



# 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*

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Its that time of year again when we need to be planning the **Kai Ming Christmas Party**. Last year we all went to Flavourz and the feedback was excellent...

It's a buffet restaurant near Junction 2 of M5 and serves 4 regions of food – Indian, Chinese, Italian and Mexican – plus has a fun relaxed atmosphere and is great value at around £15 per head.

We also had Christmas meal at lunchtime rather than in the evening which was really well received so we are planning this year to be a lunchtime event too. **The date will be Sunday 11th Dcemeber and the time 2pm.**

We need £5 per person mimimum deposit ASAP and the balance no late than 30th November

Please let your instructor know what you would like to do or contact Mark & Jenny on [markpeters@kaiming.co.uk](mailto:markpeters@kaiming.co.uk) or phone 0121 251 6172



### ARTHRITIS FOR BEGINNERS!

After most of my life being spent as a nurse I thought I had empathy and insite into the life of patients I have encountered over those years. WRONG Yes I understood and could see as we all can, the physical damage and limitations this painful progressive disease can bring about.

However I did not appreciate the levels of discomfort and sometimes extreme pain that they suffered, and the mental chaos it can bring to an active person who suddenly feels the limitations on their previous lifestyle thrust upon them or the depression they may have to learn to live with.

There is no cure, only control of symptoms and prevention of major flare ups, whilst making adjustments to everyday living, and yes, sometimes using the “dreaded” words “Can you help me with this” which many of us are quite resistant to and never envisaged having to do.

But let me tell you my story and why I am glad that I found and became involved with Tai Chi 30 years ago.

In March 2015 I suffered a really bad infection from a virus I had picked up somewhere and it ended up going to my chest . For three weeks I felt dreadful, coughing or should I say “barking” so badly that I was almost sick.

Then when my chest thankfully loosened up I spent the first 15 minutes after I got up in a morning trying to cough up the “gunk” my lungs had produced whilst sleeping.

Thank goodness after about 2 weeks of this and antibiotics my chest cleared and I was then left with a dry throat they seemed to need clearing constantly.

Then out of the blue I started getting sudden intense pain in one or other of my joints which usually lasted 24 hours or so and improved with ice packs and was helped a little by pain killers.

The Doctor found that I had developed Palindromic Arthritis which had been triggered by the virus (info on the web about this specific form of arthritis) simply put it is a disease of the auto-immune system where your body's defence system gets confused about what it should be attacking and turns on itself.

The end result is that people who have this form have a bigger chance of it developing into full blown Rheumatism at some point, and the fact that my mom had suffered with arthritis in her hands and shoulders etc for many years as she

got older doesn't bode well for me does it?

There are things you can do to try and delay this which I am trying at the moment which are:

**1) Diet.** - Lots of information about this around, e.g. eat more anti-inflammatory foods –Avocado Pears, peanuts (if you have no allergy), walnuts, almonds, red onions, spinach, cabbage, asparagus, red bell peppers, blueberries, Bok Choy, broccoli, sprouts, in fact most green vegetables, garlic, flaxseed, curry powder, fennel, ginger, kelp, hot sauces and spices (skip these if prone to tummy problems) lentils, kiwi fruit, oranges, lemons, grapefruit, oats, pumpkin, quinoa, green tea and red wine! Plus take high strength Omega-3 fish oil capsules (read label on product you choose for appropriate dosage. )

This is just a few to get started many more can be found and really it is just a healthy diet isn't it?

**2) Inflammatory foods to avoid** - Fried and processed foods, white flour baked goods, and soda's, sugar and refined carbohydrates, candies etc, dairy products may contribute to the pain due to the protein they contain, switching to a vegan diet for a while may show results. Cut back on salt and preservatives by reading salt content on food boxes, Corn Oil which is contained in many baked goods and snacks contains Omega-6 fatty acids which can trigger the inflammation process.

**3) Exercise** - Exercise at the right level helps stiff painful joints keep mobile. Several short daily bouts of gentle exercise that suits you will help circulation, loosen and strengthen muscles and lessen the pain.

Now you know what I am going to say next don't you?

Tai Chi is an ideal form of exercise due to its slow steady and progressive movements. The weight baring strengthens muscles, aids improved bone density and improves balance. The

steady weight changing improves lymph drainage and works to strengthen tendons and ligaments around your joints; the list goes on...

When I had a recent flare up of my knee joint which luckily only lasted the usual 24 hours I was unable to put my foot to the floor for that time without awful pain, but the next day at Instructor training, although still some soreness and instability, by focusing on the postures and alignment I was able to perform the whole of the form with relative ease.

My years of practice have not gone to waste and have probably kept my joints in better shape than they would have been if I had continued the high impact aerobics that I had foolishly tried earlier in my life.

There are many forms of Arthritis as I have said and many treatments but most are quite harsh on the body (the old saying the cure is often worse than the disease comes to mind) so any natural remedies or diet modifications are always worth trying at first.

I realise I may end up having to accept that I need long term medication and for many it has to be first line treatment, but at the moment I am giving all the above information a try.

**FOLLOW-UP TO DIETARY EXPERIMENT:** I have discovered by experimenting with the above dietary path, that for me Dairy Free diet didn't seem to help. I feel the most beneficial additions for me personally (as I already eat plenty of green vegetables) have been Blueberries and Avocado Pears, but we are all individuals so you need to see what works for you as I have.

However whilst in France a lady sang the praises of Magnesium tablets (at recommended daily dosage) as her salvation. I have to say I have tried it and it does seem to have helped in cutting down my use of painkillers. The arthritis UK site does mention its value for nerve and muscle health. If you have any kidney problem or uncontrolled diabetes or if at all unsure, you should check with your Doctor before taking.

If you have any story to tell about Arthritis and any tips on self help, or any chronic illness that you have found ways to live with and think your story would help others we would love to hear it. Your instructor will pass it on to us or you can email it to [Markpeters@kaiming.co.uk](mailto:Markpeters@kaiming.co.uk)

## Tai Chi for Arthritis

An ancient Chinese exercise offers arthritis relief through slow, gentle movement.

For the uninitiated, tai chi may be a little daunting. The ancient Chinese art is hardly as mainstream as aerobics or the treadmill, but with its gentle, fluid movements and proven health benefits, it's a natural arthritis workout.

Matthew Bosman, 38, started taking tai chi classes after back surgery, as well as psoriatic arthritis and osteoarthritis (OA), left him unable to continue his vigorous gym workout routine.

"I was looking for something that was low-impact and not going to hurt," says Bosman of Palm Springs, Calif., who now takes two 45-minute tai chi classes each week. "Tai chi is very calming and peaceful. I'm really sceptical about talking about chi and all that, but it gives you a better energy."

Tai chi also offers plenty of other benefits. Recent studies have found that the slow, graceful exercise, which originated centuries ago as a martial art, can improve balance, reduce stress and offer arthritis pain relief.

A study released by researchers at Tufts Medical Centre in Boston, Mass., found that tai chi can specifically reduce the pain and physical impairment of people with severe knee osteoarthritis.

Betty Broderick, 67, of Cathedral City, Calif., acknowledges that she and her classmates might have looked silly when they were first learning their tai chi poses. "When we're in a room with mirrors, you can actually see how dorky you look," she says, admitting she prefers when the instructor takes the students outdoors for class.

But awkwardness aside, Broderick credits regular tai chi classes for lessening pain from knee OA and a long bout with polymyalgia rheumatica. "I can do things I didn't think were possible before," she says, happy that she can now take long walks and be on her feet without having to stop because of aching joints. "I can't say enough about tai chi; it changed my life."

## Why Tai Chi?

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 – Instructor*



Tai Chi calendars available from  
December at £6 desk calendar & £10  
wall Calendar.