

C.K. Chern's Vertical Axis Tai Chi Chuan Form
(Cheng Man Ching's Yang Style as revised by Chern Chyu Kuan)

F=Front B=Back/Rear L=Left R=Right Corner = 45 degrees

Notes:

Hands rarely rise above solar-plexus; legs rarely step beyond shoulder-width. Nothing is forced; breathe and move comfortably. All movement starts in bubbling well, kidney 1 point in foot. Hands are internally connected to feet. There is a clear separation between weight-shifts and body-turns; all steps are “empty”, so that the weight does not transfer while stepping.

Close the Gate: to turn body into front-loaded hip while dragging ball of empty foot forward to $\sim 45^\circ$. It is done after a weight shift and ends in a bow stance.

Shan Jien: “bear-posture” hands at belly-height, palms facing each other.

Chern's 4 Principles of Tai Chi:

- Drop the sacrum; suspend the head top (vertical axis)
- Drop the weight into one foot (single-weightedness)
- Drop the shoulders and elbows
- Drop the solar-plexus and expand the back

1. Commencement (F)

(Heels together, feet out at ~ 30 degrees)

-Drop weight into right leg,

-Step to left with left foot, toe forward,

-Shift weight to left foot, turning body slightly toward front-right corner,

-Turn body forward, straightening right foot (feet parallel),

-Shift weight to center.

-Float arms forward and up from shoulders, sinking elbows as hips break,

-Extend from shoulder blades, pushing forward through fingers,

-Relax wrists and let arms drop down to sides,

-Push down.

2. Grasp Sparrow's Tail

a) Ward Off Left (F)

-Shift weight to left foot,

-Turn body to right, pivoting right foot on heel, holding energy ball, right hand high with palm down, left hand low with palm up,

-Shift weight to right foot,

-Step to front with left foot, careful to keep a channel between feet,

-Shift weight to left foot as left hand floats and right hand sinks,

-Close the gate to left, round off left arm at solar-plexus (left bow stance).

b) Ward Off Right (R)

- Release left hip, turning body to front-right corner as right palm turns up,
- Step wide with right foot to rear-right corner,
- Shift weight to right foot as right hand floats to level of left hand,
- Close the gate to right, turning hands over so right palm is up and left palm is down. Both hands extend forward (right bow stance).

c) Roll Back (F)

- Shift weight to left foot as hands turn half-over, palms facing one another, in a high Shan Jien,
- Turn into left hip as arms relax down, left hand turns palm out, right hand turns palm in.

d) Press (R)

- Shift weight to right foot as hands float in front of body,
- Turn to right, gently pressing right palm with left hand.

e) Push (R)

- Shift weight back to left foot as hands separate, palms down,
- Shift weight to right foot, pushing from shoulder blades through fingers.

3. Single Whip (L)

- Shift weight to left leg, relaxing wrists,
- Turn into left hip and turn right foot on heel (T stance). Hands and toes of right foot face front,
- Shift weight to right leg, left hand sinks,
- Turn into right hip as right hand forms relaxed eagle's beak at solar-plexus height and left hand turns palm up below right hand,
- Release (unwind) right hip, projecting right arm to front right corner with elbow down as left foot turns on ball and body turns to front left corner,
- Step wide with left foot to rear left corner,
- Shift weight to left foot as left arm floats up centerline of body,
- Close the gate, turning left as left palm turns down (left bow stance).

4. Play the Harp (F)

- Release left hip, turning body to face front while hands drop wide to sides in Shan Jien (right hand opens), right foot turns on ball, toes point forward,
- Relax both hands down and pull right heel back to left ankle,
- Raise and extend both arms forward with left palm even with right elbow as you extend right foot forward (grounded heel kick).

5. Shoulder Bump (F)

- Let right foot and hands drop back to body,
- Step forward with right foot, as left hand floats to right elbow,
- Shift weight to right foot while supporting right elbow with left hand, as body turns slightly to left.

6. White Crane Spreads its Wings (L)

- Turn into right hip, relaxing everything to face front, arms in Shan Jien,
- Release hip to turn body left, letting right arm swing up to front-left corner, palm down, as left foot turns on ball of foot, left hand stays low, palm down (right cat stance).

7. Brush Left Knee (L)

- Turn into right hip, relaxing everything to face front, arms in Shan Jien,
- Step slightly out with left foot to rear left corner as right arm floats to front,
- Shift weight to left foot while right forearm turns around energy ball and right hand “flops” over and hangs down,
- Close the gate while right hand spirals forward and left hand brushes in front of left thigh (left bow stance).

8. Play the Harp (L)

- Release left hip as body turns to front-left corner, right foot turns on ball,
- Step slightly to front with right foot to straighten leg,
- Shift weight to right foot, body faces left, as hands return to Shan Jien,
- Relax both hands down and pull left heel back to right ankle,
- Raise and extend both arms forward with right palm even with left elbow as you extend left foot forward (grounded heel kick).

9. Brush Left Knee (L) (same as above)

10. Step, Parry, and Punch (L)

- Shift weight to right foot,
- Turn body and left foot out to left-rear corner as hands return to Shan Jien,
- Shift weight to left leg,
- Right foot makes a circle step (in then out) to point to left-front corner,
- Shift weight to right foot and make a fist with right hand,
- Turn into right hip, swinging left foot, hip, shoulder, and arm to left direction,
- Shift weight to left foot as body turns to front (leaving left hand where it is in space) while dragging right heel with body until it is 90 degrees to left foot,
- Close the gate, punching with right fist toward left direction, sliding under left hand so that left hand is at crease of right elbow (left bow stance).

11. Withdraw and Push (L)

- Turn left palm under right elbow, palm up,
- Shift weight to right foot while leaving left hand in space, right wrist brushing over left wrist and separating hands,
- Shift weight to left foot and push as hands turn palms down.

12. Cross Hands (F)

- Relax wrists while shifting weight to right foot,
- Turn into right hip, turning body to front while left foot turns on heel, (T stance) Hands and toes of left foot point to front, palms down,
- Shift weight to left foot while dropping arms wide to sides of body, right foot turning on ball,
- Bring arms to center as right foot steps back parallel to left foot. Arms continue motion, floating crossed (right outside left) in front of body.

(If ending form at this point: 12a. Close (F))

- Shift weight to center as arms drop and push down with hands,
- Shift weight to right foot, turning body slightly to left,
- Adjust left foot to ~ 30 degrees and bring in into right foot,
- Shift weight to left foot, turn body to front, adjust right foot to ~ 30 degrees, heels together
- Shift weight to center and push down.)

13. Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain (R)

(Weight still on left foot)

- Drop hands and turn body to right, right foot turns on ball,
- Step wide with right foot to rear-right corner as left arm floats to front,
- Shift weight and flop left hand as in “Brush Knee”,
- Close the gate, extending thru left fingertips with right hand low, palm up/out

14. Grasp Sparrow’s Tail (R)

a.) Roll Back

- As you shift weight to left foot, allow right arm to rise slightly higher than left arm, then turn into left hip to continue “Roll Back”

b.) Press

c.) Push

15. Diagonal Single Whip (Left-Front Corner)

(Same as “Single Whip” but initial turn is only 45° so you end up on front-left diagonal instead of facing left direction.)

16. Fist Under Elbow (L)

- Shift weight to right leg and relax both arms into Shan Jien,
- Turn slightly left and drag left foot to face left direction,
- Shift weight to left foot,
- Turn into left hip, swinging right foot and arm to front-left corner,
- Shift weight to right foot,
- Open left to rear, left foot turns on ball, arms swing out in wide Shan Jien,
- Turn body back to face left direction as
 - a) left hand swings down and then back up in front of shoulder, fingers forward, palms facing front direction,
 - b) right hand swings a little higher than left, then drops down in a fist just under left elbow,
 - c) left foot swings forward to left direction in a grounded heel kick.

17. Repulse Monkey (L) (three times)

- Turn right to front direction, swinging arms down into Shan Jien,
- Turn back to left direction as right hand circles upward counter-clockwise and flops, palm down, as in “Brush Knee” at solar-plexus height and left hand circles clockwise down in front of left thigh with palm up/out,
- Empty step back with left foot, toes pointed more or less to left direction,
- Shift weight back onto left foot, dropping into heel while extending right hand, adjusting right foot so that it faces left direction, somewhat parallel to left foot,
- Repeat sequence on left side, then repeat sequence on right side.

18. Diagonal Flying (Right Front Corner)

- Turn to back direction swinging arms down as in “Repulse Monkey Left”,
- Turn back to face left-front corner as left hand circles upward counter-clockwise and flops, palm down, and right hand turns palm up, holding energy ball as right foot turns on ball (turn out of left hip as far as possible),
- Circle-step wide with right foot to front-right corner,
- Shift weight to right foot, as hands separate and extend (right hand high with palm up at front-right corner, left hand low with palm down at rear-left corner).

19. Cloud Hands (R, L, R, L)

- a) -Turn into right hip toward right direction, as
 - i. right arm extends to right at solar-plexus height with palm down,
 - ii. left hand drops to dan tien height with palm up
 - iii. left foot turns on its toe (heel up), then adjusts so feet are parallel, shoulder-width, facing forward,
- b) -Shift weight to left foot as hands return to Shan Jien,
 - Turn into left hip toward left direction, as
 - i. left arm extends to left at solar-plexus height with palm down,
 - ii. right hand drops to dan tien height with palm up
 - iii. right foot steps toward left, into narrow stance with feet parallel,
- c) -Drop weight to right foot as hands return to Shan Jien,
 - Turn into right hip toward right direction, as
 - i. right arm extends to right at solar-plexus height with palm down,
 - ii. left hand drops to dan tien height with palm up
- d) -Left foot steps out to left, parallel to right foot
 - Shift weight to left foot as hands return to Shan Jien,
 - Turn into left hip toward left direction, as
 - i. left arm extends to left at solar-plexus height with palm down,
 - ii. right hand drops to dan tien height with palm up.

20. Single Whip (L)

- Step to front with right foot,
- Shift weight to right foot,
- Continue “Single Whip” (same as above)

21. Snake Creeps Down (L)

- Further tuck into left hip to push out right heel to right-front corner,
- Turn out of left hip to open right toes to front,
- Shift weight to right foot (make sure right knee is over right foot),
- Sit into right hip tucking the body with back straight, dipping left hand to circle around the clock: 12:00-3:00-6:00, as left toes separate from floor.

22. Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg (L)

- a) -Shift weight onto left foot as left hand continues circle around the clock: 9:00-12:00, body still inclined
 - Push into ground with left foot to open out of left hip as
 - i. right leg swings forward to left direction until knee rises to hip height,
 - ii. right hand swings forward to left, fingers point up at throat height
 - iii. left hand drops beside left thigh as in “Brush Knee”.
- b) -Drop right leg, stepping back, toes roughly toward left direction,
 - Shift weight to right foot,
 - Repeat “Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg”, on opposite side.

23. Separation Kicks (to Left Front Corner, to Left Back Corner)

- a) -Drop left leg, stepping back, toes roughly toward left direction,
 - Shift weight to left foot as left hand drops down and right hand floats up,
 - Turn into left hip toward rear-left corner as hands return to Shan Jien,
 - Turn back out of left hip toward front-left corner as outside of left wrist joins inside of right wrist in “Cross-Hands”,
 - Lift right leg in low kick with top of foot as hands separate: right hand to front-left corner, palm facing left; left hand to rear-left corner, palm down.
- b) -Drop right leg, stepping back, toes toward left direction,
 - Shift weight to right foot as body opens to rear-left corner and hands turn so that palms face each other,
 - Turn into right hip toward front-left corner as hands return to Shan Jien,
 - Turn back out of right hip toward rear-left corner as outside of right wrist joins inside of left wrist in “Cross-Hands”,
 - Lift left leg in low kick with top of foot as hands separate: left hand to rear-left corner, palm facing right; right hand to front-left corner, palm down.

24. Turn, Heel Kick(R)

- Tuck into right hip, turning body slightly to right as left foot swings right to wind up and hands turn so that palms face each other,
- Spiral out of right foot, pivoting on right heel 180° to face right direction as
 - i. left leg extends to help the turn and then toes touch the ground,
 - ii. arms drop, wrists join right-over-left (keeping structure),
 - iii. energy stays down, rooted in the right foot,
- Raise hands in “Cross-Hands”, outside of right wrist joining inside of left wrist, as you lift left knee, keeping the sacrum sinking down,
- Kick out low with left heel to right direction (knee stays in same location), as hands separate, left hand toward right direction with palm right, right hand toward rear with palm down.

25. Brush Left/Right Knee (R)

- a) -Drop left foot, stepping to front-right corner,
 - Continue “Brush Left Knee” (Same as above).
- b) -Shift weight to right foot,
 - Turn body left (to right-front corner) as hands form Shan Jien,
 - Shift weight to left foot,
 - Right foot steps to right direction,
 - Shift weight to right foot while left forearm turns around energy ball and left hand “flops” over and hangs down,
 - Close the gate while left hand spirals forward and right hand brushes in front of right thigh (right bow stance).

26. Punch to Groin (R)

- Shift weight to left foot,
- Turn body right (to right-rear corner) as hands form Shan Jien,
- Shift weight to right foot,
- Left foot steps to right direction,
- Shift weight to left foot as right hand makes fist and body opens to rear,
- Close the gate, extending low punch to right direction as left hand brushes left knee (body inclines and sacrum drops even more than usual).

27. Grasp Sparrow’s Tail (R)

- Shift weight to right foot as body returns to upright posture,
- Turn body left (to right-front corner) as hands return to Shan Jien,
- Shift weight to left foot,
- Right foot steps to right direction,
 - a) **Ward Off Right**
 - b) **Roll Back**
 - c) **Press**
 - d) **Push**
 - e) **Single Whip**

28. Fair Lady Works the Shuttles (RF; LF; LB; RB)

- a) -Shift weight to right foot as left hand drops to dan tien,
 - Turn into right hip, turning body and left arm to front direction as left foot pivots on heel: careful to get toes facing front (kick-out heel if needed),
 - Shift weight to left foot, sitting into left hip,
 - Turn body to front-right corner, turning out right hand & foot (heel-pivot),
 - Shift weight to right foot,
 - Step to front-right corner with left foot,

- Shift weight to left foot as
 - i. left hand floats up center line of body,
 - ii. body opens slightly to right,
 - iii. heel adjusts to prepare for bow stance
 - Close the gate to right front corner with palms down, left hand slightly higher than right (left hand knife edge, right hand extend through fingers).
- b) -(Cheat-step as needed: step back with right foot to left direction),
- Shift weight to right foot as right hand drops to dan tien with palm up and left hand turns palm in,
 - Turn body right to rear direction, left foot pivots on heel - careful to get toes facing rear direction (kick-out heel if needed),
 - Shift weight to left foot,
 - Continue turning right (turn out of left hip as far as possible), allowing right foot to pivot on ball,
 - Circle-step with right foot to front-left corner (careful to make a channel),
 - Shift weight to right foot as
 - i. right hand floats up center line of body,
 - ii. body opens slightly to left,
 - iii. heel adjusts to prepare for bow stance
 - Close the gate to front-left corner with palms down, right hand slightly higher than left (right hand knife edge, left hand extend through fingers).
- c) -Shift weight to left foot as left hand drops to dan tien with palm up and right hand turns palm in,
- Cross-step with right foot, swinging right leg in front of left foot,
 - Drop weight into right foot,
 - Step out to rear-left corner with left foot,
 - Shift weight to left foot as
 - i. left hand floats up center line of body,
 - ii. body opens slightly to right (front-left corner),
 - iii. heel adjusts to prepare for bow stance
 - Close the gate to rear-left corner with palms down, left hand slightly higher than right (left hand knife edge, right hand extend through fingers).
- d) -(Cheat-step as needed: step back with right foot to left direction),
- Shift weight to right foot as right hand drops to dan tien with palm up and left hand turns palm in,
 - Turn body right to front direction, left foot pivots on heel - careful to get toes facing front direction (kick-out heel if needed),

- Shift weight to left foot,
- Continue turning right (turn out of left hip as far as possible), allowing right foot to pivot on ball,
- Circle-step with right foot to rear-right corner (careful to make a channel),
- Shift weight to right foot as
 - iv. right hand floats up center line of body,
 - i. body opens slightly to left (right direction),
 - ii. heel adjusts to prepare for bow stance
- Close the gate to rear-right corner with palms down, right hand slightly higher than left (right hand knife edge, left hand extend through fingers).

29. Grasp Sparrow's Tail

- Shift weight to left foot as
 - i. left hand drops to dan tien with palm up,
 - ii. right hand drops to solar-plexus with palm down, holding energy ball,
 - iii. right toe turns in, facing right direction,
- Shift weight back to right foot, tucking into right hip,
- Release right hip, turning body to front direction as left foot turns on ball,
 - a.) **Ward Off Left (F)**
 - b.) **Ward Off Right (R)**
 - c.) **Roll Back (F)**
 - d.) **Press (R)**
 - e.) **Push (R)**

30. Single Whip (L) (same as above)

31. Snake Creeps Down (L) (same as above)

32. Seven Stars of the Dipper (L)

- Shift weight onto left foot as left hand continues circle around the clock: 9:00-12:00, body still inclined
- Push into ground with left foot to open out of left hip as
 - i. right leg swings forward to left direction in a grounded heel kick,
 - ii. hands swing forward to left direction in cross-hands, making fists at solar-plexus height as outside of left wrist joins inside of right wrist.

33. White Crane Spreads its Wings - Ride the Tiger (L)

- Step back with right foot as hands open,
- Shift weight to right foot,
- Turn into right hip, relaxing everything to face front, arms in Shan Jien,

-Release hip to turn body left, letting right arm swing up to front-left corner, palm down, as left foot turns on ball of foot, left hand stays low, palm down.

34. Turn Body, Lotus Kick (L)

-Return hands to Shan Jien as you pivot right on the ball of the right foot, nearly 270°, until your body is facing the rear or rear-right corner (it's ok for the left foot to help push you around, but the body's weight must remain firmly on the right foot), ending with left foot empty toward the rear-right corner with toes pointing to the rear direction,

-Shift weight to left foot,

-Open out of left hip to turn body right one-quarter turn to face left direction, as palms turn down,

-Lotus kick: circle leg up from left to right, using arms as counter-balance,

-Drop right foot down in front-left direction, with a fairly wide channel.

35. Bend the Bow to Shoot the Tiger (LB)

-Shift weight to right foot as both hands make fists, right hand extended above solar-plexus to left direction, left hand below solar-plexus to rear-left direction, -Close the gate, the lower body turning right, as the shoulders turn left, slightly extending the arms (right fist goes to left direction and turns slightly counter-clockwise; left fist extends down slightly to rear and turns slightly clockwise). Look left to rear direction. This is only place in form where spine twists.

36. Step, Parry, and Punch, Withdraw and Push (L)

-Un-twist spine as you drag left foot in, touching heel of right foot,

-Drop weight into left foot and return hands to Shan Jien,

-Continue with Parry and Punch, Withdraw and Push (Same as above)

37. Cross Hands to Close and Seal (F)

-Shift weight to center as arms drop and push down with hands,

-Shift weight to right foot, turning body slightly to left,

-Adjust left foot to ~ 30 degrees and bring in into right foot,

-Shift weight to left foot, turn body to front, adjust right foot to ~ 30 degrees, heels together

-Shift weight to center and push down.