

# MetroWest T'ai Chi

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## **Wuji (Wu Chi) Position Explorations in Standing**

By the end of the Beginner's Course, you are probably finding that you are becoming more familiar with many of the movements in the first section and you are starting to get to know the sequence of movements. You have also discovered that we not only begin the form standing in the Wuji Position, but we also end the form in Wuji.

### **Standing in Wuji**

When we begin and end the form in Wuji, we usually stand in the position for only a few breaths. In your own practice, you may find it beneficial to stand in Wuji for longer than that. The length of time is somewhat personal preference, but you may start with standing for a couple minutes. Over time you may stretch that out to 5, 10, 15 or 20 minutes.

Standing in Wuji is a very popular meditation technique. It is also a basic stance in a set of standing Qigong known as "Zhan Zhuang" (translated as "Standing like a Post"). This can be very beneficial to various elements of your T'ai Chi practice – especially the more internal elements of T'ai Chi.

### **Exploring the Benefits of Wuji**

In class, whenever we stand in Wuji, one of the aspects that we focus on is opening up our awareness. An open awareness allows us to delve into the deeper elements of Wuji, giving us a chance to explore and become more familiar with various aspects of our being. Some areas that we may choose to explore are:

- correcting structural misalignments
- adjusting our balance
- releasing tension
- expanding our sense of awareness
- enhancing our root
- quieting our mind
- establishing stronger connections to earth and heavens
- sensing and developing our Dan Tian
- discovering other deeper internal or energetic flows and experiences

When you stand in Wuji, choose an element on which to focus your awareness. If you choose to focus on your structural alignment, for example, let your awareness rest on your alignment and

see if you can notice when a part of yourself falls out of alignment. Once you notice it, just ease yourself back into alignment.

Within this, include the practice of developing an awareness of what alignment *feels* like. The more you can become familiar with the *feeling* of alignment, the more you can move away from relying too heavily on the brain to determine when a part of your body moves out of alignment.

In the early stages of this practice, start with an awareness of just one element. Once you become familiar with that one element, add in a second element. Over time, you will be able to softly maintain an awareness of many elements all together.

One other note on practice is that you will *never* be in perfect Wuji. You will *never* have perfect alignment. You will *never* have perfect balance. You will *never* release all of your tension. So let go of the idea of trying to reach perfection. Instead strive to cultivate a deeper sensitivity, a more subtle awareness of when those elements are off. Striving for perfection will only lead to frustration. Striving for cultivation leads to ever expanding worlds of discovery.

As you discover more in your Wuji practice, you more easily be able to incorporate those lessons into your T'ai Chi practice. For example, a greater awareness of balance in Wuji will help you develop a stronger sense of balance in T'ai Chi. As you get deeper into the practice and discover rootings, connections and energy flows, you will be able to better bring those elements into your T'ai Chi practice.

### **Coming Full Circle with Wuji**

There is another reason why the Wuji position is important in the practice of T'ai Chi. Often, our T'ai Chi practice time comes in the middle of our very busy lives. While our lives can be very frantic, we want our T'ai Chi practice to come from a place of peace.

The Wuji position can act as a gateway from the frantic world of our everyday life into the peaceful "T'ai Chi Universe". The moments we spend in Wuji offer us a clean and pure transition period into T'ai Chi.

When we finish our form, standing in Wuji allows us some moments to internalize and feel gratitude for what we have gotten from the practice so that we can bring some of that out into the rest of our lives. Use the Wuji position to let all of the peace, tranquility and energy flow settle into your being so that you can better maintain a sense of it all throughout the rest of your life.