

# **Tai Chi 13 Postures**

When it comes to the fundamental practices of Tai Chi, it all comes back to the 13 postures. Tai Chi 13 postures consist of 8 forces, or "expressions of energy", and 5 steps, or "directions of movement".

These are called Peng (Ward-off), Lu (Roll-back or Divert), Ji (Squeeze), An (Push), Cai (Pluck), Lie (Split), Zhou (Elbow) and Kao (Bump Shoulder). The second category contains five components, Forward, Backward, Left, Right, and Center which relate to the structure and operation of the legs and feet.

- 1) **Peng (ward-off)** – Peng is the force that puts a curved barrier between you and your opponent. In Tai Chi, you use peng to feel, or listen to, the force of your opponent. In this force, your body is placed in a way that repels any incoming force, warding it away. When one standing in the correct peng posture, it is almost impossible to move them.
- 2) **Lu (roll-back)** – Lu stands for "leading the opponent's force into emptiness" and is the force that causes them to lose their balance by redirecting their force away from the center to the side.
- 3) **Ji (squeeze)** – Ji requires both hands and arms to work together. It is thought of as the action of squeezing your force into a small area of your opponent. Ji is directed forwards, toward your opponent.
- 4) **An (push)** – The fourth of the Tai Chi 13 Postures is An. This is when you gather your power, and then redirect it towards your opponent to drive them away. Power for this force comes up from the earth and through the legs.
- 5) **Cai (pluck)** – Sometimes referred to as "large roll back", Cai is when you use your hands and fingers to pluck or pull. Like Liu, Cai is used to lead your opponent off balance.

- 6) **Lie (split)** – Lie is a force that causes your energy to split into two separate directions. It is often used to break the hold that your opponent has on you.
- 7) **Zhou (elbow)** – Zhou is the force where you use your elbow to strike your opponent. This strike throws your opponent off balance and prevents them from controlling your elbows.
- 8) **Kao (bump)** – This is when you use your shoulder, combined with your full body force, to defend against an opponent. This will knock your opponent off balance, and prepare you for any attack they may make.
- 9) **Jin Bu (forward)** – This step involves pushing your momentum forward.
- 10) **Tui Bu (backward)** – Tui Bu is when you retreat backwards, opening up a space for your opponent to fall into when overextending.
- 11) **Zuo Ku (left)** – Look around to the left. When stepping to the left, focus your eyes on the left side. This involves stepping and kicking to the left.
- 12) **You Pan (right)** – Look around to the right. When stepping to the right, focus your eyes on the right side. This involves stepping and kicking to the right. It helps you to gain an advantage in your position and avoid any incoming forces.
- 13) **Zhong Ding (central balance)** – This is when you maintain your center position. This represents the balance of yin and yang around the center, and is the primary direction of the 5 steps in Tai Chi.