

Closing the Gate

“Closing the gate” is a foundational component of CK Chen’s Taijiquan. It refers to rotating the whole body (while being single-weighted) by using the weighted foot and the kua, or hip/inguinal region. There is no spinal twist; the pelvis and shoulders stay together. The purpose is to excite the qi, stirring it through the energy channels outward toward the surface of the body. This is the yang complement to the yin quality of sinking the weight into one foot. Closing the gate occurs throughout the solo Taijiquan form as we transition into Bow & Arrow Stance, where all the body weight is in the front foot, with the back foot “empty”, its toes out at 45°. The following walking drill focuses on closing the gate:

Starting with heels together, feet out at ~45°, body facing forward

1. Drop body weight into right foot
2. Empty-step out with left foot to front left corner, turning body left 45°, left foot toes facing front left corner
3. Shift weight forward to left foot, lifting right heel, right knee hanging
4. Empty-step forward with right foot, toes forward, proper channel between feet
5. Shift weight forward to right foot, dragging left heel as needed
6. Close the gate: turn body right (facing forward), pivoting on left heel, dragging left toes to ~45°

Now you should be in Bow & Arrow Stance (Right)

1. Shift weight back into left foot
2. Turn body right 45° to front right corner, pivoting on right heel, right foot toes facing front right corner
3. Shift weight forward to right foot, lifting left heel, left knee hanging
4. Empty-step forward with left foot, toes forward, proper channel between feet
5. Shift weight forward to left foot, dragging right heel as needed
6. Close the gate: turn body left (facing forward), pivoting on right heel, dragging right toes to ~45°

Now you should be in Bow & Arrow Stance (Left)

Repeat right and left sides as desired

When ready to finish, from Bow & Arrow stance

1. Shift weight into back foot
2. Drag other foot to heels-touching position
3. Shift weight to center