



Six basic Tai Chi principles:

1) Slow, continuous movement: Make your movements smooth, controlled and small, maintaining the same speed throughout. The movements of Tai Chi are without interruption. Each movement is a curve or circle, with no beginning or end. GO SMALL – DON'T FALL

2) Gentle resistance: Move as though there is gentle resistance. Imagine that the air around you is dense and that you have to move through it. This will cultivate your inner force. Proper deep breathing is integral to Tai Chi and the gentle resistance principle cultivates long, deep breathes.

3) Weight transference: Be aware of transferring your weight from joint to joint. First, center yourself, controlling your balance and keeping your body aligned. When you move side to side or forwards and backwards, touch down first, then gradually and consciously transfer your weight.

4) Body alignment: Keep your body upright, over center, head up. Be aware of where your body is in space before you start and while moving. Imagine your head is suspended from above by a string. Depress the chest and raise the upper back.

5) Loosening the joints: Do Tai Chi movements in a relaxed manner but not in a way that makes your muscles go limp. Try to consciously and gently stretch all joints from within, like an internal expansion of the joints.

6) Focus: It is crucial that you not let your mind distract you from what you are doing as you go through the Tai Chi movements. Focus on those movements so that your internal and external are well integrated and working together. If you relax the body and focus just on the movements, they will be light and nimble, just as your mind directs. Focus on the serenity of the movements, cleansing your mind of distractions, concentrating on the slowness and evenness of the movements.

Yin and Yang:



In Chinese philosophy, **yin and yang** describes how opposite or contrary forces are actually complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. Many tangible dualities (such as light and dark, fire and water, expanding and contracting) are thought of as physical manifestations of the duality symbolized by yin and yang. Yin and yang can be thought of as complementary (rather than opposing) forces that interact to form a dynamic system in which the whole is greater than the assembled parts.

Everything has both yin and yang aspects, (for instance shadow cannot exist without light). The relationship between yin and yang is often described in terms of sunlight playing over a mountain and a valley. Yin (literally the 'shady place' or 'north slope') is the dark area occluded by the mountain's bulk, while yang (literally the 'sunny place' or 'south slope') is the brightly lit portion. As the sun moves across the sky, yin and yang gradually trade places with each other, revealing what was obscured and obscuring what was revealed.

Yin is characterized as slow, soft, yielding, diffuse, cold, wet, and passive; and is associated with water, earth, the moon, **femininity**, and nighttime.

Yang, by contrast, is fast, hard, solid, focused, hot, dry, and active; and is associated with fire, sky, the sun, **masculinity** and daytime.

Yin and yang applies to the human body. In traditional Chinese medicine good health is directly related to the balance between yin and yang qualities within oneself.