

The Chinese characters for Tai Chi Chuan can be translated as the 'Supreme Ultimate Force'. The notion of 'supreme ultimate' is often associated with the Chinese concept of yin-yang, the notion that one can see a dynamic duality (male/female, active/passive, dark/light, forceful/yielding, etc.) in all things. 'Force' (or, more literally, 'fist') can be thought of here as the means or way of achieving this ying-yang, or 'supreme-ultimate' discipline.

“ practice is just a long form of convincing yourself you can do it “

~ Victor Wooten

- **SIMPLICITY**

- Breakdown all elements to simple sensations (EX - ie: relaxation/tension)
- Look for the simplicity beyond the complexity (EX - remove distortions and distractions - use breathing to assist)
- Isolate one element at a time, and
- Notice and allow 'balance' - never force your power. Simply direct your mind to observance. (EX - begin with posture - work up body)
- Relax into the idea and feeling.
- Now, stop thinking. I know you are still thinking.
- Feel your body 'absorb' the understanding.
- I said stop thinking :) - you have one job - only to curiously explore and notice.

- **BALANCE**

- Direct opposites - seek out physical contradictions purposefully (EX - ie: once relaxation is achieved, add tension to understand what is not desired)
- Identify Elements in Agreement - ie: how tongue relates to jaw relates to palate etc..)
- Shift balance between elements, with purpose - NOTE - be gentle! It is the subtle nuances of which you need to be in charge!

- **EXERCISES**

- **HEAD/NECK/JAW**

- EX - Neck Rotation - (- shoulder to shoulder nod)
- EX- Head Bowl - (- head sitting in bowl of oil)
- EX - Jaw Slack - (- pull and press jaw. NOTES ** if you suffer TMJ BE CAREFUL !! Be gentle - *** release SLOWLY from this exercise !)
- Jaw space -

- **LIPS -**

- EX - Labial Consonants with Light air (- buh, fuh, muh, puh, vuh)
- Percussive Consonants/Tongue tip - D, T, S

- Pitched Consonants - L, M, N, V, Z, - R, the honorary vowel :)
- **TONGUE - the mega muscle. - “Sonic Enemy #1”**
- EX - massage the tongue.
- EX - Isolation exercise - explore relaxed to pointed to relaxed WITHOUT tensing the lips or any other part of the face or neck/throat.
- EX - Tongue Extension - push ups (- tip on lower teeth and arch forward -
- EX - hard G, K, X - hold tongue out with fingers - “hengeh engeh, shengeh”
- EX - Relaxed tongue chin tuck siren - (with thumb & first finger under/on chin)
- EX - ‘Sylvester’ - slides 1-2, 1-3, 1-4, 1-5, 1-6, 1-7, 1-10-1/ (up a semitone, repeat) - ensure legato, width from onset, fat middle, zero tongue movement.
- **PALATE**
- EX - Palate Isolation - (- Soft Palate Flexure - front of uvula span)
- Palate/ Tongue relationship - explore - explore - isolate - explore .. repeat ..

VOWEL ARTICULATION -

- EXERCISE -
- “huh” - natural neutral pitch
- Lower lip to upper lip - monitor slack jaw space, tongue slack
- * hum on - “AH” - notice balance .. minimize tension - “absorb the ease”
- * very very slowly - maintain space and ease - shift to “eh”
- * very very slowly - maintain space and ease - shift to “ih”
- * very very slowly - maintain space and ease - shift to “Oh”
- * very very slowly - maintain space and ease - shift to “uh”
- * very very slowly - maintain space and ease - shift to “oo”
- * very very slowly - maintain space and ease - shift to “ee”
- EXPLORE - slow shift between vowels sounds
- Find and Maintain the “sweet spot” with minimal, relaxed tongue movement.

A word about AIR PRESSURE -

- As the velocity of a fluid increases, the pressure exerted by that fluid, decreases.
(Creates a pressure/narrow/velocity/vacuum cycle - folds approximate) EX - two pieces of paper.
- maintain a balanced sense of subglottal pressure below the vocal folds - As folds come together, subglottal pressure will increase and intraoral (supraglottal) pressure will drop to atmospheric pressure above the cords.
- Feed this consistent feeling.
- you do not need massive amounts of air - take enough for the phrase.
- Over inhalation can lead to “sucking” air - dries out cords, causes tension.
- Breath with a sensation of inhaling over the roof of your mouth and the air flowing down the back of your throat - and exhaling with the same sensation.