

Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance®

CLASS TEACHING PLAN

Your Guide

Version: 3.11

August 2016

Oregon Research Institute

Instructions: The Plan provides a weekly teaching schedule with 48 lessons that can be used for the entire duration of the class offering (Weeks 1 through 24). The Plan integrates various components of the Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance® program with each lesson starting with balance-based preparatory exercises and progressing through forms and their variations, and therapeutic movements (*Tai Ji Quan - Mini Therapeutic Movements*®).

For additional program and instructional supporting materials please visit tjqmbb.org

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[Important Notice](#)

As the participants in the class are likely come from diverse backgrounds, the activity (effort) level of practice may be varied from that indicated in any of the lessons in order to appropriately accommodate the physical ability and/or medical conditions of any particular group of participants. However, the format of the lessons and the sequence of exercises in each class should be followed as they are presented in the Plan.

Eight Forms Routine

Adapted from the contemporary 24-form Tai Ji Quan routine.

- ☯ **Form one:** *Move a Ball*
- ☯ **Form two:** *Part Wild Horse's Mane*
- ☯ **Form three:** *Single Whip*
- ☯ **Form four:** *Wave Hands like Clouds*
- ☯ **Form five:** *Repulse Monkey*
- ☯ **Form six:** *Brush Knees*
- ☯ **Form seven:** *Fair Lady Works at Shuttles*
- ☯ **Form eight:** *Grasp Peacock's Tail*
- *Ward-off, Pull, Press, and Push*

Sample Only

Practice variations include (1) seated, (2) sit-to-stand and stand-to-sit, (3) chair-assisted, (4) standing, (5) forms with intermittent steps, (6) forward-backward loop, (7) spatial orientation, (8) single-sided forms, (9) walking with forms, (10) group walking, and (11) advanced routines (see page 57 for detail).

Teaching Schedule on the 8 Forms

Form one	Form two	Form three	Form four	Form five	Form six	Form seven	Form eight
weeks 1-2	weeks 3-4	week 5	week 6	week 7	week 8-9	week 10	week 11-12

Note: learning and practicing forms are mixed with other movement exercises in the program.

Tai Ji Quan - Mini Therapeutic Movements®

- ☯ **Exercise One:** **Body sway around ankle joints**
- ☯ **Exercise Two:** **Eye-head movements**
- ☯ **Exercise Three:** **Sit-to-stand, stand-to-sit**
- ☯ **Exercise Four:** **Step-and-turn**
- ☯ **Exercise Five:** **Chair-up-and-walk**
- ☯ **Exercise Six:** **Multidimensional head movements**
- ☯ **Exercise Seven:** **Single leg standing with *Brush Knees***
- ☯ **Exercise Eight:** **Stepping exercises**
- ☯ **Exercise Nine:** **Pushing hands**
- ☯ **Exercise Ten:** **Sensory integration exercises**
- ☯ **Exercise Eleven:** **Stepping maneuver around a chair**

Note: see pages 58-62 for the detail of each exercise. Practice of Mini Therapeutic Movements is mixed with forms and variation of forms in the program.

Teaching Emphasis

1. **Stance or ankle sway with weighted foot/feet “rooted”**
2. **Exercise ankle sway that moves center of gravity near the edge of base of support**
3. **Exercise “pre-load” to engage in a rotational weight shift**
4. **Engage in controlled self-initiated movements that are driven by the core (trunk) of the body**
5. **Engage in a “toes-lift” move and a “heel-to-toes” progression while stepping**
6. **Engage in a heel “push-off” action at the end of each form**
7. **Engage in coordinated eyes and head movements**
8. **Engage in coordinated breathing that is synchronized with the postural movements**
9. **Engage in dual-task exercises that incorporate forms/moves with concurrent cognitive tasks**
10. **Elicit balance response (stability vs. instability, balance vs. imbalance)**
11. **A variable teaching approach that varies in**
 1. **movement speeds,**
 2. **range of motion,**
 3. **base of support, and**
 4. **teaching cueing (i.e., verbal, visual, kinesthetic, or self-cueing)**

Teaching Notes

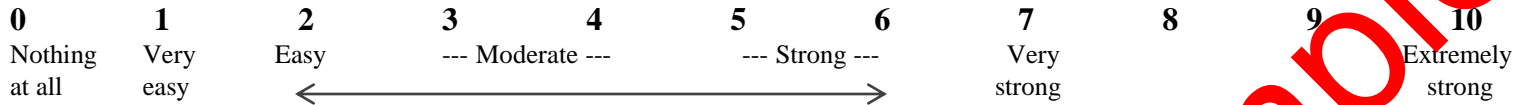
Practice terms defined

Repetition (rep): A repetition is defined as one complete movement/form (which covers both left and right sides), a routine (consisting all forms), or an activity (involving movements and forms).

Set: A set is defined as number of repetitions per form or activity.

Practice intensity defined

Reference: Rating of Perceived Exertion (Borg categorical rating scale):



Perceived efforts (i.e., how hard one is practicing) used in this program progress from **Easy** (2) → **Moderate** (3-4) → **Strong** (5-6)

Description of beginning body positions

Standing position:

- Feet hip width apart with toes pointing forward and slightly gripping the floor, and the body weight distributed between feet and on the arches of the feet
- Knees slightly bent with a slight outward rotation of the thigh muscles (to unlock the knees)
- Straighten the hips by squeezing the buttock muscles
- Open the chest by rotating the shoulders outward, then slowly rotate them back so the palms are facing the thighs
- Look straight forward
- Breathe normally

Sitting position:

- Positioned at the front part of the chair so the back of the thighs (hamstrings) muscles are exposed (note: ensure the chair is stable in this position)
- Knees lined up parallel to each other, hip width apart, with toes pointing forward
- Slightly tilt the pelvis forward to straighten the back
- Chest up with eyes looking straight forward
- Arms hanging to the side of the hips with the palms facing inward
- Breathe normally

Teaching Notes (cont.)

Description of breathing patterns - Rules of thumb

- Slowly inhale through nose and exhale through mouth
- This program uses diaphragmatic breathing style. Breathing exercises include shallow (chest) and deep (abdomen) inhaling and relaxed and deep exhaling (until a gentle contraction of abdominal muscles is achieved) that are in sync with arm swing motions
- **In the stance position**
 - inhale when arms are raised upward (toward shoulder high), open sideway, or separate diagonally from the hold-a-ball position
 - exhale when arms are lowered (toward the sides of the hips), close, or return to the hold-a-ball position
- **During motion**
 - inhale when moving/transitioning into the ball-hold position or performing an action that requires the center of the body mass to move into a postural position that is potentially destabilizing (e.g., preload action into a backward limit; ankle sway into a forward limit)
 - exhale when sinking into the hold-a-ball position or performing an action that requires the center of mass to: (1) return to the center of the base of support and/or (2) sink slowly into a form

What to do/say before the start and the end of each class session

- Briefly recap the activities from the last session and then introduce activities to be practiced at today's session. For example: "We learned and practiced the form named "*Part Wild Horse's Mane*" and a number of mini therapeutic movements (e.g., ankle sway, stepping exercises) on Monday, and today, we will begin with a quick review and practice of *Part Wild Horse's Mane* again and continue by adding a new form "*Single Whip*." We will, at the same time, practice a number of other therapeutic movements, such as sit-to-stand and eye-head movements."
- Start the class following the activities as outlined in the Plan
 - Please make sure to follow the content and order described as closely as possible.
- Always describe (briefly) and demonstrate each new form/movement to be learned (a back view is recommended). Explanation should focus on movements of weight shift, eye-head-hand, and ankle sway executed with synchronized breathing (inhaling and exhaling).
- Before ending the session, let the students know what is coming up in the next session. For example, "Next Monday, we will spend some time practicing the form *Single Whip* learned today and then combine *Part Wild Horse's Mane* and *Single Whip* and practice in various formats i.e., seated, chair assisted, standing, and stepping, in addition to more practice repetitions of some other mini therapeutic movement exercises."

Program Fidelity

Training Schedule, Compliance, Content

- Frequency: 2-3 sessions per week
- Duration of class session = 60 minutes
- Minimum number of class sessions = 48 (6 months)
- Attendance: 75% or better (i.e., minimal 36 sessions)
- Recommended class size: 8-10 for new instructors; 10–15 for experienced instructors
- Class lessons follow the content outlined in the Plan

Fidelity check

- conducted on a monthly basis via either a refresher course or in-class participation by a peer instructor

Class Sessions

First Session (WEEK 1)

Introduction (≈ 10 min.)

- Welcome; a brief talk on: (1) the purpose of the class (i.e., training lower-extremity strength, balance, mobility), (2) expectations (clothing, class attendance, breaks, and cancellation), (3) exercises (i.e., learning and practicing a series of Tai Ji Quan-based movements), and (4) class emphasis (i.e., safety, easy-to-difficult practice progression). A paragraph describing the overall purpose of this class is provided at the end of this page.***

Movement introduction and demonstration (≈ 10 min.)

- A demonstration of at least 2 forms (e.g., forms 1 and 2) and a few mini movements (e.g., seated forms, ankle sways, sit-to-stand, forms around a chair) are highly recommended, with explanation/description of movement emphasis (e.g., weight shift, trunk rotation, coordination of eye, head, trunk, arms, legs, stepping with changes in the base of support, sensing body positions between stable postural stance/motion and slightly unstable postural stance/motion). Involving students in participating during the demonstration is encouraged.

A brief exercise session (≈ 30-35 min.)

- Seated breathing exercises with coordinated arm swing (up and down, sideways) with varying speeds
- Seated weight shifting exercises – forward, sideways, backward (progressing from arm swing to the “holding a ball”-like motion)
- Seated forward and backward arm swing exercises to lift buttocks off the chair and then lower back down
- Standing exercises with weight shift – forward towards the ball of the foot, toes, tip of the toes, backward towards heels.
- Stepping exercises (sideways or diagonally forward) with the “holding a ball” motion

Cool-down exercises (≈ 5 min.)

- Perform simple seated or standing breathing with an “opening and closing a ball” motion (either vertically or horizontally)
- Q&A

***The purpose of this class is to use an adapted Tai Ji Quan exercise program to help improve your balance, mobility, walking and physical and mental wellbeing. You will learn a variety of movements from the traditional art of Tai Ji Quan but which have been specifically tailored to train balance, self-awareness, and controlling body movements in performing various activities of daily life. More specifically, during the twice weekly exercise sessions over the next 24 weeks, you will practice 8 forms of balance techniques along with a variety of movement drills that will follow an easy-to-difficult progression and increasingly challenge your ability to control and adapt to posturally demanding activities.

Second Session (WEEK 1)

Preparatory exercises (≈ 15-20 min.)

- Seated breathing and weight shifting exercises with movements in various directions
- Seated exercises with the “holding-a-ball” motion engaging in side-to-side, diagonally forward stepping
- Momentum-based sit-to-stand exercises: **3-4 reps**
 - using progressively forward arm swing motion (in a sequence of nose over the knees, buttocks off the chair, and up to lean the trunk vertically forward (reaching over the knees) to arise to a full upright standing position
 - using an arm push-forward motion to lower the body down to the chair

Note on breathing: inhale as moving upward and exhale as sitting back down to the chair

- Weight shifting exercises (in standing and performed in a sequence)

Exercise #1: unilateral weight shift from a double stance: **2-3 reps**

Exercise #2: add a lateral (sideway) trunk rotation to #1: **2-3 reps**

Exercise #3: add a “hold-a-ball” motion to #2: **2-3 reps**

Note on breathing: inhale as shifting weight laterally and exhale as returning to the center

Core practice (≈ 35 min.)

- Pelvis rotation exercises (forward tilt and backward tilt - as part of pre-opening) with arms swing up and down: **5 reps**
- Side-way trunk rotation exercises (preload [wind-up] motion) with the “holding-a-ball” motion: **5 reps** on each side
- Opening form exercises in a sequence of (1) weight shift to the side; (2) stepping sideway with the unloaded leg; (3) weight shift backward (toward heels); (4) return to the center; (5) weight shift forward (balls → pelvic tilt); (6) return to the center; (7) weight shift backward; and (8) return to the center

- **Learning and practicing Form 1 (“Move a Ball”)**

- practice movements in a sequence of:
 - (a) practice of hand/arm movements (i.e., hold the ball) in a standing position
 - (b) practice foot work (sideway steps with a preload motion)
 - (c) practice of the whole form with and without chair supported

Note: practice **2 reps** for each action listed.

Closing exercises (≈ 3 min.)

- Performing simple standing and breathing exercises with an “opening and closing a ball” motion along with slow weight shifting forward and backward (**ankle sway and breathing exercises**)

Exercise Intensity: **Easy**

Third Session (WEEK 2)

Preparatory exercises (≈ 15-20 min.)

- Momentum-based sit-to-stand exercises: **2 reps**
- Weight shifting exercises (#1 through #5 – done bilaterally): **2 reps** each

Exercise #1: unilateral weight shift from a double stance

Exercise #2: add a lateral (sideway) trunk rotation to #1

Exercise #3: add a “hold-a-ball” motion to #2

Exercise #4: add a heel push-off of the opposite foot to #3

Exercise #5: continue with #4 and add a foot lift

Note on breathing: inhale as shifting weight laterally and exhale as returning to the center

Core practice (≈ 35 min.)

- Opening form exercises in the sequence presented in the Second Session: **5 reps**
- **Learning and practicing** Form 1 (“*Move a Ball*”)
 - in a sequence of:
 - (a) practice of hand/arm movements (i.e., hold the ball) in a standing position
 - (b) practice foot work (sideway steps with a preload motion)
 - (c) practice of the whole form with and without chair supported

Note: practice **2 reps** for each action listed.

Closing exercises (≈ 5 min.)

- Ankle sway and breathing exercises
- Light stepping exercises (stepping exercises) - side-to-side, diagonally forward and backward, with breathing in sync with a “hold the ball” motion

Forth Session (WEEK 2)

Preparatory exercises (≈15-20 min.)

- Momentum-based sit-to-stand exercises: **3-4 reps**
- Weight shifting exercises (from the previous session)

Core practice (≈ 35 min.)

- Form 1 (“*Move a Ball*”) in seated: **5 reps**
- Form 1 with chair-assisted: **5 reps**
- Form 1 in standing (in place) with varying size of base of support: **5 reps** each
 - a. wider than hip width
 - b. hip width
 - c. narrower than hip width
- Form 1 with stepping: **5 reps**

Note: the term “stepping,” when it is mentioned with form exercises, refers to performing a full form. In this case, “Form 1 with stepping” means to perform the form with the preload action, stepping, the form (“*Move a Ball*”), heel push-off, returning to the ball-hold position.

- Closing form exercises: **5 reps**

Note: Please refer to step-by-step instructions described in the Opening and Closing Forms Exercises with Breathing information sheet posted on the website (Instructor’s Teaching Corner).

Closing exercises (≈ 5 min.)

- Stepping exercises
- Ankle sway and breathing exercises

Fifth Session (WEEK 3)

Preparatory exercises (≈ 15-20 min.)

- Momentum-based sit-to-stand exercises
- Weight shifting exercises

Core practice (≈ 35 min.)

- **Learning and practicing** Form 2 (“*Part Wild Horse’s Mane*”)
 - demonstration (back view, front view),
 - practice in a sequence of
 - a. preload motion in a hip-width stance (i.e., fixed base of support)
 - b. taking a diagonal step following preload
 - c. “*Part Mane*” in a bow stance with an emphasis on trunk rotation
 - d. rear heel push-off following the “*Part Mane*” action
 - e. entire form, without and with a chair

Note: practice **3-5 reps** for each action.

- Practicing with the following variations:
 - seated: **3 reps**
 - standing with chair-assisted: **3 reps**
 - standing with a hip-width stance: **3 reps**
- Linking Forms 1 and 2 with stepping: **2 reps**

Closing exercises (≈ 5 min.)

- Stepping exercises
- Ankle sway and breathing exercises

Sample Only

Sixth Session (WEEK 3)

Preparatory exercises (≈ 15-20 min.)

- Momentum-based sit-to-stand exercises
- Weight shifting exercises

Core practice (≈ 40 min.)

- Mini-Therapeutic Movement (MTM) exercises
 - *Exercise One, C* - In-place Tai Ji Quan forms - engage in diagonal ankle sway using “*Part Wild Horse’s Mane*”): **5 reps**
 - *Exercise Nine* - Pushing hands (without a partner)
 - a. forward-and backward weight shifting: **5 reps**
 - b. rotational weight shifting: **5 reps**
 - c. toes-up-and heel-push: **5 reps**
- Form 2 (“*Part Wild Horse’s Mane*”):
 - in seated: **5 reps**
 - in standing: **5 reps**
 - with stepping: **5 reps**
- Linking Forms 1 and 2 with stepping: **5 reps**
- Forms 1 and 2 with stepping: **2 reps**
Note: consider changing directions, e.g., one repetition is done facing north and second one facing south

Closing exercises (≈ 2-3 min.)

- Stepping exercises
- Ankle sway and breathing exercises

The End

Sample Only