

Opening Movement 2 - Tracing the Taiji Symbol



“The concept of [yin yang] is probably the single most important and distinctive theory of Chinese Medicine. It could be said that all Chinese medical physiology, pathology and treatment can, eventually, be reduced to [yin yang]. The concept of [yin yang] is extremely simple, yet very profound. One can seemingly understand it on a rational level, and yet, continually find new expressions of it in clinical practice and, indeed, in life.

“The concept of [yin yang], together with that of [qi], has permeated Chinese philosophy over the centuries and is radically different to any Western philosophical idea.” ... “The Chinese concept of [yin yang] is radically different to this (western) system of thought: [yin] and [yang] represent opposite but complementary qualities. Each thing or phenomenon could be itself and its contrary. Moreover, [yin] contains the seed of [yang] and vice versa, ...” (7)

The yin yang symbol is the taiji symbol. This movement represents a balance between stillness (quiescence) and motion. While the body is involved in gentle silk-reeling movements, the shen (mind/heart/spirit) is steeped in stillness. As Master Jiao Guorui has said: “find stillness in motion and motion in stillness.”

The yin yang symbol can take many forms.



Original Opening Movement 2

Bracing and Pushing

- a. Circle both of your hands back and outward as you spread your fingers. Lead this movement with your pinky as you trace the taiji symbol. This movement is called 'five fingers draw the taiji.' Turn your hands to face palm down as they arc back and outward. Your body rises as you do this. (OM 2.1)
- b. Continue to circle your hands forward and in, turning your palms to face downward as you do. As they return to the outsides of your hips, your body should sink down slightly. Your thumbs should point at your waistline, and your palms should face downward, as though you are pressing on balls that are floating in water.
- c. Hold this posture for as long as desired. After several minutes, a feeling of heat may begin to develop in your palms.



OM 2.1

(KS) While researching this movement (Tracing the Taiji Symbol) I came across a video by qigong teacher Randal Bodlak of the Bayside Martial Arts school. He taught a silk reeling style of Tracing the Taiji Symbol. The instruction was so articulate and clear that I was able to practice the movements myself. After I felt comfortable with the movements, I began sharing them with my students. Their response was overwhelmingly positive. I'm including the instructions for these movements here.

Alternative Opening Movement 2

Tracing the Taiji Symbol

Starting from the previous movement:

- The starting stance is the same as the previous movement. The posture is relaxed.
- Rotate your hands so that your palms face down. Apply gentle force downward as if you are pressing balls underwater.
- Point your fingers towards the center; point your thumbs towards the waistline. (OM 2.1)



OM 2.1

Tracing the Taiji Symbol:

The whole sequence is shown below (OM 2.2)



OM 2.2

- With your right hand, leading with the little finger, curl your fingers over until the hand is palm up. Then scoop up with your right hand until the hand is at the level of your left shoulder 'Curling the Fish's Tail.' (OM 2.3)
- Have your right hand's palm facing outward and your fingers pointing up. Draw your right hand from in front of your left shoulder to the front of your right shoulder, waving 'Hi.' (OM 2.4)

- c. The previous move is the first part of the ‘Drawing an S Move.’ This part completes it.
- d. Rotate your right hand so that it is palm up and move it from right to left, in from the middle of your body. (OM 2.5)
- e. Once your right hand is on the left side of your body, rotate your hand palm down and move your hand from the left side to the right side at the level of your left hand. (OM 2.5)
- f. This completes ‘Drawing an S.’
- g. Raise your right hand as you rotate your palm to face outward (‘Shading the Eyes from the Sun’). (OM 2.6)
- h. Pivot your right forearm so that your elbow points downward and your palm faces up. (OM 2.6)
- i. Move your right hand from in front of your right shoulder to the front of your left shoulder (‘Carrying the Tray’). (OM 2.6)
- j. Sweep your right hand downward and return to the starting position. (OM 2.6)



OM 2.3



OM 2.4

Repeat on the left side, alternating the right and left sides. Your palms may become warm as you practice.

When finished, continue onto the next movement.

Transitioning to Opening Movement 3

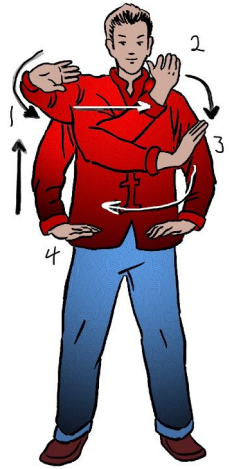
- a. Place your hands along the margin of your lower belly with your hands one fist’s width from your belly. Your wrists are slightly rotated forward so your arms bow outward. (OM 2.7)
- b. Circle your hands forward and outward while opening your arms and facing your palms downward. Brace your arms outward and push



OM 2.5

down. Apply power/jin to your wrists and the pinky side of your palms. Your body rises slightly.

- c. Rotate your hands in opposite directions. Your fingers will go from pointing inward to pointing outward. Curl the fish's tail with both hands to rotate your hands palms up with the fingers pointing inward. Finally, rotate the hands again so that they return to the original palms-down position.



OM 2.6



OM 2.7

Additional information to enhance practice:

This posture the following qi guiding patterns:

1. Breathe into the middle dantian.
2. Extend qi out from the middle dantian to the palms of the hands.

Practicing the Tracing the Taiji Symbol improves silk reeling movements and energy:

The name Silk Reeling was derived from the twisting and spiraling movements of a silkworm larva as it wraps itself in its cocoon. To draw out the silk from the cocoon, one must move smoothly and consistently. Moving too fast breaks the silk; moving too slowly causes the silk to stick to itself and become tangled.

Silk Reeling is a core method of movement used in solo taiji forms, solo exercises (chan si gong), and two-person exercises (push hands).



Making silk from silkworm cocoons by hand.

