

## Tai Chi lower body Kung Fu

(English translation below)

### 太極拳下盤功夫

太極拳是一項整體運動.想要練好太極拳,就要練好下盤功夫,是太極拳基本功,也是練好太極拳的關鍵.一般將人體分為上、中、下三盤,也稱之為三盤功夫。上盤講手上功夫,中盤講身上功夫,下盤講腿上功夫。

這是由於在完成太極拳動作時,身體重心是在不斷轉換.也就是虛實變化.所以腿部力量就得到很好地鍛鍊,身體的松沉,也起到了保持身體平衡穩定的作用。這從一個側面驗證了太極拳「下盤穩固」的重要性。

下盤穩固的前提首先是身體重心要沉下來.在太極拳中就是要做到腰髖松沉,這樣就提高了身體縱向的平衡穩定性,太極拳中稱之為中定。在這個基礎上.身體重心的合理分配、力量的運用、動作中虛實的微妙變化、氣息的沉浮等等,才能順利地完成。

腳踏實地完成太極拳動作時,就是要腳扎實的站穩了,才能發揮出太極拳的技擊技巧。在太極拳的練習過程中,四肢就要始終保持在自然彎曲的狀態,因為太極拳一個重要的動作要領就是曲中求直。

練習太極拳,首先要加強腿部力量。通過動作的轉換、架勢的穩定、重心的穩固、虛實的變化、力量的合理分配,逐漸增強股四頭肌和腿部肌群得力量,達到很好的支撐的作用,腳下生根练习是通过:

1. 通過低位站桩,腰胯松沉,重心穩固,气沉丹田,增強腿部肌群力量.
2. 通過低架旋轉變換,重心穩固,使腿部肌群加壓. 保持拳架高低一致.
3. 通過前后腿对撐勁的虚实步變換,逐漸增強股四頭肌力量. 保持拳势穩定.
4. 通過逆式丹田呼吸, "气宜鼓荡"逐漸增強腿部肌群的刚劲力量.

練太極拳下盤功夫就是要腰胯的松沉,可提高腿部穩定性,鍛鍊腿部力量,胯要松到位,這樣才能不偏不倚,腳下生根,在推手应用中得到很强体现. 這是由於在完成太極拳動作時,身體重心是在不斷轉換.也就是虛實變化.所以腿部力量就得到很好地鍛鍊,身體的松沉,也起到了保持身體平衡穩定的作用。這從一個側面驗證了太極拳「下盤穩固」的重要性。

Sam Li

Tai Chi involves movement of the whole body. Generally training will be divided into focusing on the upper, middle and lower body. All three sections are required. Upper body refers to effort with arms and hands, middle body refers to effort with the waist and trunk, and lower body refers to effort with the legs and feet.

In order to practice effective Tai Chi, it is necessary to continually practice and improve the lower body strength and form. During the process of each Tai Chi action, the body's centre of gravity constantly changes. The legs are naturally bent at the knees lowering the centre of gravity. As the lower body is strengthened through practice, the body's balance is maintained, the upper body is relaxed, and attention can be on the flow of Chi.

As the student experiences a relaxed and freely moving upper body, the requirement of lower body strength becomes self evident. In Tai Chi parlance, the lowering of the waist with the hips correctly aligned so as to improve balance and stability, is referred to as central balance.

The shifting of a person's centre of gravity, with purposeful strength and power in the lower body, enables the subtle changes in ups and downs during Tai Chi to be experienced.

Combining leg strength with feet firmly rooted to the ground, knees naturally bent and body leaning slightly forward, yields a solid stance and enables successful practice of Tai Chi martial arts.

Exercises to achieve the above:

1. Low standing exercise - knees bent, waist and hips relaxed, centre of gravity solid, "Qi" sinks down to the pubic region. Strength of leg muscles is enhanced.

2. Lower shelf rotation while knees are bent - the centre of gravity is stable and the leg muscles are pressured to keep the Tai Chi form and to maintain the same level.
3. Front and rear leg squatting movements with step changes - gradually enhances leg muscle strength and overall stability.
4. Reverse pubic region breathing while in a standing position with knees bent - enhances abdominal pressure, down to the feet; gradually enhances the strength of the leg muscles.

Practicing Tai Chi with lower body effort and relaxed waist and hips, can improve leg stability and leg strength. One can then be impartial about the placement of each foot's root position. In the context of pushing hands, this becomes very evident. This is due to the natural completion of Tai Chi actions with the body's centre of gravity constantly changing while maintaining a very firm balance.

Lower body strength and form is one of the main foundations of Tai Chi.