

Official W.T.B.A. Grading Syllabus

In the following pages you will find all the separate grading systems for the different aspects of the WTBA

Please check website for video guidelines

Please note: Once you are moving through the instructor grades, these should be your main focus, however other training methods etc that are not in the test for each grade, may help you learn something you're not understanding, so don't disregard things that are not in the grades, the grades are based on the fundamental forms and training methods only.

A student only has to go through the grading if they wish to work towards their Instructors degree, otherwise they do not need to take grades, but still can if they wish as a way of seeing how they are doing.

Student Grading:

Can be carried out by any wtba certified instructor of grade 1 or higher.

Instructor Grade 1:

Can be carried out by a WTBA instructor of Grade 5 or higher.

Instructor Grades 2-5:

Can be carried out by WTBA instructors with Masters Degree, however, the student must have met and trained with Eli in person to be graded.

Instructor Grades 6+:

Are only carried out by Eli Montaigne

All grades must be signed and certified by Eli Montaigne:

In most cases you will be viewed during class time, your teacher will simply take note of your ability during class, and then contact Eli to have the grade issued.

When this is not possible,
a small fee may be charged to cover your instructors time for the grading.

There is no fee for the issuing of a grade, however you do need to be a WTBA "Active Member"

Ask your instructor about grading, or contact Eli.

eli@wtba.co.uk

www.taijiworld.com

Official W.T.B.A. Instructor Grading Syllabus (Taijiquan)

**Students must have passed "Grades 1-8 Student" or "Pre Instructors Test"
before applying for "Grade 1 Instructor"**

Instructor grades are based on pedantic correctness.

As you will see, the first couple of grades do not involve anything you don't already know from your student grades, but the tests will be harder, the correctness of the basic forms should be A1. You will be asked to explain aspects of forms and drills as if you were teaching. Any grade you are testing for, you will be expected to have maintained the principals from previous grades.

As long as you have done your 3 years student training and passed grade 8,
then with regular training and dedication you should look to do one instructor grade every 1 to
2 years up to grade 5.

**You must have at least one year on any grade
before being able to test for your next grade.
Regardless of whether you're good enough to pass.**

This is to make sure the instructor has experience to match their skill

Major Fault: Allowance (0)

A mistake the student is unable to correct.

Minor Fault: Allowance (5)

An unrecognized mistake, pointed out by the examiner, but corrected on the spot.

Minor Minor Fault: Allowance (10)

A mistake made, but recognized and corrected on the spot.

Exceptions:

If someone has a physical problem with their body, such as a knee injury, or major back problems etc,
if this stops them being able to do a certain movement, but they are doing everything else well, then we
will make an exception that they would not have to do that move that they cannot,
but it must be a good reason!

You can use either YLC or YCF form up to grade 2, then only YLC form from grade 3 onwards.

Taiji form "Step" description (For YCF form, don't apply the Fa-jing)

Doing the form at a higher "step" during a grading, will not deduct anything from your grade, as long as that step is done correctly.

The student at anytime may be asked to show a posture how it should be taught to a beginner.

Step 1

Must show a refinement of all principals leant in the student grades.

Applications should be demonstrated.

You may be asked to demonstrate how a posture should be taught to a beginner.

Step 2:

Should now show subtle weight shifting between feet in postures where in the basic form there is no weight shifting, such as the opening movement.

Fa-jing should now be showing some good snappy power.

Step 3:

Empty movements at the end of each major posture and the extra "Hick Up" moves between postures like Sit Back Ready should now be understood correctly.

The timing of when these should be executed must be correct.

Fa-jing should now have solid weight and snap behind it, showing a strong root to the ground, and some explosive power expression.

Step 4:

Opening and closing during each posture should now be understood, and correct compressions of waist. The movements should now flow with spirals.

Fa-jing should now be at a high level, power should be developed in a close range, should have natural recoil into the next move, and a fully explosive nature.

Before going for each grade, once you have learnt the forms and drills, it is recommended that you have them looked over by an instructor, in person or via video, to make sure you're on the right path. So you do not put in a year of hard training doing something incorrectly.

Then you can put your time and efforts in, knowing you're on the right path for that grade.

Grade: Basic

(This grade is given to a student, when they are not quite ready for Level 1, but there is no one else in their area teaching, and so better for people to learn from a basic instructor, than a DVD)

Grade: 1

The most important thing we look for at level one, is that you are doing the moves right. If you are going to be teaching the forms, the worst thing is to give your students bad habits.

A very basic form done correctly = pass. A more advanced form done incorrectly = fail.

YLC form:

First third, Step 1.

Small San Sau solo form:

Should show refinement on all principals learnt in student grades

Fa-jing movements should be done with good looseness and grounding (just a snappy well-structured strike is expected)

Small San Sau two man form:

Must be able to perform each martial application, with good structure. The punches will not come fast, but they will be heavy.

Must also be able to throw all the punches, for someone else doing the form.

Must show good form and control. Should be able to show and name which Dim-Mak Point each strike is going to for both the form side, and the punching side.

Single Push Hands:

Must show solid peng, move from the centre, and be able to change hands without losing structure during the 3 main change over methods. Forward, Back, and Low. You must also show the skill of taking the force of the push up your arm into your shoulders.

Qigong:

Must be able to hold standing three circles for 30 minutes. Maintaining good posture and relaxation

Must be able to hold the baby for 2 minutes each leg. Maintaining good posture and relaxation

Training Methods:

The post, must show balance, with total relaxation of the upper body.

Steps should be performed correctly, you must not roll the heel on flat footed steps.

Striking:

You will be asked to strike a focus mitt or kick shield, with methods relative to the forms and drills for Grade 1, and should be done with a level equal to the rest of your Grade 1 test.

Grade: 2

YLC form:

First third Step 2. Second third Step 1. Third 3rd Step 1

Small San Sau solo form:

Should now be performed at a fast pace, while maintaining good form and balance. Showing good power in strikes. Fa-jing should now be showing some good snappy power.

Small San Sau two man form:

Strikes will now come at you with the same heavy power as in level 1. But now at a fast pace. As soon as you have done the application, the next strike will be coming.

Single Push Hands:

You should now be able to hold you peng regardless of where the push is coming from. You must perform at a slow pace, the skill of reading where the push is coming from, and going with the flow.

Chee Sau

Should now be able to react correctly to moderate attacks of any kind

Double Push Hands:

The basic movements should be understood and performed. Solid peng, and good use of hinge.

Qigong:

Must be able to hold standing three circles for 33 minutes. Maintaining good posture and relaxation

Must be able to hold the baby for 2.5 minutes each leg. Maintaining good posture and relaxation

Training Methods:

Dragon Prawn Boxing, the four basic drills should be performed at a fighting pace, showing good waist connection and looseness.

Striking:

You will be asked to strike a focus mitt or kick shield, with methods relative to the forms and drills for Grade 2, and should be done with a level equal to the rest of your Grade 2 test.

(Includes kicking)

Grade: 3

YLC Form:

First third Step 3. Second third Step 2. Third 3rd Step 2

Small San Sau solo form:

Fa-jing should now have solid weight and snap behind it, showing a strong root to the ground, and some explosive power expression.

Small San Sau two man form:

Strikes will now come in at you at full force and speed. (This is where you start to get hurt when you get it wrong) You should also be able to perform the full B side, punches as well as defences.

Single Push Hands:

You should now be able to maintain your peng and keep moving regardless of what is coming into you. Under heavy fast pushes, you should be able to perform a yin yielding defence. The force coming into you, should now be routed down to your standing leg. You should be able to move around. And open your centre to the side, without losing form, while still rerouting the force down to your feet. You should no longer have a stance. You should now be looking over the fence. Should be able to defend against strikes, and not allow your partner to pull you forward, by flicking the wrist out. If you are pulled forward you should barge in with a shoulder or elbow.

Double Push Hands:

You should now have good flow. And a good understanding of going with the flow. And be able to withstand the 3 basic tests. Peng break, elbow lock, and walk through.

Chee Sau:

Should now be able to move freestyle, while maintaining your Taiji principals, and be able to react to any strike that may come in at you, with a defence and counter.

Pauchui:

Both A and B sides should be performed, with good pace.

You should be moving to a similar skill level as the rest of your training.

Qigong:

35 minutes standing

Hold the baby for 3 minutes each leg.

Striking:

You will be asked to strike a focus mitt or kick shield, with methods relative to the forms and drills for Grade 3, and should be done with a level equal to the rest of your Grade 3 test. (Includes kicking)

Kick Defence:

Should be able to defend against all high kicks, including, back kick, front kick, back turning kick, using the barging principal. Low kicks to the knees should be blocked with the legs.

Stick Form:

Performed to a Grade 3 standard.

Grade: 4

YLC Form:

First 3rd Step 4. Second 3rd Step 3. Third 3rd Step 3

SSS:

Should now be done at a fully explosive level equal to the YLC at Step 4.
Both solo and partnered. Mother Apps should also be demonstrated at eh same level.

Double Push Hands:

Should now be able to move freestyle, while maintaining your push hands principals, and be able to react to any strike that may come in at you, with a defence and counter, and stop any form of grabbing and being closed down.

Pauchui:

Both A and B sides should be performed, at a fully explosive pace.

Large San Sau:

The partner form (both sides) should be done with good pace and control.
Showing reaction to your partners strikes, and not moving ahead on your own.

Qigong:

45 minutes standing

Hold the baby for 4 minutes each leg.

Striking:

You will be asked to strike a focus mitt or kick shield, with methods relative to the forms and drills for Grade 4, and should be done with a level equal to the rest of your Grade 4 test.
(Includes kicking)

Knife Training:

Should show good understanding of "Evade Bump Attack" methods.

Grade: 5 (Senior)

YLC Form:

Full form at Step 4.

You must be ready to perform at random postures from the form at a full martial pace with Fa-jing.

Double Push Hands:

Should now be able to fight from your push hands, applying all your Taiji principals learnt so far into subconscious application.

Large San Sau:

The partner form (both sides) should be done with full speed and power.
Applying all your Taiji principals learn so far.

Root Methods:

Methods covering the first 3rd of YLC form should be done at a fully explosive level.

Qigong:

The 12 Qi development Tool, done at a level equal to your YLC form.

Striking:

You will be asked to strike a focus mitt or kick shield, with methods relative to the forms and drills for Grade 5, and should be done with a level equal to the rest of your Grade 5 test.

(Includes kicking)

Grade 5 is the last of the foundation grades, you now have all the foundations of Taiji.

Now you must let them develop into the internal and small frame grades that cannot be explained in words. Grades 6, 7, and 8, will be awarded through no actual "grading test" These are reserved only for the most dedicated instructors and typically take 15-20 years to achieve. To reach these grades it usually takes a lot of personal hands on time with a Master of the System.

Masters degree comes after level 8