

SPORTS / RECREATION / COMBAT SPORTS

Master Feng Xiuqian on Tai Chi

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Master Feng's with some of the female Hun Yuan Tai Chi instructors in the workshop.

Violet Li

“Knowing the Chinese meridian system can help you with [Tai Chi](#) practice,” advised Master Feng Xiuqian.



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Master Feng is a lineage holder of Chen Style Xin Yi Hun Yuan Tai Chi. She resides in Beijing and recently was invited by Master Michael Dorgan to come to the U.S. for a three-city tour. With the arrangement by Sifu Herb Parran, Master Feng was in St. Louis for workshops on Feb 25 – 27. [Dr. Matthew Komelski](#) of Virginia Tech and others came to St. Louis to study with her. During her stay in St. Louis, she hosted a few workshops, including one especially for a small group of female Hun Yuan instructors. During the workshop, she presented special guidance to deepen the instructors' knowledge.

Even though she is a daughter of Grandmaster Feng Zhiqiang, the creator of Hun Yuan Tai Chi, Master Feng said that she never had any interest learning Tai Chi in her early life. She took ballet classes as a child. As fate had it, Master Feng was born with many illnesses. She injured her back during her youth. In her 20's, she had an office job which required her to sit at a desk all the time. At age 30, she was suffering from neck pain, back pain and other ailments. The worst problem was that she had a severe heart disease which prevented her from working. Pills and physical therapies were little help.

During her disability, she studied Yang Style Tai Chi in the park. She felt a little better but the form did not excite her much. Once the teacher left, she started to learn Hun Yuan Tai Chi from four of her father's students. A few months later, her health improved. She then quit learning and went back to work. Her health issues returned. Then she realized that she had to devote herself to serious study to save her life. She started to learn Tai Chi from the Grandmaster. Once she mastered the art, she has been teaching Tai Chi both in China and overseas.

Tai Chi is a healing art which is designed based on Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), especially the

meridian system. There are 12 major meridians in the body, each corresponding to an organ system. There are also eight extraordinary meridians which are important in study of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong. Master Feng recommends studying the four major meridians first, which are Ren Mai (meridian), Du Mai, Chong Mai and Dai Mai. It is important to know the route of each meridian and also its relationship to the Tai Chi movements. She emphasizes the importance of intent during the Tai Chi practice. She urges practitioners to follow the meridians or visualize the passage of Qi through the meridians when practice each Tai Chi or Qigong movement. She explains this will result in the Qi cultivation and improving Qi circulation.

Master Feng's form looks extremely soft and fluid. Her hands, arms, core and Dan Tian are continuously spiraling (or silk reeling). She points out that Hun Yuan Tai Chi focusing on chest-abdomen folding (*Xiong Fu Zhe Die*) and arms folding and unfolding (*Kai He Zhe Die*). During the workshop, Master Feng carefully examined each instructor's form and provided constructive feedback to elevate their skill level.

She also has recommendations for all Tai Chi practitioners. She thinks studying indoors is easier for students. But once people learn a form, they should practice outdoors when weather permits to absorb the energy from nature. She suggests people to practice by oneself so they can focus on the movements and be mindful. But they also need to practice with peers so they can learn from each other.

According to Master Feng, Tai Chi is a great exercise regimen suitable for all ages and has the same positive impact on both men and women. But personally, she thinks that women tend to be more emotional and Tai Chi definitely can bring calmness for women. She encourages everyone to study Tai Chi, especially women. Of course, Tai Chi is very good for women. Once the Qi and blood circulate well, the skin will have a natural glow. Without make-up or a special hair-do, and overcoming jet lag, the 56-year-old Master Feng still looks energetic.

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