

Sun City Center Tai Chi Club Glossary

Note: This is not a comprehensive list of all Tai Chi terms or concepts. It is provided as a reference to words you might hear in Sun City Center Tai Chi Club practice sessions.

bubbling spring

Center of the sole, at the base of the ball of the foot, between the pads where you establish a 'root' connection to the earth. When your weight is on your foot such that you cannot pick up toes or heels without shifting your weight, you are centered on the bubbling springs.

chi (aka qi)

A vital force that flows through our bodies. One goal of Tai Chi is to remove impediments to the flow of chi. Improved flow begins with proper breathing and is ultimately achieved by combining breath control with physical technique and energy to unite mind and body into one unified purpose.

dantien (aka dantian)

Energy centers in the body where energy can be accumulated. There are three centers but, in our practice, we are concerned only with the one in the abdomen, roughly two fingers below the navel. Tai Chi practice is designed to cultivate awareness of and strengthen the abdominal dantien to improve overall health.

dan yu (roughly, 'sitting spine')

A foundation exercise done to strengthen legs, open hip joints, and stretch the spine. In Taoist Tai Chi, doing a dan yu exercise is to repeatedly allow movement down to become movement up, and repeatedly draw in and let go of your breath and energy.

Diagonal Single Whip

A multi-part move characterized by a series of three hand 'blocks' that are coordinated with movement of your body as you turn almost in a full circle.



express (verb)

One of our goals is to move without introducing tension. When you hear *express* in practice, understand the move is done with a sense of *intent* or *purpose*, without overemphasis. An apt analogy might be the difference between *acting* and *emoting*; good acting is much appreciated; emoting is overacting and is seldom appreciated.

feed the bird (not a move in itself)

When doing *Whip to One Side*, feed the bird is a transitory position in which the right arm is stretched out facing down and the left palm is facing up nearly under the right elbow.

Five Principles

These principles: 45-Degree Angle, Knee Not Overextended, Squaring of the Hips, Straight Line from Heel to Head, and Equal and Opposite Expression – are all crucial to keep in mind as you practice Foundation Exercises and the 108 move set.

Foundation Exercises

These 7 exercises - Wrist Turning, Arm Turning (Reeling Silk), Arm Extensions, Turning the Body, Dan Yu (Sitting Spine), Tor Yu (Turning Spine), and Snake Exercises - are done to warm-up before practicing the 108-move set.

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hold the ball

In this transition move, arms are crossed at the wrists, away from the body, approximately at the middle of the chest. The upper palm faces down, the lower palm faces up. An imaginary ball is held between the arms and the body.

meridian

A channel through which chi (energy) and other fundamental substances flow. Tai Chi exercises are designed to improve flow through these channels.

Pa Kua (aka Ba Gua)

A multi-faceted discipline that uses twisting of the body to activate bodily meridians. In practice, when we '*step pa kua*', the left foot points 45° left while the right foot (placed in front of the left) points 45° right. This step helps to open the hip joints.



pei pa (aka pipa)

A traditional Chinese musical instrument, sometimes called the Chinese lute. In our practice, the move called, *strum/play the pei pa* is so named because the hands are held in a similar position to the one held by someone holding the musical instrument.



Qigong (aka qi gong)

A mind-body exercise form developed in ancient China and Tibet that uses meditation, breathing, and movement to increase energy and enable the body to heal itself.

rooting

Using mind intent to send energy into the earth or to pull energy up from the earth. Rooting ensures a good connection to the ground and enables you to withstand efforts to push you over or aside, and to move with balance and strength.

tiger's mouth

When the hand is extended with the area between thumb and first finger stretched open, the curved space between thumb and forefinger is said to resemble a growling tiger's mouth.

tor yu (roughly, 'turning spine')

This exercise is not so much about stretching your body and arms forward and back as it is about turning the waist slowly, spiraling up and down to move and circulate chi. To this end, try to keep your hips reasonably still as you alternately sit into your back leg, then spiral up.

Whip to One Side (aka Single Whip)

Done nine times in the set: the left hand is in line with the heart, in a palm-out push. The right arm is relaxed, stretched out slightly forward of the shoulder. The right hand is curled in the shape of a hook; fingers joined at the thumb. The right foot is at 45° to the right; left foot is at 90° pointing straight ahead. Hips are squared to the front.

