




Wushu



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About the Tutorial

Wushu is a famous Chinese sport. It is a collective name for all the Chinese martial arts, which are not only practiced in China but also around the world. We can say that Wushu is an art of war that can be played as a sport.

This tutorial will help you gather the essential knowledge on the sport - Wushu.

Audience

This tutorial is meant for beginners. It gives an overall knowledge to a person on how to play Wushu successfully. It can be helpful in getting to know the fundamental details of this game to all the athletic sports enthusiasts.

Prerequisites

We assume you have the passion and eagerness to learn this game. We also assume you have the strength, agility, and quick reflexes required in mastering Wushu. Understanding or awareness of other Chinese martial arts is a plus.

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1. Wushu – Overview

The word **Wushu** comes from a combination of two Chinese words: **Wu** means 'war' and **Shu** means 'arts'. Wushu is derived from Chinese martial arts. It is played in numerous styles; with weapons or with bare hands. The weapons used in the game are sword, broad sword, short sword, straight sword, spear, and gadget. Wushu is played by two or more persons.

This game is present since the dawn of civilization. It gradually developed over the passage of time. Since the beginning itself, Wushu is practiced all over the world not only as a means of self-defense but also to realize the inner world of an individual. It is played for the viewers to admire the body language of the players. It is believed that the fighting techniques between a man and an animal in those days created the base of this game.

Soon the popularity of this game was spread to Japan, Korea, and other Far East countries. The initial objective of the game was to teach the person the true human spirit and then the techniques. Other attire like belts, uniforms were added later to give it a form of a formal sport.

Basic Types

There are two prominent types of Wushu:

Sanshou

In this type of Wushu, the participants wrestle with each other using Wushu moves.

Taolu

It involves a seamlessly connected set of hand, leg, sweep, jumps, stances, and footwork choreographed and styled according to the principles of attack and defense.

Wushu – Objective

Wushu is played for a particular length of time in the presence of a team of judges and referees. The judges observe the performance for the entire time. They assign score for an individual or a team based on the time taken, errors committed, smoothness of movements, synchronization and coordination among participants in case of team, keeping good balance, rules followed or broken, and other important measurements of marking.

It is performed either individually as a player or as a team of players. The player or the team who scores the highest is declared as a winner.

Regulating Bodies

International Wushu Federation (IWUF) is an international sport organization established in Beijing, China on October 3, 1990 with the aim to promote competitive Wushu. The Federation is actively working on getting Wushu to become a demonstration game since 1992.

The Federation also helps other federations around the world to organize Wushu competitions and events.

European Wushu Federation, Wushu Association of India, Pakistan Wushu Federation, are some of the area-based regulating bodies for Wushu sport.

Wushu – Participating Countries

Wushu comes under the martial arts event with graceful movements and a strong emphasis on their artistic display. Since its introduction to World Championships in 1991, the popularity and demand of this game by different nations grew exponentially. Many Asian and non-Asian countries have their active participation in this category of game. List of some of the major dominating Asian countries are China, Malaysia, US, Italy, and Vietnam.

The countries that topped the medal list in Wushu are: China, Vietnam, Iran, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Russia.

2. Wushu – Equipment

As it is a form of martial arts, the players are not required to wear much equipment which can interfere with the actions or make the body heavy. But some equipment is needed to protect from the punches and kicks. Let us see the equipment used for playing Wushu.

Boxing Gloves

These are regular boxing gloves used in Wushu to attack and defend the opponent. Sanshou players need to wear them.

Head Guard

This is used to protect the head from the opponent's attack. This equipment is used for safety purpose. Sanshou players need to wear them.

Teeth Guards

In fighting, there may be severe blow to one's teeth. So to protect them, one has to wear teeth guards like boxing players. Sanshou players need to wear teeth guards.

Chest Guard

This is another equipment for security purposes and the most important one because unlike boxing the blow from an opponent is mainly on the opponent's chest. Hence, a Wushu fighter must wear a chest guard.

Shin Pad

This pad is for training purposes. By practicing with this equipment, a person or a trainee can improve his power, potential, and muscle in his elbow and even in his thigh.

Cup Protector

It is a type of athletic supporter to shield the players against severe injuries to the groin area.

Kick Bag

This equipment is made out of leather and nylon. It is filled with sawdust or cotton cut piece clothes. Its circumference or diameter will be 10 feet in which kick and punch can combine at a time.

Punching Pad

It is also made out of leather and nylon. It is filled with soft sponge. It is made in such a way that it can be a five-finger grip. However, it should be flat so that the power of punch can improve accordingly while punching.

Wushu Swords

Among the swords used in Wushu, the famous ones are Daoshu (a broad sword), Straight sword, Taiji sword, Mongun, Memdao sword, Gunshu, and Qianshu. The swords are

sometimes tied with a tassel or beautiful silk cloth at the end that sways gracefully when the Wushu players move.

3. Wushu – Playing Environment

As we know that Wushu is of two types, one is Sanshou and other is Taolu, there are different playing arenas for conducting the game.

Sanshou Playing Environment

For Sanshou, the competition area is prepared using wood. The arena should be 80cm high, 800cm long, and 800cm wide.

It needs to be covered with soft mats and a canvas surface on top of the mat. Also the logo of IWUF must be displayed at the center of the platform. The boundaries of the platform are also engraved with 5cm-wide red line. Inside 90cm of the boundaries of the platform, a square line of 10cm-wide is marked.

Taolu Playing Environment

Taolu competition is conducted on a carpet of which the length is 14m and breadth is 8m. There should be mark of liner edge of 5cm breadth and also at the middle of the longer side line, there is a line drawn of 30cm length and 5cm breadth. Taolu can also be played on a grass field.

4. Wushu – Important Terms

Since Wushu originated in China, it has a great influence from Chinese language and culture. Almost all terms in Wushu are inherited from Chinese as they are. Let us see a few important Wushu terms:

Wushu Term	Meaning
Wu shu	Martial arts
Ji shu	Technique
Lian/Lian Wushu	Train/Practice Wushu
Pao bu	Running
Huo dong	Warmup
Huo dong kai le ma?	Did you do enough warmup?
Ya/ Ya tui	Stretch/Stretch legs
Bu fa	Stance techniques
Shang bu	Step forward
Quan/Bu/Tui fa	Punch/Stance/Leg techniques
Ti	Kick
Caipan	Referee
Kaishi	Begin/Start
Ying le/Dui le	Won/lost
Fen	Point
Bisai	Competition
Di yi/er/san ming	First/Second/Third place
Cai Fu	Uniform used for competition
Qian/Hou sao	Front/Back sweep
Teng kong	Jump
Taolu	Wushu artistic performance forms
San da	Forms
Lei tai	Competition area
Chang/Nan Quan	Long/Southern Fist
Taiji Quan	Slow and graceful Wushu moves

Taiji Jian	Wushu with double-edged straight sword
Daoshu	Broad sword
Jianshu	Straight sword
Gunshu	Cudgel
Qiangshu	Spear
Nandao	Southern broad sword
Nangun	Southern Cudgel

5. Wushu – How to Play?

Wushu is both an internal and external exercise for body and mind, which is very effective in developing a person physically and mentally, and make him ready for any combat. The word “Wu” has five meanings: war, fight, combat, exercise, and dance.

It is the normal strength which is required for day-to-day work out against normal resistance, for example, running, jogging, normal weight lifting. It is not specified for Wushu warriors but before moving to a higher level, one has to have normal fitness.

Preparing for Wushu

Performing any kind of workout against the maximum resistance is called **Maximum Strength**. This level is very important for Wushu warriors as they need to increase their maximum strength limit as much as possible.

To increase the maximum strength, the Wushu players need to perform a particular exercise in sets. A set must be practiced for 3-7 times and the intensity of performance must vary gradually upwards from low to medium and to high.

Performing any kind of workout against the maximum resistance with high speed is a mark of **Explosive Strength**. It can be divided into three types:

- **Start Strength:** It is the ability to develop a high muscle force during the starting phase of the fight.
- **Speed Strength:** It is that strength which shows the ability of a person to overcome lower resistance with high speed.
- **Strength Speed:** It is the ability of a person to overcome heavy resistance with high speed. It is also known as power.

Wushu – Basic Moves

Wushu is the sport of demonstrating graceful movements that require flexibility, strength, perfect leaps, twists, and flips. Here are some basic moves a beginner can try:

Ma Bu – The Horse Stance

It is a basic stance used for almost all Wushu routines. It provides balance that you require to execute more complicated moves. To begin, stand with your feet apart, slightly wider than your shoulders. Lower your knees into a sitting position, as if you are straddling a horse. Keep your upper body posture straight yet not tensed.

Gong Bu – The Bow Stance

Stand in a forward lunge position, with one foot in front of another in a straight line. Turn your back foot out slightly, with toes pointing outwards. Let both your heels be on the ground. Lower yourself by bending the front leg for about 90 degrees. Extend your back leg. Pull your upper body straight and tall, and look straight ahead.

Xie Bu – The Rest Stance

Cross your right foot over your left foot. Sit comfortably on your left knee, ensuring that there is no space between both legs. Keep good balance to avoid fall over. As you lower your body, lift your left heel off the ground. Turn your head towards the left while keeping your upper body pulled straight and your chin upright. Place your fists on the hips. Ensure your elbows are tucked in, and the wrists face upwards.

Ce Chuai Tui – Side Kick

Stand upright with your hands by your waist and your wrists facing upwards. Make fists and tuck your elbows close to your body. Placing one foot slightly behind the other, bend a little to gain some preparatory momentum. Using this force, kick the leg that is at the back up sideways. The kick should be as high as you can go.

Tan Tui – Sharp Kick

Stand upright and extend your right arm in front of your chest. Flex your hand at the wrist such that the fingers are facing upwards. Clench your left hand in a fist. With the left elbow tucked inwards and wrist facing upwards, place the left hand at your hips. Put your left foot ahead as a step and raise your right knee up in front of you to reach your hip. In one powerful move, kick the lower right leg out to straighten it. Keep entire right leg parallel to the ground. During the kick, move your arms too.

Hand Forms

There are various hand forms used in Wushu:

- Hook punch
- Palm
- Punch

During the fight, the different positions of hand are called **hand forms**.

Hook

In this posture, all fingers and thumb are joined to make a hand form and the wrist is bent inward. The fingers should not be overly bent.

Palm

Here five fingers together with the thumb is bent. With the change of use of palm, the thumb is stretched to make a 'V' shape.

Punch

Similar to the normal punch, the fingers are clenched tightly with the thumb across the forefinger and joint of the middle finger.

Before Fight Body Posture

Here are some body postures before fight:

Standing Position

In this position, you must stand with legs apart up to the shoulder level with straight body.

Movement Practice

First of all, you should be aware of the position of our toes, hips, and second shoulder rotation. Hands should be in free moving condition on your shoulders.

Caution

Both the arms and the knees must be straight. In addition, both the arms must be opposite during movements.

Rotation of Shoulders

Here is how you do it:

Standing Position

Keep your legs in a straight position with the shoulder.

Movement Practice

Stretch both your hands towards the head and move them from right to left and from top to bottom serially. We can also move them to and fro. It will not only relax your body but also your mind. Keep both arms relaxed and straight, and move them in a circular motion in front of the body.

Stamping

Here is how you do it:

Standing Position

Stand in a normal position with the distance between legs keeping normal.

Movement Practice

With the help of toes, turn the heel forward and shift our rear foot forward. At the same time, cross your both arms in front of the abdomen. Move the upper hand downward to upward in a circular motion.

At the same time, let the other hand cover in semi-circular motion up to the top of the head in closed foot striking position. At this time along with the bending position of the supporting leg up to waist, let the hip and body take half rotation.

At last, let the striking hand and the leg stamp together on the ground. In all this movement, let both legs be bent from the knee and let the upper torso be straight from the waist.

6. Wushu – Variants

Wushu is a combination of two types of demonstrations:

- Sanshou
- Taolu

Sanshou

It is derived from its name 'San' means three and 'shou' means arts. Sanshou is a combination of three styles of fighting: throwing, punching, and kicking. It is a combat part of Wushu. Due to these styles, Wushu is different from other fight sports such as Boxing, Wrestling, and Judo. Sanshou was introduced in the international arena in track events in the year 1979. After that it has become one of the most popular events among athletics players and viewers.

Taolu

Unlike Sanshou, Taolu is the demonstrative part of the fighting skill. Here the fighters demonstrate Wushu skills like energy, speed, agility, and rhythm. They can perform these demonstrations with or without the opponent according to the requirement of the game. Taolu is recognized in Asian and Olympic games, and is keenly played in all categories like senior, junior, or in sub-junior levels.

Wushu Uniforms

Uniforms are termed as Sanshou. The uniforms that are worn by the players are:

- Black and red half pant and a Sando suit.
- Half sleeves with inner and half pants up to knee level.
- The non-group uniforms are short sleeves with long pants and belt of usually dark brown, green, or navy blue color.
- The Taiji group uniform is full sleeves of very light colors such as pink, yellow, white, or light shades of blue and green.

7. Wushu – Rules

As the performance sport of Wushu involves two major types, there is a list of separate rules for the competitors participating in Sanshou and Taolu. Let us see what the rules are briefly.

Common Rules for Sanshou and Taolu

Here are some common rules for both Sanshou and Taolu players:

- The contestants have to compete according to their weight categories. They are required to participate in a mandatory weighing-in session that is held before the competition. For fair weighing of each competitor, they are required to weigh with very light undergarments. Also, if a competitor is heavier, he or she is given some time to reach the required weight.
- There are mandatory as well as individually choreographed routines, which the participants need to demonstrate in front of a panel of judges.
- The participants start performing only when called, after they salute the judges, the coaches, and the opponent in case of Sanshou.
- The participants must appear with appropriate uniform.
- The participants must clear the anti-doping test.

Rules for Sanshou

The rules for Sanshou are:

- One bout involves three two-minute rounds, with a minute of rest after each round.
- The participants must adhere to the rules of Wushu style attack and defense. They must not strike their opponents using their heads, elbows, or knees.
- It is illegal to hit the opponent's head if he or she is already down.
- It is illegal to attack the opponent on the backside of the head, neck, and crotch.
- Attacking the opponent is prohibited before or after the calls that signals the start and end of each bout.

Rules for Taolu

The rules for Taolu are as follows:

- There are specially choreographed or mandatory routines for performance display.

- The duration of each performance may vary depending upon the type of event. It lies between 50 seconds to 6 minutes.
- Competitors must finish their performance including first salute before the stipulated time.
- If the participant requires music in the background, the event management plays the recorded music. The music must not contain lyrics, words, or any verbal cues of actions.

Rules Regarding Wushu Weapons

Here are a few rules regarding Wushu weapons:

- **Jian and Dao (Swords and Broadswords):** The tip of the weapon, when held up with a straightened arm behind your back, must reach the top of the player's ear.
- **Nandao (Southern Sword):** The tip of the weapon, when held up with a straightened arm behind your back, must reach the bottom of the player's chin.
- **Gun (Cudgel):** The length of this weapon must not be shorter than the player's height.
- **Qiang (Spear):** The length of this weapon cannot be shorter than the distance from the ground to the player's middle fingertip when his or her arms are extended overhead while standing straight.

8. Wushu – Championships & Champions

International Wushu Federation (IWUF) is a governing body which organizes Wushu championships all over the world. Apart from this, various nations have their own governing body to manage the Wushu championships in their territory. Some of the important tournaments of this game are:

- World Wushu Championships
- Golden State International Wushu Championships
- Lativa Open Wushu Championships
- European Taijiquan and Wushu Internal Arts Championships
- Hong Kong International Wushu Championships
- US Capital Wushu Championships

Wushu – Hall of Fame

Here are a few famous experts in Wushu:

Jet Li

Li was born in Beijing, China on 26 April, 1963. He started Wushu training at the age of two years. As a member of the Beijing Wushu Team, he received Wushu training and won 15 gold medals and one silver medal in Chinese Wushu Championships.

Despite his young age, he competed against adults. According to Li, when he went with the Chinese National Wushu Team as a child to perform for President Richard Nixon in the United States, he was asked by Nixon to be his personal bodyguard. Apart from an expert of various Wushu styles, Jet Li is also a famous film maker and a director.

Wu Bin

He is known as a pioneer of the modern Wushu in China. He is a Wushu coach who produced the highest number of Wushu players in China. He started the career of a Wushu coach after graduating from Beijing Physical Culture University's Wushu Department in 1963.

Wu Bin became a coach of the famous Beijing Wushu Team. He also held the Chairman's position from 1986 to 1992 in the Technical Department of the Chinese Wushu Research Institute.

Hao Zhihua

Hao started her Wushu training when she was nine at the Beijing Sports Academy under the instruction of Wu Bin. As a member of the Beijing Wushu team, she won the title of National All-Around Champion three years in a row.

She is the only recipient of six gold medals and one silver medal in a single national competition in China's history of Wushu. She has also received the award of "Ten Best Athletes

in China". In total, she has won over 80 gold, silver, and bronze medals during her competitive career in Wushu.