

## Taiji Notes

Abhayamati

### 1. Preparation exercise and the opening movements of the form

Below are step by step instructions as a reminder of what we have learnt on this course.

Preparation exercise:

1. Stand with feet together, heels touching. Imagine the line of central equilibrium running from the top of the head down the middle of the body between the heels.
2. Open the feet to a right angle (90 degrees).
3. Feel as if you are being lift from the crown of the head and tuck in the chin.
4. Soften the chest and relax the belly.
5. Drop (i.e. relax and do not lift) the shoulders into the shoulder joints.
6. Place the middle finger in line with seam of the trousers on the outside of each leg and flatten palms.
7. Unlock the knees and feel that your weight is evenly distributed over the whole of each foot.
8. Relax and gather your awareness into your body.
9. Relax firstly from the base in the sequence of feet, ankles, knees, hips; then the body, firstly the belly and then the chest; and finally the arms, starting with a sinking of the shoulders, dropping of the elbows and a relaxing of the wrists. At all times, the middle finger stays in contact with the leg, so that the elbows open as the shoulders sink. Ensure that the knees do not collapse in, but move in line with the toes and do not go over the end of the toes.
10. To send the body back up again, push gently and continuously into the floor to send the body back up again. The arms close against the body and the shoulders stay relaxed.

*Repeat this sequence to practice the preparation exercise. Make sure that the body stays upright and relaxed.*

Moving from the preparation exercise into either exercise number one or the opening of the form:

1. From the down position of the preparation exercise, send the mind awareness into the right foot until you are able to lever up the left heel.
2. Adjusting all the while into the right foot, turn out the left foot and slide it away from the right foot until the left leg is straight.
3. Move the body to the centre, so that the weight is equally distributed on both feet.
4. Spiral into the left leg by relaxing from the base and turning the waist 45 degrees to the right, at the same time open the left palm to face behind you keeping the thumb in contact with the seam of the trousers.
5. Turn the waist back to face the front as you turn on the heel of the right foot to bring the foot straight, opening the right palm to face behind as you do so.
6. You should now be standing feet shoulder width apart with the *outside* edges of the feet parallel.
7. Sit in the posture by relaxing the base and simultaneously 'sit' the wrists so that the hands are resting on two cushions of air.

*You are now ready to move into the form or the number one exercise.*

Opening of the form:

8. Push into the ground with both feet to raise the body. At the same time, feel the arms drifting up from the side of the body directly in front of you. The arms move together as they rise. Keep the arms seated in their joints – do not lift from the shoulders.
9. When the arms reach 2/3-body height finish pushing up.
10. Begin to relax down from the base in the usual sequence – feet, ankles, knees, hips – relax the body and sink the shoulders, drop the elbows and relax the wrists. The arms should feel as if they are rolling over a barrel, rather than moving down in a straight line.
11. Sit the wrists. You should now be back at position 7 – make any corrections to the posture that is necessary.

*You can now repeat the movements from 7-11 – they are an effective exercise in themselves. Alternatively, close up the posture and repeat the form movements from the beginning of the preparation exercise.*

Closing up:

12. Open up the left foot 45 degrees and turn the waist to the left corner.
13. Move towards the left foot.
14. When your weight has been transferred sufficiently to the left foot, turn the waist to the front and bring in the right foot so that the heels touch.
15. Adjust the feet to 90 degrees if necessary and push up. You can now continue with the preparation exercise/form.