

Thai Qi, Training Cycle 1

Level 1 is a series of eight lessons that combines elements of martial arts and dance forms. Each lesson has its own theme and lasts approximately 90 minutes. The goal is to enhance body exploration, coordination improvement, and body awareness in the context of combat and dance forms. What we mean by dance will become clear to you throughout the lessons.

NOTE: Physical contact is made during the training sessions. Men and women train mixed with no distinctions made.

Lesson 1: Groundwork

- **Goal:** Basic principles of movement on the ground. We work with fall prevention, securing in attack and defense, ground contact, balance, overcoming fear, submission and dominance, cooperation and resistance.
 - **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Dynamic stretching, focusing on flexibility and mobility in the hips, the Qi area, and shoulders.
 - **Ground Movements:** Basic rolls (forward, side), crawling movements, and rotations using hands and knees.
 - Forward fall and roll
 - Side fall and roll
 - Backward fall and roll
 - Other options for ground movement
 - **Ground Techniques:** We explore sports like Judo, Jiu-Jitsu, BJJ, and other ground combat and defense positions.
 - Ground position exercises to quickly rise and descend
 - Techniques for quickly getting behind someone, from wrestling
 - Helping each other rise quickly
 - **Partner Exercises:** These exercises focus on applicability, realism, and body-specific characteristics.
 - Choking
 - Two different arm locks
 - Pinning (holding on the ground) front and rear
 - **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, make comments, and contribute knowledge.
 - **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.
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Lesson 2: The Way of the Sword

- **Goal:** Movement and technique at knee level and standing movements. Basic techniques of weapon training. The principle of the Samurai and the way of the sword. This lesson is about understanding that martial arts cannot be separated from the use of weapons. We work toward understanding how armed and unarmed combat are intertwined.
 - **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Stretching, focusing on legs, knees, and core.
 - **Knee-Level Movements:** Transitions from kneeling to squatting (a low squatting stance called *iai-goshi*), stepping at knee level, and basic movements in standing combat stance.
 - *laigoshi no Kamae* (居合腰の構え) - This technique requires the sword wielder to rise from a seated position while quickly drawing the sword and executing a cutting attack, usually in a diagonal motion.
 - *Tsuka Ate* (柄当て) - In *Tsuka Ate*, the sword fighter uses the handle (*tsuka*) of the sword as an offensive instrument when rising from a seated position. The technique often begins with a thrust of the *tsuka* towards the opponent to create space or deflect an attack, after which the sword is quickly drawn for an upward cut or defensive move.
 - *Gyaku-kesagiri* (逆袈裟切り) - From a seated position, this technique is performed by quickly standing and drawing the sword with an upward cut.
 - **Standing Techniques:** Basic sword-drawing (standing stance called *tachi-ai*), striking from low positions, transitions from knee to standing.
 - *Shomen Uchi* (正面打ち) – Forward or Centerline Strike
 - *Yokomen Uchi* (横面打ち) – Diagonal Side Cut
 - *Tsuki* (突き) – Thrust Technique
 - **Partner Exercises:** These exercises focus on applicability, realism, and body-specific characteristics.
 - **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, make comments, and contribute knowledge.
 - **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.
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Lesson 3: Bodywork (Close Contact)

- **Goal:** Learning to handle a partner in close contact situations (<25%) and body awareness. What will you do when another person enters your intimate circle? Will your defenses activate, or will you remain passive? **NOTE:** Strong physical contact is involved in this lesson!
- **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Exercises focusing on balance, strength, and coordination.
 - **Partner Exercises:** Close contact movements, such as clinching, embracing, and moving together with a partner. Focus on connection and body control. These exercises come from original Muay Thai, emphasizing effectiveness and efficiency.
 - **Double Collar Tie (Thai Plum)** Thai name: จับคอคู่ (Jab Kho Koo) - Place both hands behind the opponent's head, crossing your hands and arms on top of each other and pressing your forearms firmly against the sides of their neck. Pull the head down, controlling the movements to deliver knee strikes to the body or head.
 - **Single Collar Tie** Thai name: จับคอเดี่ยว (Jab Kho Diao) - Use one hand to hold the neck or back of the head. With the other hand, control the shoulder and arms. In this position, you manage distance and create opportunities for both attack and defense. You'll also learn to flow into other techniques, such as an arm lock.
 - **Body Lock Clinch** Thai name: ล็อกตัว (Lok Tua) - Stand fully against your partner, using both arms to secure a lock around the waist. Both arms are rotated in a way that allows you to gain control over the position and create opportunities for a throw or counterattack. This is a simple yet highly effective defense in direct full contact.
 - **Techniques:** Basic grips and escapes, with smooth dance and combat movements to maintain or change position. Clinching is like dancing, where you use balance and movement to deliver knee and elbow strikes while simultaneously using your partner for balance and strength.
 - **Partner Exercises:** These exercises focus on applicability, realism, and body-specific characteristics.
- **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, make comments, and contribute knowledge.
- **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.

Lesson 4: Half Distance

- **Goal:** Movement and technique at half distance (50%). The focus is on using angles, knee, and elbow techniques, where the effectiveness of a good defense as an attack becomes clear. This is a direct continuation from the previous lesson.
 - **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Coordination and stability exercises focusing on footwork, including partner exercises for balance with dance-like movements.
 - **Footwork:** Basic dance-form and combat footwork to control and shift distance, incorporating turns and various step forms.
 - **Half Distance Techniques:** Punch, strike, and kick combinations at half distance, along with defensive moves like blocking and evading. Techniques covered include:
 - **Straight Knee Strike (Khao Trong - เข่าตรง):** A straight knee strike forward, targeting the opponent's abdomen or ribs.
 - **Diagonal Knee Strike (Khao Chiang - เข่าเฉียง):** A diagonal knee strike rising from the side to target the body or ribs.
 - **Side Knee Strike (Khao Sok - เข่าศอก):** A side knee strike executed with a short turn, aimed at side areas like the ribs or hip.
 - **Sok Ti (Strong Side Elbow):** A side strike to the head of the partner, using a sharp elbow and turning the body forward.
 - **Sok Chieng (Diagonal Elbow):** A diagonal, upward elbow aimed at the head, lifted at a 45-degree angle with shoulder force.
 - **Sok Glab (Backward Elbow):** A backward elbow strike targeting the face or body, swung back with turning hips and shoulders.
 - **Partner Exercises:** These exercises focus on applicability, realism, and body-specific characteristics. For this part of the training, we also use pads and cushions.
 - **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, share comments, and bring knowledge to the group.
 - **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.
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Lesson 5: Full Distance

- **Goal:** Movement and techniques at long distance (100%). In this lesson, we work at full arm and leg distance. Techniques are practiced separately at first, then combined. We use gloves, shin guards, and other equipment.
 - **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Reaction and distance drills, dynamic stretches, stepping, and switching.
 - **Footwork and Mobility:** Shadowboxing and dance-form movements at long distance to quickly close or increase distance, practicing techniques from both left and right stance.
 - **Long Distance Techniques:** Kicks and punches, defense, and using speed and distance to evade, intercept, and counter. Techniques are practiced on pads, then with a partner.
 - Tei Tat (Side Kick): A side kick to the body, turning the hips, stepping, lifting the leg sideways, and kicking powerfully to drive through the cushion.
 - Tei Tad (Low Side Kick, also known as Low Kick): A low side kick to the thighs, practiced with maximum effort on the pad and defensive practice with a partner.
 - Tei Tien (Forward Kick): A straight forward kick targeting the chest or abdomen.
 - Tei Phak (Push Kick or Teep): A forward, defensive kick to the chest or abdomen, often used to maintain distance or destabilize the opponent.
 - Combination Technique: Alternating punches and kicks, practiced with a partner, from both left and right stances.
 - If time allows: Tei Glap Lang (Reverse Backward Kick): A full turn with a backward kick to the head or body, powerful as a counter after evading.
 - **Partner Exercises:** These exercises focus on applicability, realism, and body-specific characteristics, using equipment like kicking pads.
 - **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, make comments, and share insights.
 - **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.
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Lesson 6: Combinations from Standing to Ground

- **Goal:** Transitions from standing position to ground techniques, focusing on bringing the attacker to the ground quickly and effectively.
 - **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Dynamic stretches focusing on transitions between different heights, practicing elements from Lesson 1.
 - **Standing to Ground Transitions:** Techniques such as shoots, controlled falling, and smooth transitions from kicks to ground movements.
 - **Partner Exercises:** Working with a partner to practice transitions and control when going to the ground.
 - **Double Leg Takedown:** A common technique where both legs are grabbed, pushing the opponent backward and pulling the legs to unbalance and bring them down.
 - **Single Leg Takedown:** Grabbing one leg, lifting it, and using a push or turn to bring the opponent to the ground, effective if they're pushing forward.
 - **High Crotch Takedown:** Grabbing one leg at the thigh, lifting it, and rotating the opponent to unbalance and bring them down.
 - **Body Lock Takedown:** Encircling the opponent's torso, often from a clinch, using sideways pressure or a turning motion to bring them down.
 - **Trip (Inside Leg Sweep):** Hooking your leg inside theirs during a clinch and pulling them toward you, causing them to fall.
 - **Partner Exercises:** These exercises focus on applicability, realism, and body-specific characteristics. We work with time intervals, switching partners each "round" to feel a variety of experiences.
 - **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, share comments, and contribute insights.
 - **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.
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Lesson 7: Ground to Standing

- **Goal:** Rising and transitions from ground to standing. When lying on the ground, it can feel like a disadvantageous position. This training explores how to defend yourself when down and quickly turn a disadvantage into an advantage.
 - **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Mobility exercises for shoulders, hips, and Qi.
 - **Standing Techniques:** Basic rising techniques from the ground, such as the technical stand-up and roll to standing, revisiting techniques learned earlier.
 - **Partner Movements:** Work with a partner to practice resistance and control while rising from the ground.
 - **Technical Stand-Up (Base Stand-Up):** Support yourself with one hand behind, keep the other leg bent forward for defense, kick forward to create space, and rise with control.
 - **Scooting (Shrimping Backward):** Quickly move hips backward in a “shrimping” motion, sliding yourself back to create distance and wait for a moment to rise.
 - **Sit-Up Guard:** From lying, shift to a seated position with one leg forward, making it easier to stand or defend as the opponent closes in.
 - **Tripod Stand-Up:** Place one hand and both feet firmly on the ground in a triangular stance, enabling a fast return to standing while defending against approaching attacks.
 - **Rolling Stand-Up (Backward Roll):** Quickly roll backward, create space, and come to hands and feet for a secure return to standing.
 - **Kick-and-Roll Escape:** Kick forward to deter the opponent, then immediately roll to your side, coming up on hands and feet for a safe standing position.
 - **Partner Exercises:** We practice disturbing the standing partner. The standing partner tries to make it difficult for the ground partner to rise quickly by disrupting balance, while the ground partner attempts a defensive offense from a disadvantageous position.
 - **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, share comments, and bring knowledge to the group.
 - **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.
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Lesson 8: Combining Everything

- **Goal:** Integrate all learned techniques and movements into a complete flow. In this lesson, we aim to combine all previously learned techniques. Wearing as much protection as possible for the mouth, groin, hands, and shins is recommended.
- **Components:**
 - **Warm-up:** Gradual build-up with a review of techniques from previous lessons, incorporating various techniques from past sessions into a warm-up routine.
 - **Combinations and Flows:** Free partner exercises combining all elements (ground, knee, half, and full distance). Practice flows in a relaxed manner, integrating all learned techniques. The attacker performs the moves, and the defender follows, creating a continuous flow of movements.
 - **Controlled Sparring Sessions:** Gradual sparring sessions integrating all movements, both dance- and combat-oriented. After the flow, we work with resistance, where there is no designated attacker or defender; both roles are adopted simultaneously. We first perform this as a group and then in a circle, focusing on a pair in the center. The aim is to learn to manage attention and focus.
 - **Partner Exercises:** These exercises expand on the previous ones, focusing on the application of previously unsuccessful techniques. The goal is to identify what you've retained and which techniques your body has accepted and integrated into your reaction system. This will vary for each individual.
- **Questions and Discussion:** During this time, you can ask questions, make comments, and bring knowledge to the group.
- **End:** We conclude with a short meditation and/or breathing session.

Throughout the course, we try to cover each component as thoroughly as possible. However, not everything may be addressed, and other techniques may be taught that are not listed in the description. This all depends on the effort, abilities, and level of advancement of the participants.

This is the foundation course for Thai Qi, called Level 1. You can continue training up to Level 8.