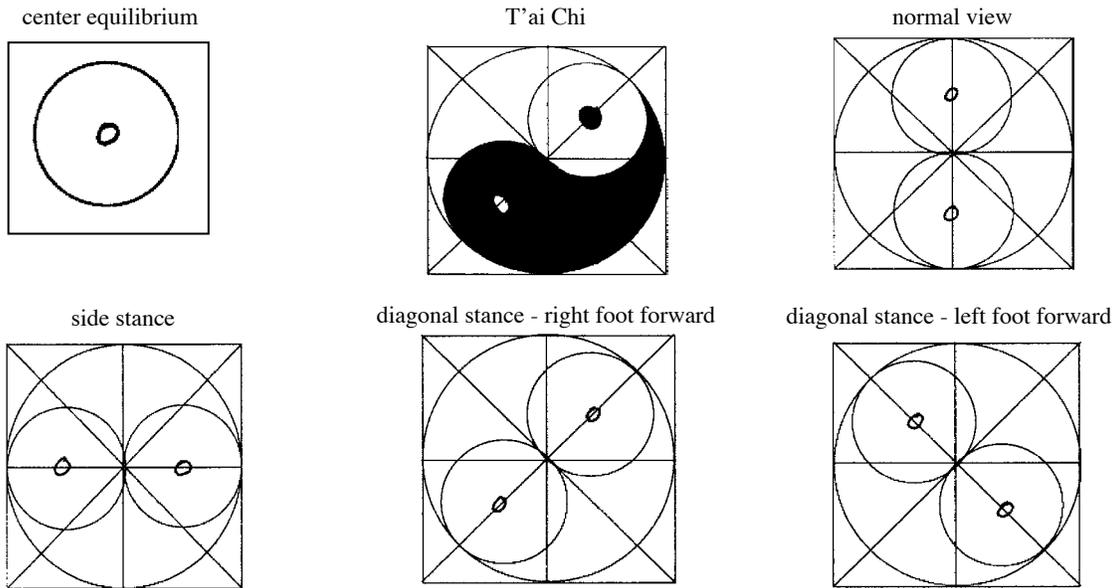


SQUARE CIRCLE



Most of the steps and stances in the exercise form and the boxing are on the diagonal at 45 degrees of the square so that a circle fits inside the square. These stances are as wide as they are long. This allows an easy and comfortable rotation of the hips in the weight shift. It is advantageous in the self defense because it allows one to displace ones body from the line of the attack without having to lean; and it makes the release of power in the counter attack more efficient.

Center equilibrium stance. The feet are shoulder distance apart at the outer edge of the single circle. The weight is equally distributed on both feet and the trunk of the body is within the circle. The central vertical axis aligns over the center dot. This is the only stance in which this occurs. In all the other stances, the vertical axis of the practitioner is never over the center of the T'ai Chi circle, nor does it pass through it. To do this would cause the joints of the body to lock, and inhibit free and relaxed breathing and movement.

There are other postures with the feet shoulder distance apart (laterally or diagonally), but the weight is to one side or the other and the axis is rotating. The central vertical axis is tilted just inside the center of the circle. This occurs in the returning half of the **cloud hands**, in the windup to **hit tiger to the left**, in the half step movements and cat stance positions. This also occurs with equal weight on both feet in the **apparent close up** movements at the end of the first and second stage, and at the end of the third stage.

Normal view. This is the usual view of the T'ai Chi diagram, but there are very few movements in the exercise form that correspond with it. **Play the pipa, step up and raise hands and hammer under the elbow** approximate it. The weighted foot is at a 45 degree angle at the diagonal corner of the lower inside circle. The heel of the straight foot aligns just outside the heel of the weighted foot.

Side stance. In this stance, the feet are parallel to each other and are placed at the outer lateral edges where the large and the small circles meet. When the weight is on the right foot, the trunk of body is in the small right circle and the vertical axis is over the right dot. The knee of the left leg aligns vertically over the left dot. When the weight shifts to the other foot, the inverse is true.

Diagonal stance. Most of the stances in the exercise form are diagonal. In the diagonal stance with the left foot forward, the left foot is placed at the left upper diagonal edge where the large and small

circle meet. The angle of the left foot is straight. The right foot is placed at the right lower diagonal edge where the large and small circle meet. The angle of the right foot is 45 degrees.

When the weight is at the left foot (front stance), the trunk of the body is within the upper diagonal small circle, and the vertical axis is over the dot within that circle. The knee of the right leg aligns vertically over the dot of the lower right small circle. When the weight is at the right foot (back stance), the trunk of the body is within the lower diagonal small circle, and the vertical axis is over the dot within that circle. The knee of the left leg aligns vertically over the dot of the upper left small circle.

The inverse is true in the diagonal stance with the right foot forward.

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