

september

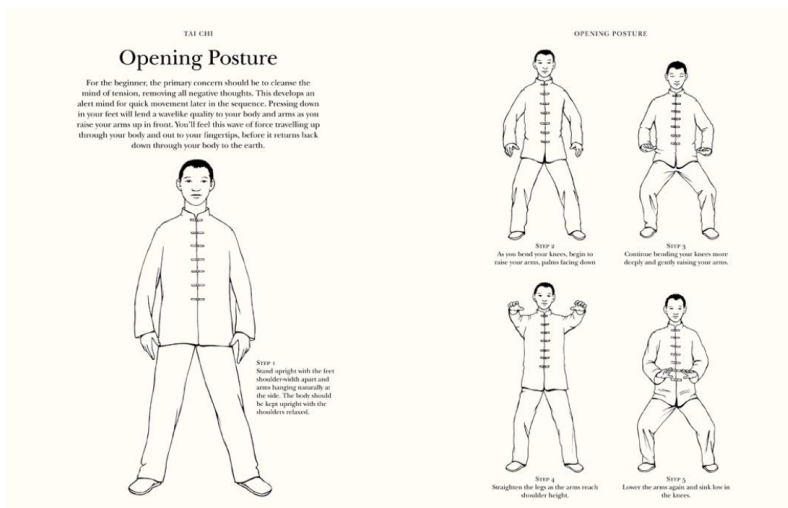
THE MONTHLY MOVE

BEGINNER TAI CHI

What is it?: A Chinese martial art with origins dating back several hundred years. Many of the therapeutic benefits are thought to arise from its combined emphasis on movement, breathing, and focused, relaxed attention.

Methodology: Marked by (1) slow, flowing movements; (2) harmonization of breath and action (mind-body integration); and (3) uninterrupted mental focus (mindfulness).

1. Opening Posture:



- Start by standing in a relaxed posture with your feet shoulder-width apart and hands at your sides.
- Breathe in through the nose and into the belly as you slowly raise both arms slightly bent, until your hands reach chest height.
- Slowly exhale through the nose and lower your arms back to your sides.

**** Note:** In raising the arms, lead with the wrists as if invisible strings were pulling them upward. As you lower the arms, sink the wrists with palms forward and fingers slightly elevated. Repeat several times. Breathe from the abdomen, timing movement with breath.

2. Pushing Hands:

- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Shift the weight to the left foot and step out with the right foot at a 45 degree angle to the front, placing the heel down first.
- Bring both hands up to chest level with palms facing outward. Transfer your weight onto the right foot as you push both hands forward (as if pushing a car).
- Shift your weight back to the left foot as you retract your hands to the hips with palms facing upward.
- Immediately shift your weight back to the right foot repeating the pushing movement.
- Repeat the cycle several times. Change to a left-sided pushing position by retracting the right foot and hands, and then stepping out to the left front.
- Repeat the pushing and retreating motions on the left side.
- Remember to breathe from the abdomen, timing movement with breath.