

# Princeton Chi Club

## What is Taichi?

Taichi is a martial art, health exercise, manifestation of deep philosophy (e.g. Daoism and Zen), and everyday life method. The central idea of Taichi is relaxation of one's body and mind, which leads to deep clear awareness and precise body alignment.

## What is Relaxation and how to relax?

- **Relaxation = good posture.** Relaxation is not something extra you do, it is about finding the natural state of your body that is the most comfortable and stable.
- **Relaxation is not collapsing.** If you collapse, your body contracts and is weak. Instead, feel open and strong.
- **No relaxation for relaxation's sake.** When there is tension, trying to fight against it won't work. Just be aware of it and discomfort will go away by itself.
- **Relaxation is everywhere.** When you work hard, don't think you have to sacrifice relaxation. Difficult tasks will become easier if you relax.
- **Physical relaxation ↔ mental relaxation.** Feel both.

## Taichi example: Wuji Standing

Release from the top of your head (baihui) and all the way down to the bottom of your feet (yongquan). Be aware of the interaction between your body and gravity. Sinking, soften the bottom of your feet and really feel the ground; feel being supported by the ground. Next, feel the weight of your upper body being supported through your legs, and the weight of your head being supported through the neck and shoulders. Feel how this helps to release tension around the neck, shoulders and lower back.

At another level, experience how constantly releasing from the top of your head (baihui) and awareness of gravity brings about the lightness and calmness of your mind.

You can relax this way in all other movements that you do, not just in wuji standing. For example: when you type or use the mouse, be more aware of the natural curve of your body and relax your shoulders, elbows and wrists. There is no need to squeeze your shoulders or tighten your muscles. Start to feel that, as you are more relaxed, you can perform this kind of task more efficiently yet with much less effort. There are many such examples in everyday life, e.g. walking, drinking coffee, interacting with people, even studying/problem solving and concentrating. Relax, feel and find the way it is -- you will experience less body pains, feel more alive and energetic, and also find yourself happier and calmer even under a lot of stress.

## Find out more about Princeton Taichi Club

We learn Taichi from Sifu Won Park at Dillon Gym. Taught as an internal style martial art, the class emphasises that relaxation leads to efficient movements and the concept of soft overcoming the hard. Besides Taichi form, Sifu Park also teaches self-defense applications of Taichi such as pushhands, chunjing (one-inch punch), and chinna (joint locking and escape). Through these, one can learn to really experience how power and speed are achieved through the natural, relaxed state of mind-body and optimal body alignment.

Additionally, our club meets every Monday, 8pm to 10pm, in Wilcox Dance Studio in Wilson College to practise Taichi together. Practice sessions include form and martial applications. The floor is always open; you are welcome to attend, with no experience necessary. You can find more information at our website <http://www.princeton.edu/~taichi>. In particular, we recommend you visit <http://www.princeton.edu/~taichi/demo.html>, where there are video clips of Taichi masters demonstrating different styles of Taichi. Very beautiful!

If you have any questions, contact us!

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**Taichi PE classes are offered year round at Dillon Gym.**

**For current info, visit <http://www.princeton.edu/recsport/pe>**