

Best Practice for your body-mind

Beside the Golden Principles in Tai Chi there is guidance for best practice.

Practise the stances a little at a time but often.

Take one movement at a time and you will reach your goals relaxed in body-mind and spirit, rush head trying to get to the next movement then the next in as short as possible time and you will find you have not noticed that the weight in the foot should be in the left or right leg and have to go back to practice again and again, creating disharmony and confusion in body-mind and spirit.

Slowest is the fastest.

We try to consider the whole body-mind when we move from one stance to another. Sometimes it is not what to do but what not to do in our movement.

Keep the muscles soft and relaxed so they can work for longer and go further. Do not work beyond your capacity so the body is put under pressure, when you feel tired stop and relax.

If time is short and you do not have time to do the warmup exercises daily, try to fit them in, in small blank spaces over a week or doing your weekly tasks. Like practising your balance by standing on one leg in Crane or Dog stance while brushing your teeth. Practicing your Leopard stance while doing the ironing or reaching up to open and close the curtains. Stepping out into extended Dragon, Monkey or Leopard stance to pick things up of the floor.

If you want to take a leg up something must go down first.
If you want to bring a leg down something must go up first.

If you want to go to the left, turn to the right first.
If you want to go to the right, turn to the left first.

If you want to go back, go forwards first.
If you want to go forwards, go back first.

We look forwards but feel what is behind us, protecting our back.

In the martial arts we put our **attention** in one place to distract your opponent, then move in the opposite direction where our **intention** is really going to be.

The breath should be soft natural and consistent with a rhythm to a count of 5 seconds IN and 5 seconds OUT. If you find this difficult lower the count but always the same count IN to OUT.

When practising in a group we may have to adjust our rhythm by breathing in and out at a different rate, we practice keeping in pace as a whole unit therefor extending our body-mind outwards in a larger circle, moving as one breath in a unified rhythm together.