

T'ai Chi Ch'uan

Some Basic Principles

When we first start out learning Tai Chi we spend a large amount of time learning the mechanics of the movement. This first stage is not Tai Chi. When the movements begin to flow together and the body is relaxed then we have entered the stage where we are beginning to do Tai Chi.

The following principles must be in each movement for the form to be Tai Chi.

- Feet are firmly rooted
- All joints are slightly bent and relaxed open
- Functional and Governor energy channels are connected
- The circle of strength is maintained
- The movement is directed by the waist
- There is no double weighting
- The yin and yang of each movement is observed
- The mind is focused on the Tan Tien

In later stages of learning you will want to incorporate reverse breathing into the form (Chi Kung Tai Chi).

The form at this point should be composed of large movements that are well rounded. Tai Chi is an internal style of martial art and we are trying to learn what the internal aspects feel like by learning the external form. By keeping the form large it will cause us to utilize the waist much more extensively thus aiding in internalizing the form. If you were to watch a master doing Tai Chi you would not see much - the form would be small and not very attractive because all of the form would be occurring inside rather than out. This takes many years of practice to achieve.