

Class #2

Focus:

Wave Hands Like Clouds
Snake Creeps, Pheasant Stands
Single Whip

Teaching Points:

Wave Hands like Clouds

This is everyone's favorite Tai Chi move! It is very flowing and gentle and relaxing once you master the technique. Practice the arms only with this move first . . . and practice them independently first. Start with the right arm and draw a clockwise circle, palm toward the face. It's as if you are wiping your eyebrows gently. Then draw a counter-clockwise circle with the left arm keeping the palm toward the face again. Then try putting it together by starting with the right arm and as the right arm reaches the bottom half of the circle, start the left arm. Keep the hands loose and light. After you have mastered the arm movement, you can add the footwork. You will always step left with Wave Hands like Clouds. Start from a Single Whip position and begin by bringing the left hand down towards your body into its counter-clockwise motion. As you begin to move the left hand, adjust the left foot so the toes point forward and you are ready to step to your left.

Snake Creeps, Pheasant Stands

This is one of the most difficult moves in the form. You must take into consideration any knee issues, hip issues and certainly basic flexibility when you begin this move. Everyone should be allowed to modify as they need to in order to accommodate their body. Start from the Single Whip position again. Your weight will be forward toward the left in this position. Rock the weight back to the right which should straighten your left leg. Trace down your left leg with your left hand. As you reach the bottom, turn your torso to the left, bend your left leg and shift your weight onto the left so you can bring your right leg up into the Pheasant Stands position. The weight shift forward is important to allow the back leg to lift off of the ground. If you cannot stand on one leg, it is okay to simply pull the right leg through with the toe barely touching the ground. Remember, it is more important to be balanced than to bring the knee high. Of course, this move needs to be done on both sides of the body. Don't attempt to over-stretch your body and reach all the way to the floor if your flexibility is not good. You

will improve as you practice over time. Relax into the movement instead of forcing it to happen.

Single Whip

The positioning of your hands is important in Single Whip. You will form a bird's beak with your right hand and will push out into a block with your left hand. The bird's beak is simply formed by touching the middle two fingers to the thumb and letting the fingers drop down so the wrist is the high point. The wrist is actually the contact point if you were to bring the hand up under an opponent's chin. The left hand sweeps across your body in a counter-clockwise semi-circle and then pushing out into an open hand block. Since it is a block, keep the elbow bent. It is not a football stiff-arm technique!

Warm ups: 2-3 minutes

- Hold the ball
- Chi Walking

Form practice: 6-7 minutes of each

- Wave Hands Like Clouds
- Snake Creeps, Pheasant Stands
- Single Whip

Cool downs: 1-2 minutes

- Heaven and Earth

Homework: Practice the moves.