

Ten Essentials Study Guide: Essentials 1 - 5

Compiled and edited by Marc Friedman

Listed below are the first five of Yang Cheng Fu's ten essential principles of taiji as translated by his great-grandson Yang Jun.¹ Alternate translations and bullet points are provided to clarify the meaning of each principle.

1. Empty, lively, pushing up, and energetic

Alternate Translations:

- a. An intangible and lively energy lifts the crown of the head²
 - b. Insubstantial Jin to lead the crown upward³
- Raises spirit to the top of head
 - Muscle tension in neck must be avoided or flow of chi/blood will be inhibited

2. Hold in the chest and pull up the back

Alternate Translation: Contain the chest and arc the back³

- Containing chest helps sink chi to dan tian
- Arcing the back facilitates transmission of power from the spine

3. Relax the waist

Alternate Translation: Loosening the waist³

- Tailbone must be tucked under
- Waist connects the legs and the torso

4. Separate empty and full

Alternate Translation: Distinguish insubstantial and substantial²

- Refers primarily to legs
- Double weighting must be avoided

5. Sink the shoulders and drop the elbows

- Helps to sink chi to the dan tian and to firm the root
- Positions arms properly with respect to body for energy transfer

¹ Yang Jun, <http://www.yangfamilytaichi.com/about/study>

² Louis Swaim's translation of Fu Zhongwen, *Mastering Yang Style Taijiquan*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, 1999

³ Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming, *Tai Chi Secrets of the Yang Style*, YMAA Publication Center, Boston, MA, 2001

Ten Essentials Study Guide: Essentials 6 - 10

Listed below are the second five of Yang Cheng Fu's ten essential principles of taiji as translated by his great-grandson Yang Jun.¹ Alternate translations and bullet points are provided to clarify the meaning of each principle.

6. Use intent rather than force

Alternate Translations:

- a. Use consciousness, not strength²
 - b. Use the Yi not the Li³
- Mind must be focused to lead chi
 - Body must be relaxed for chi to flow and energy to transition from soft to hard

7. Synchronize upper and lower body

Alternate Translations:

- a. Upper and lower follow one another²
- Body moves like a soft whip
 - "Root is in the feet, issued by the legs, directed by the waist, and manifested in the fingers"

8. Match up inner and outer

Alternate Translations:

- a. Internal and external are united²
 - b. Internal and external harmonize (unify) with each other³
- Spirit commands the body
 - Mind and body open and close together: body manifests intent

9. (Practice) Continuously and without interruption

Alternate Translations:

- a. Linked without breaks²
- Contrast with discrete movements of external martial arts
 - Wavelike and circular: end of each movement is beginning of next

10. Seek quiescence within movement

Alternate Translations:

- a. Seek stillness in motion²
 - b. Seeking for calmness in the movements³
- Unlike external arts, energy is conserved
 - Mind is calm, movements and breath are long and slow

¹ Yang Jun, <http://www.yangfamilytaichi.com/about/study>

² Louis Swaim's translation of Fu Zhongwen, *Mastering Yang Style Taijiquan*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, 1999

³ Dr. Yang, Jwing-Ming, *Tai Chi Secrets of the Yang Style*, YMAA Publication Center, Boston, MA, 2001