands on Right Leg** – Yield to left, then turn NW, and step down and behind with right leg and lower right hand. Turn W sinking into right leg and raise left knee high while left hand swings up from elbow to form a vertical chop above knee at chin height.
34. **Separate Right Foot** – Turn and empty step left leg down to SW. Step into left leg sweeping right hand up to form cross in front of left hand at head height and pulling right leg in to post position. Turn W separating hands, raising knee, and kicking with right foot.
35. **Separate Left Foot** – Yield to left then in a similar way, turn and empty step right leg down to NW. Step into right leg sweeping left hand up to form cross behind right hand at head height and pulling left leg in to post position. Turn W separating hands, raising knee, and kicking with left foot.
36. **Brush Left Knee and Push** – (See 14 above + photo 3.)
37. **Needles at Sea Bottom** - Turn NW with a slight step up with right leg and place left hand over right wrist. Sink back into right leg turning to face W and drag left foot into post position. Bending knees sink down low, lean forward from hip and part hands. Open both hands palm slightly upwards, straighten back first then rise back up by using legs.
38. **Iron Fan Penetrates Back** – Empty step left leg forward to W, turn NW sinking into left leg, left hand forms a chop (to strike a back) and right hand turns palm outwards (to pull on an arm).
39. **Turn Body, Chop and Block Back Fist** – Turn N sinking into right leg, adjusting left foot, and turning left hand to slap high. Right hand forms a fist and swings CW from elbow as you sink into left leg and empty step out with right leg to E. Turning NE then back to E swing right arm CW again and left hand drops to lie above right elbow. Sink forward into right leg turning SE to pull right arm back until left hand passes over right fist.
40. **Step Forward, Deflect Downwards, Intercept, Parry and Punch** – Sinking into left leg turn back E performing an aborted roll back with right fist which then opens. Like 17 above - sink back into left leg dropping right arm with fist. Raise right fist shielded by left hand and pulling right knee up high into post position. Turn and step down to SE. Sink into right leg dragging left leg into post position. Turn and step left leg forward to E punching forward under left hand as weight sinks forward into left leg. Sink and yield to right raising left hand to shoulder height.
41. **Kick with Right Heel** – Turn NE, sinking into left leg, sweeping right hand up to form cross behind left hand at head height and raising right knee high. Turn E separating hands and kicking out straight with heel.
42. **Brush Right Knee and Push** – Yield to left, step down and sink into right leg. Left hand goes into push position and right hand drops to brush right knee.
43. **Brush Left Knee and Punch Downwards** – Yield to right, then sink back into left leg bringing both hands to shoulder height. Turn SE on heel then sink down into right leg, turning hands over to push down and lifting left leg into post position. Turning S sink more into right leg taking gun from holster



with right hand. Turn and step E with left leg, left hand drops to brush left knee and right hand punches down.

44. [Ward-Off Left](#) (See 4-10 above.)

45. [Ward-Off Right](#)

46. [Rollback](#)

47. [Press](#)

48. [Split](#)

49. [Push](#)

50. [Single Whip](#)

51. **Fair Lady Weaves Shuttle** (1), (2), (3), (4) –

(1) Sinking back into right leg turn from W to N, cupping right elbow with left hand and adjusting left foot. Sink back into left leg and short step right leg around to point SE. Sink into right leg pulling left hand up right forearm and left leg steps up to post position as you complete the turn to face SE. Turn and step left leg to NE turning both hands over to push with palms outwards, left hand higher than right hand, as you sink into left leg. Adjust right foot and finish facing NE.

(2) Sink back into right leg cupping left elbow with right hand, turn and adjust left foot to point S. Sink back into left leg and step right leg around to NW, pulling right hand up left forearm. As weight sinks into right leg, turn both hands over to push with palms outwards, right hand higher than left hand. Adjust left foot and finish facing NW.

(3) Sinking back into left leg turn W and cup right elbow with left hand. Short step right leg to W, pulling left hand up right forearm as weight sinks into right leg and left leg steps up to post position. Turn and step left leg to SW turning both hands over to push with palms outwards as you sink into left leg. Adjust right foot and finish facing SW.

(4) Sink back into right leg turn N, cupping left elbow with right hand and adjust left foot. Sink back into left leg and step right leg around to SE, pulling right hand up left forearm. As weight sinks into right leg turn both hands over to push with palms outwards, adjusting left foot and facing SE.

Finally sink into left leg and turn NE adjusting right foot to point NE and adjusting hands to hold beach ball. Sink back into right leg starting to repeat the sequence below.

52. [Ward-Off Left](#) (See 4-10 above.)

53. [Ward-Off Right](#)

54. [Rollback](#)

55. [Press](#)

56. [Split](#)

57. [Push](#)

58. [Single Whip](#)

59. **Squatting Single Whip with White Snake Creeps Down** – (See 31 above + photo 4.)

60. **Step Forward to The Seven Stars** – Turn NW sinking more into right leg and raising left fist high. Turn W sinking into left leg, as you rise up and step forward on right toe while right fist swings down and up to cross behind left fist at head height.

61. **Step Back to Ride Tiger** – Open hands and step back with right leg, left hand lowers to shoulder height and right arm forms a vertical slap with palm facing forwards to W.

62. **Turn Body and Sweep Lotus with Right Leg** – Pull left leg back into post position, turn and empty step left leg to S and place both hands palm down at chest height. Sink back into right leg and turn up to 360° CW to face S or SE, raising left foot in a low swing at ankle height and with both arms following at chest height. Place left foot down pointing S (ideally in the same position where you started), sink back into left leg and turn to face W. Yield to the left, raise right knee high and sweep foot at waist height keeping both arms steady at chest height to finish facing W with right knee still raised.

63. **Bend Bow to Shoot Tiger** – Turn and step right foot down to NW with hands forming fists and press down to waist height. Turn W sinking back into left leg and punch head high with right fist. Sink forward into right leg punching low with left fist and keeping right fist high.
64. **Step Forward, Deflect Downwards, Intercept, Parry and Punch** – (See 17 above.)
65. **Withdraw and Push** – (See 18 above.)
66. **Crossing Hands** – (See 19 above.)
67. **Conclusion** – Sink into left leg, turning NE, and dropping both hands to hug tree with palms turning upwards. Turn N rotating hands at wrist to finish pointing down at sides of body with palms facing S.
68. **Attention (Wu Chi) Posture** – Return to position 1 above.

There are 73 moves to the form but many are repeated.