



NORTH SHORE TAI CHI & QI GONG

www.TQSpirit.com

Tips for Buying a Tai Chi Fan (for Martial Arts Practice)

When selecting a fan for your Tai Chi Fan class, it's important to choose one that supports your practice—not just in look, but in function and feel. Here are a few helpful guidelines:

✓ 1. Choose a Bamboo-Ribbed Fan

- **Go for bamboo, not metal.**
Fans used in martial practice should have **bamboo ribs (spokes)**—they're lightweight, durable, and safe for movement.
 - **Metal fans may look flashy**, but they're heavier and can be **dangerous to joints** (especially wrists and shoulders) when performing repeated opening/closing movements.
 - Bamboo fans also tend to **create a pleasant sound** when opened quickly—enhancing the rhythm and energy of the form.
-

✓ 2. Get a Full-Sized Martial Arts Fan

- Look for fans labeled specifically as **Tai Chi Fan** or **Kung Fu Fan**.
 - Most adult-sized martial fans are between **13 to 14 inches long** when closed, and open to about **25–28 inches wide**.
 - Avoid small souvenir fans or decorative fans—they won't hold up to regular practice and don't have the proper weight or structure.
 - You may want to buy two fans. Sometimes they break.
-

✓ 3. Material of the Fan Leaf

- The fan “leaf” (the fabric part) should be made from **nylon, silk-blend, or satin-like fabric**. These allow for crisp movement and smooth openings.
 - Cotton or paper-based fans tear easily and aren’t ideal for martial practice.
-

✓ 4. Sound Is a Bonus, Not a Necessity

- Some martial fans are designed to make a loud *snap* when opened—this can be fun and exciting, especially in Chen-style with its bursts of energy.
 - But the *snap* isn’t required. **Smoothness and ease of control** are more important than volume!
-

✓ 5. Right or Left Handed?

- Most fans used for tai chi practice are designed for **right-handed use** only. Double-check product descriptions. DO NOT buy a left-handed fan.
- This new Fan Form requires a right-handed fan. Any left-handed person will be able to operate a right-handed fan.
- **"A Note for My Fellow Left-Handers" from the TQ Spirit Instructor:**
As a left-hander myself, I understand how challenging it can be to learn a form that is choreographed for the right hand. When I first began learning the fan form, I found it awkward and even frustrating at times. But I stuck with it—and over time, something wonderful happened.
 - Not only did my right side become more coordinated and responsive, but I also noticed a shift in my focus and mental clarity. Training the non-dominant side is more than just a physical adjustment; it becomes an act of **rewiring the brain**, cultivating balance between the two hemispheres, and expanding your capacity for **flexibility—not just in the body, but in the mind**.
 - In Tai Chi, we are always exploring **the harmony of opposites**—Yin and Yang, soft and strong, familiar and unfamiliar. Using your non-dominant hand is an opportunity to practice that harmony directly. It strengthens not just your technique, but your resilience, your patience, and your adaptability.
 - So to all of my left-handed students:
This may feel uncomfortable at first. But stay with it. You are building a bridge in your brain, opening new energy pathways, and

discovering a deeper symmetry within yourself. And that, in the spirit of Tai Chi, is a beautiful kind of strength."

✓ 6. Appearance and Aesthetic

- Some fans come with **Taiji symbols, dragons, or calligraphy**. Choose one that inspires you—but make sure it's well-built before focusing on decoration.
 - **Plain fans** are perfectly acceptable and often more traditional for class use. But this is a great opportunity to “step-out” and buy something more decorative.
-

✗ Avoid These

- ✗ **Metal-ribbed fans** — Too heavy and potentially unsafe.
 - ✗ **Cheap party or tourist fans** — They can't withstand repeated martial movement.
 - ✗ **Plastic ribs** — Often brittle and unbalanced.
-

✓ 7. When you get your fan...it'll be fun to listen for the Snap!

- In our Chen-style fan form, that **crisp “snap” sound** is part of the movement's energy and rhythm. It brings life to the form and helps mark key moments of **fajin (explosive power)**. A good fan will open smoothly and **ring out with confidence**—just like you will!
 - **A good fan becomes an extension of your energy**. It's part of the choreography, the soundscape, and the spirit of the form. Choose one that supports your practice—one you'll enjoy opening with strength, grace, and presence.
-

✓ 8. Research your options. Here's a good start:

- www.Amazon.ca
 - [Bamboo Fans Search](#)
 - Lots of great options in Canadian \$.
- <https://www.kungfudirect.com/?route=product/category&path=126>

- This is a U.S. based company but the quality has always been very reliable. You can see what options are available here and compare them to others you might find on the web.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

We hope this summary of “How to Buy A Tai Chi Fan” has been helpful!

A good fan becomes **an extension of your energy**. It's part of the choreography, the soundscape, and the spirit of the form. Choose one that supports your practice—one you'll enjoy opening with **strength, grace, and presence**.

SOON, YOU'LL BE PRACTICING FAN WITH THE TQSPIRIT

