

HOW TO CHOOSE A SWORD – SOME SUGGESTIONS



Jian is a double-edged straight sword used during the last 2,500 years in China. Although the early origins of the weapon probably emerged in North China, this imminently classical weapon is popular throughout China. Thus most of its major techniques are shared by diverse styles. Many Chinese martial arts, such as Taijiquan for one well-known example, still train extensively with jian, and expertise in its technique is said by many of them to be the highest physical expression of their martial skills. The jian is very often the weapon of the hero in Chinese martial arts movies. In folklore, it is known as "The Gentleman of Weapons" and is considered one of the four major weapons, along with the staff, saber, and the spear. The straight-bladed jian became known as a weapon of the aristocracy, high-ranking military officers, professional martial artists and the wealthy for personal defense, training, ceremony, and prestigious decoration.

What generally matters - whether you are using your sword for practice, demonstration, competition, or combat - is blade length. **If you are a beginner, then you will be using your sword mostly for practice and maybe for demonstration in the future.** You do not need an extra long sword. A longer sword is not better for a beginner.

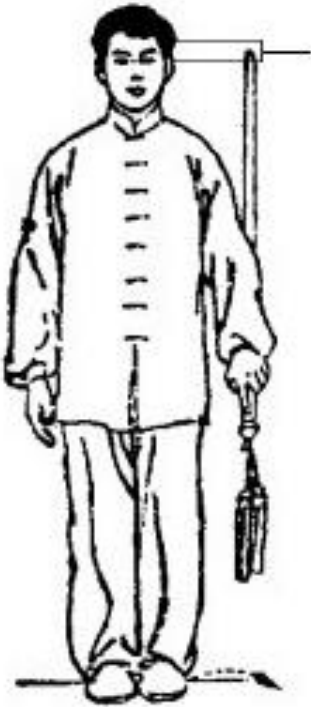
To find your perfect fit, determine your own height and match it to the sword sizes on the chart below. This chart below is based on the average individual, and follows International Wushu Federation (IWUF) weapon regulations. Select the weapon that matches closest to the determined ideal blade length.

About Size and Length

Choose the right size of sword just like it is a priority when it comes to choosing shirt or shoe size.

In practicing Tai Chi, especially for new learners, a well-suited Tai Chi Sword will help to abate fatigue and shoulder discomfort that might occur for the first few times you practice. If one starts with an inappropriate sword, one is liable to risk potential injury or dissatisfaction with tai chi practice in general. The right equipment is important so that you gain all the potential benefits of Tai Chi practice, as well as excite and inspire you to practice, practice, practice!

What length of sword should you consider? If you've never practiced with one, it is best to decide on a size that is in line with your own height.



A useful way to see whether a Tai Chi Sword fits you, or not, is to hold the sword in Tai Chi's beginning posture, tightly clinging to the back side of your arm. The best-suited position of your sword's tip should be higher or lower less than 1cm by comparison with the top of your ear.

Another way: Hold one end of the tape measure in your left hand, between the tips of your fingers. Pull open the tape measure, extending your left arm horizontally and to the left of your body. For a jian sword, measure to the middle of your left ear. This measurement is the best length for a sword for you, **and must match the overall length of the sword, not the blade length.**

If you are unsure what you should do, the first time you are in class, get measured by your Sifu. Also, lighter is always better - it will help you develop sensitivity in a way you cannot with a heavy sword.

Check out the Height Chart below. Use this as a guide only. These are suggested only and what you require may vary with your height and arm length.

Wooden, Metal or Retractable?

- Wooden is a great way to start. Size is important. Wooden swords are usually cheaper but can sometimes be quite heavy.
- Metal swords can be cheap or a little more expensive. The cheaper ones can be a bit heavier and are considered "firm," which means they won't transmit energy down the blade when you issue force into them. When you can "feel" the energy transmission the sword is telling you that you are doing a good job. The more expensive "competition" style swords are an excellent choice, even if you are only doing the sword form for fun. It also looks amazing when hung on your wall.
- Retractable are excellent if you want to travel. It will, however, not give you that "energy" transmission. Buying a good sword for class and a retractable one for when you are on the move is an excellent option.
- Small wooden "toy" swords are good to use when you want to quickly practice in a small space. Having a good metal sword and a small wooden "toy" sword is an excellent combo.



Metal sword, with case and tassel



Wood training sword



Small "toy" sword



Retractable Sword for travelling.

Sword Blade Length Size Chart

Your Standing Height	Ideal Straight sword Blade Length
4' 0"	22"
4' 1"	22.5"
4' 2"	22.5"
4' 3"	23"
4' 4"	23.5"
4' 5"	24"
4' 6"	24.5"
4' 7"	25"
4' 8"	25.5"
4' 9"	26"
4' 10"	26.5"
4' 11"	27"
5' 0"	27.5"
5' 1"	27.5"
5' 2"	28"
5' 3"	28.5"
5' 4"	29"
5' 5"	29.5"
5' 6"	30"
5' 7"	30.5"
5' 8"	31"
5' 9"	31.5"
5' 10"	32"
5' 11"	32"
6' 0"	32.5"
6' 1"	33"
6' 2"	33.5"
6' 3"	34"
6' 4"	34.4"
6' 5"	35"
6' 6"	35.5"

Sword Blade Length and Size

In addition to size, you want a lighter weight sword. A proper jian sword is on average 1-1.5 lbs with the weight balanced at about about 6 inches from the hilt where the tassels tie on.

Sword Tassels

In addition the the length of the sword you will want to consider purchasing a sword bag and a tassel.

You can buy short and long tassels... so if you buy a long tassel, it can be shortened and we can show you how.



Sword-tassels can be used as a way to distract the enemy. It is also considered as a way to help balance the use of the sword. The sword is considered Yang while the tassel is considered Yin.