

Sì Bǎ Quán Tào Lù (Four Grasps Boxing Routine)

1. *Qīn Pū Zhàn* (Encroaching, pouncing stance)

- Start by standing straight with the left shoulder facing forward (i.e., “north” down the intended path) and arms hanging loose at the sides.
- While stepping back one step, rotate the left hand CW across the face down the front of the body to the top inside of the left thigh so that the left elbow points forwards. At the same time, raise the right hand to the front of the right hip so that the right elbow points backwards.
- The left elbow should be aligned with the nose, left knee, and left foot. The legs should be straight with the toes of the left foot raised at the heel and the right foot pointing “northeast.”
- Keep the head high, and look down the nose.

2. *Xióng chū dòng* (Bear exits cave)

- Take one step backwards with the right leg and *either* crouch to about two-thirds your upright height *or* continue standing fully upright. The shoulders are rounded, back straight, head is high in an alert posture, and eyes continue to look down the nose.
- While stepping backwards, the right arm swings horizontally from the right side of the body to the front as the left hand circles horizontally CCW over the top of the right forearm. The toes of the left foot are raised from the heel again.
- Both forearms are pointing forward. The fingers of both hands are loose and facing downwards in “bear claws.” The right hand stops in front of the lower stomach and left hand is extended further and higher, in front of the stomach.

3. *Māo pū shǔ* (Cat pouncing on rat)

- Step LLF in *gōngbù* and quickly open both hands (*fàng bǎ*) in a forward and downward pushing action, with the left hand in front of the right and both directly in front of the crotch on the inside of the left thigh. Palms are facing the ground.
- Fingers are flatten out as they are released. The right foot drags as the left leg steps forward. The release uses power from the hips.

4. *Hǔ zuò shān* (Tiger sits on the mountain)

- While stepping back one step with the right leg into a deep crouch, raise the right hand up along the front of the body, grab out directly in front when chin high, and pull the hand back. Then grab with the left hand in front over the right forearm and pull it back.
- The fingers are curled into claws during the grab and the step backwards.
- The left hand stops above the left leg, and the right hand stops in front of the lower stomach.
- The upper body is straight, and eyes are alert. The left leg is in front with the toes raised.

5. *Hǔ pū bǎ* (Tiger pouncing grasp)

- Step with LLF into *gōngbù*, move both hands up along the stomach to the lower chest, and snapped both hands forward nearly fully extended in a two handed grab.
 - Fingers are curled slightly and facing forward with right thumb behind left thumb.
6. *Hóu suō dūn* (Monkey contracts to a squat)
- Take a big step of RLF into a deep “monkey posture” crouch while pulling the right hand under the left arm. The shoulders are rounded.
 - Raise left knee and paused briefly, with left hand just below and inside the left knee and right hand on right hip. [Move into the next strike while completing the step of the left leg.]
7. *Dà héng quán* (Big crossing fist)
- Step with LLF in *gōngbù* and sharply raise both arms in front to chin height. The left hand is an open palm with fingers spread. The right hand is a fist with the middle bones (phalanges) against the left palm (i.e., the bottom of the wrists face each other).
 - The arms are about two-thirds extended and thus the fingers of the left hand point equally upward and forward.
8. *Yàozi rù lín* (Sparrow hawk enters the forest)
- While turning right to the south and stepping with the RLF, raise the right arm high and circle it broadly overhead and down to where the forearm stops a few inches across the front of the waist with the right palm facing upwards. At the same time, the left arm is raised while fully extended and stops when straight up with the left palm edge pointing south.
 - The right shoulder and right foot (without toes raised) point south. The left foot points to the SE. Both legs are straight.
9. *Qǐ luò* (Rise and fall)
- Step with RLF (to the south).
 - While stepping forward with the left leg, kick ground with the heel of the left foot (“*guā dì fēng*”); dig the left hand down the front of the body and raise the right arm (with open hand) sharply directly in front of the body to overhead.
 - The left shoulder points south with the toes of the left foot raised. Both legs are straight. The straight left arm is pointing down along the front of the body with the left palm against the inside of the left thigh. The right arm is straight up with the bottom edge of right palm pointing south.
10. *Dà pī* (Big chop/slap)
- Step with LLF. Chop the right open hand sharply to inside of the right foot as the right foot kicks the ground (*guā dì fēng*) and is then raised off the ground. At the same time, the left open hand is raised in a counter chop to near the right side of face (with left palm facing outwards). The crouch should be as low as possible.

- [Move into the next strike immediately because of the instability of crouching on one leg.]
11. *Tiǎo lǐng* (Raise to the neck)
 - While the raised right leg steps into *gōngbù*, raise a nearly fully extended right fist arm in an upward strike directly in front of the body to face height. At the same time, the left hand comes down in front of the body in a grabbing/raking movement with fingers partially curled; the left hand stops in front of the crotch and faces downwards. These movements are sharply counterbalancing.
 12. *Yīng zhuō bǎ* (Eagle grasp)
 - Draw the right leg back to alongside left leg with knees bent.
 - Pull the arms towards the chest with the right arm outside of the left arm, with palms facing the body. Draw the right arm up to the front of face with left arm below the right wrist.
 - Without stepping back, put the LLF with toes raised and turn both hands outwards as they are pushed upwards. As the arms are extended, the left hand slides over right forearm. The hands pause just above head height. The open right hand is under and in front of the open left hand. The left shoulder is slightly forward.
 - Step with LLF into *gōngbù* and grab sharply downwards. Drop the head (as if head butting) as the hands grab down to nearly ankle height. Raise the head and upper body to immediately to where the left hand is next to the left knee and right hand is beside the right hip. Use forward movement of the hips to raise.
 - [A releasing movement, either after the grab (i.e., after the head is raised) or at the end of the grab (i.e., before head is raised), can be skipped.]
 13. *Hǔ zuò shān*
 14. *Hǔ pū bǎ*
 15. *Hóu suō dūn*
 16. *Dà héng quán*
 17. *Yàozi rù lín* [turn to north.]
 18. *Qǐ luò*
 19. *Dà pī*
 20. *Tiǎo lǐng*
 21. *Yīng zhuō bǎ*
 22. *Hǔ zuò shān*
 23. *Hǔ pū bǎ*
 24. *Hóu suō dūn*
 25. *Dà héng quán*

26. *Hǔ wàng shān* (Tiger gazes from the mountain)

- While in *gōngbù* with LLF, cross both arms in front of the chest, with the right outside of the left, and start turning to the left with the arms still crossed. Sink the body downwards slightly.
- Step south with LLF in *gōngbù*, drop the arms downwards and outwards, with left open hand in front and right open hand behind. Hands are “hooked” slightly inwards. [Do not spread the arms too wide because that delays the next movement (*tí xī gōu quán*).]
- Turn the head to face south as the arms are spread and the top of the body raises slightly and straightens. Both the movement of the arms and the head are delayed slightly until the body has turned.
- For better stability, the legs are not aligned. The eyes don’t look downward during the turn.

27. *Tí xī gōu quán* (Raising knee hooking fist)

- Step with LLF and punch upwards with the right fist from alongside right leg as the right foot kicks the ground and is raised and the left leg is straighten. The left hand is against the inside of the right elbow. The front of the right foot is hooked upwards as much as possible.
- At the beginning of the punch, drop the right arm low and strike to chin height with an uppercut. The right upper arm and forearm form a right angle; and the right upper leg and lower leg form a right angle (i.e., the right upper leg is parallel to ground).

28. *Zuǒ rèn jìn* (Left knife edge advance)

- Step with RLF and then with LLF into a very low *jī bù*. At the same time, circle the face CCW past the left shoulder with the right hand and pull the left hand towards the left hip.
- Spread out both arms equally (*rèn jìn*) along the left side of body outside the left thigh, with the bottom edge of the right palm in front of the left knee and pointing south and bottom edge of the left hand behind the left buttock pointing north.

29. *Pěng yì* (Holding intention with both hands)

- Draw the hands together with the bottoms of the fists facing one another, stand up quickly, snapping the legs straight together, and punching upwards with both fists in an uppercut close in front of the body to chin height. The forearms are touching with the left fist against the wrist of the right fist.

30. *Bān bǎ* (Moving grasp)

- Step with RLF to the WSW and push sideways with both open hands facing outwards in a westerly direction. The right hand is upper chest high and left hand is lower stomach or crotch high.
- Use the waist for power.

31. *Yīng zhuō bǎ*

- Draw right leg back to alongside left leg to face directly south again. Pull both hands towards stomach...(see 12).
32. *Dà pī*
- Step with LLF into low *jī bù* and chop the right hand to outside of the left thigh. At the same time, the left hand counter chops to the right side of the face with palm facing outwards.
 - [Note that this *dà pī* is different that those in 10 and 19.]
33. *Bèi jìn* (Back power)
- While turning to the right and stepping with RLF (facing north), raise right arm gradually higher in a broad slapping movement to about face height; and push the left hand down the front of the body with grabbing/raking movement (with fingers slightly curled) to the front of the crotch.
 - The right hand, nose, and right knee should be aligned at the end of the strike.
34. *Yīng zhuō bǎ*
35. *Dà pī*: [As 32]
36. *Bèi jìn* [Turn to south.]
37. *Yīng zhuō bǎ*
38. *Tí xī gōu quán*
39. *Sān pán luò dì* (Three coils dropping to the ground)¹
- Leap north to *sān pán* position (not *mǎ bù*): the left leg is nearly straight, right leg is crouching deeply, and both hands extended along the inside of the legs with palms facing downward.
40. *Māo pū shǔ*
41. *Tuī bǎ* (Pushing grasp)
- Step with LLF and push with right hand straight forward; the left hand is pulled sharply back under right upper arm in a counter movement to the push.
42. *Tā bǎ* (Collapsing grasp)
- While stepping backwards with the right leg, move the open left hand (with partially curled fingers) over the right forearm and right hand (also with partially curled fingers)

¹ Master Li taught an unnamed alternative to this movement that consisted of the following sequence:

- Step to the south in an extreme *jī bù* crouch and strike down in front of the right foot with the right fist (with left hand on right forearm just below the right elbow).
- Turn to the north, step RLF and raise right arm in a high blocking fist with left fist by left side.
- While stepping forward with left leg nearly fully extended in front and right leg in deep crouch (“asymmetrical *mǎ bù*”), pass left hand over the right hand as it is lowered and push sharply downwards between legs with the fingers curled in “bear claws.”

directly in front of the body chest high. As the left foot is raised on the heel and dragged backwards a short distance, the left hand is dropped to the front of left upper leg and the right hand is dropped against the lower stomach. Both legs are straight. The wrists are loose and the palms face downwards.

Notes:

- The *sì bǎ* routine described here was accepted by Master Li for me on 27 June 1998. It differs in either small or large measure from other *sì bǎ* routines that I've seen, including that of Master Li in the short video clips on YouTube!² Here are some examples:
 - *Bān bǎ*: Instead of a sideways push, Master Li performs a straight ahead, two-handed push to WSW that is more like *shuāng tuī bǎ*.
 - *Yīng zhuō*: Instead of stepping back, Master Li steps forwards. [For both the *jī bù* form and this *sì bǎ* routine, I learned the backward step variation.]
 - *Hǔ zuò shān*: Instead of grabbing out with the hands one at a time, Master Li pulls both open hands back, with the right hand near the right hip and the left hand against the inside of the left thigh, as he crouches and steps backwards. The palms face downwards.³
- *Dà héng quán* application: The left hand grabs behind the opponent's neck while the right hand punches up to crotch, stomach, chest, or face.
- *Bān bǎ* application: With one hand to the opponent's chest and one to his crotch, grab and twist skin and clothes. You can then (1) pull him towards you and hit him with your left knee or (2) if your right foot is behind him, push with your right hand and pull with your left hand to knock him over backwards.
- *Hǔ pū bǎ*: This is not the upward push of the full *hǔ pū bǎ* form.
- *Hóu suō dūn*: Although this is suppose to be a monkey form, I did not learn specifically to keep the hands in "monkey" posture, that is, bent downwards at the wrists with the fingers nearly straight.

² The Master is the master and of course can perform the forms and routines any way he wishes; and he did vary them from time to time! It seems logical that all but the most advanced students should practice the movements caught specifically to them.

³ I have also seen this movement (which I believe is called "*guò bù jiàn chuān*") performed with a forward step. While stepping with RLF (after *māo pū shǔ*), raise and extend the right arm directly in front with the left arm across the waist; and as the left leg is raised pull the right open hand to right hip and left open hand to inside the raised left thigh. Finish the step with the left leg and push with *hǔ pū bǎ*.