



Tai Chi Newsletter

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Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

Improvement cannot always be measured, it is something you feel

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As we move into March, the spring is upon us. Officially the spring equinox is 20th March and signals the onset of growth in plants and the reawakening of nature. Spring is the season of abundance. It's the time when nature comes to life. The flowers blossom. The trees grow new leaves... and everyone starts getting outside again.



In Spring, the energy is about strength, flexibility, and growth. This is the energy we want in our practice, and in our everyday life. It's like a tree; when a tree is rooted and grounded, it has the strength to withstand the weather... but it's also flexible so that the branches move in the wind and can flow with whatever life brings your way. It is resiliency, the ability to manage challenges, quickly recovering from them, and even growing and improving because of these challenges.

Tai chi and qigong teach calm mindful flexibility and growth in life. Remember, Confucius said "it does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop". This signifies the importance of perseverance, patience, focus, and discipline in daily life.



3 Pressure Points to Heal Yourself

By Mao Shing Ni

The next time you have a headache, a stuffy nose, or insomnia, don't fret! Try using your own hands to heal yourself with acupressure.

What is acupressure? Let's start with an explanation of acupuncture, the 5000-year-old Chinese medical system that treats patients by inserting needles in the body at certain energy points to produce healing in the body. Acupressure follows the same principles as acupuncture, but you stimulate the energy points with your fingers instead of needles.

In my Traditional Chinese Medicine practice, I have seen many success stories with acupressure. Here is just one example: Recently, the 8-year-old daughter of one of my patients was suffering from a headache. I simply pressed the Valley of Harmony acupoint between her thumb and index finger, and the headache vanished within five minutes. Acupressure is that simple and accessible.

There are thousands of research articles on acupuncture and acupressure: The overall finding is that these healing techniques encourage self-regulation that leads to health and balance. Research has shown that acupuncture and acupressure exhibit effectiveness in treating a wide variety of conditions, including lower back pain, arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome, nausea, addiction, insomnia and diabetes – to name just a few. Ready to try acupressure on yourself? Try these 3 points!

How to Get Started:

Make sure you have found the exact acupoint. They are only about 0.5 mm in diameter, so be as precise as possible. Use your index finger or a ballpoint pen (with the lid on) to press the point. If you are not feeling any sensation, try different spots close to the area until you feel a slight soreness. Keep your pressure moderate, and be patient: You may need to perform acupressure on the same point a few times a day over the course of several days to feel the results. Acupressure can sometimes be a gradual healing process. For best results, relax and breathe deeply during the acupressure.

Point 1: Sinus Support

For immediate relief of sinus allergies, use your own fingers to stimulate the acupressure point "Welcome Fragrance" (LI-20) on both sides of your nose, where your nose and cheek meet. Apply moderate pressure with both index fingers, one on each side of the nose. Hold for 3 minutes.

Point 2: Relax and Relieve Insomnia

"Gate of Spirit" (H-7) is the number-one point for emotional issues, especially excessive anxiety and worry. Stimulating this point calms the spirit and helps relieve insomnia. With your left hand palm-side up, find this acupoint at the end of your wrist crease, just below your little finger. Apply moderate pressure with your right thumb, holding for 5 minutes. Then repeat on your other hand.

Point 3: Alleviate Headaches and Pain

Commonly used in acupressure, "Valley of Harmony" (LI-4) is often used to bring relief from pain and is considered good for the immune system. Mildly stimulating this point can strengthen

and revitalize you. This point is helpful for cold and flu, cold hands and feet, constipation, eczema, headaches, menstrual disorders, sinus problems, sore throat, ulcers.

Valley of Harmony is found in the centre of the web – or the “V” – between your thumb and index finger on both hands. Apply steady pressure with your opposite thumb until you feel a slight soreness and hold for 2 minutes. Repeat on your other hand.

Do you feel a little more energized? I hope these points serve you well!



Stillness

We have always found that a large majority of students of Tai Chi begin attending classes for the purpose of the health benefits of the relaxation and focus that is at the core of the art.

We drag along all the days stresses from our work, or problems at home and at times the weight that everyday life sometimes puts on our “tense” shoulders.

I know that when I have a “bad” day and I feel as though I am in “5th gear”, which for me means racing round but getting nothing done, I have to take a moment to put on “the brakes and change down.”

I think maybe we should think about this as applied within the weekly Tai Chi class.

Some of us rush in late so already we are still in top gear before we commence, some get there early to practice before the class begins, either way everyone starts the warm up still with the shoulders physically up and the mind psychologically “up”.

Why not get to the training venue 5 or 10 minutes early and just “be”.

Stand with eyes closed (if it helps) bring down your breaths to a comfortable level and begin working your way around the muscles in your body, from the feet up or the head down, doesn't really matter, just focus on any tension you find and let it go as you breathe out.

Feel right to your fingertips and toes, hopefully as you progress you will be surprised at how warm they can become as the tension leaves.

When you have worked your way round the outside of the body, the oxygen to the brain (mind) should be improved by the muscles relaxing and allowing the blood in the veins to flow more freely.

Major organs will also benefit from this and their function should improve.

You will be surprised how much better your focus will be once the class officially begins.

You will hopefully with regular practice be able to change out of 5th gear and begin your class in ‘neutral’

Give this some thought; it could add a whole new dimension to your practice.

You can practice this anytime.....

In the BOOK OF 5000 WORDS which is attributed to Lao Tse the great Taoist scholar, it is written “The substantial is the root of the insubstantial; the STILL is the master of what moves” (inner calm)

I find it really hard to meditate in what some may call the traditional way, but find this exercise helps lead my mind into a more peaceful place and helps to bring my shoulders ‘down’. Learn to Jing Zhou – “sit quietly”.

静坐

Advanced monthly training sessions.

Sessions are held each month for 3 hours at Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville, to enable instructors time for their own training and for more advanced students to gain the time to develop a deeper understanding of the application of tai chi chuan.

Sessions are Sunday's 9.30-12.30 at £30 per person.

Below are training dates for 2023

March 5th

April 16th

May 7th

June 11th

July 9th

Aug 13th

Sept 2nd & 3rd – annual weekend camp – 9.30am to 4.00pm

October 8th

Nov 5th

