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# 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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Gradually, guidance is being produced by our [Government](#), [CIMSPA](#), [HSE](#) and [ACRE](#) regarding opening classes indoors and outdoors. We are hoping to be able to open classes in September. Neil has been given permission by Staffordshire council and has opened his class in Stonnall, on 13<sup>th</sup> August, with limited numbers and social distancing.

We will update websites and inform students when we have more news. Please also look at our facebook page [@KaiMingTaiChi](#) and tai chi in the park group:

[www.facebook.com/groups/parktaichi](http://www.facebook.com/groups/parktaichi)



### Louhan or Body Patting

During the lockdown I decided to learn more about Louhan Patting, a form of gentle patting, and its purported benefits. Why does it make me feel good, both physically and mentally? What does it do and is it authentic?

I have read several articles and watched many videos, published by a variety of different people, including doctors, acupuncturists, and medical scientists.

The consensus seems to be that patting stimulates the Meridian or energy pathways and increases blood flow allowing the chi, or energy, to flow

around the body. This in turn stimulates the organs, helps us to function and keep healthy. More recent videos suggest it boosts the immune system and helps with anxiety which, in these troubled times, would be a great help.

Acupuncture is now a well-known and recognised therapy treatment. Studies have found it to be an effective treatment for many conditions, not least anxiety. Acupuncture works by inserting small needles along the energy or meridian pathways. Their purpose is to realign energy flow and bring any imbalance back to a healthy state.

Patting works broadly along the same premise but without needles. The science behind it shows evidence to support the practice. It addresses any imbalance of neurotransmitters and hormones, increases flow of nutrients to injured areas, helps tissues to repair and removes stagnated blood. Tapping also relieves muscle tension and stress, stimulating the lymphatic system and benefits the body by removing toxins.

Louhan Patting can be done at any time and is particularly effective in the morning and is a great way to wake the body up. After a Qigong routine I find it revitalises my muscles and leaves me with a feeling of wellbeing.

As it is so gentle, it is suitable for anyone regardless of age and ability.

The main benefits are:

- Stimulates blood circulation.
- Stimulates the meridian pathways and acupressure points
- Strengthens the immune system and helps with anxiety
- Boosts overall energy in the body.

If you go to YouTube there are various forms of Louhan Patting you can join in with. Please give it a try, routines only take a few minutes.

Steve Taylor – Instructor.



twinkl.com

### Tip to Ease Aching Feet.

Soak your feet in saltwater to ease inflammation.

Follow with simple exercises to stretch out the muscles.

First stand on your toes, hands against the wall, for 2 minutes.

Then scrunch tissue paper with your toes.

Finish off by massaging moisturiser into your feet,

### Using Tai Chi Skills in an Emergency!

About 20 yrs. ago I came home from work and realized suddenly I was locked out (no before you ask, Mark had not done it on purpose) it was just a case of the forgotten keys. The choice was, ring Mark who at the time worked ½ an hour away if he could leave work and come home to let me in (supposing

his boss would allow that) or think of something else that did not include a ladder !

Then I remembered that the previous week we had practised “effortless” kicking that still packed a punch/force without locking joints or damaging the foot.

Mmm it sounded interesting, but would it actually work.?

The door was a solid wood one and I would have to really have faith in what I had been taught. Looking at the door again I decided I would have a go, It had to be better than waiting another half hour when the dogs were clawing at it because they had heard me arrive and were desperate to be let out to greet me.

The thought did cross my mind that they would probably get through the door anyway if I waited long enough!!!!!!!!!!

Anyway I gathered all my chi and remembered the phrase “where the mind goes the chi goes” and swung my leg at the offending door, making sure the heel and sole connected with the lock at the same time.

With a dull thud the door swung open. When Mark arrived home he said “What’s happened to the door? have we been broken into?”

Smugly I answered “No thankfully, I locked myself out so kicked it in !”

“Fine “ he said “So when are you fitting the new lock?”

I feel I cannot tell you my reply.

By Jenny Peters



## Martial Art versus Relaxation

*"What is the purpose of this discipline? To lengthen one's life, extends one's years, and give one an ageless springtime".*

From The Thirteen postures song

Tai Chi is increasingly advertised around the country as another form of relaxation therapy or moderate exercise with significant gains for people's general health. In some classes, it is offered with no reference to its origins as a form of martial art; however, this approach can have a mystifying effect on the students who have to take on trust that these seemingly randomly choreographed balletic movements have some sort of coherence. It is far easier if the students have explained to them the fundamental martial origins and applications of the moves even if they do not intend to cultivate the skills necessary to apply them.

It is worth reflecting on the nature of martial arts in general. Despite the wonderful fantasy of much contemporary martial art cinematography, Taoist martial arts are essentially about controlling aggression and finding a path around conflict. Without some skills in this in contemporary society, people become ill. We see the young parent in the supermarket with the fractious child who responds to the child's cries and demands with increasing anger and even aggression, reflecting their own lack of balance, often with sad long-term consequences. The ability to calmly acknowledge and control anger and fear enables us to discover the least harmful ways of diffusing situations of aggression.

The practice of tai chi has immediate health benefits not least of which is the balance between gentle receptivity yin and assertive creativity yang. Such balance is necessary for both martial arts and a healthy lifestyle



## Excerpt from a classic text and application:

*Shisan shi xinggong xinjue / Exposition of Insights into the thirteen Postures*

Attributed to Wu Yuxiang<sup>1</sup>

*“By using the xin (heart-mind) to move the qi and make it sink, it can then gather and permeate into the bones. By using qi to move the body and make it compliant, it can easily follow the xin. If the spirit can be lifted then there will be no slowness or heaviness; this is what is called “suspending the head-top”. The yi (focused intention) and the qi must change agilely, only then will there be the wonder of roundedness and liveliness; this is what is called the “the changes and turning of the empty and full”. In issuing Jin, one must sink, relax thoroughly and concentrate in one direction. When standing the body, the body must be upright, comfortable, and support the eight directions.”*

I understand this to mean that the mind (including feelings etc.) and intention must be calmly focused so that the student is consciously and as clearly as possible anticipating each move with no other distractions or considerations. To achieve this, the posture must be right: "suspending the head-top", the sinews relaxed so as to "sink" and the shoulders hips aligned so as to "support the eight directions"

## Let us apply this to preparation<sup>2</sup>

First take up the necessary standing posture, taking time to quietly and calmly focus (*using the xin*). Then allow the movement to rise within spontaneously shifting the weight to the right leg, gradually sinking the weight into it. When the body is stable

then lifting the left leg and taking one step to the side then sinking the weight into the left leg; then turning the right foot until it parallels the left at shoulder width.

Repeat the process only this time concentrating on the hands and arms so that the arms are never locked but relaxed and slightly bent with the wrist facing forward and the hands facing down. The fingers slightly raised pointing in front of the feet and just slightly open.

Repeat the move again this time focusing on the head. It should be upright resting on the top of the spine neither forward nor to one side. The eyes should look straight ahead but be focused within, that is, not consciously focusing on anything in particular in the room. The tongue should rest gently on the roof of the closed mouth and the hearing should be tuned to the breath so that there is a state of calm focus (*li*).

The move is then repeated keeping in mind all the above but focusing in particular on sinking. Sinking the shoulders, dropping the elbows, and allowing the chest to depress slightly and consciously imagining ones energy gradually flowing to the tan t'ien. Then resting in this relaxed and completely focused pose "supporting the eight directions" as though ready for whatever should be necessary next.

Working in this way on a seemingly simple movement could seem pointless but please be aware that attention to the preparation posture can make all the difference to the performance of the rest of the form. If the preparation is inadequate, it can be difficult to regain balance within the form. The martial applications are obvious. If one cannot achieve a focused attentive stance at rest, one will not be ready to respond simply and spontaneously to the opponents move.

By David McLoughlin



### Ode to Tai Chi Practice

Ask me why I do Tai Chi  
And I will Answer what?  
A simple question you may think,  
But to myself, it's not.

You could say I practice religiously  
The word hell is used a lot  
But when I feel like giving up,  
I think, give it one more shot.  
I hold the postures one by one,  
The pain is at it's height.  
Don't worry say's our Sifu  
You'll be able to walk again, by  
tonight!!

The sweat begins to break out again,  
It runs right down my face.  
Oh blimey the class has speeded up  
again,  
They think they're in a race!

The focus seems to have left my hands,  
It's dropped into my feet.  
And if I could just shift my weight a bit,  
My heaven would be complete.

My knees always seem to be out of line,  
My shoulders ache like crazy.  
By the time I reach the end of the form,  
Directions seem quite hazy.

Why is everyone facing the other way  
They must have got it wrong.  
Next time we practice in this hall  
I'll hide amongst the throng!

I directed my thoughts to my Dan-Tien  
my stomach shot out like a ball.

But before I could think of investing in  
loss,  
My partner threw me straight up the  
wall.

So when the class is over  
And I've sweated ached and quivered  
Ask me again why I do Tai Chi  
Or you could just have the straight  
jacket delivered!!!

By Jenny Peters



You know that you are over the hill—

When you've seen it done it, and can't  
remember most of it.

When you'd feel nostalgic, if only you  
could remember what for.

When you keep repeating yourself

When your reclining chair has more  
options than your car.

When you do the 'Hokey Cokey' and  
you put your left hip out ....and it stays  
out

When you keep repeating yourself

When the only sport left to you , is  
hunting for your glasses.

When you go upstairs and stop midway  
to catch your breath, and when ready to  
start again you are unable to remember  
whether you were going upstairs or  
down!

When you keep repeating yourself!