



By Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang

Pushing Hands

Pushing Hands is just like Form Practice in that they both follow the principle of being natural and relaxed. There are two goals for Pushing Hands.

The first is to improve our reaction to attack. Reacting to an attack falls into two parts; neutralising and counter attacking. In deciding whether to emit power or to softly neutralise, the timing is critical. Pushing Hands helps us to improve our timing and so enable us to be in the right place at the right time.

The second goal for Pushing Hands is to correct our body structure. Through Pushing Hands, we can passively discover problems with our body structure and correct them.

Traditionally, there are five types of Pushing Hands. The first one is Whirling Flowers, the second type is Fixed Step Pushing hands. This type is very popular. The third type is Single Step Pushing Hands, the fourth is called Da Lu. This type calls for the thigh to be parallel to the ground. It is similar to the Single Step Pushing Hands, but the movement is much bigger, lower, and much harder. The fifth is Freestyle or Random Stepping. There is no fixed movement for this type, and it is up to the participants to decide how to move. This type is close to free style fighting.

The traditional sequence is to first practise Whirling Flowers before moving on to Fixed Step Pushing hands once a certain level of proficiency has been reached. Once the technique is better, we can practise Single Step Pushing Hands and Da Lu. Freestyle Pushing Hands is reserved for advanced practitioners. Beginners of Tai Chi Chuan can practise Pushing Hands, but they need to be clear on the goal. Pushing Hands is like practising the Form with a partner.

*The purpose is to correct body structure and discover the body mechanism, **not** to win the game. If we start to use force just to “win”, we can only make it worse for our practice.*