

Learning Cane Forms Using an Instructional DVD

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This short essay talks about how I use instructional DVD's to learn Taijiquan, Shaolin, Karate, and Kung Fu wooden cane forms.

I use a 40" hickory heartwood combat cane; and, adapt all other short staff, sword, broadsword and staff routines and techniques for practice and performances with this wooden cane. The only weapon I practice with anymore is this wooden cane; and the only weapon I teach in my Taijiquan classes is the cane. Also, whenever I take a long walk, anywhere, I bring my cane along.

I use a wooden cane with a hook end. Other comparable weapons or tools are the short staff, walking stick, *jo*, *zhang*, *guai gun*, 13 Hands staff, or hiker's staff. Some short staffs have two straight ends, tapered ends, or are made of materials other than wood.

I live in a rural area near Red Bluff, California. There are no cane instructors in my area. Therefore, if I am to learn cane forms I must study and practice on my own. When possible, after I have learned a form, I seek corrections and suggestions from qualified teachers.

When using an instructional DVD, I use a learning process similar to that which I described in strategies for learning the Standard Taijiquan 24 Yang Form. I carefully watch the lesson on the DVD, and repeat viewing and studying the specific lesson dozens of times. I make detailed written notes on each lesson. For me, I must be able to verbally describe the movement in detail before I can physically learn to perform the movement correctly. I learn a name for each movement, and associate the movement with a specific technique and martial objective. I may need to view a specific DVD lesson dozens of repetitions depending on the complexity of the movement taught and how long it takes me to write up a description of the movement sequence. Then, I practice the movements for that lesson many times outdoors. Then, I review the instructional media again many times, refine and memorize the description, and then practice the form or technique outdoors over and over.

The whole purpose of this learning method is to develop in your mind a clear idea, a clear concept, a clear picture of what is to be done, how to move, and the martial purpose of each movement in a lesson. When you have this clear picture in your mind then you can describe or explain the picture with some precision. You can tell yourself or another person what movement comes next. You can articulate your understanding and your knowledge of the nature of the movement sequences.

I favor instructors who provide a clear and detailed narrative for each movement sequence in a lesson using a voice over technique delivered in the English language. They must first show and carefully describe the movement done in a very slow manner. Multiple angle views are very helpful. Multiple repetitions are essential. Views of the movement sequence done at various speeds are very helpful. Good audio is essential, and unobtrusive and quiet background music is acceptable but not required. Good lighting with an unobtrusive and uncluttered background is preferable. The instructional DVD must provide good cueing control.

Generally, I greatly prefer instructional DVDs by English speaking instructors who have some understanding of instructional methods and who provide detailed descriptions of each movement sequence done slowly. I learn best by first watching and listening carefully and then repeating the description of the movement until I have memorized the description. I never try to learn a movement sequence by trying to watch the DVD as I simultaneously perform the movement.

Videos of workshops are often not very useful because of poor lighting and cluttered settings, poor audio with distracting background noise, insufficient detail, single viewing angles, poor or no cueing options when using the media, and lack of a consistent instructional methodology. Instructional VCDs from China are inexpensive and interesting, but too often show the movements far too quickly and, of course, have no English voice over narrative in most cases and limited English subtitles. Also, instructional VCDs often lack good cueing control.

I have found the instructional DVDs for the cane or staff by Jesse Tsao and Jiang Jian-ye very useful for learning these forms and techniques. The instructional DVD for the Shaolin Kung Fu Cane by Shifu Ted Mancuso does meet all of the above criteria for a superior instructional DVD.

Cane Research Project at Valley Spirit Taijiquan

Self-Defense Arts and Fitness Exercises Using a Cane or Walking Stick

All documents were created by Michael P. Garofalo, M.S.

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These documents normally include a list of the movement names in the specific cane or short staff form and final direction to face in each posture/movement. Some documents provide detailed descriptions of each of the postures or movement sequences. All documents include some commentary, notes, and a bibliography of books, media, and links. Many of these documents are in Adobe PDF read/print only format. Some of these documents are still works in progress.

Bodhidharma's Shaolin Cane (Damo Cane, Shaolin Damo Kung Fu Cane). As taught by Master Shi Deyang. 21 Postures/Movements in 3 Sections.

Cane Research Project at Valley Spirit Taijiquan. Studies in the Cane, Walking Stick and Short Staff. Current list of cane research.

Cloud Hands Taijiquan

Chen Taijiquan Broadsword Form. As taught by Grandmaster Chen Zenglei. 23 Postures/Movements. Practice with cane. List of Names.

Chen Shen-Pu's Taijiquan Short Staff. Created by Grandmaster Chen Shen-Pu, and taught by Shifu Jiang Jian-ye.. 74 Postures/Movements. List of Names.

Eight Immortals Taijiquan Cane, Routine One, Yang Style of Taijiquan. As taught by Master Jesse Tsao. 36 Postures/Movements. List of Names.

How I Use Instructional DVD's to Learn Cane Forms.

Martial Arts Techniques for the Cane and Short Staff. Lists, Notes, and Commentary.

Northern Energy Taiji Cane (Beifang Qi Taiji Zhang). As taught by Sensei James Bouchard. Postures/Movements.

Shaolin Cane. As taught by Shifu Ted Mancuso. Postures/Movements. Detailed descriptions.

Standard Simplified Yang Style Sword Form. 32 Postures/Movements. Detailed descriptions. Practice with a cane.

Tchoung Ta-Tchen Cane. Created by Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-Tchen. 33 Postures/Movements. List of Names.

Way of the Short Staff. Comprehensive bibliography of books, media, links, and resources. Includes research on cane, short staff, walking stick, *jo*, etc..

Way of the Staff. Comprehensive bibliography of books, media, links, and resources. Includes research on the staff, *bo*, *gun*, quarterstaff, pole, etc..

Wudang Tiger Tail Short Staff. As taught by Shifu Jiang Jian-ye. 48 Postures/Movements in this Wudang Mountain Taoist Short Staff Form. List of names.



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