



Painting the Rainbow Newsletter

<http://www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk>

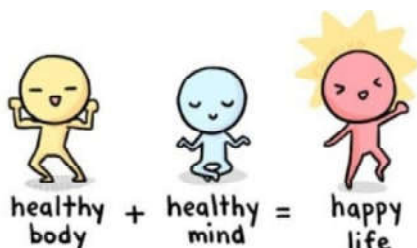
Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

Improvement cannot always be measured, it is something you feel

call: 0121 251 6172

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Balance is a mind and body thing



Tension is like knots hidden in our muscles, in our minds, and deep within our hearts.

We practice Tai Chi in order to discover those hidden knots and dissolve them.

- David Chen

Tai Chi Intervention reduces **Fear of Falling**. The **fear of falling** in itself is a risk factor for **falling**. ... **Elderly** adults are the population segment most likely to experience injury from **falls**; each year one in three **elderly** adults **falls**, according to the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). – extract from *Today's Geriatric Medicine*.

When I first started teaching tai chi for falls prevention, in the early 90', this was at the request of the NHS due to research showing how significantly better tai chi was when compared with any other methods of falls prevention training. What also became apparent, very quickly, was how the fear of falling was a key factor in the increase in falls. Many older people have a variety of adverse psychosocial difficulties related to falling, including fear, anxiety, loss of confidence, and impaired perception of ability to walk safely without falling. This may sound strange to some, so please consider for a moment how you react if you have to walk on a slippery surface such as ice; do you relax into your feet and move comfortably, or do you tense up and worry?

Mindfulness has increased in popularity in recent years, and is most often just taught as a method of relaxation to overcome anxiety; but in fact relaxation is the bi-product of being mindful, and its key benefit is to retrain your brain in more helpful patterns. Tai Chi is, by its nature, and excellent form of mindful practice: it trains proprioception (awareness of the position and movement of the body), kinaesthetic awareness (feedback from muscles, tendons etc.) and the state of non-judgement (being aware in each moment of the feedback without the urge to believe you're no good at it!)

Tai Chi teaches you to check the ground (feedback through your unweighted foot) and then to move into balance, aligning correctly. Tai Chi also teaches you to use your joints in a functionally correct way so no excessive load is applied. One point to consider, for example, is many spiral fractures are caused by the twisting force of turn your body; the twisting force is through the bones rather a rotational movement through the natural function of your joints. Often people fracture and fall rather than fall and fracture.

As you practice tai chi, relax into your body, feel the natural buoyancy, sense the ground and move with awareness into balance. Each posture and change of direction challenges your balance, so please take your time and move with mindful awareness. As you train your body, you are training your mind (neuro pathways) to build trust, which in turn helps you relax which in turn helps you trust... For most of us a fall does not mean another wall is coming, but it does mean we need to consider what was happening that enabled the fall to happen. Although it is often said that older people are more at risk of falling, there is no statistical evidence that people fall more

or less at any age, only that older people are more at risk of injury due to osteoporosis etc. There are many conditions that increase the risk of people falling and age is nowhere near the greatest. Balance can decline with age, but the main reason it declines is the lack of balance practice activities e.g. yoga, dancing, martial arts, sports and of course TAI CHI.

Practice your tai chi with a mind and body approach so that it is more than just a pattern and you will gain its benefits. Prof Cheng Man Ching has been quoted as saying, "The main reason to practice tai chi is so that when you reach the point in your life when you know what you want, you will have the health and strength to enjoy it".

*A lovely poem from a
Cotteridge Park student*

What to do when I retire? I couldn't really see,
Maybe "Walking Football" No not with my bad knee!
But then my neighbour Sheila said,
"come and try Tai Chi,
I'm going there on Thursday so come along with me".

Soon I'm swimming with two dragons
and painting rainbows to,
Swinging my arms around wildly and
then the white crane flew
I've grasped the sparrows tail, and
turned to gaze at the moon,
Now the only problem is the session
is over too soon!
The exercise and friendship really
make it fun,
and even when it starts raining we can
soon bring out the sun

Tai Chi and Health

Keeping healthy is one of the main aims of those who practice Tai Chi. Hence it is most appropriate to pose the question: how does Tai Chi contribute to my health and wellbeing?

In the warm up exercises (Chi Kung), the rhythmic movements help the muscles and joints and keep the circulation active. The breathing exercises are vital for the lungs. The regular deep breathing energises the systems and increases the oxygen intake of the body. At all times breathing should be through the nose not the mouth. Breathing should be coordinated with the body movement. The general rule is that you inhale when you contract or pull back, exhale when you expand or strike.

The regular exercises help create the feeling of well being. It is a known fact that exercises produce endorphines. Production of endorphines in the brain induces the sense of well being and happiness. Of course some people are happier than others during the classes; this depends on the level of endorphines, beside other factors.

Doing the exercises in the open air is another benefit. Fresh air contains more oxygen, and is more energising to the individual. Practising the form at home is better if you have more space to move. If these practises are carried out in open space as in the garden, the benefit will be greater. However, avoid slippery surfaces.

Tai Chi helps you to be more aware of your surroundings. The more you practise, the more aware you are of the environment around you. To increase this awareness, you can practise parts of the form with eyes closed. One needs to be careful when changing orientation such as in turning and kicking with the sole and sweeping in the lotus movements (when you turn 180°). If you practise Tai Chi on this deeper level, your process of "anticipation" will increase through your increased awareness of your surroundings.

Posture is emphasised in all Tai Chi sessions, especially in "the form". Maintaining a straight back cannot be stressed enough. The spine should be held straight and vertical. One of the scourges of our present day life is backache. Training oneself to straighten the back is a great asset in life, more so as one advances in age. Tai Chi practitioners should use the chance of practising the art to acquire the habit of having a straight back. The more self conscious you are about that most important posture, the more it becomes a habit.

Tai Chi has a calming effect on the individual, and in our present day stresses and tribulations that is an asset. Here, concentration and proper regular breathing during the sessions is of help. To get the full benefit of the sessions, a calm mind and a relaxed body are beneficial. In turn, the practise of Tai Chi will increase the calmness and relaxation.

People will notice that as they practise Tai Chi, and for that matter any other self defence art, they will be more aware of what they eat and drink. One hopes that those practising the art will realise the futile habits of smoking and the like.

Muscles and bones benefit from the exercises and form. The muscle tones well, rather than enlarges, owing to the gentle nature of the form. The bones are rendered firmer and healthier. As a matter of fact, Tai Chi is beneficial for sufferers of osteoporosis, though the exercises in these cases should be carefully monitored by the teachers.

Master Cheng Man-Ch'ing (who simplified Tai Chi to its present form) was a doctor and professor of Chinese Medicine. He directed many of his patients to take up Tai Chi. He believed that such practice would help his patients in combating their illnesses and enhance their recovery.

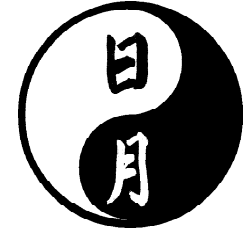
The basis of Chinese Medicine is the Ying and Yang, the same has great significance for Tai Chi. There has been much research in Tai Chi and Health and the benefits have been proven through vigorous scientific methodology.

Breathing Life into your

TAI CHI

Sat 3rd & Sun 4th

August 2019



Every year we run a tai chi weekend in Bournville. This year's focus will be on **Breathing Life into you Tai Chi** as this is often requested across the classes; understanding correct form movement to truly apply form and function. We will work on not just the shape of the postures but the underlying function.

Saturday

9.30 - 12.30pm Breath, intention and expansion.
12.30 - 1.30pm Lunch
1.30 - 4.00pm Heavens Breath Qigong (chi-kung)

Sunday

9.30 - 12.30pm Martial Application without effort
12.30 - 1.30pm Lunch
1.30 - 4.00pm Feel & Flow

Price for the weekend: £40 per day (members) £60 per day (non-members)

Please note, if you only want to attend the '**Heavens Breath Qigong**' session it is £30 members and £40 non-members

Venue: Weoley Hill Village Hall, Weoley Hill, Bournville.

To book and for more details, ask your instructor or call Mark and Jenny on 0121 251 6172

PLEASE NOTE:

Please send your Newsletter contributions for future issues to markpeters@kaiming.co.uk