

TIAN YI

FOUNDATION

MOVEMENT • BALANCE • WELLNESS

Cheng Style Eight Mother Palms Curriculum

程式八大母掌课程体系

Movement • Balance • Wellness • Internal Cultivation

This curriculum is structured for senior wellness programs, VA therapeutic movement development, balance restoration, mobility training, fall prevention, and Daoist mind-body cultivation through Cheng Style Ba Gua Zhang circle walking and Eight Mother Palm training.

Nei Gong & Circle Walk Theory (内功与走圈理论)

According to Zhao Da Yuan, Ba Gua Zhang differs from static standing meditation systems because the practitioner remains in motion while cultivating intention, structure, breathing, and energetic integration. Circle walking develops “stillness within movement” and “movement within stillness.” The internal intention leads the external body while the external structure refines the internal awareness.

Zhao describes the Daoist influence on Ba Gua circle walking as an effort to harmonize with the continuously changing patterns of nature—becoming “one with Heaven and Earth” through meditation in motion. In this framework, the external trains form while the internal trains Yi (intention) and qi; both are trained together, with the internal leading the external.

The Eight Mother Palms cultivate coordination between the lower dantian, middle dantian, upper dantian, posture, breathing, balance, proprioception, and whole-body integration. Zhao further emphasizes the mind-body link as a key feature of internal training: physical alignment and connection are developed together with focused intention and refined bodily awareness.

Zhao also presents a training theory that slow movement or static-posture work combined with concentrated Yi may improve the practitioner's ability to recruit and coordinate muscular effort. This is presented here as Zhao Da Yuan's traditional training theory rather than as a clinical or physiological claim.

Eight Mother Palms (八大母掌)

1. Downward Sinking Palm (Earth Palm)

Hands are held low near the lower dantian while walking the circle. The palms face downward and the practitioner focuses on sinking the energy downward to develop rooting, grounding, stability, and lower body connection.

Training sequence: the student walks repeatedly in both directions while maintaining the low palm position and the mental image of pressing or sinking downward. The posture establishes the lower-dantian foundation for the sequence.

2. Double Lifting Palm (Great Roc Spreads Its Wings)

After grounding the lower dantian, both arms rise outward connecting the lower and middle dantian. Energy spreads through the chest and into both palms evenly while developing balanced posture and expansion.

Training image: the practitioner holds the palms as though each contains a small pool of water that must not be spilled. This directs attention into both palms while maintaining balanced expansion from the center of the chest.

3. Closing Embracing Palm

One palm rises near eye level while the other moves overhead. This posture guides energy upward toward the upper dantian while creating a circular energetic loop through the arms and torso.

The first three postures form a progressive sequence: lower dantian and legs, then middle dantian/chest and arms, then upper dantian and crown. In the source tradition, this establishes a whole-body energetic foundation before the remaining palms distribute that energy through different structural patterns.

4. Seven Star Turning Palm (Monkey Offers Fruit)

This posture opens the back while hollowing the chest. The practitioner focuses on expanding energy through the back and projecting it outward through the palms.

The intention is placed in the palms as though embracing a ball. This posture emphasizes opening through the back while maintaining rounded, connected arm structure.

5. Double Crushing Palm

Also called “Embracing Moon at Chest,” this posture expands the chest while pushing outward through both palms. The shoulders relax while unified force projects outward from the centerline.

The elbows turn outward and the chest remains rounded. The image of “double crushing” or “double crashing” gives the practitioner a clear outward-directed intention without sacrificing relaxed shoulder structure.

6. Yin and Yang Turning Palms (Bear Palm)

One palm rises while the other presses downward behind the body. This develops the body's ability to separate high and low energy while maintaining coordinated internal unity.

The upper arm remains rounded with the palm facing away from the body while the lower palm presses down and away behind the back.

7. Uniting the Internal Palm (Monkey Hangs from a Branch)

The upper palm extends outward while the lower palm supports below near the dantian. This posture coordinates front and rear energy pathways and develops whole-body integration.

The upper palm faces downward with the cutting edge forward; the lower palm is held near dantian height facing upward. Together with the sixth palm, this trains high/low and front/back separation while preserving a full, connected structure.

8. Pushing Turning Palm (Ba Gua Guard Stance)

The final posture integrates all previous energies into one complete structure combining balance, rooting, coordinated movement, and full-body connection.

The sequence culminates in the standard Ba Gua guard posture, tying together the lower-, middle-, and upper-dantian work; opening of the back and chest; high/low separation; front/back separation; and unified whole-body strength.

Single Palm Change (单换掌)

The Single Palm Change develops torso rotation, waist turning, pelvic integration, functional flexibility, and coordinated movement between the upper and lower body. Direction changes on the circle strengthen gait mechanics, turning ability, and total-body coordination.

In the complete training description, the twisting and turning action is driven by the legs and directed through the inner thigh and pelvic region. Proper movement of the upper legs and lower torso connects the upper and lower body, while repeated direction changes develop functional flexibility and coordinated turning mechanics.

Double Palm Change (双换掌)

The Double Palm Change develops advanced spinal rotation, waist integration, coordinated stepping, functional flexibility, and continuous whole-body movement. Multiple directional changes on the circle strengthen balance recovery, turning ability, vestibular coordination, and unified body mechanics while enhancing fluidity between the upper and lower body.

Internal Exercises (内功练习)

The complete curriculum also identifies the following internal exercises as supporting practices within the training system:

- Seek Moon at the Bottom of the Sea
- Ba Duan Jin — Tendons
- Chan Si Jin — Joints
- Bear
- Hawk
- Saan Choi
- Dragon Turns Its Head

Program Development Objectives (训练目标)

- Rooting and grounding
- Postural alignment and stability
- Balance restoration
- Mobility and gait development
- Functional flexibility
- Coordinated upper- and lower-body movement
- Proprioception and body awareness
- Breathing and internal integration
- Whole-body connection
- Mind-body cultivation
- Circle-walking direction changes and turning mechanics
- Progressive integration of Yi (intention), structure, and movement

Practicing the Eight Mother Palms cultivates body, mind, spirit, balance, mobility, and harmony.