



Principle #2 Rotation

A “core” principle

Rotation in the ancient manuscripts is described as “massaging the internal organs.” Rotation is an important skill in everyday life. We are constantly turning to pick something up off the floor or put something away on a high shelf.

Improper rotation or rotation without a strong core is another one of those areas that results in injury and time away from the things we want to be doing.

We need to train the body to rotate on the central axis of the spine in order to keep things in alignment. If you move side to side from your torso, you will feel the gentle “massaging” effect that the ancient manuscripts were talking about.

You must learn to move from side to side, but still maintain your columns. This is the ultimate core workout!! As you rotate from side to side, your eyes should follow your movement.

The twist step incorporates an entire body rotation and should be an upper level inclusion in learning the form.

Class #4

Focus: Rotation/Gathering and Releasing
Postures 1-9

Teaching points:

Since T'ai Chi is a martial art, consider that rotation allows the entire body to be involved in a movement and not just the limbs. This provides tremendous power. Take a look at a baseball player's swing, for example. He doesn't just stand upright and swing his arms from the shoulders. He uses his entire body by stepping and rotating with each swing. Think about the rotation as a coiling and uncoiling, or a gathering and releasing of power.

Warm-ups: 25 minutes

- Step side to side, holding ball
- Arm circles
- Chi walking
- Part the wild horse's mane
- Brush knee
- White crane spreads its wings
- Ward off, grasp the bird's tail, roll back sequence
- Repulse the monkey

Form practice: 15 minutes

Using the first half of the form (postures 1-9), think about the rotation as "coiling and uncoiling" or gathering and releasing the energy.

Cool-downs: 5 minutes

- Pushing chi
- Roll the ball
- Ball right to left
- Heaven and earth

Homework:

Notice how many times you reach for something and rotate. Practice Brush knee and Part the wild horses mane focusing on rotation.

Class #5

Focus: Rotation/Central Axis
Postures 10-24

Teaching points:

Move from the torso, not just from the shoulders. Think about your belly button being a flashlight. Turn the flashlight to where you want to move first. Rotate around the central axis keeping your posture upright and relaxed. Your columns stay intact. Your eyes should follow your rotation.

Warm-ups: 25 minutes

- Step side to side, holding ball
- Arm circles
- Step side to side and kick
- Chi walking
- Wave hands like clouds
- Deflect, intercept, and punch
- Repulse the monkey
- Fair lady works the shuttle
- Snake creeps, Pheasant stands

Form practice: 15 minutes

Using the last half of the form (postures 10-24) practice this sequence with a focus on moving from the belly button first.

Cool-downs: 5 minutes

- Pushing Chi
- Rolling the ball
- Ball right to left
- Heaven and Earth

Homework:

Notice how many times you reach for something and rotate. Practice deflect, intercept and punch and wave hands like clouds focusing on rotation.

Class #6

Focus: Rotation/Twist step

Postures 1-24

Teaching points:

Move from the torso, not just from the shoulders. Think about your belly button being a flashlight. Turn the flashlight to where you want to move first. Rotate around the central axis keeping your posture upright and relaxed. Your columns stay intact. Your eyes should follow your rotation.

Since T'ai Chi is a martial art, consider that rotation allows the entire body to be involved in a movement and not just the limbs. This provides tremendous power. Take a look at a baseball player's swing, for example. He doesn't just stand upright and swing his arms from the shoulders. He uses his entire body by stepping and rotating with each swing. Think about the rotation as a coiling and uncoiling, or a gathering and releasing of power.

The twist step should be incorporated to help with rotation. Turn your feet to keep your toes in line with your knees. As you get better with the twist step, try to relax the lower body and turn the upper body smoothly into your movement.

Warm-ups: 20 minutes

- Step side to side, holding ball
- Arm circles
- Step side to side and kick
- Chi walking
- Part the wild horse's mane
- Brush knee
- Wave hands like clouds
- Ward off sequence
- Snake creeps, pheasant stands
- Deflect, Intercept and Punch

Form practice: 20 minutes

Practice the entire form 4 times through.

The first time, focus on rotating around the central axis and keeping your columns intact.

The second time, focus on moving the belly button first and letting your body follow.

The third time, focus on using the twist step and thinking about the power released by rotating. The fourth time, focus on the feeling of massaging the internal organs.

Cool-downs: 5 minutes

- Pushing chi
- Roll the ball
- Ball right to left
- Breathing in and out (up and down)

Homework:

Notice rotation in your everyday life. Practice the ward off sequence focusing on rotation and feeling the massage effect.