



shutterstock.com • 131253923

## March Musings for Linda's Tai Chi

The Irish culture is rich in legend and stories. I love stories. There are 2 that are my favorite. Today, I shall focus on the legend of the Leprechauns. Leprechauns are tiny entities that normally take the form of an old man in a red or green coat. They are known to be mischievous little creatures that like to make shoes and store their gold coins in a pot of gold that is hidden at the end of a rainbow.

What is at the end of the rainbow when we learn and practice Tai Chi? Our goal is tranquility and improved health and wellbeing. How do we get there? We focus on the basics.

The basics of Tai Chi begin in the feet and our posture:

1. The bow and arrow step or the bow step. One foot faces straight ahead at our opponent and the back foot is at a 45 degree angle. One foot on one RR track and the other foot on the other RR track with a channel in between. This is the proper footing.
2. Weight is a bit forward with 60% of the weight on the front leg and 40% on the back leg.
3. Stand tall from the waist. Lead with the belly button and not the shoulders. No leaning.
4. The T-step is used quite often throughout the form. The T-step is one foot on the ball or heel. The ankle is relaxed and not constricted.
5. The empty step is the step we take before we shift our weight. The word, empty, means no weight. We step heel first and then shift our weight.
6. Breathe deeply and slowly from the abdomen. Deep breaths the way babies breathe. Watch a baby lying on its back. The Belly rises and falls with each breath. That is the way to breathe. Slow inhales with the exhale twice as long as the inhale.
7. Hands are the expression of Tai Chi. Embrace the moon is a common form we use. Make it big and full. Engage your spirit and creativity to envision the full moon in this posture
8. Silk reeling- every movement in Tai Chi is a spiral or circle, like undoing a spool of silk. Gentle rolls of the wrists and fingers are essential components to finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.
9. Practice is a good thing. Try setting a goal to practice every day or every week. You will gain confidence in your form and be more likely to achieve the health and wellbeing benefits of Tai Chi. That is truly the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.