

*Once you have the skill, you must try it on your enemy – but you must guard against feeling dejected when you lose or complacent when you win. You must constantly consider **why** you won or lost. Did you lose because you were afraid of your enemy, or because your skill is not deep enough? The Ancestors always said “A person of great skill must also be very brave”.*

*“Canon of Boxing.”
(Qi Jiguang)*

Pushing Hands is based on, and tests the quality of, our Form Practice

Pushing Hands practice provides feedback to enable us to assess whether our Form training has developed the correct body mechanism. If our Form is deficient, our weaknesses will soon become apparent when we push hands. *Tui shou* allows us to test whether our structures and co-ordination are correct or not in a way we could not simply by practising the Form on its own. However, effective Pushing hands skills are nevertheless built on a solid foundation of Form training.

Tui shou and Form training are inseparable. Whatever defect a person has in the Form will be revealed during Pushing Hands as a weakness that can be exploited by an opponent. That is why Tai Chi Chuan requires us to have the whole body working in unison. We must practise Tui shou frequently. Tui shou is a practical application and is the only way of accurately testing the Form. Learning Tai Chi Chuan and its postural requirements is like manufacturing the different parts of a machine. Tui shou is like its assembly. If all the different components are made to specification, then it is easy to assemble the machine. However, if the parts are not built correctly and are either too big or too small, or, if they are simply the wrong parts, it will be impossible to build the machine.

*We need to practise Tui shou; check on the Forms; understand internal power; and learn how to release energy dynamically (*fajin*), as well as how to neutralise energy (*huajin*). If we is able to withstand confrontational Pushing Hands, then that would suggest we have understood the underlying Tai Chi Chuan principles.*

Chen Xiaowang

*Form work (*taolu*) is the foundation of Pushing Hands. Pushing Hands is a device for testing the correctness of *taolu*. And Pushing Hands is a bridge between the Form and free fighting. Practising Pushing Hands without practising the Form can develop some skill in self-defence, but without the foundation work you cannot improve and raise your skills to a higher level.*

Chen Zhaokui

From mastery of the postures (i.e. the Form) you will gradually awaken to interpreting energy. However, without long, arduous practice you will not suddenly make this breakthrough.

Wang Tsung-yueh

Pushing Hands develops sensitivity, linking Form to Self-defence Applications

Nobody knows me, whilst I know everybody.

Chen Wangting

Tui shou was created by Chen Wangting to develop practical fighting skills in such a way that students would not be injured. It develops “listening skills” (sensitivity), leg strength, and stamina.

Listening skills (*ting jin*) help us to read our opponent’s intent from his/her movement, whilst at the same time concealing ours. The softer we are, and the more closely we can blend our own movements with theirs, the harder it is for them to read us.

To listen properly, we must keep a light contact with them all the time and avoid resisting or using force. But, we must not restrict ourselves to the sense of touch alone; we should make use of sight and hearing too. Many people exclude their other senses, closing their eyes in the belief that this will improve their sensitivity. This is bad practice and is to be avoided. Our aim should be to heighten our overall **awareness**. We cannot do this adequately if we deliberately shut off one of our senses.

Tui s Pushing Hands must be seen as a co-operative exercise

The purpose of Tui shou is not competition. The purpose is to learn skills and develop technique.

Zhu Tiancai

Pushing hands embodies the idea of constant change and adaptation

Tui shou develops the ability to sense and adapt constantly to the energy between you and your partner. These are not abstract energies but physical movement types. Each one can be deployed in a combat situation through a whole range of techniques. Each one can be neutralised and countered by another.

See Study Aid “Pushing Hands 3”