



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

fàng sōng

放松

To Relax

Recipe for Relaxation

Take one stressed person

Add some slow movements

Mix in some calm breathing

Add a pinch of quiet music

Stir in a little mindfulness

Then put together in a large hall.

When finished allow to cool down

Adjust quantities to taste.

The article below has been written by Irene, a student of our Northfield PtR class. This is her tai-chi journey, so far. I would like to add that I have seen quite an improvement in Irene's mobility since she first walked into the class on her walking frame and this is testament to her dedication, engagement and positive outlook.

Steve Taylor

Instructor Northfield class

10th March 2018

My Tai Chi Journey by Irene Clark

Friends suggested that I join their Tai Chi class. Apart from the fact that they thought I would enjoy it, they also thought it might help with my COPD (Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). So, one Friday afternoon in March 2017, I joined them at the local Baptist church hall. When Steve, the instructor, saw my walking frame he told me that if I became tired I should sit down. All the exercises could be done while seated.

We did some loosening up exercises, then Steve gave us each a medium sized blue ball. They seemed quite heavy, but I enjoyed the exercises we did. Then we were all told to sit down for our relaxation session. That was totally unexpected, but I thought it was a good idea.

I am a very tense and anxious person, so doing the relaxation really did help me to calm down. That night I had a lot of aches and pains from using muscles I didn't know I had. So I decided to do some of the warm up exercises at home – maybe ten or fifteen minutes twice a week.

The following week I was disappointed that the little blue balls weren't used. But I do enjoy the fact that each week the activities are slightly different.

I enjoy the classes so much that I want other people to come and enjoy them too. I have taken friends and family who were visiting me along to the class.

One thing I really enjoy about the class is the music. I am hard of hearing, so I haven't always heard birdsong, leaves rustling and water rippling along in a stream. I bought a CD of the music and use it to help me relax. I've been asked to get CD's for friends and family.

I use some of the techniques I've learned in class to make life easier for me every day. I used to get dressed when I was sitting on my bed. Now I get dressed standing by the side of my bed. I do have to sit down to put my socks on.

I think the great thing about Tai Chi is that you go at your own pace and do what you are comfortable with. No one is telling you that you should be quicker or to reach higher. I do feel that I am able to move a bit more easily and maybe stretch a little further than I could.

I think I would enjoy any Tai Chi class, but I think I am really lucky to have a teacher like Steve. He creates a lovely relaxed atmosphere and enjoys good natured banter back and forth with the class.



Discovering Ch'i outside the class.

I have to admit that, for some time, I have been a little skeptical about the concept of gathering chi during warm up exercises and practicing the form. Recently however I was reading some anecdotes attributed to Professor Cheng Man-ch'ing where he talked of relaxing the body and mind in order to use Tai Chi martially or to be effective in push hands; in other words not trying so hard.

With this in mind I carried out a little experiment at home. I had the DIY task of removing some decking boards which had been in situ for 13 years and the screws fixing them to joists were pretty immovable. I'm no spring chicken and am not particularly muscular so was straining to budge some of these screws.

I had more success when I stopped constantly straining against the stubborn screws and applied the principles of Tai Chi instead. First, I positioned myself with my wrist, arm and shoulder in line with and as an extension to the screwdriver; I then relaxed my mind and muscles whilst breathing deeply three times into the Tan Tien. Then, after another deep breath, I exhaled forcefully as I exerted downward and twisting pressure on the screwdriver turning the screw a fraction. By repeating this process I was able to free up the stubborn screws a fraction of a turn at a time.

Apparently Professor Cheng Man-ch'ing also talked about having faith in the art of Tai Chi Chuan and it maybe that I've experienced that whilst unscrewing some

deck boards on a cold winter's day? Now I must remember to take that attitude into every class.

Rob Taylor
Little Aston Class



TAI CHI AND OTHER THINGS

Hello everybody, if you are reading this then you are probably in some way connected to Tai Chi, be it Instructor, Student or just have an interest in the art. We are always being asked for articles or contributions to the newsletter so I thought how about a slightly different slant on what is normally written. Let's try and get to know each other better.

The passion for Tai Chi is clear, but what else do you have a passion for (nothing to risqué please). Is it your family, a hobby, your job, I know from speaking to various people that lots of you are involved in interesting and diverse things, so why not share with us all what it is and how you came to be involved in it. It doesn't matter if it's not related to Tai Chi, but if it is, then all the better.

More than 500 newsletters are issued every month and to me that means there are at least 500 stories out there waiting to be told and shared with us all, which means if we had a monthly newsletter that equates to 42 years of stories. I am sure that Mark and Jenny would be very pleased to receive even half of that number.

I will start the ball rolling with my other main hobby, which is gardening. I find it relaxing and satisfying and sometimes even fascinating. The fact that you can plant a seed a mm in size, which turns into a plant (most of the time), which gives us lots of beautiful flowers or loads of vegetables – amazing. In our garden we have a greenhouse plus 4 raised beds where we grow potatoes, peas, beans, tomatoes, kale, carrots, parsnips, courgettes, lettuce, cucumber and

peppers, to name a few. At this time of year it is very quiet on the growing scene, but it won't be long before it starts to get busy again.

A little bit like our Tai Chi journey, somebody plants a thought (the seed). You go along to the class, enjoy it, and someone sees the possibility of you doing better (feeding and nurturing) and going further (instructor training). Then it starts to grow from there with the help and love of the tai chi family, fellow students and instructors and after a lot of hard work and dedication (more watering and feeding) the flower appears – A new instructor. So what is your hobby or interest and how does it relate to your tai chi?

John Jenkins, Instructor, Tamworth



So this is what happened —

At about 10am one morning on a day that Mark was out of the house for the day teaching, I thought what shall I get ready for the evening meal? knowing that as soon as he got back late afternoon his greeting would be “what did we decide on for tonight's meal!”

Remembering we still had salmon in the freezer because of shopping in case of a holocaust at Christmas (my mother always said, “it's best to have too much food in at Xmas than run out”) I thought get it out now in plenty of time to defrost. On my way to where the freezer is I past the kitchen window and saw that the bird table had no nuts on for the multiple blue tits and nut hatch sat on the tree near it. So I grabbed a handful nuts and a handful of seed to meet the immediate need thinking I will fill up all the tables round the garden later.

Got to the door to go outside and realised I hadn't unlocked it yet, and now had two hands full of loose bird food but still tried to turn the key with one., Didn't work. So now the seed is all over the floor. As I got the vacuum out I thought might as well do the rest of the carpets now I have started.

I finished an hour later as I decided after I did the downstairs that might as well do the bedrooms as well.!

I was planning to change the beds the next day but hey ho I am up here now so I did that as well.

Then went down to get a coffee.

While upstairs I noticed the laundry basket in the bathroom was half full so went back up there to get that to put in washing machine .with the bed linen I had taken off.

Just then the postman rang the bell to give me a parcel and we spent time to “put the world right”. After deciding that both of us could do a better job than the government I remembered that I had put the kettle on for a coffee, so went to the kitchen to make one. Kettle was cold by this time so put it on again to boil.

Plants in conservatory where due to be watered and as it is off the kitchen I went through to do this whilst waiting for kettle to boil again, but knocked a large cactus off that stuck to my cardigan like a trifold as I went past it.

Ten minutes later after clearing up broken pot and dirt trod all over the floor by me went back and made myself a cup of luke warm coffee

Whilst doing this and looking out of the window again watching the birds I remembered I hadn't been down the garden to fill up the 3 bird tables we have, so off I went to do that.

It's amazing how the weeds can take over I thought, better just pull a few out while I am out here.

An hour later I came back in through the utility, and thought how untidy it looked, not that anyone saw it but us, so it could wait till another day, still won't take a minute put a few things straight.

Whilst doing this I knocked the laundry basket over and saw a few items in their waiting to be ironed, so after I had done this I went to hang up the shirts in the wardrobe .

Then sat down to finish COLD coffee off that I had left by my chair.

Woke up with a start as I heard Mark's key in the door !!!!! It was 5pm and I got ready for the usual question re evening meal. However we would not be having salmon as it was still in THE FREEZER !!!!!

“Shall we have fish & chips tonight?” I said as he walked in “it will make a change”.

What did you say mindfulness was?