

Principles of HOW to MOVE in T'ai Chi Chih®

By Teacher Trainers Pam Towne & Sandy McAlister

Flowing from the Center / moving from the T'an T'ien

- The entire body moves in synch, as one integral whole.
- Movement originates in the T'an T'ien; as it moves, so does the rest of the body.
- Hands and arms move **with** the weight shift, neither ahead nor behind.

Softness and Continuity / "Softness means letting go." – Justin Stone

- Muscular effort or tension contracts the meridian channels through which the Chi flows, and inhibits the flow of Chi.
- RELAX and move as though swimming through very heavy air, or moving slow motion as in a dream
- The waist and wrists are very relaxed and pliable.
- The hands are softly rounded with fingers open and loosely spread apart (not curled).
- SOFTNESS, NOT floppiness or sloppiness in the wrists.
- Flow in soft, smooth, continuous motion at an even pace.

Yinning and Yanging / shifting the weight correctly

- T'ai Chi Chih is done primarily BELOW the waist.
- It is important to stay at one level while shifting the weight, so sink down and remain at that same level.
- The spine is ALWAYS upright (no leaning!).
- Step out with the feet in a correct position for effortlessly shifting the weight without muscular effort in the legs.
- The heel always touches down first, BEFORE any weight shifts.
- The weight shifts FULLY, in a smooth, gradual manner, from one bent knee to the other.
- The Yang leg (with weight on it) is bent & the Yin leg (empty) is straight.

Focusing in the soles of the feet / grounding

- This gives the mind a place to focus so it can become still.
- It ensures an even flow of Chi throughout the body.
- It grounds us by drawing the Chi downward. Remember, Chi follows thought.
- It brings the Yang (Fire) of the Heart down rather than letting the Yin (Water) of the kidneys rise, which is important in Chinese medicine. This dries up aqueous excess in the body.

Circularity / in T'ai Chi Chih, as in nature, energy flows in circular patterns

Be sure your circles are ROUND & hands are always softly rounded, not flat

Polarity / Yin/Yang energy between the palms when the hands face each other