

太極拳

Tài Jí Quán

*Yang Style,
Long Form*

Quick Reference

Jim Cleaver LAc.

Muddy Bottom Press

Introduction to Tàì Jí Quán

Tai Ji Form in Chinese Characters and Pin-yin – First Section

太 = tài/very/great

極 = jí/pinnacle/pole

拳 = quán/fist

1st Section Characters:

Traditional Characters	Pīn-Yīn (with tone marks)	Translation
無極	wú jí	formlessness: before space & time
太極起勢	tài jí, qǐ shì	differentiation: the great beginning
		scholar points the way
攬雀尾	lǎn què wěi	grasp sparrow's tail
棚	péng	ward off
擡	lǚ	roll back (lit. hands travelling)
擠	jǐ	press
按	àn	push
單鞭	dān biān	single whip
提手上勢	tí shǒu, shàng shì	raise hands, up step (clap tree, bump door)
白鶴亮翅	bái hè liàng chì	white crane spread wings
樓膝拗步	lǒu xī, ǎo bù	brush knee, twist step
手揮琵琶	shǒu huī pí-pá	hands play / handplay/brandish the/a lute play the pi-pa
搬攔捶	bān, lán, chuí	strike, parry, punch
如封似閉	rú fēng, sì bì	as if to seal, appear to close
十字手	shí zì, shǒu	cross the hands

* I found the character for péng under bīng.

* lǚ character is very obscure. I could not find it in any dictionary.

I created it by placing a hand radical 扌 on left side of phonetic lǚ 履 shoes, step / Stepping Carefully (Hex. 10)

Wú-Jí

無極 Wú-Jí in Detail

Phase I Finding Neutral and Aligning

- feet shoulder width apart and parallel
- knees unlocked, release the pelvis and allow low back to flatten (pelvis rolls under)
- spine erect (not stiff or held) all the way to occiput (sense of floating up)
- release occiput, feel suspended from sky (head loose, neck like a spring)
- face relaxed, eyes (open or) closed, but looking inward - ‘ears relaxed & open’
- jaw relaxed, but mouth is closed (lips touch, teeth apart) - breathe through nose
- follow breath in, relax/open throat, allow more air to move through (soundlessly)
- chest soft, but not collapsed (little breath movement) • belly full (more breath movement)
- breathe into abdomen, lower dan-tian & pelvis (allow pelvis to relax and open)
- open hip joints with mind & breath
- follow leg bones down to feet - open joints (knees, ankles, feet) along the way
- check weight distribution (adjust wt. so it is equal ball to heel, knees over K-1)
(wt. more to lateral edge, toes slightly grip the earth, lifting arch & opening Bubbling Spring)
- relax shoulders, let gravity take them down
- turn elbows out, back of the hands forward, (air in the armpits), breathe into your sides
- uncurl fingers so qi gets all the way to fingertips/nails
- focus attention on breathing into lower dan-tian
shift consciousness away from any particular sense of time or place
experience “*no-thing-ness*” that is wu-ji

Phase II Connecting to Earth/Ground/Terra-firma (Yin)

- from dan-tian send qi down to feet, breathe out through your soles (K-1, Bubbling Spring)
- imagine growing roots downward into the earth (deeper & broader with each breath)
- absorb earth energy through your roots (esp. on inhalations)
 - allow it push up through the bottoms of your feet (Bubbling Spring)
 - let the earth energy fill your legs and lower torso (to umbilicus, lower dan-tian)
(feel the strength, power, solidity, & stability of the earth energy in your legs/lower body)

Phase III Connecting to the Sky/Heavens/Cosmic Openness (Yang)

- send qi upward through the center of your torso and out the top of your head (GV-20 Bai Hui)
- growing branches and/or leaves, reaching toward the light, feeling the breeze
- absorb the sky energy and bring it into your body, all the way down to your lower dan-tian
- allow it to fill your torso, then your arms, neck and head, finally spilling over and surrounding your entire body all the way to your feet, where it mingles with the Earth energy and the two begin to circulate together.
- All the movements of the Tai-Ji originate from this primordial interplay & circulation of Yin & Yang, Heaven & Earthly Qi.
(feel the relaxed airiness, lightness, & buoyancy of the celestial qi in your upper body)
- Wu-Ji aligns us with Heaven & Earth and facilitates the flow of qi throughout the body.
- Try to stay connected to both Heaven & Earth throughout the Tai-Ji form/sequence.
(wu-ji teaches you how to stay connected & centered, learn to recognize those feelings)
(practice makes it easier & easier, you get there more quickly and assuredly, and go deeper)

Section I – Quick Reference

1. **wu-ji**
 - a. press toe pads into earth 9x
 - b. connect to & harmonize the 3 realms (Tian-Di-Ren / Sky-Earth-Human)
2. **tai-ji (3x)**
 - a. hands flip over, open wrists & Lao-Gong
 - b. hands level out, qi to fingertips
 - c. hands full – double size
3. **scholar points the way**
4. **gather ball of qi (R) (holding the moon/yue)**
5. **grasp sparrow's tail**
6. **gather ball of qi (L) (holding the sun/ri)**
7. **ward off (peng)**
8. **roll back (lü)**
9. **press (ji)**
10. **sit back**
11. **push (an)**
12. **single whip (dan-bian) (180° turn)**
13. **shift R then L**
14. **arms like wings ‘clap tree’**
15. **lift knee**
16. **bump door into**
17. **white crane (bai he)**
18. **twist L, backhand slap 3x**
19. **turn R to initiate *Brush Knee Series***
20. **brush Left knee (#1)**
21. **balance then extend 100% on L then lay out horizontally and rock back to**
22. **play the pipa (#1)**
23. **brush L knee (#2)**
24. **brush R knee (#1)**
25. **alternate brush L & R knees until done**
26. **brush L knee**
27. **extend & lengthen (hold – touch horizon)**
28. **step up, rock back to play pi-pa (#2)**
29. **brush L knee (final)**
30. **shift weight back & turn slightly left (as if to start another R brush knee)**
31. **shift forward into hoop (big embrace) & fist (R hand)**
32. **release R foot, bring it thru and place heel twist step, double strike**
33. **step through & punch**
34. **release fist like flower opening**
35. **sit back & scrape**
36. **twist back into push**
37. **turn & close**
38. **crossed hands wu-ji**
39. **check feet & arms (hold)**

Section II – Part 1 – Quick Reference

40. shift wt. to R foot, turn L toes toward R heel, **carry tiger back to mountain** (NW)
41. (R foot empty, check heel line) shift weight to R foot & **swing R hand across** to L shoulder
42. **sit back full arm scrape** (push & pull), transition into **roll back** (SW then back to NW)
43. **press – sit back – push** • sit back again (leave hands NW, touch the water's surface)
44. turn left, **petals floating/drift on water/pond** (pivot R toes to S)
45. **great bird extends her wings**, L foot steps out (pivot toes E as shift wt.)
46. bring R foot thru to SE, L foot steps out E (foot flat, no wt.) – **fist under elbow**
47. raise L knee, roll hip and place L toes behind R heel at 7 o'clock, L heel comes down on R heel line at 6 o'clock
48. raise R knee toward elbow, roll hip & place toes at 5 o'clock, pivot front toes to 12 o'clock = **repulse monkey 5-9x**
49. on last monkey, **gaze sweeps N, arms float up** (shoulder level, palms down, E-W line)
50. **R foot sweeps S** (to 5 o'clock position, SW), shift wt. to R & pivot L toes to SE
51. shift back to L foot, gather ball of qi, L foot steps out straight S
52. **diagonal sweep** into **lift-off & take flight** (lift R hand & L foot) (hand points SW, toes NE) hold, then **tap L toes**
53. on final bounce L toes **touch** ground & **adhere**, **slide back** into **clap the tree** stance
54. raise R knee, step out sideways & **bump** door, hold eyes wide stare, transition into **white crane**
55. **twist** left, **turn right backhand slap** & proceed to **brush L knee**
56. extend, step up, rock back into R leg, elbow sinks, dragging R hand back toward shoulder
57. **over the waterfall** (keep looking E until torso is parallel to earth, then look down and straighten neck)
58. reach down til R arm is straight **needle at sea bottom** • rotate R arm from shoulder to **stir the caldron**
59. raise torso, step out with L foot, frame the treetops, shift wt. & whole body **press to corner (arms like fan)**
60. turn R – **hands follow rainbow (arc across sky)** (low arc - winter solstice)
61. shift back, R arm floats across & slowly forms a **fist** (in front of chest)
62. R foot steps out, L hand circles thru into **sword thrust** (R hand in fist to R hip helps twist waist)
63. **uncoil** into **hoop & fist (grind** as R foot steps out & pivots into **twist step**
64. step thru with L foot (place the heel under L hand) shift wt., turn waist & **punch**
65. shift wt. back to R leg, hands drift/float R to NW – **watch hands** transition, L toes turn out
66. R foot steps thru while R arm floats up into **ward off**
67. **roll back, press; sit back, push; sit back, turn L into single whip/danbian**
68. *drift into...* **yun-shou/cloud hands-1**
69. **return to single whip**

太極拳 *Tai Ji Sequence – Second Section: Quick Reference*

Section II – Part 2 (Kick section) – Quick Reference

70. *float back into ready position pat the horse, R & L*
 - a. R hand **pat the horse**, R toe kick into **sweep kick** (hands push out NW & SE)
 - b. withdraw R foot & protect L knee, then **step out to SE corner**
 - c. shift weight into R foot, L hand **pat the horse** into L toe & **sweep kick**,
 - d. (hands push out NE & SW) **place L toes behind R heel** (7 o'clock position / NW)
71. pivot on R heel (toes to NW), R hand swings inside L (no wt. shift)
72. raise L knee, open knee to W & **heel kick** (straight West)
73. keep leg straight and **lower from hip** until L heel touches (check foot placement on heel line)
74. flow into **L brush knee – low brush knee series** (R-L-R),
75. end L brush knee with **downward punch** (hold & check back alignment: sacrum to occiput)
76. turn to right, pivot L toes to NE – **on guard** (protect head, but don't block view)
77. sit back into L foot, raise R knee, step thru, circle L arm around and thrust out like **sword** (E)
78. **uncoil**, raise R knee, arms form **hoop & fist**
79. R foot **twist step**, double-strike
80. step thru with L foot, shift weight & turn waist to **punch**
81. sit back into R foot **sunburst transition** – step up into **R heel kick** (E)
82. lower leg like drawbridge – toes of both feet point to NE corner
83. shift wt. into R foot, **twist torso** to right (E) & **form bearpaws**
84. L foot steps out to NW corner, shift wt. & swing **L bearpaw** overhead
85. turn right, L toes E, R foot steps out to SE corner, **R bearpaw** swings overhead
86. shift wt. 100% to R foot, turn L toes N; shift wt. L – **deep horse sunburst**
87. draw R leg in and up as shift all wt. to L foot, – **R heel kick** (E) **1x**
88. R foot protects L knee, **hold the platter** – pivot right 90° (now facing SE) still holding platter
89. R foot steps out to SE – shift forward swinging both arms up to **strike temples**, rock back, **box ears** (3x)
90. sit back into L foot – **sunburst R**
91. raise L knee (use psoas) & **heel kick** (E)
92. use leg to **spin** (R ball) around (270°) & plant L foot (toes NE) (all wt. in L foot)
93. raise R knee & **kick with R heel** (also E) 3-5x
94. retract foot & protect L knee – form **hoop & fist**
95. **twist-step-double-strike**, step thru place foot, use waist to **punch** (E)
96. sit back **scrape** – twist back into **push** (E)
97. drag R arm across, end in **crossed hands wu-ji** (facing S)

Section III – Quick Reference

** repeat of second section material

98. **tiger returns to mt.**, sit back push/pull, roll back, press; sit back, push
99. **single whip-1** (diagonal to SE corner)
100. turn right, step out into **wild horse** flipping mane (5x R–L–R–L–R) or any odd #)
101. L foot steps out – **grasp sparrow’s tail** (hold/focus on **Lao-Gong – 2 into 1**)
102. gather on L & step out with R foot into **ward off, roll back, press; sit back, push**
103. sit back into **single whip-2**
104. **yu nü/jade lady-1** (slow & hold corners) (4 corners: SW–SE–NE–NW)
105. **long sparrow 1** (hold/focus on **Yong-Quan – 2 into 1**)
106. **jade lady-2** (faster, with more writhing/twisting)
107. **long sparrow 2 – 4 into 1** (Laogong & Yongquan, then add **Qihai/LDT** – qi in & out to fingers & toes)
108. **gather**, step out into **ward off, press, push & single whip-3** (**peng-lü ji--an → danbian**)
109. **yun shou/cloud hands-2** (watch palms, pass qi hand to hand) back to **single whip-4**
110. **snake creeps down-1**, slither down & slide up into
111. **golden rooster** standing on L leg, then on R leg (stand tall & hold knee high, point toes)
112. L toe kick into **full leg monkey’s** ** ↓
113. gaze sweeps N, arms float up parallel to earth & point E & W
114. R foot sweeps (to 5 o’clock / SW), shift weight R & L, step to south,
115. lift off into **diagonal flying form** (hold & relax low back, then 5 bounces)
116. adhere then slide back to **clap tree, lift knee, bump door** into **white crane**
117. twist left (backhand strike), turn right, **brush L knee, extend**
118. float back high, over the waterfall into **needle at sea bottom(2)** (touch the earth / frog)
119. **stir the caldron**, lift torso, step out & press to corner (**arms like fan**)
120. turning right **rainbow hands** (high overhead arc (summer solstice),
121. shift back to L and watch R hand float in (no fist)
122. R foot steps out, L hand **sword** (R hand dagger), **uncoil** into **hoop & fist**
123. fist into palm grind & **twist step** double strike, shift weight to L foot, turn waist and **punch** West
124. sit back & turn R **watch hands** transition (hands float to NW then down, then up as
125. R foot steps through into **ward off (peng-)**
126. (**lü-ji-an**) **roll back-press; sit back-push; sit back into dan-bian/single whip-5**
127. transition into **cloud hands-3** (tiger leaping: land & balance on L), back to **single whip-6** ** ↑

太極拳 *Tài Ji Sequence* – *Third Section: Quick Reference*

128. slide back, twist L, then lunge with left foot & hand **white snake flicks tongue**
129. turn right, **on guard**, L arm drifts down as R arm and leg float up, **R heel kick west**
130. R foot protects L knee, arms form **hoop & fist**
131. **twist step, arms swing around to north**, step thru (high brush knee) & **punch west**
132. watch hands transition into **ward off** with **quick step**
133. **roll back, press; sit back, push; sit back into single whip-7**
134. **snake creeps down-2**, shift weight from R to L, push thru and
135. reach up & out to form the **seven-star fist** (seven-star punches)
136. withdraw R foot, hands float down then up into **white crane** (weight now in right leg)
137. twist torso left, **spin right 360°** on R foot (ball) plant left foot
138. draw R knee & leg up then sweep kick & slap toes (**double lotus kick**)
139. recoil & ready, **kick (side, heel, toe kicks low/ankle, med./knee, high groin, 3x3)**
140. (grab staff and) **raise the staff/block**, then **draw your bow** (elbow straight back)
141. shift to L foot, raise R knee, form **hoop & fist**
142. **twist step – punch; scrape, twist & push**
143. big circle R into **crossed hands** – (open arms & circulate qi thru all 6 arm channels CL & CCL)
144. **return to wu ji: go inside – rest – integrate – savor**

Finishing: Cool Down

a. when fully relaxed drift into **microcosmic orbit breathing**

inhale: up the spine to top of head (GV-20 Bai-Hui) with tongue up touching behind GV-28

exhale: down the front & core back to perineum (CV-1 Hui-Yin)

with tongue down touching behind CV-24

b. tapping:

1. kidneys, low back, gluts to sit bones

2. around hips (3 leg yin & 3 leg yang channels)

3. slide down GB channel (IT band) (9x hip to knee)

4. massage knees: (pts: Kd-10; BL-54/40; BL-53/39;

GB-34 and ST-36, then quick slides down ST channel;

slides up Sp channel to condyle (Sp-9); then massage pts Sp-6-8-9

continue to Lr-8 and back to Kd-10)

c. lower dan tian internal massage:

completely empty on exhale & suck tummy in toward spine

hold breath til can't any longer

variations:

1. tummy in & out

2. hold in & up

3. wave (from pubic bone to umbilicus)