



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

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Order your copy of our 2021 calendar.

Limited quantities of A5 desk and A4 wall sizes available.



Every year Jenny and I make a calendar and the proceeds go to charity. If you have not had one before, it has a mix of inspirational quotes and funny thought.



Government tiers 1-3 and classes

Guidelines are that indoor classes, in England, are OK in tier 1 & 2, non-contact and following COVID guidelines. For tier 3, only outdoor classes are permissible. Details can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>

If you are running or attending sessions in your local parks, please share details and pictures at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/parktaichi>

Points on Using the Principles of Tai Chi Chuan

As most students and practitioners of Tai Chi Chuan know, the concepts that come from the “principles” are the tools which empower Tai Chi.

All practitioners, if they are performing their Tai Chi according to what we understand historically, and wish to attain the ‘Kung Fu’ (skill) of the art, must utilize and implement these principles.

It is our understanding of them that give us the keys to all the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects that make Tai Chi work for us.

Whether you are interested in only the martial, the health benefits, inner relaxation, or meditation you still need to adhere to these principles, which have been handed down in the classics for generations, if you wish to attain any of them or all of them.

Tai Chi is a never ending circle of learning, just when you think you have achieved your own personal excellence, a posture in the form suddenly becomes uncomfortable or just “doesn’t feel right

Or maybe your push hands partner work seems to be letting you down, and you feel tension creeping back.

It is usually standard practice to apply more than one idea or concept along with a principal.

However, until you have explored and are clear in your mind what the original classics are conveying, it will be difficult to attempt this.

Many of the old classic teachings refer to moving and aligning the body in a certain way, e.g. “sink the shoulders, relax the chest”.

This is to let the body receive energy more easily, while relying on as little muscle power as possible. This will protect your body from as much damage as possible.

The principles are there to help practitioners understanding, but there is much more to explore apart from the written word.

We must not forget that many teachings as they moved down the years were “word of mouth” and we also need to explore these.

I look at them like sprinkling in an OXO cube to a stew.

It has lots of wonderful tasty ingredients, but the cube really enhances and adds to the flavour!

By the same token if you feel it doesn’t work, you do not have to use it again.

It's all about exploring.

Some of the early teachers of Tai Chi taught in a way that they believed made their martial art movements effective.

They found out quite quickly if they had strayed too much from the traditional teachings as they found themselves on the ground, or with a bloody face.

They needed to be effective in the martial aspects of the art if they were to protect themselves from bandits and bullies.

Although Tai Chi in the West has a huge amount of people who purely practice to attain the health benefits the art is well known for, we must also realise it is a whole art embodying Yin and Yang, Hard and Soft, Male and Female.

Without the Martial, Tai Chi becomes simply another movement art, and although sometimes referred to as a "dance" its roots where initially deeply embedded in defending oneself.

The martial meanings provide character, purpose, depth and subtlety to the mood of the form.

The secret is not to get "stuck" in one or two of these principles or you may find your form is unbalanced.

You could become really competent at rooting, but forget about the upper bodies need for lightness and so find you are becoming too heavy and inflexible as a whole unit.

The other extreme is too much attention being focused on

relaxation or what I like to call "the wet rag" syndrome.

Having spirit, and 'pung' and the ability to have connected body structure to manifest power is sometimes lost in this situation.

I think the answer lies in not spending too much time on any one principle. Give it a few months if you are still struggling, move on to another one. You can then come back to it at a later date and find the break has given you new insight into what was going wrong.

These classic principles although forming the basis of our art, have over the centuries been added to and extended to make the understanding of them and applications work in a real situation in modern times.

If you try and fathom out the mysticism that surrounds Tai Chi, then it will remain just that, mystic. Tai Chi is real so practice in a real way and use the principles to help guide you.

Lao Tse once said "The fundamental source is like an empty container: it can be used but never exhausted. It is like the eternal void, filled with infinite possibilities."

I have listed below one of the most comprehensive lists of Tai Chi principles that I could find without being too long

See how many you think you understand and can effectively practice, and think about the one's you need to give more thought to. (Ask your class instructor if in doubt)

Principles to practice

1. Have slowness and Evenness
2. Use Alignment and Structure
3. Have Mindfulness and Sensitivity
4. Have Stillness in Movement.
5. Use Simultaneousness and Unity
6. Have Relaxation with Vitality
7. Use Mind –Intent with Feeling
8. Sink the Chi
9. Raise the Spirit
10. Manifest Power (natural strength)
11. Have Balance
12. Use Circularity and Flow
13. Have Rootedness below, Responsiveness above.
14. Distinguish and Harmonize Yin and Yang
15. Have softness, Fullness, and Roundness
16. Practice Regularly and Persevere.



We are not able to hold a Tai Chi Christmas Party this year, for obvious reasons, unfortunately. But we are considering a mid-year tai chi party once the world is back on an even keel again.

We hope you, your friends and family are able to make the best of Christmas this year even if you're only pulling virtual crackers and sharing a Christmas dinner via zoom or WhatsApp. Coronavirus may keep us physically apart but it can't stop us sharing our love and thoughts with the people we care for, and even others who may be struggling in these difficult and strange times.

A close friend of ours, David McLoughlin, shared a meditation with us and I'd like to share it with you so you may share it with others.

This little meditation session is an awareness exercise, a practice in mindfulness.

We all need to breath. So we start there.

Aim to become present and aware.

Focused and centred.

This is not necessarily easy as there are many people and things whose demands or influence on us can fragment us. To become present to ourselves takes practice.

Helps: comfortable clothes; suitable place – at least initially; looking down or closed eyes; comfortable but alert posture e.g. sitting, back straight, shoulders relaxed, knees below belly button, hands loose in the lap or resting on thighs. We focus by counting breaths or focusing on different parts of body in turn till we become aware of sensation e.g. clothes touching skin; or we use a gentle repetition of a word that is meaningful and peaceful for you.

Guess the Move !
Taken from the Cheng Man'Ching 37 Step Form

1. Valuable bird becoming impatient
2. Audition to join a Rock Band maybe
3. Heavy lifting gear in a feathery snowstorm
4. To get the plot of the story, ornithologically speaking
5. Fast vehicle needs to get the brush off
6. The Pleiades just fit the bill
7. Anagram: wonderful bites
8. Village crafts instead of sitting in an ivory tower
9. No speed, no legs, and not in a northerly direction
10. Aeronautical gyrations, but not 'a barrel roll'
11. Reverse the action for the human race to evolve
12. Not a pulling action - I say again, not a pulling action
13. Cuddly kitty hitches ride to summit
14. Anagram: rain shades
15. One lone tree sapling affected by wind from the South West
16. To down tools, but not from the hip
17. Are you ready - no, are you really sure you are ready ?!
18. Smoke and mirrors - at the end all is not what it appears
19. Reconsider - it would never catch on in the Grand National
20. Apart from the letter 'c', what links cirrus, carpus, cumulus and a crustacean ?



A bit of fun from www.kaiming.co.uk

Answers in the next newsletter. You can email for hints 😊

Then focus on yourself:

- May I be well.
- May I be happy.
- May I be free from suffering.

Then a friend: May they be well, may they be happy, may they be free from suffering.

A neutral person e.g. the cleaning lady, the bus driver...! May they be well, may they be happy, may they be free from suffering.

Then a difficult person:

Acknowledge the negative feelings but choose to say: May they be well, may they be happy, may they be free from suffering.

It may be necessary to create a sense of space in this last meditation e.g. imagining them some distance from you, or focusing on some good point, which despite their awfulness, they still have!

Practice of this meditation may not change the other but it will change how they affect you and how you interact with them.

End by returning to simply attending to your breathing and allow yourself to slowly and calmly come out of the session.

Practice regularly and share with others.