



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

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

ACTIVE PARKS, USE THEM OR LOOSE THEM. My Story



I joined Tai Chi at Cotteridge Park 3 years ago.

I was surprised to see what a large mixed group it was, made up of people of all ages and ability.

I was welcomed by Mark Peters, the Instructor, who briefly told me about the exercise we would be doing based on the art and movements of Tai Chi which are very flexible making it easy access for all either standing or seated at times. He also asked if I had any health problems, and introduced me to Avril a lovely lady who helps put newcomers at ease and assisted me in filling out the simple form to enrol in the Park Lives community project for free. There are lots of classes and activities for everyone organized at the park, and once the form was submitted I became able to access all of them if I wanted. A great way to save our parks from land grab and preserve them for the future .

If you don't fancy going to the Gym, then come along and join us. No special clothing, just wear something comfortable.

Tai Chi is a gentle and relaxing way to exercise. It helps with breathing, clearing the lungs and get more oxygen circulating to the brain and major organs so that they can work more efficiently. It is also

proven to be on par with an energetic Zumba class but without getting sweaty... We we're featured on 'Trust me I'm a Doctor' with Michael Moseley. It also helps to relax the mind as well as the body.

I was encouraged by the hospital to do Tai Chi to help the recovery of my movement after a major operation. The fact that during the session you are encouraged to do as much as you can without straining yourself is very helpful. You can even use a chair to do the exercises seated or just hold on to for balance. The aim being to improve gradually at your own pace (unless Mark thinks you need a bit of encouragement to see you have more potential than you thought). The word YET means just that. Cannot do it "yet" but hopefully you will at some point in your Tai Chi journey.

Then at the end of the hour session at Cotteridge Park there is a welcome cup of tea or coffee and biscuits and also a chance to meet up socially Courtesy of and thanks to Emma and Avril.

Its open to everyone in local parks so take a look at the facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/parktaichi or website www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk/park-tai-chi-classes.php

By Sheila Cash



Tai Chi and M.E.

The next time you miss the bus and have to walk home with armfuls of heavy shopping, try to stem the curses for a moment and instead be thankful that you are physically able to do just that!

Most of us today who are blessed with good health take it for granted and punish our bodies in various ways on a daily basis until something happens to make us all too aware of just how precious it is. Then, when we lose it, we turn to our medical profession and demand a quick fix cure to put us back on our feet almost immediately so that we can return to our routine of what amounts to self abuse once more - until something else goes wrong! So it continues until we finally come up against something for which there is no quick fix pill, no ready answer and seemingly no way forward.

In my own case it was M.E. (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) - an illness which I believe is becoming more and more commonplace, affecting people right across the board. There are all sorts of ideas floating about as to what causes it and indeed there are still all too many people who do not acknowledge that it exists at all! I too once thought of it as simply 'yuppie flu' - some sort of malingerers' complaint, the sufferers of which needed a shake and to be told to get their act together - I came to learn the truth in a painfully personal way by falling victim myself to this illness which can be both physically and mentally debilitating to the point where people came become bedridden for years!

The symptoms can vary from person to person, but usually include disturbance to sleep patterns, heart rhythm abnormalities, painful muscles and joints,

fainting, confusion, inability to concentrate, intolerance to bright lights and noise, digestive problems, breathlessness and an overwhelming general fatigue. These stay with you all the time, week after week, month after month, year after year ... if you let them. What many of us do not realise is that we all hold within ourselves vast energies - but we don't know how to tap into them and they often become blocked - I was as much in ignorance of this as anyone and had never taken the time before to listen to what my body had been telling me for years - I had always considered myself to be strong and fit and now suddenly all my physical strength had left me. No one could explain why nor could they tell me how to get well again - I was fortunate to have the most supportive and helpful GPs, but they had no answers other than to rest with a prognosis of a possible recovery in a few years time. Well, I didn't want to wait for years - there had to be an answer somewhere, it was just a question of looking in the right place. As it turned out I didn't have to look very far. I had heard of alternative or complementary medicine but had never taken it seriously. In some of the books I had read on M.E., many had been listed as 'tried and failed' by the authors. However I was persuaded by a friend to visit a homeopath and healer and I also consulted a radionics practitioner. After years of chronic illness, unbeknown then to me, I had reached a major turning point. My whole outlook on life was to change as I was introduced to the concepts of holistic medicine and associated therapies. It was these practitioners who first drew my attention to Tai Chi.

Just as there is no single cause of M.E., there is no single road back from it either, but I would say that Tai Chi proved to be a significant factor in my recovery. I had reached a point where I could barely sit upright in a chair, I had no muscle tone or stamina to speak of just to utter a sentence was exhausting. Exercise of any kind seemed out of the question, but as my holistic treatment began to show signs of working, I knew that some form of physical activity was going to have to be considered if I was ever going to get to

where I wanted to be. The homeopath had told me it would take about nine months to get me back on my feet and able to cope with the basic demands of life - I got there in eight, and wanted to be able to do more. All that I knew about Tai Chi at this point was that it was of Eastern origin, and I had a picture in my mind of solitary figures standing motionless in beautiful parklands for hours at a time. I had no idea at all of what was involved and was still very fearful of doing anything that might cause me to relapse. However those responsible for my healing to date persuaded me that it was a good idea and when I saw Mark's new class advertised, I enrolled.

It was an effort at first. The class took place in a large school at the top of a flight of stairs which I viewed with some trepidation. However, I was able to rest when I got to the top and I found that there was no pressure on me during the class to do anything which I considered to be too taxing. If I wanted to simply sit out and watch, it was not a problem, although in actual fact by the time I had gone through the warm-up exercises, I rarely found the need to do so. I quickly discovered that the benefits to my circulation were considerable and far from leaving a session fatigued, I always experienced an increased level of energy as well as a general sense of relaxation and well being.

My sleep pattern improved as did my stamina and I quickly realised the benefits of practicing for at least a few minutes every day. Soon I felt able to do other forms of exercise, but I have continued with my Tai Chi and recognise its importance in my daily routine as a factor in preserving my now good health. In the mornings it kick-starts my system wonderfully well. It helps to get the energy flowing, unblocking the channels which get clogged up through the demands we place upon ourselves in modern living, and helps to restore the body's natural balance. To anyone who is attempting to recover from M.E., I cannot recommend the practice of Tai Chi highly enough as a means of breaking in the endless circle of "I'm-too-ill-to-exercise-therefore-I-shall-become-

increasingly-unfit-and-even-more-sick!" Even if all you can do to start with is sit in a chair and do the breathing exercises, the effects are surprisingly beneficial, and it is a starting point. It is a very gentle but effective way to exercise, placing no real stress on the body or minds and can be done in the quiet of your own home to whatever level you feel you are able to attain. I can now ride, swim, jog and do a day's work with no ill effects and believe that I am probably fitter than a lot of other people.

A holistic approach to treating my condition has been the focal point of my recovery and Tai Chi has been an integral part of that. I believe that it could prove to be of considerable value to people like me in their quest to improve and maintain their health. Wherever they are, I wish them well!

By Cathy Saveker - Erdington Student

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

How To Please A Monkey!

The keeper said the monkeys were to have one banana in the morning and two at night.

The monkeys were very unhappy with this arrangement.

So the keeper said they could have two bananas in the morning and one at night. The monkeys were very pleased with this arrangement.

The amount of 'bananas' remained the same; the secret was the adaptation to the likes and dislikes of those concerned.

CHUANG TZU - Wisdom from the East

