

Curriculum

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1st Set – Siu Nim Tao (小念頭)

All the basic hand movements used in Wing Chun Kuen are contained in Siu Nim Tao. This is the foundational form that teaches proper mechanics and hand positions without leaving the Yee Jee Kim Yang Ma (二字鉗羊馬) or "Character two goat clamping stance". The stance is called such because when in it, the practitioner's toes will be at a shorter distance to each other than the heels, thus resembling the Chinese character two.

Siu Nim Tao translates into "little idea" which refers to the neutral state of simplicity maintained throughout the practice of the form. One should not "over do it". On the contrary, this form teaches the student how to relax into the correct posture and practice settling their energy downwards toward the ground. The calm mental training develops "Nim Lik" (念力), which means "thought strength", referring to the intent guiding the movements.

Fundamental rules of balance and body structure are developed in this form. Proper practice of Siu Nim Tao enables the student to develop proper abdominal breathing, independent arm movement, structure and energy. When practicing Siu Nim Tao, the eyes should be fixed forward taking in everything while focusing on nothing.

During Siu Nim Tao practice, the student:

Trains the stance and structural mechanics

Defines the centerline and learns where their hands should be relative to it

Learns proper positioning and how to execute movements correctly

Trains coordination and relaxation

Develops knee cap energy, elbow energy, and long bridge energy

Structural Guidelines:

1. Kim Sut (鉗膝) knees in; lit. "squeeze/press knees"
2. Lok Ma (落馬) lower/settle down in the stance
3. Ting Yiu (挺腰) tuck the hips under and forward; lit. "straighten lower back"
4. Dung Tao (登頭) head erect
5. Mai Jarn (埋肘) elbows in; lit. "bury elbow"

By keeping the stance still throughout the whole set, the student will maintain a stable state to return to while executing the techniques, learning how to develop and apply elbow and knee energy correctly.

Chi Sau (黏手)

Chi Sau / 黏手(lit. "sticky hands") are the core exercises in Leung Sheung Wing Chun used for the development of contact sensitivity, coordination of the limbs, forward energy, timing and the ability to "stick" to the opponent. It also provides the Wing Chun practitioner an opportunity to test the movements from the forms against pressure. During Chi Sau, the proper stance, five points and other principles are kept in mind.

Chi Sau is central to the Yip Man Wing Chun system. As grandmaster Yip Man said, "No Chi Sau, No Wing Chun."

The Leung Sheung method of Chi Sau develops skill in "Mo Zhang Dai" or "Touching the base of the elbow", which allows the practitioner to contain the opponent's energy by touching their elbows. Chi Sau teaches how to react appropriately to the opponent's energy while maintaining the proper structure and relaxation. Training under pressure, the student should neither be afraid of getting hit, nor be overly eager to hit their opponent. Chi Sau ingrains into the neuro-muscular system the mindset of accepting and sticking with the opponent's energy. After a short time, trained sensitivity allows one to act without conscious thought or the necessity of seeing the opponent's hands.

1. Dan Chi Sau (單黏手) - Single sticky hands; this drill trains basic movements on one arm.
2. Seung Chi Sau (雙黏手) - Double sticky hands; this drill trains both arms to move independently of each other.

Besides the two Chi Sau exercises, other hand drills in the Leung Sheung method include Lop Kuen, Pak Sau, Poon Sau and others. Rather than fighting, Chi Sau is a learning process that gives two practitioners the opportunity to test and explore each other's strengths and weaknesses. Once the practitioner has become well trained in Chi Sau, they can use the skills gained to freestyle "spar" outside of the Chi Sau format.

During sticking hands practice it is important to remember the Wing Chun maxim: "Greet what arrives, escort what leaves and rush upon loss of contact," or in Chinese: "來留去送, 甩手值沖"

Besides sticking hands, there is also a sticky legs exercise or "Chi Gerk" (黏腳). In this drill, the ankle functions as the wrist, the knee as the elbow, and the hip as the shoulder.

Chi Gerk enables the practitioner to develop the sensitivity in the legs for sweeps, redirections and counter kicks. In Wing Chun, arms deal with arms, legs deal with legs (腳打腳).

2nd Set – Chum Kiu (尋橋 / 沉橋)

Chum Kiu is the second of three open-hand forms of Wing Chun Kuen. In order to begin the second set, the legs and knees must be trained via the first set to be able to put the body weight on one leg. Once the proper body structure from Siu Nim Tao is trained, the student can then learn how to move that structure by turning and stepping.

The "Chum" in "Chum Kiu" can be represented by two different characters in Cantonese. When 沉 is used the form translates to "sinking the bridge." If the character 尋 is used then it translates to "seeking the bridge."

The bridge refers to contact with the opponent's limb. In this form, one focuses on developing the long bridge energy, which is a deep, long and lasting forward energy towards the opponent.

Fundamental rules of footwork and body unity while moving are introduced and developed in this form. The form introduces turning, the small step, and kicking.

3rd Set – Biu Jee (鏢指)

Biu Jee is the third of three open-hand forms of Wing Chun Kuen. Biu Jee builds upon and refines the technical and structural training of the first two sets. In some circles Biu Jee is known as the "emergency set" as its techniques diverge from the centerline and can be seen as guidelines on what to do if your structure is compromised. In other words, it teaches how to "return to the center".

Biu Jee" (鏢指) literally means "darting fingers" and refers to the way the form trains the practitioner to project energy through the fingertips.

Advanced footwork is taught in this form. The footwork of Biu Jee is more circular in nature and teaches how to close the gap as well as sweeps. This form also has more emphasis on shoulder and hip opening/rotation. After this form the student traditionally can begin learning the wooden dummy form (木人樁).

Wooden Dummy Set - Muk Yan Jong (木人樁)

The modern slat mounted version of the wooden dummy was designed by Yip Man. It is designed to remind the student of how the first three sets work, and verifies the proper use of the first three sets.

The MYJ is a sequence of approximately 100 techniques/"hands." The entire sequence is further divided into 10 sets of 10 "hands" for the sake of transmission.

Several features of the wooden dummy are noteworthy:

1. The wooden dummy arms are designed to restrict the movements and force the student to learn to deal with the hindrance.
2. In particular, the right arm of the dummy is placed higher than the left, forcing the student to work the left arm a bit more than the right.
3. The wang dam (橫擔) --- the horizontal slats supporting the dummy --- flex causing the student to learn to absorb the bounce back of the dummy toward the student after striking the dummy.

Practicing the wooden dummy is done with several principles in mind:

1. Place the dummy in front of you so that it will "stick hands" with you.
2. Be precise with the stepping, positioning, energy, and timing. The dummy is not attacking, so one can afford to move correctly and smoothly, with no need to feel rushed or pressured.
3. Do not move the legs further than needed; do not take big steps. After all, the dummy is still.
4. Connect (連), embrace (抱), and engage (食) the dummy and try to avoid the temptation to bang into it with brutal forces and excessive speed.

Training correctly with the wooden dummy accomplishes certain training goals:

1. Teach the student how the small step works.
2. Builds the student's structure, especially the knee and elbow energy and the unity of the body.
3. The dummy serves as an important training tool after departure from one's teacher (離師) or no hands (右手)-absence of a live training partner; so that one can maintain one's skill. However, skill development requires touching live hands.

Pole and Knives (棍,刀)

In the Leung Sheung line, the weapons and empty hand sets mutually aid each other through a consistent set of well conceived principles and training methodologies.

Upon adoption into Wing Chun, the pole set was distilled and refined to blend with the core hand sets in a harmonious manner. Pole training introduces the lower, wider stance and sideways advancing footwork which is different from Wing Chun's

normal structure and forward facing strategy. The saying "側身以膊為子午" (use shoulder as center line when side facing) becomes evident during pole exercises. The preparatory exercise of the six and a half point pole resembles Hung Gar's chain arrow punch combination in snapshot view. The execution sequence and mechanics of movement are very different, however; Wing Chun exclusively emphasizes elbow-knee propulsion rather than Hung Gar's shoulder-waist-hip rotation. Due to the length of the pole, good horse-elbow-grip stability is the most important aspect for one to achieve (ideally) perfect control of the pole tip.

The Wing Chun eight chopping knife set does not train "blade flipping" "反手刀" like some other Southern style butterfly knife styles. Flipping of the wrists during execution of the knife movements is discouraged. Wrist strength should be developed through Biu Jee and pole training before working with the knives, and a set of preparatory exercises must be practiced before learning the techniques. Many knife techniques have a one-to-one relationship with empty hand movements. In general, the stance is a little wider and footwork practiced a bit quicker than in the other sets of Wing Chun. This correlates to the Kung Fu saying "雙刀看走" (double-knives-watch-running). In translation, this means that good performance with the double knives depends on lively footwork; thus the knives set places increased emphasis on footwork agility and the ability to close the gap. Elbow-knee and finger-palm unity must all come into play within the knife set.