

## **Push Hands**

(Excerpt from Translation of Dong Ying Jie's Red Book by Alex Dong)

Push Hands is when two people touch hands and make circles by using Peng (ward off), Lu (roll back), Ze (press) and An (push). Peng upward, is used to block upward, so an opponent cannot push your arm down. Peng forward, is to keep your opponent in front of you so they cannot advance forward. Lu is to pull your opponent to the side to uproot them, so there will be a better chance to push them. Ze is to follow an opponent without giving them any room to breath, and to keep pressing them, so they have nowhere to go. An is to use both hands to push forward or downward to control an opponent, so they cannot get away.

### **Push Hands Circle**

When you pull, I use press. When I press, you push. When you push I use ward off. You continue to push and I will pull back. When I pull back, you use press. These are the four applications of Push Hands. Remember to always protect your top and bottom, left and right, front and back.

Practice Push Hands circles regularly until the circles are natural. Practicing often will develop good energy, and good energy will impart good skills. Through time and sensitivity, a deep understanding of the different energies will develop. Good teaching from an experienced instructor, followed by a great deal of practice will allow skill to prevail.

Advance is fire, retreat is water, gaze left is wood, look right is metal, and stand still is earth.

## **Eight Gates and The Five Steps**

### **The Five Steps**

Step Forward  
Step Back  
Watch Left  
Expect Right  
Protect Center

### **Straight Energies**

Peng, Lu, le, An Corner Energies  
Zhai, Lie, Zhou, Kou

Stepping in and back or advancing and retreating, are the steps of fire and water.

Watching left and expecting (aware) right, are the steps of metal and wood.

In protecting the center, the pivotal role is earth.

These moves are hidden within the Eight Tri-gram (Ba Gua), feet on the Five Elements.

Hands are the Eight and feet are the Five, for a total of thirteen postures. Thirteen postures of Taijiquan are created from the Eight Gates and The Five

Steps.

## **The Eight Basic Applications**

### **Peng -Ward Off**

A blocking energy or position, Peng is used to create space between you and an opponent. Stances should be rooted, with the body centered. Hold your ground, with your upper body slightly forward and arms expanding in all directions. Fingers and palms should be fairly relaxed with power in the wrists and forearms. In Peng, the wrist should be slightly higher and in front of the elbow. Remember that Peng energy comes from the back and the back leg. The shoulder and arm must separate. When someone pushes against Peng, the energy is absorbed by the arm, through the back, into the legs and feet, and disappears into the ground. Peng can be directed upward to prevent an opponent from pushing you down, or forward to prevent an opponent from advancing. Turn your thumb toward your opponent to pin their arm.

### **Lu -Roll back**

Lu is a pulling energy used to guide and neutralize an opponent's energy to the side. Pulling energy comes from sitting back and turning the waist, this allows you to follow an opponent's energy. One or both hands can pull depending on the situation. Control an opponent's energy and body so they can't step in. To pull a person is the same as pulling a tree. Pull their arm to break their root.

### **Ze -Press**

Ze is to use the back hand to press the front wrist by relaxing the front hand and pressing from the back hand and leg, then Fajing with the back hand suddenly. Remember, the front hand is used to stick. In Grasp the Bird's Tail, press the wrist but in a real situation or Push Hands, the palm, forearm and fist can be pressed to strike with the elbow. Ze energy is concentrated in a small area, so it must be very accurate and perfectly executed.

### **An -Push**

An is to use both hands to push at the chest. It is used to pin an opponent. An, can also be applied with one hand. It is like placing your hand on a piece of paper to prevent it from being blown away, or trying to hold a dog down for a wash. It is important to move in gradually, because a forceful move will alert an opponent.

### **Cai -Yank**

Cai energy is sudden and uses short energy. It is like a pull, but the energy is different. If using Cai to pull grass, it will break in the middle. Pulling with an even energy, the grass will come out by its root. Cai usually starts upward and ends waist high. Cai can be applied with both hands or only one hand, with the hands separated or acting together. Cai is sometimes used with a sweep to increase its effectiveness.

### Lie -Break or Split

Lie energy can be applied to various moves. It is like shaking. For example, Lie energy is like when a wet dog shakes its body to dry off. When an opponent is solid, suddenly shock or shake them to break their root, or to disturb their posture and energy.

### Zhou -Elbow

Zhou is an elbow strike at close range. An elbow can strike at the chest, stomach, or strike from the side on either shoulder. Elbow strikes are not used frequently because of their complexity and danger.

### Kao -Shoulder

Kao means, "to lean and strike with shoulder." A shoulder strike is executed by stepping into an opponent. When an opponent is too close, or when my hands are tied up, I can surprise them with a shoulder strike. Step-in, strike, and step back quickly to avoid vulnerable positions.

## **The Four Basic Energies**

### Zhan -Stick

Zhan is to stick to an opponent like glue. When contact is made, try not to lose contact. This will allow you to always know where your opponent is. Always, have a sense of where an opponent is, even if not in contact with them. Energy cannot be too hard or too soft when sticking.

### Nian -Sticky

Zhan and Nian have a similar meaning, but are not the same. For instance, if an opponent tries to stick (Zhan) to you and you stick to him, you would not be able to stick together unless both parties are willing. You are really sticking when using Zhan and Nian together. You cannot clap with one hand.

### Lian -Continuous

Continuous movement, continuous attacks, continuous energies. Everything is linked and unbroken. Never give an opponent any breathing room.

### Sui -Follow

Sui is to follow an opponent. Go with them, but do not panic. When they come at you continuously, relax and follow. When they make a move, you make a move. If they make several moves, defend without panic and follow with an attack.

In Push Hands, you Zhan and I Nian. If you Lian then I Sui. If these four energies are practiced, then other energies like listening and controlling will also be developed. Without mastering these four basic energies, the other energies cannot be understood. A tree cannot grow unless a seed is planted, watered and

nourished.

### **The Four No's of Push Hand**

Diu -Lose

Not sticking, when keeping up with an opponent's circles and changes, is to lose them. Always be able to sense an opponent by sticking to them.

Li -Part From

Do not let an opponent part from you. When they try to lose you, stick to them and move in.

Ding -Against

Going against, or butting heads, with an opponent is to use force, not Taiji principles.

Kang -Resist

Resistance creates tension. Fluidity cannot be developed if resisting. Push hands cannot be mastered without being fluid.

Qing -Light

Ling -Alertness, Sharp Sense

Huo -Agility, Liveliness

Chen -Sink, Heaviness

Nei -Inner, Within Ti -Lift

Tuo -Hold in the Palm

Cuo -Rub Deeply

Mo -Feel, Touch

Rou -Rub the Surface

An -Push down

Tui -Push

Ru Gu -Penetrate into the bone

Yao -Shake, Rock

Fa -Issue, Send

Dou -Tremble, Vibrate

Cun -Inch, Short

Tian -Stick Close To

Fu -Support, Hold On

Cui -Crisp, Snappy

Leng Bu Fong -Unexpected Energy

Fen Cun -Proper limit, Differentiate

Qu -Send Away

Deng -Waiting

Shuai -Slam, Tumble

Xu -Stored like a cat crouching before attacking a mouse

Xu -Empty, Void

## Shi -Solid, Real

### **Method of Attack and Defense**

Attack like a tiger jumping on a rabbit. Smother opponents and make them feel helpless. Defend like a porcupine. Curl up, so there are no openings. This will make an attacker back off.

If an opponent is like a small tree, it can be demolished by pulling it out by its roots. If an opponent is more like a medium size tree, it is too big to pullout by its roots, but it's branches can still be attacked. Do not waste time trying to pull the roots. If an opponent is a big tree, even the branches are too big to break. By picking off all of its leaves it can still be damaged.

Use strength to attack an opponent's weakness and use their strength against them. If an opponent is big, use speed and make them move around, letting them chase you. If they are soft, weaker or smaller, try to over power them by stepping in and being more direct. If an opponent is faster, try to be more still and take the closer routes. Do not try to match their speed if you are not as fast. Let them do the moving. When an opponent is better, try to surprise them and take some chances, or stay away and be more cautious. If an opponent tries to take a chance, they are usually more vulnerable, so make them pay. If an opponent shows that they do not intend to harm you, be very careful. That is when they can be the most dangerous. If they have bad intentions, show

them no mercy, or do not push with them again.

### **Nature Can Be A Friend or Enemy**

When on a hill, it is better to take the lower side. When outdoors, do not face the sun. When the floor is slippery, center and defend yourself. Always be aware of your surroundings and give your back lots of space. Always be early and take all opponents seriously.

### **Self-Preparation**

Wear comfortable clothes made of strong fabric and strong shoes. Sometimes, new shoes can be a problem. Take off your glasses, hat jewelry, and watch. Your stomach should not be too empty or too full. Your hair should not cover your eyes.

### **To Develop the Right Energy**

When pushing, push the roots.

When pushing forward, aim further then your eyes can see.

When pushing upward, aim for the roof and through the ceiling.

When pushing downward, aim for three feet deep, into the ground.

When Fajing, it is like dynamite.

When rooted, be heavy like a mountain.

When light, be light like a feather.

When turning, be smooth as a cartwheel.  
When moving quickly, be faster than a blink of an eye.