



Tai Chi Newsletter

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

<https://www.kaiming.co.uk>



Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

Improvement cannot always be measured, it is something you feel

call: 0121 251 6172

<https://www.taichinewsletters.co.uk/>

e-mail us: markpeters@kaiming.co.uk



Tai Chi & Qigong
2022 Calendar

Learning has no early or late start.
One who has mastered the subject
is the teacher

www.kaiming.co.uk

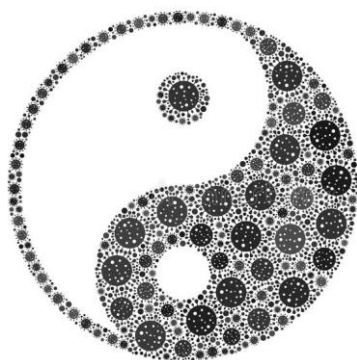
www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk

Our 2022 desk calendar is now available and any profit goes to a local charity. The calendars are a mix of humour and thoughtful quotes. They are £8 desk (A5) calendar or £10 A4 wall calendars. The image above is the front cover. Please ask your instructor or email:

markpeters@kaiming.co.uk

You can also buy online in more sizes at:

<https://www.askonline.shop/products/ptr-calendar>



COVID Guidelines and Classes

As of 1st December 2021 we can confirm that there is no legal change currently to group exercise guidelines already in place which state *“There are no restrictions on how many people can take part in sport and physical activity, or on the activities they can do”*.

We still advise:

- Wearing of face coverings to and from class venues
- Wearing face covering in class if appropriate
- Adequate ventilation within classes
- Social distancing at your own discretion within class
- Continue to follow good hygiene practice
- Avoid sharing water bottles
- Avoid sharing equipment
- Avoid contact training e.g. partner work and push-hands
- Flow tests before attending class. These are free from any chemist.

We also recommend:

Self-assessment: Before attending any classes, all participants, instructors and spectators should self-assess for COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste). If you/they have one or more of these symptoms (even if they are mild), you are advised not to attend any classes, and to follow NHS guidance on testing and self-isolation.

Informed decisions: You should consider your own health and circumstances (for example, if not yet double-vaccinated or living with somebody at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19), please make an informed choice about whether you wish to participate.

Self-isolation: Clearly understand that you should not take part in your activity if you need to self-isolate (for example, because they have tested positive or are asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace). If you are displaying any COVID-19 symptoms (a high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste), do not attend, even if these symptoms are mild.

Find more information on self-isolation guidance here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

Always check with your instructor before attending, if unsure.



KNEE SURGERY AND TAI CHI

As my daily dose of tai chi has been interrupted by a long-overdue knee replacement, Mark Peters has asked me to share a few thoughts on how I see this “panning out” over the coming weeks and months.

Up until the day of the operation (five weeks ago at the time of writing), I was persevering with a more-or-less daily routine of tai chi, qigong, riding my bike and (with a lesser frequency) a bit of Pilates. Fortunately, I have always enjoyed exercise (55 years ago I trained as a PE teacher) and, even now, just a few weeks’ shy of my 74th birthday, exercising is a normal part of daily life. However, during recent months with knee surgery pending, there was the added incentive of a hope and belief that the fitter and stronger my leg was when the surgeon attacked it with hammer and saw, the quicker and easier might be the rehabilitation process,

Modern medicine (even if it is largely driven by health economics) still amazes me: surgery in the morning; physiotherapy during the afternoon; and back home in the evening ... with my new knee protected by nothing more than a crepe bandage!

But, at this point, I should probably interject a word or two about pain: as my son explained (he is a GP and emergency medicine specialist), you can’t subject a part of the body to the sort of trauma associated with joint replacement and not expect it to hurt. However, when they allow you home on the same day as the surgery, it doesn’t hurt at all, because all that lovely anaesthetic is still swimming around inside you. It is the day after (when the anaesthetic has worn off) that you discover what pain really is ... and, boy, is it intense!

Happily, with a two-week supply of a whole cocktail of painkillers, every subsequent day is just a little bit better

than the day before and, guided by the hospital’s physiotherapy programme, the process of rehabilitation can be described, for me at least, as measured, incremental and effective. Apparently, for some people of my age, a “successful” joint replacement is one which permits a gentle and more or less pain-free stroll. In my case, the bar was set slightly higher: my wife wants me back on the dance floor and I want to get back to my daily tai chi routine.

Now it must be said (lest the reader be misled into believing otherwise) that I am not a tai chi master. I had never even practised the art until retirement and, even then, it took me a few years to find Mark Peters and for him to shine some light upon my tai chi darkness. Nowadays, with Mark’s blessing, I run a weekly “tai chi in the park” session for my neighbours and I have evolved a daily routine which, with some variation according to mood, time and the weather, includes:

- Master Huang’s five loosening exercises
- A “homemade” set of weight transfer/balance exercises
- A qigong routine (usually Ba Duan Jin)
- Cheng Man Ching’s 37-step form
- and a few minutes of “standing post”

Of course, since my knee replacement, for the time being at least this has all gone out the window. For the first two weeks after the operation, the focus was on pain management and the first tentative steps towards “re-mobilising” my knee. The hospital had provided a really useful physio guide ... simple exercises, carefully graduated, and supplemented by brief periods of “walking on sticks” ... but nothing even remotely resembling tai chi.



During weeks three and four, the physio routine was extended and intensified; the walking was increased in both

time and distance; and, whilst tai chi was still a “step too far”, I found a brief qigong session to be a really useful adjunct to at least one part of the physio. Let me explain: by this time, my new knee had improved daily in terms of reduced swelling, less pain and good extension ... but flexion (bending the knee) was still a problem. The solution (of which I hope the hospital’s physiotherapist would approve) was to sit on an upright chair with my new knee flexed as far as pain/swelling/etc would allow and then to “divert the mind” from the obvious discomfort by focussing on a few minutes of seated qigong ... for which the Wu Xing routine (which I found in Damo Mitchell’s Heavenly Streams: Meridian Theory in Nei Gong) was just about perfect.

Weeks five and six (where I am now) involve more of the same ... although I have dispensed altogether with the elbow crutches and, as such, I can begin to focus more on quality of movement instead of the “anything is better than nothing” approach which has necessarily characterised the last four weeks. About 18 months ago, when I was recovering from a total hip replacement, a physio friend saw me walking in the grounds where I live (and, then too, I had just abandoned crutches) and she offered the following advice: “Stop waddling like a duck and start marching like a soldier” ... so you get the picture!

I have also just added some of the simpler “weight transfer/balance” exercises to my daily routine and this, I think, will be the key to my eventual return to tai chi. It seems to me that, when I can comfortably and confidently, slowly and smoothly, transfer my weight from one foot to the other (forwards, backwards and sideways), I should also be able to re-engage both with my qigong routine and the Cheng Man Ching 37-step form ... even if, initially, it is all performed within a more limited range of movement than would normally be the case. Time will tell.

Although progress is slow and sometimes painful, it is at least progress that I can see and feel on a day-to-day basis ... so, I guess, the mantra has to be along the lines of “slowly, slowly, catch a monkey”. As Cheng Man Ching might have said (but almost certainly didn’t): “Tai chi is an effortless and rhythmical art that stresses slow breathing, balanced and relaxed postures, and absolute calmness of mind” (I wish) and, as Mark Peters delights in reminding me: if I had

found tai chi earlier in my life, I probably wouldn’t have needed all this joint replacement in the first place. Happy days!

By Bob Price, Lincoln



Painting the Rainbow
Tai Chi tops

T-shirt £12
Polo £16
Sweat £20
Hoodie £20

Sizes: S - 4XL

Contact us on
07831 743737
or visit the website to order
www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk

We have a limited stock of **Painting the Rainbow** tops and are selling off at **HALF PRICE** so let us know if you’re interested markpeters@kaiming.co.uk



The Dying Art of “Stillness”

There are certain human changes which come about by participation in martial activities. The misunderstanding arises from the interpretive and market-oriented selling of martial arts to non-Asian communities.

It is hardly surprising in essentially a cultural marketplace that there exist newer, more generically made forms of martial arts (e.g. taekwondo, kickboxing, contemporary wushu), which are stripped of certain cultural nuances.

These absolutely fundamental aspects of the intent of these martial arts are continually underplayed as being culturally controversial, ethnographically unquantifiable, or simply incomprehensible to the observers. One of the more elusive cultural aspects is the relationship of the practitioner to STILLNESS.



In its original setting, stillness is considered to be a resource as well as an element of belief. Stillness and its direct perception are at the core of martial training. In Asian thought, this highly expedient method allows the practitioner direct access to models of experience with definite benefits.

One method is exemplified in stance training (Zhan zhuang) which refines the martial artist's skills with subtle, non-intrusive and profound re-association with his own body and mental processes. The constant attempt to strengthen and yet simultaneously relax (sung) offers an alternative to high level exercise which, though improving muscles, creates an aversion reaction in the body.

Stillness training circumvents this lactic-acid, adrenal-pumping approach and, in some instances, actualizes a more complete change in the body. At the same time, it establishes what, for want of a better term, we might call a 'default' system.

Just as the shoulder width stance is the natural First Position for the ballet dancer the horse stance or some variation of it (Wu Wei) must become the natural default position for a martial practitioner. The same process encourages a relaxed state of mind. Stripped of the normal amounts of fear and anticipation, this is considered the traditional default position for the practitioner's mind as well as body.

The obvious advantages in terms of increased reactive speed and clear judgments need not to be argued here. The point is that this training is the express agenda of the stillness practice, not a meaningless adjunct to it.

Even more profoundly, the concept that stillness is the "origin of all things" and that the practitioner must attach himself to it and learn from it, is an absolute requirement of Chinese martial arts. IT IS NOT AN OPTION.

This direct perceptual engagement is at the heart of the practice. Giving it up would be like attempting to teach science without referring to the cultural, objective, comprehensive materialism that is at the core of the discipline. In the study of physics, a basic and non-refutable core concept lies in the absolute similarity of quantifiable measurements and laws regardless of location (given the exigencies of local space and time conditions).

We find the same non-changing, unalterable premise in the twin concepts of selfhood and stillness. The direct perception of the Dao, individuated in the unique existence of the practitioner, is a fundamental proposition of the martial arts; it counterbalances the activity of the more frenetic aspects of the arts. It "rounds the corners" of practice. It re-associates the practitioner with the "original self".

The Original Self is a pressing consideration of Asian cultural modes. The very concept of self-defence is linked by definition to some comprehensive understanding of the "self" that is defended.

As mentioned in Sun Zi's Art of War, the overriding strategy here is "*Know yourself and know your enemy and you will never meet defeat*".

When practicing your form, you look for stillness in movement, when practicing push-hands look for stillness in blending (connection to the other person). For me stillness in application is the difference between reacting and responding.



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.

Sessions are 9.30-12.30 at £30 per person.

2022 dates are:

Jan 9th

Feb 20th

March 6th

April 10th

May 8th

June 12th

September 3rd & 4th (weekend camp)

Oct 9th

Nov. 20th

Dec. 4th