

Training Goals in Sensing Hands

The partners will work on single and double sensing hands techniques. Students begin with technique no. 1 (push for partner's center) and then progress to other techniques when they are comfortable with no. 1. In sensing hands, the tasks for each partner will be:

1. Develop "Listening Jin." To develop the skill to sense when being pushed and when not being pushed, to sense the direction of the push, to sense when your partner's push has been neutralized, and to sense when Yin should be turned into Yang. This task requires developing sensitivity of feeling, which, in turn, depends of developing an alert, focused, and relaxed mind. Closing eyes during practice will help achieve this task.

2. Learn to regulate your body in Yin movements. To learn to react to partner's push while preserving center (head upright, no tilting, no leaning) and at the same time remaining in a relaxed state, "Sung." To learn to react to partner's push by forming the two arcs of Peng—arms rounded and chest hollow, spine curved and buttocks tucked under. Tilting backward when pushed is a sure path to defeat. Tensing up is also a sure path to defeat because it will allow the pushing partner to connect to your center and root. Tensing will also inhibit Qi flow making it impossible to succeed in using internal energy at later stages of your training.

Peng should have "softness within hardness" to prevent the fault of resistance and the creation of a "double weighting" or "mutual resistance" situation. Peng should have "hardness within softness" to prevent the fault of deficiency. The fault of deficiency (collapsing Peng) will enable the pushing partner to find and attach to your center and uproot you at later stages of training.

Peng should be immediately followed by Roll Back to redirect the push to the side. The ability to redirect to the side requires relaxed waist, hips, knees and ankles. Roll Back should not commit the fault of excess. You should redirect your partner's push only to the point where the hand being pushed lines up with your shoulder. If you redirect the push farther to the side, you will have difficulty turning Yin to Yang.

3. Learn to regulate your body in Yang movements. To learn to push by correcting aligning your posture so as to connect your root to your fingertips of your pushing hand. To learn to shift your weight forward as you push but not to lean forward or to shift so far forward as to compromise your center. If you lean forward or compromise your center, you will become vulnerable to plucking at later stages of training. To learn how to use light force so as to both preserve your ability to sense your partner's reactions and to avoid wasting your energy by applying force when there is no prospect of success.

4. Learn to coordinate your breathing with Yin and Yang movements. Shifting weight forward and pushing should be coordinated with exhalation. Shifting weight backward and neutralizing

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should be coordinated with inhalation. Breathing should be slow and deep to help promote relaxation of your body and mind.

5. Learn to lead your Qi in coordination with body movements and breathing. Step by step, incorporate the martial arts breathing techniques of Yongquan Breathing, Four Gates Breathing, and Martial Grand Circulation into the sensing hands exercise.