

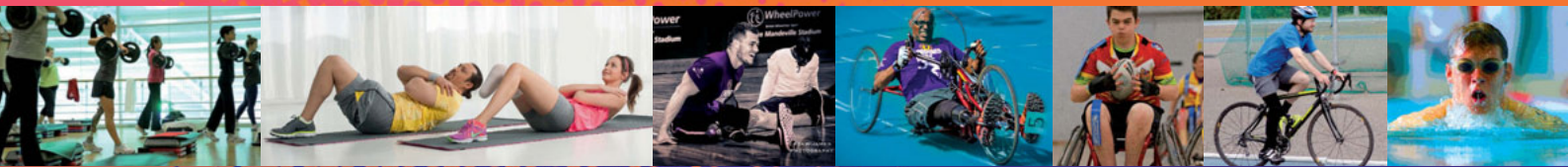


RESOURCEGUIDE

TAI CHI



A Guide to Tai Chi for Amputees and individuals with limb difference



Seemingly simple and gentle, Tai Chi delivers a personal workout that can equal a more outwardly vigorous aerobic exercise, such as Zumba, for improving health and fitness. Regular practice of Tai Chi will help build strength, improve balance and coordination, and can promote a deep sense of relaxation and wellness. You can enjoy your Tai Chi practice by yourself or within a group of like-minded people. The social aspects of group Tai Chi practice can prove especially beneficial for older adults living with limb-loss or limb difference who may also experience prolonged periods of living by themselves or find it more difficult to get out. The added motivation of regular social contact has proven one of the main reasons people enjoy Tai Chi.

CONTENTS:

Page 2	What is Tai Chi?
Page 6	Baduanjin – Eight Strands of Brocade
Page 9-11	The Baduanjin set – the Eight Strands of Brocade – Qigong (chee-gong)
Page 12	Tai Chi for people living with limb-loss

“Regular practice of Tai Chi will help build strength, improve balance and coordination, and can promote a deep sense of relaxation and wellness”

What is Tai Chi?

Tàijǐ often gets simplified to 'Tai Chi' in the west and has become commonly used as a way of referring to the martial art of Tàijíquán 太极拳 – meaning Supreme Ultimate Boxing Art.

Academics acknowledge Tàijíquán's origins stem from Chen Village, Henan, China, in the 17th century. Since then Tai Chi, as it has become known, has spread around the world into five distinct styles called: Chen, Yang, Wu, Hao (Wu) and Sun. Each style may have different moves and characteristics, but all abide by the same embodied principles that make Tai Chi the standout exercise it enjoys today.

Tai Chi is practiced and taught in a range of venues, from health-centres, hospital outpatient clinics, community hubs and spaces, faith organisations, spa and leisure facilities, indoors and outside.

Tai Chi Principles – The unique ingredients that make Tai Chi a special practice

Tai Chi embodies a complete way of being, a philosophy of life, as well as a great way of getting active, keeping fit, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Like a subtle form of dance, Tai Chi teaches you to coordinate your upper and lower limb movements with the controlled transfer of your body weight from one stance to another. The hands, arms, legs and feet all move in circular and spiral patterns combined with turns of the torso via the waist, neck and head. In Tai Chi you must engage all parts of the body under the orchestration of your mind. When people see Tai Chi being performed or practiced they often say it looks like meditation in motion.

Tai Chi can be a challenge for people with lower and upper limb difference and with reduced mobility, but once mastered can

be very rewarding. Like any exercise you can adapt each movement to suit your impairment or level of ability. Where finger and hand movements are suggested you can use your residual limb to follow the movement pattern and if you choose to you can image the flow of the movement through the absent hands and fingers.

People who practice Tai Chi regularly report that they feel a great deal of satisfaction in learning and then mastering even a few sequences from a Tai Chi form. This sense of mastery becomes an important benefit in its own right. People who attend Tai Chi for Health classes say they feel more confident, calmer, and more able to take on the day-to-day tasks and activities of work and home.

No matter what style of Tai Chi you practice a knowledgeable and experienced teacher will help you develop your mastery in the Tai Chi Principles and will help you to adapt the movements to suit your impairment and individual needs.



The most important Tai Chi Principles for you to know and practice include:

- Maintain the torso, shoulders, neck and head in a relaxed and balanced position
- Careful controlled transfer of one's weight via the pelvis from stance to stance (This will take practice if you are a lower limb amputee)
- Moving slowly in a smooth continuous flow of movement with a sense of gentle resistance
- Developing the feeling for Sōng 松 meaning a relaxed muscular system
- Developing the quality of Jing 靜 meaning a serene and quiet state of heart-mind, often referred to as 'movement with stillness'
- Developing the quality of Péng 篷 meaning literally awning or stretched cover, but in the context of Tai Chi means to extend strength or support in all directions

A Guide to Tai Chi for Amputees and individuals with limb difference

Tai Chi for People Living with Limb-loss?

Living with limb-loss or limb difference, whether we experienced loss of a limb/s very early in life or have had an amputation as an adult brings with it some unique challenges.

Our bodies must compensate for the asymmetries created by the loss of bone and muscle. As a consequence, we learn to adapt and rely on larger muscle groups close to or within the torso to maintain balance and to initiate movement. These large groups of 'core' muscles play an important role in stability and movement for all people, not just those of us living with limb-loss.

For someone living with limb difference, especially with a lower-limb amputation, developing and maintaining stability in lateral directions (side to side movements) becomes an imperative for us to successfully increase our activity levels. The Tai Chi for Health program places special emphasis on this kind of lateral stability within the Core Movement Sequences.

The deliberate and purposeful elements of Tai Chi can prove especially beneficial for people with limb difference. Tai Chi really asks you to take time, to slow down, and tune in to how you move your body as efficiently as possible. Something that people with limb-loss or limb difference often find themselves having to do. This deliberate slowing down has the simultaneous benefit of calming the mental chatter in our heads as you focus and concentrate on the practice.

Tai Chi emphasizes maintaining balance – both in physical space as well in our own

internal mental space. A famous saying in Tai Chi circles goes – "Protect the centre". This centre relates to an area in the lower part of the torso call the Dāntián in Chinese or the 'Hara' in Japanese. Tai Chi requires you to shift your awareness down to the area of the Dāntián, your pelvis and hips.

As you first stand and then begin to move through the Tai Chi sequences you will begin to feel how the large structure of bone, ligaments and muscle that makes up the pelvis plays such an important role in balance and movement. It both supports everything above it – your torso, neck, head, shoulder girdle, arms and hands – while at the same time acts as the keystone that connects our lower-limbs including your residual limb and prosthesis.

This connection or bridge (Dang in Chinese) creates the fulcrum from which you can initiate dynamic movement produced from your feet and legs. The force of your legs can only have effect because of the bridging/connecting element that the pelvis provides. For someone living with lower limb-loss using prosthetic legs you quickly realise just how profound the loss of a lower-limb impacts your ability to balance or move dynamically. This is similar for someone living with lower limb-difference who has reduced mobility or lacks muscular strength.

Tai Chi can help you to recruit the resources you do have, whether biological or technological, to fully optimise your ability to balance in standing movements as well as in dynamic movements such as walking, running, bending, climbing or descending steps or stairs.

As you make progress with your practice, at first mastering the coordination of the movements, then building your strength and improving your balance, you can bring

additional elements to increase the challenge. You can add supporting the load of two very light weights in your hands (residual limbs), two 500g soft medicine balls or two tins from your kitchen cupboards for example, will offer a surprising amount of resistance that will build additional strength throughout your body.

What are the benefits for you?

Evidence from research appears to support that regular practice of Tai Chi can:

1. Build strength – so important for maintaining overall health as well as enabling us to enjoy activities throughout our lives
2. Improve balance, especially important for people with limb-loss and limb difference
3. Maintain bone density through the sustained load bearing of the exercise
4. Improve cardio-pulmonary function (See BBC Trust Me, I'm a doctor link)
5. Improve range of movement and flexibility
6. May enable people to better cope with pain or experience some pain reduction
7. Offer people a sense of mastery, positively affecting self-worth and confidence
8. Promote a deep lasting relaxation response that improves quality of sleep and quality of life
9. Improve cognitive function and memory recall



“Look for a local class with a teacher who is prepared to adapt the practice to suit your impairment”

I Would Like to Give Tai Chi a Try – Where Next?

If you would like to learn and practice Tai Chi regularly look for a local class with a teacher who is prepared to adapt the practice to suit your impairment. Attend the class with a clear idea of what you would like to achieve or gain from learning Tai Chi:

Decide on your goals or aims, i.e.:

1. “I would like to learn Tai Chi to improve my balance and confidence during regular activities of day-to-day living.”
2. “I would like to benefit from the mind/body benefits of Tai Chi to feel more relaxed, coping with pain, or improve concentration.”
3. “I would like to socialise and make friends while I enjoy learning some Tai Chi forms.”
4. “I would like to learn the martial forms and applications of Tai Chi in a self-defence class.” (Could involve quite intense partner work such as sparring or even full-contact fighting if that's your goal).

Currently, UK based Tai Chi Teachers/Instructors are unregulated. No organisation has government recognition for a generally acknowledged minimum standard of qualifications or requirements of a teacher or instructor. Be aware of this when joining a Tai Chi class, ask questions to ascertain the level of experience the Tai Chi instructor has.

- Tai Chi teacher should have a good understanding of human anatomy and physiology such as you would expect from a Level 2 or higher, Fitness

Instructor or Personal Trainer.

- All teachers/instructors should have appropriate insurance, have a DBS check, and an up to date First Aid qualification.
- When contacting a Tai Chi class ask the teacher if they have experience working with people with long term health conditions or disabilities. How confident or comfortable do they sound with you attending the class?
- They should have good knowledge of the historical origins of Tai Chi.
- Tai Chi instructors should have five years of experience before independent teaching.
- A Tai Chi instructor should have excellent teaching skills. Having the skills to work with people living with limb-loss places extra demands upon a teacher/instructor.
- Tai Chi for Health Instructors must undertake a rigorous learning programme with an examination and formal assessment to ensure they teach in a safe and effective manner. They must register with the Tai Chi for Health Institute on qualifying, abide by a Code of Conduct, and update their knowledge and practice every two years to stay compliant with the standards set by the Board at the Tai Chi for Health Institute. You can find a Board Certified Tai Chi for Health Instructor by visiting the Tai Chi for Health Institute website <https://taichiforhealthinstitute.org/instructors/>.

Top Tips to Enjoy Your Practice

Wear comfortable loose clothing to allow for movement sequences.

As a person with limb-loss, be it upper-limb or lower-limb, stump care always takes precedence. Do check out the resources LimbPower have produced about starting and enjoying any physical activity to ensure you stay safe and remain comfortable.

Learning to coordinate the slow, purposeful, mindful movements will prove your first step toward mastery of this wonderful form of exercise. As you become more familiar with the movements and sequences you can really delve into the depths of what regular Tai Chi practice can offer. You may find the following top tips useful to guide your practice:

• Relax - 松 – Sōng

Relax physically and mentally. Sometimes we can overthink things and worry about performing perfectly. Letting go of those expectations will help you find the right frame of mind for enjoying your Tai Chi practice.

• Support & Poise

Tune into the sensation of your body's mass and weight passing down your legs and feet into the ground. At the same time carry your body, head, shoulder girdle, arms and hands with a relaxed sense of poise and balance.

• Slow Down

Moving slowly allows us to sense our body's position and tune into excessive muscular tension. We have time to make subtle adjustments to our posture as we coordinate and integrate all the movements that make up a particular movement or sequence.

• 70% Rule

In our classes and workshops, we encourage you to stay within a comfortable range of movement – 70% of your natural

A Guide to Tai Chi for Amputees and individuals with limb difference

range. By not over stretching we can safely enjoy our practice and reduce risk of injury.

- **STOP!** If you feel any pain or severe discomfort, stop. Don't push things. Keep things light and easy. We don't abide by the "No Gain Without Pain" mantra.

- **Deliberate & Purposeful**

Whenever we practice Tai Chi, even for just a few minutes, try to bring all your attention to it. This kind of deliberate or mindful practice can prove challenging as first but by taking things easy we can find a renewed relationship with ourselves and toward others.

- **Smooth Continuous Movement**

Once we have learnt a few sequences we need to smooth out the rough edges and begin to develop a feel for the smooth continuous flow of movement so indicative of Tai Chi.

- **Little and Often**

A little practice goes a long, long way. It takes three to four weeks of daily short periods of practice to establish a good habit or routine. With a little 恒 – héng or perseverance we find we have travelled further than we think from when we first started.

- **Patience**

Be patient with your progress. Evidence from research seems to corroborate the anecdotal reports from participants in our classes – that it takes roughly 12 weeks to feel the benefits of regular Tai Chi practice.

Look out for the little wins each day – Feeling more confident on your feet for instance or having more confidence to take on the tasks of day to day living. As you notice these little wins appreciate those moments and give yourself a pat on the back – you did this :)

Profiles

Philip Sheridan

Board Certified Tai Chi for Health Instructor

Philip has practised Tai Chi, Qigong and other martial arts for over 34 years. He founded Huntun Tai Chi™ in 2016 teaching accredited Tai Chi for Health Programmes.

When not teaching or running Tai Chi workshops Philip works as a facilitator and tutor on the 5-year Medicine and Surgery MBChB at the School of Medicine, University of Leeds. He also regularly features as a guest lecturer at other Universities across the country.

In 2002, Philip survived a near fatal road accident where he suffered significant injuries and the amputation of his right leg. He supported his recovery and rehabilitation over two and half years with his training and practice in Tai Chi, Qigong and the martial arts which he continues to practice and study to this day.

Over the years he has worked as a guest instructor with students of other martial arts demonstrating how adaption to his conditions has pushed his knowledge and application of those arts to new levels of understanding.

Helen Parsons

Board Certified Tai Chi for Health Instructor

Helen is a Registered Occupational Therapist (MSc). She has practiced Tai Chi and Qigong with Philip for over 10 years. She brings a wealth of experience in community development and health promotion from her career, and brings her passion for supporting people with their health to the classes and workshops.

Discover Tai Chi™

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A Guide to Tai Chi for Amputees and individuals with limb difference

Baduanjin – Eight Strands of Brocade – Qigong (chee-gong)

Qigong

In 1949, Liu Guizhen as part of a committee for the Chinese Government coined the name ‘Qigong’. Qigong is an umbrella term to describe the diverse and non-standardised practices collectively known as Yangsheng – meaning to nourish or cultivate life. These physical and mental exercises integrate what we call mindful practice with specific movements of the body similar to gymnastic postures, with an emphasis on calm, refined breathing.

The Eight Strands of Brocade or Baduanjin

The Baduanjin set, translates into the Eight Strands of Brocade, comprised of eight individual movements. The set represents one of the most popular forms of the many sets of qigong practiced today around the world. You can enjoy and practice the Eight Strands of Brocade set from a seated or standing position making it an ideal set for people with limb difference, as the practice can be from a standing position, wheelchair or chair for some or all of the movements.

Search the web and you will find many variations around how people interpret these movements, some include steps to the left and right, while others remain standing in place. You will also find

variations to the extent that people will squat or bend their knees while in stance. For our purposes, and it seems in keeping with the older ways of performing set (set what), we would advise that you work with your body and prosthetic limbs, and avoid forcing yourself into an uncomfortable position.

The two stances you can adopt if you choose to stand vary according to the exercise. You can perform the practice either in a natural stance with your feet hip width apart – let’s call this Bear Stance; or you can place your feet slightly wider than shoulder width while softening your knees, if you can, like shock absorbers in a car, let’s call this Riding Horse Stance. Keep your feet planted, it doesn’t matter how your toes point, find the most comfortable position for you.

Two Hands Support the Sky

Lifting Hands (arms if you are missing a hand/hands) to the Sky (Two Hands Support the Sky)

Bear Stance – Lift the hands (arms if you are missing a hand/hands) up the centre line of the body, palms (residual limbs) turning to face the sky, extending the arms upwards. Circle the hands (arms if you are missing a hand/hands) out and down to your sides. Repeat 8 times.





Drawing the Bow (to shoot the eagle)

Riding Horse Stance – Bring the hands (arms if you are missing a hand/hands) up in front of the chest, crossing right over left. Draw an imaginary bow and arrow, pulling the bow string with the fingers (if you have them) of the right hand (arm) while pushing

the bow with the left hand (residual limb), looking to a target to your left. Let the arrow go, then swing the hands (arms) down and up crossing left hand (arm) in front of the right, before repeating the exercise looking to a target on your right. Repeat 4 times

each side. (For individuals who are missing their hands or digits attempt the movements using your residual limb/limbs. You may need to adapt the movement to suit your impairment.)

Parting Earth from Sky

Bear Stance – Holding an imaginary beach ball in front of the body. Bring the bottom hand (arm) forward and upward turning the palm to face the sky. Continue to extend the arm pressing the palm (residual limb) upwards while pressing down with the opposite palm (residual limb) toward the earth. Bring the hands (residual limbs) back to the holding ball position, the hands (residual limbs) having swapped position. Repeat 8 times.



A Guide to Tai Chi for Amputees and individuals with limb difference



Clench Fists and Stare Fiercely

Riding Horse Stance – This exercise looks in essence like slow motion punching. Bring both hands (residual limbs) up to your hips in loosely clenched fists (if you don't have hands hold the residual limbs in position and imagine clenching your fists), fingers (residual

limbs) facing upward. Slowly extend the right fist (residual limb) forward turning the fist (residual limb) over as you do so until you have fully extended the arm forward with the fist (residual limb) now with fingers (residual limb) facing downward. As you pull

back your right fist (residual limb) toward your right hip, imagine pulling out your left fist (residual limb) as you do so. Then repeat this alternate pulling action with each fist for 8 repetitions for each arm.

Sway the Head, Shake the Tail

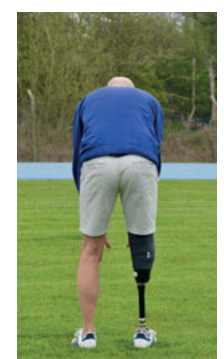
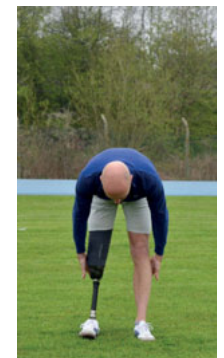
Riding Horse Stance – Relax into your stance while you place your hands (residual limbs) on top of your thighs with your elbows facing out [If you are an above elbow amputee try to follow the movements using your residual limbs]. Imagine you duck your head under a rope from right to left then vice versa gently twisting the torso while you do so. Repeat 8 times. Take care if you experience any dizziness to stop the exercise.



“...these old Daoyin exercises describe the breath as being like finely drawn silk, even and smooth, gentle and naturally relaxed ...”

Two Hands Hold the Feet

Bear Stance – Lift your hands (residual limbs) and place them on your lower back, covering the area of your kidneys. Gently bend forward all the while sliding your palms down the back of your legs as far as you find comfortable. If you can reach your toes do so, but it doesn't matter if you find it a challenge. Remain within a comfortable range of motion – no prizes for bendy girls or boys! Bring your hands (residual limb) to the front of your toes or legs. Stand back up lifting your hands (residual limb) up in front of your body as if holding a parcel until you lift the parcel above your head. Then lower your hands (residual limb) to start the exercise again by placing your palms on your kidneys. Repeat 8 times.



A Guide to Tai Chi for Amputees and individuals with limb difference

Wise Owl Gazes Backwards

Bear Stance – Take a hip width stance with hands (arms) hanging loosely by your sides. Turn your palms (arms) outward lifting your arms outward slightly while turning your head and torso to look over your right shoulder. Allow your shoulders to protract drawing your shoulder blades together. Turn back to face forwards again before repeating the exercise turning to your left. Repeat 4 times on each side.



Bouncing on the Heels

Here's a rather challenging balance exercise for those of us who wear lower limb prosthetic legs. Bring your feet together, then begin shifting your weight gently forward. Your heels will begin to rise and lift from the ground. Go as far and as high onto the balls of your feet while maintaining your balance. Pause for a moment, then let go and allow yourself to gently bounce back onto your heels and a foot flat position. Take care to avoid rocking backward.

That completes the set.



A Tai Chi programme for people living with limb difference

A short program Based on the Tai Chi for Health programmes devised by Dr. Paul Lam founder of the Tai Chi for Health Institute – TCHI. Revised and simplified by Philip Sheridan (Board Certified TCHI Instructor)

Aim

To focus on mastering hand and arm movements in coordination with shifting their weight from side-to-side.

Objectives

- To learn the essential hand and arm movements within each sequence
- To master key Tai Chi elements, you can practice at home
- Experience just enough challenge without overloading at any one stage

Key Tai Chi Principles for you to Master

- Maintain a relaxed standing posture throughout the exercise/s
- Develop a feel for your weight shifting to the left and right via the pelvis and hips
- Coordination of both hands and arms moving at the same time
- To enjoy a relaxed learning environment with a sense of achievement

Let's Get Moving

- Take your time, slow down, mentally and emotionally
- Place your feet roughly hip to shoulder width apart, with your weight evenly balance between your real foot and your prosthetic foot (between both prosthetic feet if you are a double amputee)
- Stand upright and relaxed – with your attention focused on preparing for practice
- Feel how gravity affects your sensation of

balance and poise

- Seek out and focus on the balance between the inescapable force of gravity and the necessary muscular tension needed to keep you upright
- Take notice of your natural breath cycle, focus on your breathing

Sequence 1

Commence – Sun Style Tai Chi

- Bring your hands (residual limbs) forward with your arms gently extended as if you are picking up a parcel, roughly the same size as your head. Lift your arms to shoulder level palms facing one another. Try to visualise that your parcel has a bit of weight to it.
- Lower your hands (residual limbs) gently to waist height the same way you lifted them up, now draw your hands (residual limbs) in toward your waist then gently lift them up again in front of your chest, before extending your hands (residual limbs) forward at shoulder level with your fingers pointing forward.

Sequence 2

Open & Close – Sun Style Tai Chi

- Draw your parcel in toward your chest stopping halfway, allow your fingers to point gently upward, palms (residual limbs) facing each other.
- Visualise your parcel expanding pushing your hands (residual limbs) apart to about your shoulder width apart. Now squeeze the parcel back to its original size against a gentle resistance.

Sequence 3

Single Whip (looking left) – Sun Style Tai Chi

- Push both your palms (residual limbs) forward at shoulder level placing

them onto an imaginary surface like a wall or window

- Part your hands (residual limbs) as if drawing open two heavy curtains, to just beyond shoulder width. At the same time gently transfer some of your weight toward your right leg, soften your right knee like a shock absorber if you can? [Alternative movement for above knee amputee – If you are an above knee amputee gently bend the prosthetic knee using the knees stance control, if you have a free knee be careful not to lose your balance (you may need to lock the knee and place it out in front of you as an alternative)] As your hands (residual limbs) part, turn your head to follow the path of your left hand, looking across your fingertips (real or imagined) .

Sequence 4

Waves Hands or Cloud Hands (starting left) – Chen Style Tai Chi

This is a challenging sequence at first but one that offers a great deal of satisfaction once you have mastered it. This is difficult to describe given that all the movements of the whole body occur at the same time. Please watch the video link to support you with this sequence: <https://thetaichinotebook.com/2016/05/13/wave-hands-like-clouds/>

- Imagine clearing a table at waist level and a bookshelf at shoulder height with your hands (residual limbs).
- You will turn your hips to the left and then right, no more than 45 degrees.
- As you do so you will sweep your right hand (arm if you are missing your hand) down to the left at waist level as if clearing a table in one sweep of the hand (arm).
- As you continue to turn your hips to the right with your left hand (arm) sweeping

A Guide to Tai Chi for Amputees and individuals with limb difference

“Take your time, slow down, mentally and emotionally”

the table lift your right hand (arm if you are missing your right hand) to shoulder height with your palm turning to face to your right. Visualise sweeping a bookshelf with your right hand/arm.

- Once you've completed your turn to the right with both your left and right hands/arms sweeping to the right you will swap hand positions and turn your hips back to your left.
- Your right-hand (arm if you are missing your right hand) sweeps down again to the table as you lift your left hand (arm if you are missing your left hand) up out of the way sweep the bookshelf at shoulder height. Turn your hips to the left again and you have completed one cycle of the sequence Wave Hands, also known as Cloud Hands.
- Begin by bringing the left hand (arm if you are missing your left hand) down towards your body into its counter-clockwise motion (Bring your left arm down if you are missing your hand). As you begin to move the left hand (arm), adjust the left foot so the toes point forward and you are ready to step to your left. Continue your arm movements as you step in with right foot and then out again with your left.
- Coordinate the sweeping movements of your hands and arms with gentle yet powerful turns of your hips left and right – no more than 45 degrees.
- Repeat this cycle two more times for a total of three cycles.

Sequence 5

Open & Close – Sun Style Tai Chi

- As you finish your third cycle of Wave Hands turn your hips back to face the front with your balance firmly centred down both legs (if you wear a prosthesis

try and balance both legs)

- Allow your hands (arms) to gently sweep into the Open & Close position and repeat this sequence just as before.

Now repeat the sequences above in the opposite direction.

Sequence 6

Single Whip (looking right) – Sun Style Tai Chi

- Repeat exercise as before, this time follow your right hand (arm) instead of your left hand (arm) looking across your fingertips.
- Both your hands (arms) come to a rest, palms facing outward, just beyond your left and right shoulders respectively.

Sequence 7

Waves Hands or Cloud Hands (starting right) – Chen Style Tai Chi

- Repeat exercise as before, this time starting turn to the right, not the left.

Repeat three cycles.

Sequence 8

Open & Close – Sun Style Tai Chi

- Repeat sequence 5.

9. Finish

- Push both hands (arms) forward at shoulder level, fingers (residual limbs) point forward, holding the parcel.
- Lower the parcel gently to waist height onto an imaginary table then continue to bring both hands (arms) to rest beside the hips, the original start position.
- Pause for 4 or 5 seconds, attention focused gently on one's breathing.

Top Tips for Practice – The 3R's

Rehearse

Within 60 minutes of leaving class take just 5 minutes to mentally rehearse what you learnt in class and practice the sequence or sequences you have learned.

Review

The following day take 5 or 10 minutes to review what you practiced in class and practice those sequences again.

Revise

Try to find 5 or 10 minutes each subsequent day to practice those sequences with the learning points you have remembered.

Videos

Watch this accompanying video of Philip and Helen running through the 8 sequences described in this practice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5lyZbsIFGN0&feature=youtu.be>

Watch each sequence as stand alone exercises: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnYIFKDJ3g&list=PLizvaAiZcptyLDBxeENBpn-v9u-icZbwP>

Helen and Philip have set up a paid for online resource with modules that follow the spiral learning journey, making it easier for members to find their way in the learning and enjoyment of their programmes. www.patreon.com/discovertaichi

Some Top Tips

For upper limb amputees missing fingers, follow the movements with your hands and imagine the fingers following the movements.

For upper limb amputees missing a hand or both hands, follow the movements with your residual limbs and imagine the hands and fingers following the movements.

For upper limb amputees who are above the elbow, follow the movements as much as you can aiming for balance and as much movement as you can follow using the residual limb.

Take your time to get a feel for each exercise and be prepared to adapt the exercise to suite your level of impairment.

- Go slowly and steadily. Think of this as an opportunity to observe and take notice of your body and mind.
- Seek out excess tension, in your shoulders for instance, or your hips perhaps.
- How can you ease that tension? You may find you could do with backing off your efforts, or you might find you can put a little more effort in?
- What do you notice about your breath or breathing? Do you hold your breath at points? How might you keep your attention gently on your breathing without trying to control it?

The texts associated with these old Daoyin exercises describe the breath as being like finely drawn silk, even and smooth, gentle and naturally relaxed – called Eupnea from a medical perspective.

- Keep the idea in mind of working against a gentle but firm resistance – water perhaps or treacle even. If you have worked with Therabands in the past, for instance in rehabilitation with a physiotherapist, you could imagine working against the resistance of the therabands you used.

Written by Philip Sheridan – Board Certified Tai Chi for Health Instructor and **Helen Parsons** – Board Certified Tai Chi for Health Instructor on behalf of LimbPower

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