



# 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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Recently, somebody phoned enquiring about tai chi to help them overcome kinesiophobia. As a therapist, I often get asked for help to overcome a phobia but had never heard of this one so I asked them to explain how it was affecting them. Our discussion inspired me to write this short piece for the newsletter.

## Moving Without Fear: How Tai Chi and Mindfulness Help You Heal

Many people recovering from injury or living with pain find themselves afraid to move. Even when the body has healed, the mind may still whisper, “Be careful - you might hurt yourself again”. This fear is known as kinesiophobia - the fear of movement.

It's common after accidents, surgery, or chronic pain. Unfortunately, avoiding movement often makes things worse: stiffness grows, confidence fades, and pain can even increase. But there is hope — and it starts with gentle, mindful movement.

## How Tai Chi & Qigong Helps You Move with Confidence

- Safe and gentle: The slow, smooth pace lets you explore how your body feels without overdoing it.
- Better body awareness: You learn to feel balance, posture, and coordination again — and realise you are capable of more than you think.
- Calmer nervous system: Deep, mindful breathing helps your body relax out of ‘fight or flight’ mode.
- Regaining control: Each small success — smoother motion, better posture — rebuilds your confidence and trust in your body.

## Mindfulness: Movement with an open mind (Kai Ming)

Mindfulness means being fully present in the moment — noticing sensations and thoughts without judgment. When we move mindfully, as we do in Tai Chi & Qigong, we begin to change our relationship with pain and fear:

- We notice sensations without panic or expectation.

- We understand that pain doesn't always mean danger.
- We replace avoidance with gentle curiosity.

Over time, the brain starts to connect movement with calm and safety instead of fear and threat.

## Try This: Mindful Weight Shifting

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees soft, shoulders relaxed.
2. Breathe in gently as you shift your weight slightly to one foot.
3. Breathe out as you return to centre.
4. Repeat on the other side, keeping your breath slow and smooth.
5. Simply notice how your body feels — no rush, no judgment, just grounding.

Each time you practise, you'll begin to feel more at ease and more connected to your body.

## Moving Forward

Recovery from kinesiophobia isn't about pushing through pain - it's about moving kindly. Tai Chi and mindfulness remind you that you are safe to move and capable of healing. Every breath and every small motion is a quiet victory.

Be present in your practice as your mind and body grow stronger.

By Mark Peters



## Tom's Storey.

A few years ago a man called Tom came into one of my Painting the Rainbow (PTR) classes. He was using a walking stick and supported on the other side by his wife. His balance was so bad I had to put a chair in front of him and one behind when he tried to do any standing exercise.

Tom had been a hard working market trader all his life and then, when he retired, unfortunately suffered two strokes within 18 months causing him severe balance problems. He told me after one session that his poor balance had made him lose confidence to the extent that he would not go to family events in case someone accidentally bumped into him, knocking him over.

Tom paid particular attention when I spoke about posture and balance and told me that, on a daily basis, he practiced the exercises to strengthen his legs/ankles. He was a very keen student and attended every weekly class.

After a few months, Tom was able to walk into class without the assistance of his wife, and said his ambition was to get rid of his stick. He continued to improve over the months and, one day, came into class without his stick, which was amazing. He said that he was now happy to join in with family gatherings.

He then told me that there was one drawback from not having his stick with him, apparently he liked to walk on a Sunday morning to get his paper and had to cross a busy main road. When he had his stick the drivers would stop and let him cross safely, when he did not have the stick, they would not. He laughingly said he now takes the stick just so that he can cross the road easily.

Tom has now moved away from the area, to be closer to his family and I hope he continues to improve.

I am not trying to suggest that Tai Chi and Qigong are miracle cures for balance problems but as this story shows, with practice and dedication, we can certainly improve. Give it a try for yourself.

Neil Rankine - Chief Instructor



### Slow

If you were to pause a moment  
Draw a breath and say  
That actually, rushing about  
Is the thing that's in your way

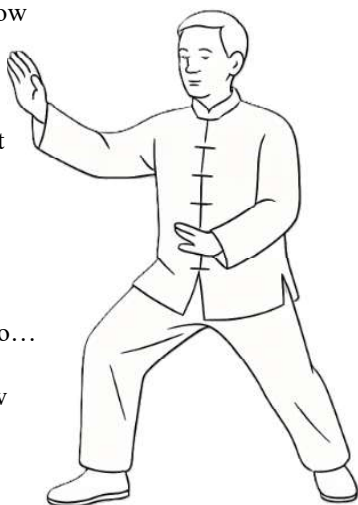
Nobody told me  
Though of course now, I know  
That everything is better  
If you take it slow...

Don't jump in with both feet  
As I did before my show  
Stop, take a deep breath  
And let your energy flow

Maybe you are rushing  
Down, a road you needn't go...  
Rest a while, pause  
Turn around and take it slow

If you were to stand tall  
And open up your heart  
You'll find that you can let go  
Of things, best left in the past

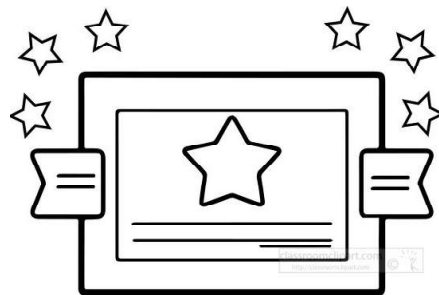
And you might, learn that  
To connect the Earth to the Sky  
Will help you find some peace  
As those around you – rush on by



Maybe then, you'll understand  
That nature's eye is wise  
Pay attention to your senses  
Allow them, to be your guide

It could be that slowing down  
Is, in its own way, profound  
Helping us to discover  
Where peace of mind is found

By Lou Clements – trainee tai chi qigong teacher



### Dedicated Student Award

In the May 2023 newsletter, we mentioned the sad loss of Andrew McAuley (Mac) who was a long-term student. Before he died, he asked if we could start a Dedicated Student award as tai chi had given him so much in his life. The feedback from students and instructors has been excellent and the awards in '23 and '24 well deserved.

We have received nominations for individuals and even a nomination for a group this year. All will be announced in our next newsletter along with photos 😊



### Donations

As many of you may know, each year at Christmas, Kai Ming donates to several charities. The money comes from Mark & Jenny Peters donating their time to run the club, create the newsletters, manage the websites etc.

This year we decided to donate to local charities in Birmingham, Litchfield, and Tamworth, and make donations to two other nominated international animal charities. They will be listed in the next newsletter.