



Kai Ming Association Newsletter

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A STEP TOO FAR

Some months ago whilst at home, I made the mistake of trying to go down the stairs too quickly.

The result of this was I lost my footing when my heels slipped of the edge of the treads, and my whole body weight went downwards.

Luckily I was holding on with my right hand to the newel timber upright at the top of the stairs, and as I dropped downwards I gripped tightly to this and held on. The effect of this was a huge painful stretching of my right arm and shoulder.

A visit to the Doctors then followed as my shoulder had begun to intermittently "lock" up.

Then a subsequent ultrasound scan reported a 23mm tear in the muscle, tendonitis, teno-synovitis, bursitis, oedema, and changes in the ACJ joint (Acromioclavicular joint) which is at the top of the shoulder.

A later x-ray showed a small amount of arthritis. This had been requested when an appointment was made to see a physiotherapist.

At my first visit to her I explained the incident, and an examination was made of my arm and shoulder to determine the range, and strength within the movement of it.

Whilst chatting the physio asked me how I spent my time now I was retired. I explained I was a member of Kaiming Tai Chi Association, and attended 3 classes a week including a Painting the Rainbow daytime class because I have hip joint movement limitations and can spend more time focusing on this during this class.

Once a month I also train with the instructors and more advanced students when Mark Peters Principal Instructor holds a more in depth morning training session.

She was very interested in the class exercise details and said she was going to take a look at the website. When I first injured my shoulder I was advised to rest it for a few weeks and then after this I decided to resume my Tai Chi classes as with all the range of movements in warm up, chi kung, and form we are allowed to work within our own limitations, and do as much or as little as we are comfortable with, depending on our state of health at the time, and in my case the level of healing that was taking place.

From the time of my injury and during the months that followed while the healing process was taking place I had declined pain killers and steroid injections into my shoulder joint.

I wanted to feel the process of the bodies gradual healing aided by gentle

exercise appropriate to the stage of recovery. Injections etc would have concealed this.

This was a personal choice and some injuries may need people to follow medical advice depending on the severity of the condition.

On my last visit to the physio to assess my recovery she was very impressed how my range of movement and strength had improved so since my last visit, and felt the Tai Chi exercises had played a significant part in this. I now have full range of movement back in shoulder and arm and am very thankful to my Kai Ming Instructor Neil Rankin for all his attention and help.

By Terry Lalley - tai chi student for life



Tai Chi for falls prevention and more...

I regularly receive requests for tai chi for NHS patient rehabilitation. Can Tai Chi and Chi-Kung REALLY help? Below is a brief look from my experience.

I was fortunate enough, in the mid 1990's, to be asked by a primary care trust (PCT) in Lichfield if I would train a group of staff in **Tai Chi for Falls Prevention**. As a mechanical design engineer I have always been drawn to the mechanical structure and physics involved in tai chi (much like William CC Chen) so the application of body mechanics here was an amazing opportunity. There is much published research on tai chi, for many conditions from falls prevention to cardiac and respiratory (COPD)

rehab; from anxiety management to mental health and even Dementia/Alzheimers. Research has usually been around form practice and applied to specific conditions e.g. falls prevention (Wolf, 1996), knee structure (Kinesiolo, 2006), Planter pressure (j.apmr, 2006), COPD (Qiu, 2015), Diabetes (Cavegn, 2015) etc. etc.; I have been, and continue to be, involved with a number of research projects looking at the affects of tai chi and chi-kung.

The most well known and quoted study is the Wolf study which states general exercise reduce risks of falls by 10%. Specialised training reduces risks by 25%. Tai Chi reduces risks of falls by 47%

Our regular classes for the general public include people who have various interests from relaxation and gentle exercise, to a less aggressive martial art and spiritual development; we also get a number of referrals from GP's and hospitals which can consist of patients with COPD, cardiac conditions, strokes, sports injuries etc. We have people suffering from CFS (ME), MS, Parkinson's; rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, people who are fully mobile, wheel-chair bound and everything in between. This mix gives a very good insight into Tai Chi's effectiveness.

Some falls facts (taken from help the aged website)

- Falls make up over half of the admissions to A&E
- 14,000 died from fractures
- 50% fall again
- hip fractures cost NHS £1.7 billion
- after a fracture 50% no longer live independently
- over a third of people of 65 years fall each year
- Tai Chi reduces risks of falls by 47%

How Tai Chi works – Therapeutic elements

1. Continuous steady movement – performed slowly with awareness
2. Small and large degrees of movement
3. knee flexion and weight shifting

4. straight and extended head and trunk – suspended from above. Do not watch the floor
5. combined/coordinated rotational movement of head, trunk and extremities. Rotational movement builds greater stability than linear movement alone.
6. centred movement – asymmetrical arm and leg movement about the waist.
7. unilateral weight bearing and constant shifting
8. improved circulation, suppleness and flexibility
9. increased sense of connection to the ground
10. checking/sensing the ground before moving into it
11. strengthens muscles and balances tendons and ligaments
12. abdominal breathing increases oxygenisation and relaxation
13. increased special awareness – mind/body balance and connection



The Origins of Tai Chi

There are many different stories concerning its origins and creation. The most popular legend, which has little factual substantiation, is that of **Zhang San Feng**, a Daoist who, already having mastered Shaolin boxing, caught sight of a crane fighting a snake. Intrigued by the yielding, smooth evasion and darting counter-attacks of both creatures, he was inspired to develop a form of boxing, which would embody the natural philosophy of the Dao. Legend aside, in the middle of the eighteenth century a soft boxing was being taught in the village of Chenjiakou, in Henan

province. This soft boxing was finally popularised by **Yang Luchan** (1780-1873), who, through diligent effort, learnt the Chen family boxing, and then went to Beijing, where he taught the art, in a modified form to the Manchu court. This **YANG** school of boxing was destined to become the most popular form of **Taijiquan (Tai Chi Ch'uan)**, with the help of **Yang Cheng Fu** (1883-1936), the most widely known descendent of Yang Luchan. It is characterised by large, smooth, flowing movements with an unbroken even tempo, avoiding strenuous over-exertion. Tai Chi became more accessible when **Cheng Man-Ching** (1902-1975) a senior student of Yang Cheng Fu went to America from Taiwan and taught openly to all who were interested.

What is Tai Chi

Tai Chi is a sophisticated form of whole body Neuromuscular/skeletal movement re-education. Its use of natural rotational, as well as linear movements, strengthen balance; Bruce Francis even recommends it for aiding post-operative recovery for knee and hip surgery quoting from his own personal experience.

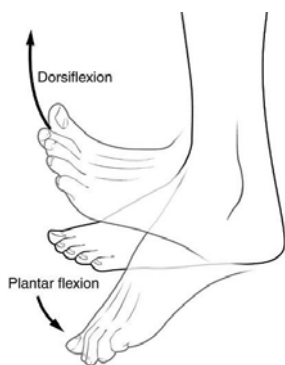
Fractures are more to do with function than falling

Some hip fractures occur as a result of a direct injury when the patient hits the ground, but a high proportion occur as a result of rotational stresses due to sudden twisting. One textbook goes as far as to suggest that the majority of fractures of a brittle hip follow rotational forces induced by a stumble or a fall, and not from a direct injury as the patient hits the ground.



Why do we risk over-balance?

Have you ever considered how we walk? We fall forward and hope our legs keep up unhindered. In Tai Chi we learn to not commit body weight until we know the leg is definitely their first; this way we avoid trips and develop a strong stable base. Research into planter pressure during Tai Chi practice highlights the effects of tai chi's approach to positioning and function. A natural bi-product of Tai Chi movement is strengthening of the vastus medialis obliquus (VMO) which is a key part of our core stability. The VMO muscle is not effectively used during normal walking or running; in fact runners quite often suffer from knee pain due to weakness of the VMO.



Function of Dorsiflexors and heal strike

The dorsiflexors are what allow you to work your car pedals or tap your foot to music. When they weaken it becomes hard to lift your foot without the toes dropping. This causes the foot to drag when walking and increases the risk of falls. Tai Chi teaches you to place your heel down first and to clearly define your steps. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) state that 80% of injuries are due to human error, of which 26% is trips and falls.

Spatial awareness

One of the clear benefits of Tai Chi is improved spatial awareness (Kinaesthetic awareness). The steady, clearly defined movements, the walking exercises and concept of 'aligning with gravity', all add to an improved awareness of being. Exercises are designed to increase awareness of your range of balance and the need to move within that range. You learn to listen to your body and appreciate/understand what

affects your balance. You learn to be aware of the ground beneath your feet.....

Learn to do less and understand body connection

A key phrase I use in my own classes is 'learn to do less'. We think we need to do much more than we actually do to achieve the result we want. Consider your car: when driven hard it burns more fuel, wears out sooner and doesn't necessarily get you there any sooner; your body is no different. Move mindfully; Can you feel your weight falling through your body easily and uninterrupted? Does your whole foot feel connected to and pressing the ground? The key to everything in Tai Chi can be summed up in the concept of *living in the here and now*, of being aware and paying attention to the moment. It is in the attention to detail, of listening to our bodies, that we develop a greater understanding. Mindfulness is so trendy at the moment but what is overlooked is to learn you have to pay attention, be mindful. There is an increase in the diagnosis of Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); I believe that this is due, at least in part, to overstimulation by social media etc. and that tai chi mindful movement could help greatly.



The mental aspects of falls

As Tai Chi is a holistic system i.e. it treats mind and body as an integrated system, we learn to not only see what we do but **FEEL** it. Tai Chi is often referred to as meditation in movement. As well as learning to balance physically, students learn to balance mentally. As you can see from the figures at the beginning of this article, 50% of fallers fall again; this is due to a combination of weakness and attitude. We think of phobias such as

spiders, needles, heights etc but tend to forget that the fear of falling is also a phobic response that can grow and become life limiting. Our aim should be to reframe peoples thinking, help them relax and gain confidence again. I personally use Tai Chi as the core of the rehab/prevention program but also include aspects of Alexander Technique, NLP and hypnotherapy. The more tools in the toolbox the greater our options.

Why is Tai Chi so appealing to the medical field?

There are many forms of exercise and rehabilitation but as far as I am aware Tai Chi is the only one with no contra-indications. It has been used in hospitals solely because of this fact. There is extensive research into the beneficial effects of Tai Chi for: Cancer patients, Parkinson's, knee osteoarthritis, sympathetic nervous system activity, fibromyalgia, cardiac conditions, COPD, plus further research still underway into its effects on depression, ADHD, ME(CFS) and much much more. In some areas Tai Chi is available on prescription.

Its more than a martial art

Tai Chi is more than just a martial art, it's a self-defence for life. It takes the same skills to off-balance an attacker as it does to improve your own balance for well-being. Pushing-hands is a tool to refine sensory awareness of balance and it can be used in so many ways.

Next time you practice push-hands work with your partner to put each other in and out of balance; notice the point of balance. As a martial art we look to off-balance the attacker and speed them up so they fly, only to be stopped by a wall or the floor. If you slip or trip it's the same thing – you lose balance and speed yourself up in the panic to rebalance.

Please invest the time to explore your sense of balance, the structure of weight and muscle response through your body (be mindful) and your skills for health and self-defence will develop exponentially.

I hope this article will encourage you to find more facets to your tai chi training and strengthen its value to you.

by Mark Peters

WE NEED YOU!



Yes, we need you. The demand for Tai Chi instructors is on the increase and especially to give access to people that wouldn't normally feel able, from hospitals, special needs groups etc. etc. The regular route to train as a full tai chi instructor with us is get the support of your instructor and attend the monthly advanced Sunday classes, followed by a grading. This is still the route for anyone wanting to learn and advance in the whole art of tai chi, but nearly 10 years ago now Jenny and I formed Painting the Rainbow (PtR). Its aim is to make tai chi and chi-kung more accessible to people who can benefit from the health and well-being benefits of tai chi (physical and social). Mark trains staff in hospitals and they then refer patients to PtR groups in the community.

See www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk

Over the last few years PtR has expanded to include '**Tai Chi in the Park**' and is currently working towards '**exercise on prescription**'. We have actually started our first tai chi class in a doctors surgery. This means the demand for PtR instructors is outstripping supply and we need you... Speak to your instructor to get more details, or call Jenny & Mark on 0121 251 6172 to discuss.

Please start to attend a few PtR classes to get a feel for it and attend the PtR training sessions (ask for details). In addition to this Marks '**tai chi rehab**' program can be seen at www.midlandstaichirehab.com and for 2017 we may have a few sponsored places on the course that are available following an interview. Obviously you can book on and opt to pay monthly yourself as the course is spread over the year in four blocks of two days. You will learn both seated and standing tai chi and chi-kung, plus aspects of NLP, CBT, mindfulness,

relaxation, Alexander technique and more to enable you to work with a mind-body approach to well-being.

PtR tai chi and chi-kung classes have a completely different focus than Kai Ming tai chi classes. The aim with PtR is to make classes social and inclusive to enable as wide a selection of people as possible to take part. The research shows the benefits of tai chi for patient rehabilitation and the only limiters in the past have been "it's difficult" or "it's boring and slow" which is addressed in the delivery style of PtR classes. People's motivation to attend '**social tai chi**' classes is generally different than the motivation to attend a Kai Ming class where students aim to learn all aspects of tai chi as a martial art. They are not mutually exclusive but they do offer that different perspective which gives a clearer focus.

Maybe you are retired or just have some free time and would like to get more involved. We look forward to hearing from you and hopefully setting you up in your first PtR class. Many of the classes are sponsored and you can be paid for the classes you teach; getting paid for something you really enjoy a nice bonus we feel. Above all you must be motivated by the enjoyment of working with the different groups; it's not about being perfect at tai chi, a lot of it is about having a caring personality and sense of humour. You do need to understand the principles of tai chi and we're always happy to discuss this with you. We look forward to hearing from you.

Regards
Jenny & Mark Peters
0121 251 6172



Advance Sunday Training sessions for 2017

You may or may not be aware but we run a monthly advanced class on Sunday mornings. These classes are three hours and designed to develop a deeper understanding and application of tai chi chuan and internal martial arts. Some people attend because they want to become instructors; some attend purely

for the love of tai chi and to develop their skills. All instructors must attend to achieve and retain their grading. Please discuss with your instructor or contact Mark on 07831 743737

In 2017 the sessions will include weapons work, San Shou (solo & two person), Hsing-I, Ba-Gua, Tui-shou (push-hands), Chin-Na (locks). Each month you will get the opportunity to strengthen your application of tai chi and work with people from other classes, as well as other instructors, to broaden your experience.

The dates for your diary are shown below and the content for each will be announced shortly. No prior experience of the aspect being taught are necessary but please do check with your instructor before attending as they will understand your needs and abilities more than I. January will be focus on Chin-Na and will look at locks and holds within tai chi chuan. We are also planning to show a contrast from Aikido to give a wider appreciation.

Advanced training dates 2017

Hopwood Village Hall
9.30-12.30pm £25

January 15th – Chin-Na (locks)

February 12th

March 5th

April 9th

May 14th

June 4th

August 5th and 6th – Tai Chi Camp

September 17th

October 15th

November 12th

December 10th



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