

Lesson 12 — Moves Deep Dive

The intermediate core of Tai Chi & Capoeira — fewer moves, deeper roots

No fusions this time, no inventions — just **craft**. We slow down and learn the intermediate core of two pillars properly. The rule is 80/20: a handful of moves carry most of each art. Drill these few until they are yours, and the fancy material in every other lesson suddenly has somewhere to plug in. **Depth beats breadth.**

Part I • Tai Chi — *the internal engine & its four hands*

Tai Chi isn't a catalogue of strikes — it's **one engine** expressed through a few shapes. Learn the engine first; the postures are just it pointing in different directions.

The Engine (drill this under everything): ① **Sung** 鬆 — release/relax-down, dissolve held tension so weight falls to the feet. ② **Root** — that fallen weight is your power source; you push the ground, not the man. ③ **Open/Close** 開合 — the body pulses like a lung: gather (yin) → issue (yang). ④ **Dantian** 丹田 — the waist/lower-belly turns first; hands arrive last. (*Frantzis: tai chi's power is the 16 neigong layered into the form — every move below is this engine, aimed.*)

The Four Hands (四正 — the intermediate heart of the whole art). These are the famous "four ounces deflect a thousand pounds." They are not punches — they are four ways to handle an incoming force.

1. Ward Off 棚 Pèng

A buoyant, springy outward structure — the arm rounds in front like an inflated tube, meeting force without collapsing or going stiff. The default "full" energy.

80/20 cue: not muscle — it's *structure* + *root*. Imagine floating a beach ball under water: it pushes back on its own. Keep the elbow below the wrist.

2. Roll Back 履 Lǚ

Receive the incoming force, stick to it, and *lead it past you* into emptiness by turning the waist and sitting back. You don't block — you redirect his momentum off your line.

80/20 cue: this is the soul of the art — **yield, don't resist**. Turn the dantian; let his push slide into the hole where you used to be.

3. Press 擠 Jǐ

A two-handed forward issue — back hand backs the front forearm, and the whole rooted body delivers one short, sealed push the instant his Roll Back over-commits.

80/20 cue: it's a *follow-up*. Lü creates the gap; Ji fills it. Power comes from the back leg through a connected frame, not the arms.

4. Push 按 Àn

Sink first, then rise — both palms drop slightly to "load," then issue forward-and-up on a rising arc as the back leg drives. The clearest taste of *fa-jin* for a beginner.

80/20 cue: sink to rise. The dip is the load (it's a tiny squat — the same eccentric trick as our Coiled Dragon). Relax, then release; don't shove.

Three Signature Postures (the engine, walking).

5. Brush Knee & Twist Step 樓膝拗步 Lōu Xī Āo Bù

Step forward; one hand sweeps low across the knee to clear a low attack while the opposite palm strikes forward — opposite hand and foot (the "twist"). The classic parry-low-strike-high.

80/20 cue: the strike is driven by the *waist turn and the step*, not the shoulder. Lower body clears, upper body answers, one beat.

6. Cloud Hands 雲手 Yún Shǒu

Continuous side-stepping while both hands trace vertical circles across the body, each turn powered by the waist. The supreme drill for waist-driven power and lateral mobility.

80/20 cue: the **hands do nothing — the waist does everything**. This is the rotation that later swings every Capoeira kick below. Pure dantian training.

7. Single Whip 單鞭 Dān Biān

An expansive open posture: one hand forms a downward "hook" (fingers pinched) pulling/ trapping to one side, the other palm pushes out to the far side — the body stretched wide and rooted between two opposing energies.

80/20 cue: feel the *opposing pull* (open energy 開) — one side traps, one side issues. Great for learning to root while expanding in two directions.

If you drill only three Tai Chi things: the **Engine** (sung + root + open/close), **Roll Back (Lǚ)** for defense, and **Push (Àn)** for offense. That trio is 80% of tai chi's fighting value — yield his force, then issue your own.

Part II · Capoeira — *eight intermediate movements (from the source)*

From *Capoeira 100*'s intermediate section — turning kicks, ground evasions, and the rotations that link them. All fresh (none repeated from earlier lessons).

1. Armada — *spinning outside crescent*

Step across, spin a full turn, and whip the rear leg around in a wide horizontal arc to the head or waist. A versatile turning kick that hides its origin behind the spin.

80/20 cue: *spot your target* — turn the head first to find him, the leg follows. Step before you spin to disguise the distance.

2. Queixada — *inside crescent / "jaw" kick*

The mirror of armada: the leg swings *inward* across the body, slicing down toward the jaw. Armada and queixada are a left/right pair that chain endlessly.

80/20 cue: learn it *with armada* — they're one pendulum. As his *esquiva* ducks one, the other is already loading.

3. Martelo — *"hammer" roundhouse (de estalo / giratório)*

A direct roundhouse driven by hip rotation, striking with the instep/shin. *De estalo* is the sharp snapping version; *giratório* adds a spin for power.

80/20 cue: this is the Capoeira move closest to our other arts — pure **hip rotation**. Pivot the support foot fully or you lose the hips (and the power).

4. Chapa — *push / stomp kick*

A linear pushing kick with the sole of the foot, thrusting straight into the opponent's hip or chest to stop him or create space. The "stiff-arm" of the legs.

80/20 cue: it's a *spacer*, not a finisher — use it to interrupt a rushing opponent (echoes Lesson 4: counter the press by meeting it early).

5. Negativa — *low evasion & transition hub (normal & lateral)*

Drop low: one knee deeply bent, the other leg extended along the floor, body folded down. It ducks under high kicks *and* becomes the launchpad for ground moves, sweeps, and *aú*.

80/20 cue: this is a **hub, not a pose** — the source converts it into *rasteira*, *rolê*, *rabo de arraia*, *chapéu de couro*. Master the position; everything low connects here.

6. Rabo de Arraia — "stingray tail," low spinning kick

From a negativa/low base, plant the hands and whip the rear leg over in a low spinning arc — like a meia lua de compasso ridden close to the ground. A counter thrown from underneath.

80/20 cue: it lives off the **negativa** — you sink under his attack, then the same sink loads the tail. Hands down for the base, eyes on him through the turn.

7. Aú Cabeça no Chão — cartwheel, head to the floor

The intermediate aú: a slow cartwheel where the crown of the head and both palms form a tripod base on the ground. Builds the control to pause, look, and change direction mid-move.

80/20 cue: keep the **legs forward of the body** so you don't tip back; it's about *control*, not height — this is the bridge toward inverted play (and our Scorpion).

8. Chapéu de Couro — "leather hat," rising kick from the floor

From negativa, the extended leg swings up and over in a rising arc — a kick that comes *up* off the ground into an opponent who expected you to stay down.

80/20 cue: it's the **answer to the sweep game** — when you're low, you're not helpless; the floor becomes the launchpad (our recurring "floor as launchpad" theme).

If you drill only three Capoeira things: the **Armada/Queixada pair** (your whole turning-kick game), the **Negativa** (the hub every ground move routes through), and the **Martelo** (your most direct, transferable power kick). That's 80% of an intermediate game.

Part III · Where They Meet — two bridges, so the cores talk

You asked for moves, not fusions — but these two arts share one secret, and naming it makes both easier to learn:

The waist is the engine. Cloud Hands and the Armada are the same rotation — one slow and empty-handed, one fast and on a leg.

- **Cloud Hands** → **every turning kick**. Drill Cloud Hands to teach the waist to drive the limbs; then the Armada, Queixada, and Martelo are just that same dantian rotation handed to a leg. Slow builds the pattern; fast spends it.
- **Roll Back (Lǚ)** → **Negativa** → **Rabo de Arraia**. Same idea, two arts: receive his force, sink and lead it into emptiness — but where Tai Chi answers with a Push, Capoeira answers with a tail kick from underneath. *Yield, then issue.*

Few moves, deep roots. Drill the engine; the postures are free.
— Si Fu