

Bai Si Fang

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Seemingly easy to do, [Tai Chi](#) is tough to learn. Many have tried it and given it up because of the complicated movements and subtlety in each of the moves. Some have found it challenging to memorize the movement sequence. As the origin of all modern Tai Chi styles, Chen Style Tai Chi is incredibly rich in details. In other words, it is harder to learn despite its potentially greater benefits especially in martial art applications.

I mentioned this concern to the Chen Style lineage holder [Grandmaster Chen Zhenglei](#). He recommended Chen Style Bai Si Fang for people who have a hard time to memorize details and sequence. I find it extremely helpful, especially in the case of beginners. Bai means worshipping in Chinese. Si Fang means four sides. This routine has 19 movements and repeats four major movements (Buddha Pounding, Lazily Tying the Coat, Six Sealing and Four Closing, and Single Whip) several times. These four movements happen to be the beginning four poses of the marquee Chen Style Old Frame (Lao Jia). They are the most important poses in Old Frame. In Old Frame Routine One (Yi Lu), Buddha

Pounding is exercised four times, Lazily Tying the Coat twice, Six Sealing and Four Closing six times, and Single Whip seven times. They focus mainly on the four Tai Chi methods or **Si Zheng** (Four Square) including **Peng** (ward-off), **Lu** (diversion or rollback), **Ji** (squeezing) and **An** (pressing downwards). Bai Si Fang allows you to practice various hand movements, foot works and stances. You need to learn and adhere to Tai Chi principles of suspending the head, keeping upper body upright, maintaining central equilibrium (Zhong Ding), and coordinating body movements. The sequence of this form is Beginning, repeating four major movements four times, Buddha Pounding and Closing. Since the Buddha Pounding movement causes you to turn to the left, doing it five times times will take you to face all four sides and then back to the original position. Click [here](#) for a video demonstration.

Bai Si Fang is widely taught in China as a beginner course. Grandmaster Chen said it should not be performed slowly. A good pace would take 4 to 5 minutes to complete the form. You can practice more than four sets of the major movements and continue the process to your heart's content. It is like doing a country line-dance that you can go around and around. It is also good for performance. [Master Kam Lee](#) (Jacksonville, Florida), a 12th Generation of Chen Style Inheritor and disciple of Grandmaster Zhu Tiancai said Bai Si Fang is a good form for a beginners to participate in a Tai Chi tournament.

Some may wonder if he only does six unique movements whether the health benefits of practicing Tai Chi will be compromised. The truth is that in most medical studies, the Tai Chi protocol adopted normally contains 6 to 8 simple movements. Bai Si Fang is a good regimen if your whole purpose of practicing Tai Chi is for [wellness](#) and health. Of course, a solid foundation from practicing Bai Si Fang can also prepare you for Old Frame Routine One and Two.

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