

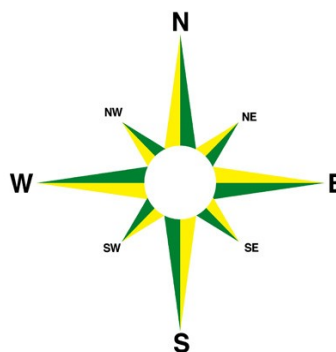
Cheng Man-Ching 37 Posture Form – the First Third

All weight-shift is slow, stead and even.

Arm motion is 'driven' from the hips, and co-ordinated so that moving arms and hands come momentarily to rest only at the same time that the weight shift is completed. Remain in each posture for a second, while practising, and relax. Where, during a movement from one posture to another, no arm movement is indicated, that arm and hand simply move with the torso, remaining in the same relative position.

Once a posture has been mastered, you can think of it as a preparation for the next – you sort of 'bounce' from one to the next.

Compass points are sometimes used to refer to directions. You start facing north (N). West (W) is to your left; east (E) to your right.



Ready

Starting point is heels together, toes apart at approximately 90°. Knees soft. Shoulders relaxed. Belly soft. Head as if suspended from above. Weight on chin. Pelvis tucked under a bit. Arms at sides. Tongue gently touching the roof of your mouth.

Sink all weight into right leg, bending knees. Hands move slightly out to sides and slightly forwards, and turn so that palms face backwards.

This is the Ready Position., or Wu Chi Position

Preparation

Lift the empty left foot and place down, heel and then toes, a shoulder's width to the left, with toes pointing straight ahead.

Shift weight to left leg (sitting on left leg), while turning hips clockwise so that body points in direction of right toes (NE).

Keeping weight on left leg, turn hips counter-clockwise, taking toes of right foot counter-clockwise with the turn. Feet end up parallel, and shoulder-width apart (N).

Bring weight to centre and rise, without locking knees.

The is called Preparation.

Beginning

Arms rise as if pulled by string at wrists. Elbows are not locked. Wrists loose / dangling.

When hands reach shoulder height, straighten fingers softly

Lower elbows, bringing hands, now parallel to the ground, towards shoulders.

Hands float down as if in water, wrists move first, with fingers following, and then drifting below wrists as arms go all the way down to rest by your side.

Hands move forward slightly – to the Ready Position.

This is called Beginning.

Grasp the Sparrow's Tail - Ward Off Left

Empty right leg by sinking weight into left,

At the same time turn hips clockwise - hence rotating right foot on heel to face E.

And, at the same time, raising right arm directly up, keeping palm down

And, at the same time, turning over the left hand to be palm up

Weight is now all on left leg, torso is facing E - along right foot, right hand at chest height, palm down

Shift weight onto right leg

Continue to shift weight until 100% is on right leg; torso may continue to turn clockwise with weight shift.

At the same time move left hand directly under right - 'hold the ball'.

Step 'out' with left leg directly N in line with toes - torso remains as-is.

Soften left knee and start to shift weight to left leg.

At the same time turn hips counter-clockwise

When sufficient weight is on left leg, rt foot turns on heel to point at 45° (NE).

During the turning, the left arm drifts up, ending across chest, palm facing chest.

Equally, during the turning, the right arm drifts directly down, ending slightly in front of and to the right of the right thigh. 'Feel' the two palms passing one another during this movement.

Weight is now 70% on left, 30% on right. Hips and shoulders are in line so that torso points directly in line with left foot. Groin is nicely open. (stance is called 'bow stance'). Ward off left.

Grasp the Sparrow's Tail - Ward Off Right

Continue to sink weight into the left leg, at the same time turning both palms so that left palm faces down and right faces up.

When pretty much all the weight is on the left leg, turn hips clockwise, thus turning the right foot clockwise - this time, on the ball of the foot.

At the same time, gently move right arm slight left across body to hold the ball over the left thigh.

Step 'out' slightly with empty right leg - just enough to give a good width to stance. Heel – toe.

Soften right knee and start to shift weight into right leg

At the same time turn hips clockwise

When sufficient weight is on the right leg, left foot turns on heel to point at 45° (NE).

During the turning, the right arm drifts up, ending across chest, palm facing chest.

The left arm just moves with the torso, and so ends up pointing, palm down, into the right palm

Weight is now 70% on right, 30% on left. Hips and shoulders are in line so that torso points E directly in line with right foot. (bow stance again) Ward off right.

Grasp the Sparrow's Tail - Roll Back

Turn waist slightly to right.

The right arm remains in pretty much the same posture, but the elbow sinks a bit, bringing the arm angled slightly upwards from the horizontal

Sink weight onto left leg - sitting back onto leg

At the same time left wrist turns so that palm points upwards as left arm drifts down to thigh level

Right arm stays in same relative position, just moving with torso.

When weight halfway back, start to turn hips counter-clockwise, as weight continues to sink into left leg

At the same time, left arm drifts up in a circular motion, ending with hand near the left ear, palm down.

Weight is now all on left leg, torso turned at 45° - ish (NE). This is Rollback.

Grasp the Sparrow's Tail - Press

Soften right knee, start to shift weight onto right leg, at the same time turning hips clockwise to E.

At the same time, bring left hand to right hand; palms meet near wrists at the same time that torso is aligned with right foot - just before weight shift finishes.

Weight is now 70% on right, 30% on left. Hips and shoulders are in line so that torso points directly in line with left foot (E). Press.

Grasp the Sparrow's Tail - Push

Sit back onto left leg

At the same time, separate hands, and bring them back near to shoulders, hands, palm down, parallel to floor.

Soften right knee, shift weight forward

At the same time drop wrists so that hands are in line with forearms. Arms move forward with torso, and perhaps a tiny bit more, not extending beyond right knee. Angle of arms is about 45° from horizontal.

Weight is now 70% on right, 30% on left. Hips and shoulders are in line so that torso points directly in line with left foot. Push.

To Single Whip:

Sit back on your left leg. Arms extend at elbow to become parallel to the ground, with hands in line with forearms (elbows don't change their position with respect to the body). Turn to the left, leading with the hips; right leg turns, pivoting on the heel, as far as you can comfortably go. Maintain alignment of nose, arms and navel.

As you shift all your weight back to the right foot, your right hand comes back towards your right shoulder and your left hand moves diagonally down towards, ending palm up in front of your right thigh at navel height. Complete the movement by turning your waist slightly to the right while forming a 'bird's beak' with your right hand, which is directly in front of your right shoulder. When the movement seems natural, combine the weight shift and the right turn into a single movement, coordinated with the arm movements.

Unwind. Pivoting on your left toes, leading with the waist, turn to the left, ending up facing the 'NW' corner. As you turn, your right arm (with the 'beak') gently extends directly out from your shoulder, ending up pointing toward the 'SE' corner. Coordinated with this, your left hand moves the short distance to a point in front of your navel. You can think of this as unwinding or relaxing from the 'tight' previous position.

The beak arm is extended, but not stiff. The movement is a 'strike'; the striking surfacing is the bent wrist. The end position is with the wrist at shoulder height.

Take a good-sized step with the left leg towards the 'NW', heel, then toe - with the toes pointing 'W'. (The correct positioning of the foot will become clear at the end.) Begin to shift your weight onto your left leg. When your weight is distributed 50-50, start turning your hips to the left, turning on the heel of your right foot, bringing your right toes to a 45° position. Continue to shift weight and turn until 70% of your weight is on your front (left) leg, 30% on the back (right) leg, and your right toes are at 45° to the left.

During this turning movement, let your left arm sweep diagonally upwards and outwards, from near the navel to in front of the left shoulder – elbow bent at about 90° (forearm at 45° to the horizontal), palm in line with forearm. At the last moment, turn the left hand around so that the palm faces away from you.

This completes 'Single Whip'. The movement of the left arm, driven by the hips turning, is a bit like a whip; starting from palm up over right thigh position, it moves by shoulder movement across to the navel, then rotates at the elbow to take the hand in front of the left shoulder and finally rotates at the wrist.

Play Guitar

Let your left leg take more weight, eventually 100%, as you rotate your hips 90° to the right, pivoting on the toes of the right foot. As you do this, open the beak hand and turn both hands so that palms face one another. Then lift your right foot slightly and move it directly to the left, touching the heel down more or less in line with your left heel. At the same times your arms come closer together, the right arm ending in front of your right shoulder, with elbow bent to 90 degrees, and the left hand just inside the left hip, palm facing your right elbow. An expansive position changing to a compressed position. All weight remains on the left leg.

Lean Forward (Shoulder Strike)

Allow your empty right leg move back so that your right foot rests on its ball by your left heel. At the same time, both arms 'drop'. The left hand comes to the side of your left thigh and the right to guard your groin. All weight remains on the left leg.

Step directly forward with your right leg – heel, toe. Your feet are at 90° to one another. Shift weight to 70% front and 30% back, leading with your right shoulder, right elbow slightly bent. The left hand rises a bit so that the fingers, palm towards you, point towards the crook of your right arm, about 10 cm from it.

Your torso will be pointing a bit West of North.

White Crane Spreads Its Wings

Let all your weight move into your right leg as you turn your hips left, so that you end facing 'W'. At the same time your left foot slides to the right, ending in line with the heel of the right foot, resting on the ball. During the movement, you come up in height – the only time in the form that this happens.

With the turning of your hips, your right arm rises and your left arm falls. The right hand finishes just above and to the right of your right temple, palm facing out – as if warding off a blow to the temple. The left hand 'brushes' the rightward moving left knee and finishes just in front of and to the side of your left thigh, palm facing back – the arm more or less straight.

The arms together thus make a diagonal spreading movement in conjunction with your rising in height. All your weight remains on your right leg.

Brush Knee and Twist Step

Bend your right knee as you turn your hips to the right, turning on the ball of the left foot.

At the same time both your arm move. Your right hand 'rolls' over and down ending loosely at your right side, and then immediately swings up, bringing your right hand, wrist gently bent, palm down by your right ear, fingers pointing forward. Your left hand comes diagonally from beside your left thigh to in front of the right side of your chest (almost shoulder height) and then down to waist height. Coordinating this movement with that of the hips is good fun. Think: 'right hand down and up; left hand up and down.' The rotation of the body turns the up and down movements into nice arcs.

Then:

Step with the left foot away from you and to the left (towards the SW), heel – toe, toes pointing W.

Shift your weight and turn your hips, ending in a 70-30 bow stance.

As you do this, your left hand 'brushes' your left knee, ending in the same position as for White Crane Spreads Its Wings, and your right arm extends forward at the elbow, ending bent at 90°, with your forearm at 45° to the horizontal, and your hand in line with it, palm facing away from you. (This is the same as the ending position for your left arm/hand in Single Whip).

Play Guitar

Take all your weight on your left leg and bend your right leg at the knee, lifting your foot behind you a few centimetres off the ground; your heel comes off the ground first, then your toe.

Place your right foot back exactly where it was, toe – then heel. Shift all your weight onto your right leg, sitting back. Your right arm moves down (and slightly to the side away from your body) and your left up (also slightly away), palms face one another, and are in line at about chest height when your right leg has taken all your weight.

Slide your left foot, toes up, to the right, so that your left heel is directly in front of your right.

Both arms move slightly towards the centreline – left arm ending in front of your left shoulder, with elbow bent to 90°. Your right hand comes to just inside the right hip, palm facing your left elbow. All weight remains on the left leg. This is the same position as the previous Play Guitar, with left and right reversed.

Brush Knee and Twist Step

Turn your hips to the right, turning on the ball of the left foot.

At the same time both your arm move. Your right hand drops down ending loosely at your right side, palm forward, and then immediately swings up, bringing your right hand, wrist gently bent, palm down by your right ear, fingers pointing forward. Your left arm bends at the elbow to come to the right across your chest and down to waist height.

Then:

Step with the left foot away from you and to the left (towards the SW), heel – toe, toes pointing W.

Shift your weight and turn your hips, ending in a 70-30 bow stance.

As you do this, your left hand 'brushes' your left knee, ending slightly to the left and in front of your left thigh, and your right arm extends forward at the elbow, ending bent at 90°, with your forearm at 45° to the horizontal, and your hand in line with it, palm facing away from you. (as previously).

Step Forward, Deflect Downward, Intercept and Punch

Sit back on your right leg. As your weight comes off your left leg, turn hips to the left, so that your left toes turn out to 45° (SW). Your left palm simply turns to face forward. Your right arm moves diagonally down and to the left, the hand ending in front of the left one.

Shift all your weight to your left leg, lifting your right heel off the ground. Make a loose fist with your right hand.

Bring your right foot close to the heel of your left and then step out with your right foot diagonally to the right (NW). Place it down, heel-toe, point towards the NW corner. As you shift all your weight onto your right leg, your waist turns comfortable to the right, facing NW. Your right fist moves up and across, with the rotation at your elbow, ending to the right of your head at ear height. (as if giving a blow to someone's temple) Your left arm moves upwards and out, ending in front of your midline at chest height, palm facing toward you. (as if reaching to grab someone behind the neck)

Step forward with your left leg – toes directly forward. As your left leg reaches out, your right arm drops down, ending with your fist 'hidden' behind your back, at hip height. As you shift your weight onto your left leg (to end at 70 – 30), your hips turn to the left, ending directly W. Your right fist moves up to waist height and 'snakes' around your waist and then punches directly forward. Your left hand comes a little to the left and downward to avoid the punching fist, ending just to the left of the right wrist.

Withdraw and Push

Retaining your weight distribution and hip position, turn your waist to the left as you move your fist to the left, rotating at the elbow, to bring your right wrist above your left forearm. Your left hand turns palm up.

Sit back onto your right leg and turn your waist back to 'neutral'. Turn your hips slightly to the right. Open your fist and turn your right palm face up. Draw your right wrist and hand towards you and to the right, almost sliding in the crook of your left elbow – then across your body at stomach level.

As your weight approaches 100% on your right leg, turn your hips to the left to face directly W. Your right arm continues in an arc to end in front of your right shoulder and your left comes up to be in front of your left shoulder. Both arms are bent at 90° at the elbow, forearms are at 40° to the horizontal and palm face away from you.

Shift your weight forward until it is 70° on the front (left) leg, in a bow stance.

Crossing Hands

Sit back on your right leg, turning your waist to the right – turning on the heel of your left foot, bringing the toes to point N.

As you shift all your weight to your left leg, pivot your right leg on the toes of your right foot, ending facing N, all weight on the left leg, right toes pointing N. Your arms come down and out, ending outside and slightly in front of your thighs, palms facing down.

Bring the right foot parallel to the left, a shoulder's width away, facing N. Continue your arm movement by bringing hands to cross in front of your navel, left hand closer to the body.

Allow your weight to even-up so that you are standing with 50% of your weight on each leg. Bring your crossed hands up to chest height, palms facing you.

Overall arm movement is roughly circular: 'out and down', 'in and cross', 'up' – coordinated with weight shift from bow stance W to double-weighted N, via 'left toe in', 'unwind', 'step across with right', 'balance weight'.

This is the end of the 'First Third' of the form.