

These are 10 criteria judges generally use at Tai Chi Competitions during the Hand Form sections.

Tai Chi Hand Form – Competition Categories

Correct Posture

- *The back needs to be straight*
- *There needs to be a straight line through the head, the neck, down the spine and into the coccyx*
- *The coccyx is in a state of "Zhong Zheng"*
- *This allows for the lungs to expand in comfort*

Correctness of Stance

- *good alignment of the knee and foot*
- *making sure each stance is properly executed*
 - *front stance*
 - *back stance*
 - *horse-riding stance*
 - *cat stance*
- *Length of stance needs to be correct for the different techniques*

Distinguishing Yin and Yang

- *distinguishing Yin and Yang, substantial and void, full and empty; all meaning the same thing*
- *The weighted limb is considered Yin*
- *The empty limb is considered Yang*
- *Doesn't only apply to stances. Can also be done in opening, contracting, closing, expanding*
- *There is always an element of Yin in the Yang and Yang in the Yin. It is never 100% one or the other. Just like the Yin Yang symbol*

Intent & Focus

- *Correct use of the eyes*
- *focusing in accordance with the technique*

Co-Ordinated Movement

- *a much more difficult goal for beginners*
- *every part of the body must start and end together*
- *total body movement in unison*

Smoothness

- *practising your forms in a smooth manner*
- *the form is performed at different speeds throughout, but smoothness must still be maintained*
- *smooth transitions between techniques*

"Balanced Turning and Stepping

- *You need to sink*
- *distinguish Yin and Yang*
- *good posture*
- *correct foot placement before and after kicks, turns and steps*

Softness and Relaxation of the body

- *no tension*
- *in Chinese the term used for relaxed = "Song"*
- *loose and lax*
- *not as simple as it sounds*
- *obviously there is muscular strength*
- *the strength is trained and relaxed*
- *various Tai Chi exercises can help a student achieve softness*
- *If the techniques are done softly and slowly, the body becomes more relaxed*
- *if we are more relaxed we can move faster and more efficiently*

Aesthetic Appearance

- *Overall, how does the form look?*
- *Fast and then slow*
- *High and then low*
- *combining the other categories to produce a good looking form, from start to finish*

Martial Spirit

- *making sure the martial aspect of the hand form technique can be seen.*
- *again, in accordance with intent and spirit*