

Movement of the knee joints in the 5 phases of the vertical circle

The 5th exercise trains various aspects of the vertical circle. The taiji form adds complexity with horizontal turns and stepping. Then, in the even more challenging situation of the partner exercises (tuishou) we aim to apply what has been trained into the body. By controlling the knee joints and the muscles in the legs we refine the movement.

1. sit back, then lift
front knee straightens, back knee doesn't change
2. float back & down
front knee still straight (!), back knee begins to bend - not too low!
3. sink
both knees bend
4. issue &
5. settle down into activated front leg - until front knee is above the toe or base of toe
front knee bends, back knee opens/straightens

To bend the front knee in phase 5 is very difficult to do and requires some training. Still it is something important to aim for (instead of just shifting the center forward over the front foot).

To listen to the joint sensors in the knees & use intention on that level is part of the training on the 1st level (like: managing contraction/release; movement waves; 1st timing).

The movements of the knee joints indicate the direction of the movement:

- when the horizontal component is bigger than vertical/sinking, then the back knee will straighten
- if the sinking is bigger than the horizontal movement forward, then the back knee will bend

The first year should bring an initial basic understanding. Correct training will slowly develop awareness & eventually bring more control over the knee joints. Further refinement has to follow in later years.

Note:

These points do NOT include the full internal process of the vertical circle. They merely describe the sequence of what happens in/with the knee joints as we go thru the 5 phases.