



Welcome to a program of tai chi provided in association with the Australian Academy of Tai Chi. An AATC *Special Needs Instructor* since 2002, I continue to learn and hope that you'll find it challenging and fun as we learn together.

Classes concentrate on balance and relaxation to help to maintain our physical health. While evening AATC classes (Rockhampton, Mount Morgan and Yeppoon) may have several instructors and provide instruction at individual levels, this group will include individuals who have been doing tai chi for years as well as those who've just started.

We'll work together, integrating novice and experienced practitioners in a less formal setting as we review tai chi basics and expand our repertoire of *shibashi* and similar exercises.

Lynn Zelmer, Special Needs Instructor

What the Class Involves...

While Tai Chi is based on Chinese martial arts we use it for health and relaxation. As a relaxed, almost ballet-like form it combines balance, breathing, movement and relaxation. It can be performed at your own level and shouldn't place extra stress on your body.

"The idea is to learn to do simple things in a relaxed manner and then with improved skill take on more challenging things."

Grand Master Khor, AATC Founder

Our classes include warm-up/stretching exercises, *Qigong* or *shibashi* exercises, and the first three levels of the tai chi set.

Shibashi and other repetitive exercises are easy to master and contain all of the elements for success with the tai chi set. Their rhythmic and repetitive nature promotes relaxation and meditation, usually with a balance of left and right side movements.

The tai chi set can be more complicated for beginners as movements are not directly repeated but they are built on basic forms and

encourage a slow, relaxed and graceful movement from one posture to another.

Practical Tips

Don't force the exercises. Everyone has different limits and you're the only one who knows yours. Modify the way you perform the exercise or stop and rest before you reach your limits. For example, many of the exercises can be done while sitting or you can use a chair or other balance support.

Coordinate your breathing with the movements; keep it smooth and avoid holding your breath.

Relax and flow with the exercises. Avoid making sudden movements or over-extending yourself (usually losing your balance).

Know your balance limits and keep movements within those limits. Bending the supporting knee slightly will help your balance. Slide your foot (so that it still provides some support) rather than lifting, if balance remains a difficulty.

Focus your thoughts inward on your form and posture, rather than being distracted by what other people are doing.

AATC Evening Classes

The Australian Academy of Tai Chi was established in 1976 and is internationally recognised and affiliated. Grandmaster Gary Khor, Academy founder, has developed a series of tai chi courses that adapt authentic tai chi practice to Australian learning needs. Contact Debbie, 4936 1929 a/h for details or see www.livingchi.com.au.

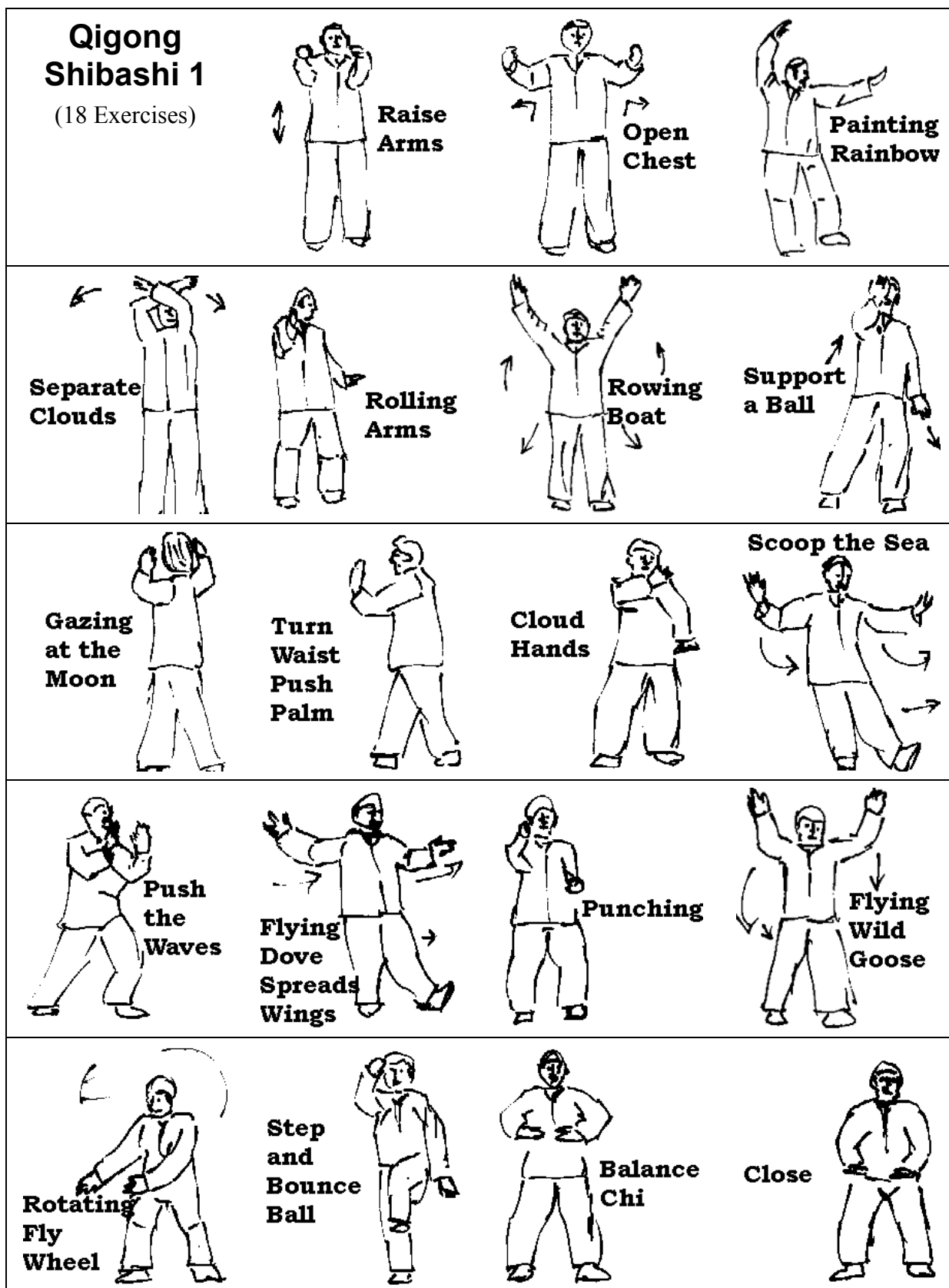
Academy books, videos, music CDs and other training materials can also be purchased.



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Rockhampton 'Special Needs' Tai Chi Classes
















The illustrations are only representative of a part of each exercise as all involve movement.

We'll normally repeat each movement four times, twice on each side if the move goes to

two sides. The exercise becomes more meditative with increased repetition (eg 8/4).

Start relaxed and in the 'horse-riding' position (feet shoulder width apart and knees unlocked).

Rockhampton 'Special Needs' Tai Chi Classes

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| <p>Chi: the power of energy</p> <p>Shibashi-II</p> <p>(18 exercises)</p> | <p>Peacock unfolds tail</p>  | <p>Small heavenly roll</p>  | <p>Needle at sea bottom</p>  |
| <p>Willows flutter in Breeze</p>  | <p>Fisherman casts net</p>  | <p>Farmer grinds corn</p>  | <p>Buddah in meditation</p>  |
| <p>Dragon circles mountain</p>  | <p>Lohan focus chi</p>  | <p>Hit tiger's ears</p>  | <p>Monkey offers peach</p>  |
| <p>Warrior draws bow</p>  | <p>Crane in flight</p>  | <p>Maiden weaves cloth</p>  | <p>Cross hands/separate legs</p>  |
| <p>Circulate energy in tan tien</p>  | <p>Embrace morning sun</p>  | <p>Standing zen</p>  | <p>Close</p> <p>Illustrations show a representative part of each movement. Repetition leads to improvement; 'listen' to what your body tells you to improve form.</p> <p>Relax, breathe slowly and don't overdo/force the movements.</p> |

Rockhampton 'Special Needs' Tai Chi Classes

Basic Stances

Horse riding stance: Stand relaxed, knees slightly bent, feet shoulder width apart and weight evenly balanced, hands at side.

Bow stance: Relaxed, one foot ahead, about a hand width space between and back foot turned 45 degrees, weight balanced, hands at side.

Narrow stance: Relaxed, balanced with weight mostly on back foot, the front foot ahead but ready to move to a new position.

Weight transfer: Shifting the weight from side to side or back to front with the body upright.

Swinging/Moving Arms: Arm movement often results from turning at the waist, with the arms gently lifted up and down as the waist turns.

The Lotus Exercise

The Lotus is a basic *Qigong* sequential set that tells a story from the time of China's Yellow Emperor:

- Wave hands in air
- Turtle treads water
- Rabbit digs earth
- Fair lady scoops water
- Lotus flower blossoms
- Face the wind (each side)
- Lift the sky (bend knees and extend)
- Press the earth (bend waist, press down, then bend knees to return)
- White crane spreads wings
- Rabbit ploughs earth
- Wave hands in air

Tai Chi Set: The Postures

The *tai chi set* has six levels of low-impact sequential exercise routines that encourage relaxation, balance and concentration. While these exercises are based on the 'hard' martial arts, they are slow, soft and meditative in practice. Special needs classes practice the first three levels only; attend an evening class if you wish to go further with your tai chi.

Start relaxed with the feet together. Grace and form come as you learn to transfer weight and practice 'tai chi walking'. Notes, with images of each posture, are on the following pages.

Level 1

Preparation, separate feet

Commencement, raise and lower arms

Holding the Ball, on right

Grasping the bird's tail, in left bow stance

Holding the ball, on left

Ward off, in right bow stance

Pull back, in right bow stance

Press, in right bow stance

Push, in right bow stance

Single whip, in left bow stance

Play guitar, in left empty stance

Level 2

Shoulder stroke, with right shoulder

White crane spreads its wings, in right empty stance

Brushing knee, in left bow stance

Play guitar, in right empty stance

Block back, in right empty stance

Slant flying, in left bow stance

Forward deflection, with right fist

Kick and thrust, with right heel

Parry, with left hand

Punch, right fist in left bow stance

Close the door, in left bow stance

Cross hands, central stance

Level 3

Embrace the tiger, in right bow stance

Needle at sea bottom, in left empty stance

Fan to back, in right bow stance

Snake creeps down, left crouch stance

Seven star punch, in right empty stance

Jade lady shuttles to four corners

Punch under the elbow, in right empty stance

Tai chi, like any exercise routine, is very easy 'not to do'. Spending even a few minutes each day on simple weight transfer or movements from the shabishi sets, however, can quickly improve both your form and your well being.



Khor Tai Chi Movement Set — Levels 1-3

The Academy's Khor tai chi set is a series of *postures* and joining *movements* based on the Yang tai chi martial art tradition. While similar postures and movements (usually performed much faster and with considerable force) can be found in most of the martial arts, tai chi emphasises an internal focus, which encourages inner calm, balance and smoothness of movement.

In a very real sense there is no 'right' or 'wrong' to tai chi, only individual 'improvement' as we work on coordination, balance and breathing as much as form. We all perform the set slightly differently each time we do it... as we gain experience (skill and relaxation) and concentrate on different aspects (breathing, form, balance, posture, internal focus, etc.) or are influenced by the locale and other external events.

Tai chi is all about focussing on what we are doing, rather than what's happening around us. It's being relaxed, and a good tai chi experience brings pleasure from a relaxed and enjoyable 'moving meditation'.

These notes provide an outline of the first three levels of the tai chi set. Along with my videotapes they will hopefully inspire you to continue with tai chi beyond our classes. I know from experience that exercise is very easy 'not to do', but is also very important to our health.

Relax and enjoy,

Lynn Zelmer, Special Needs Instructor

Movement Tips

All tai chi movements begin in a relaxed position, breath even and deep, knees slightly bent. Breathe through the nose, with the tongue resting on the roof of the mouth and breathe out fully, rather than trying to take in a big breath.

In the *bow stance* the feet are almost shoulder width apart but one is ahead of the other; weight is balanced, and the back foot is positioned at roughly 45° to provide maximum balance.

An *empty stance* is similar to the bow stance, except that most of the weight is on one foot and the feet are closer together in preparation for a kick.

Chinese tradition locates the body's store of energy in the *tun tien*—the lower abdomen (behind and below the belly button).

The *zen* position has the feet parallel and shoulder width apart, knees slightly bent and weight balanced, with the hands on the *tun tien*. We often take this position for warm-ups and quiet meditation.

Many tai chi movements work much better if you *sink* into them by bending your knees and relaxing. This lowers your centre of gravity and enhances balance.

Finally, your balance is enhanced if you maintain an upright body posture—imagine yourself as a puppet hanging from a string attached to the top of your head!

The illustrations here are only a guide to the form—I'm learning and improving my form too.

Level 1

Preparation, separate feet

Start relaxed, feet together, knees slightly bent and back straight, head upright. Several deep breaths (from the bottom of the *tun tien*) help to relax.

Commencement, raise and lower arms



Holding the Ball, on right



Khor Tai Chi Movement Set — Levels 1-3

Grasping the Bird's Tail, in left bow stance



Holding the Ball, on left



Ward Off, in right bow stance



Pull Back, in right bow stance



Press, in right bow stance



Push, in right bow stance



Single Whip, in left bow stance



Concentrate on palm of hand, weight shifts for feet to rotate.



Finish with hook and block



Khor Tai Chi Movement Set — Levels 1-3

Play Guitar, in left empty stance



Brushing knee, in left bow stance



Slant flying, in left bow stance



Level 2

Shoulder stroke, with right shoulder



Play guitar, in right empty stance



**Forward deflection, with right fist
Kick and thrust, with right heel**



White crane spreads its wings, in right empty stance



Block back, in right empty stance



**Parry, with left hand
Punch, right fist in left bow stance**



Khor Tai Chi Movement Set — Levels 1-3

Close the door, in left bow stance



Cross hands, central stance

Level 3

Embrace the tiger, in right bow stance

Slash out as you turn and block

Needle at sea bottom, in left empty stance



Fan to back, in right bow stance



Snake creeps down, left crouch stance



Seven star punch, in right empty stance



The Jade Lady seems complex... but it's simply a series of four 'hold the ball and block/push'. Start with your weight back in the Seven Star Punch; and remember left toe into right instep as you turn.

Jade lady shuttles to four corners, hold ball and turn



Punch under the elbow, in right empty stance



Close, feet together

We always use the standard close to return to the starting position and indicate the set's completion.

Practice

Although each movement flows into the next, it helps to pause (relax and sink) momentarily at the end of each posture/movement.

- Maintain an upright stance
- Coordinate balance, breathing and weight transfer, aiming for a smooth flow of movement
- Don't push beyond your balance or strength/energy limits—use tai chi to relax, not as 'punishment'.