



Tai Chi Newsletter

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Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

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World Tai Chi & Qigong Day 2024

'One World - One Breath' - the motto of the World Tai Chi & Qigong Day (WTCQD)

This year is the event's 25th anniversary. Founded in the US by Bill Douglas and Rebecca Wong Douglas, the whole concept is one of 'connection'.

It has grown to involve 90 nations, all taking part at the same time, on the same day - and this year it was on Saturday, 27th April 2024, as near as possible to 10am local time.

When one stops to think about it - to involve people from different cultures, and religions, from every corner of the earth - all 'breathing together' ... is a powerful concept.

Most of us in the Kai Ming and Painting the Rainbow communities who braved the weather to be part of the celebrations in either or both Beacon Park, Lichfield in the morning, and Rosliston Forestry Centre in South Derbyshire, in the afternoon, may not have taken part because of the wider picture. We took part to support each other, to experience Qigong and Tai Chi with our friends, family, and fellow students from the various Tai Chi classes in the area - and we all had an understanding of the significance of the day itself.

I am extremely proud of all the students from my classes who were able to join us - and I very much appreciate the commitment and effort they put in despite the biting wind, the overcast skies and the potential drops of rain that were ever present in the air for most of both events. It takes quite a bit of courage to be prepared to 'perform' the various sequences in front of various members of the public. In addition, to devote part of your 'family time' to come together with others in a park in beautiful sunshine, with blue skies and surrounded by warm currents of air is one thing - but to withstand the rigours of the UK weather, and to be prepared to don up to five layers of clothing to be able to stay the course with a smile on one's face takes your support and loyalty to a whole different level ! Thank you !

The amount of practice people had put in in preparation was truly appreciated - this included the various Qigong sets, the

Cheng Man Ching Form and the weapon Forms including the Fan Short Form, the 13 Secrets in the Straight Sword (Jian), the Walking Cane, and the Broad Sword (Sabre). On the day it became so cold at both events that I decided to save the Stick Form until next time !

I am also extremely grateful to my fellow Instructors, Lynne, John, Neil, and Linda who joined me in Lichfield with some of their students, and to the students themselves - and especially to Sarah and Sam who also made the journey to Rosliston.

In more detail - the event in Beacon Park, Lichfield had almost 100 people take part.

In the two-hour session we performed a series of Qigongs, the Cheng Man Ching 37 step Form and the weapon Forms named above for the Fan and the Straight Sword. Some of the students went the extra mile to decorate their wooden Straight Swords with an equivalent to tassels !



The atmosphere was special, everyone feeling part of the whole. We had students join from a wide area - Burton-on-Trent, Stone, Handsworth, Erdington, Tamworth, Kingsbury, Burntwood and Chase Terrace, and the main group from Lichfield and its surrounding villages. A motley crew indeed - but one dedicated to the Art of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong - and each determined to play their part to the fullest, and with enthusiasm - in spite of the weather !

Later in the day - the afternoon event in Rosliston was a whole new ball game in 'being cold' !

Rosliston Forestry Centre is much higher up than Lichfield geographically, and the area is far more exposed - so the biting wind increased accordingly, but we were a stalwart bunch, equally determined to play our part.

There were 35 people taking part - some wearing six layers of clothing to survive !!

Our programme followed a similar pattern of Qigongs, the Cheng Man Ching 37 step Form, and demonstrations of weapon Forms, namely the Fan Short Form, the 13 Secrets using the Straight Sword, and our first public demonstration of the Broad Sword.

Rosliston is a relatively new venue with one Kai Ming class active for only eighteen months, and the other having just started in January 2024. I am really proud of everyone from the Rosliston groups who shelved their nerves and were determined to enjoy themselves. It wasn't just the cold that made them perform with such gusto !



In fact, one of the 'onlookers' is quoted to have said "Respect to all of you. How can you perform for so long, so slowly, and all keeping in time - when it's (bleep !) freezing !!"

That's Tai Chi for you !

In conclusion - apart from giving my gratitude and respect to everyone who took part - I can say with confidence that both events were a great success. Each and every one demonstrated true commitment, and each person added to the whole, not just in terms of overall numbers, but in what they brought to the event.

If I consider what those of us representing the Kai Ming Association for Tai Chi Chuan, and our 'Painting the Rainbow' strand of Community Tai Chi contributed to the whole concept of World Tai Chi & Qigong Day - I can also say that I feel we achieved, in both venues, the essence of what the Day is about. When you reflect on the fact that people in Indonesia, Brazil, and Nigeria are performing the same sequences as those of us living in Stapenhill and Burntwood, on the same day, and, for those countries in our time zone, at the same time - it is mind blowing !

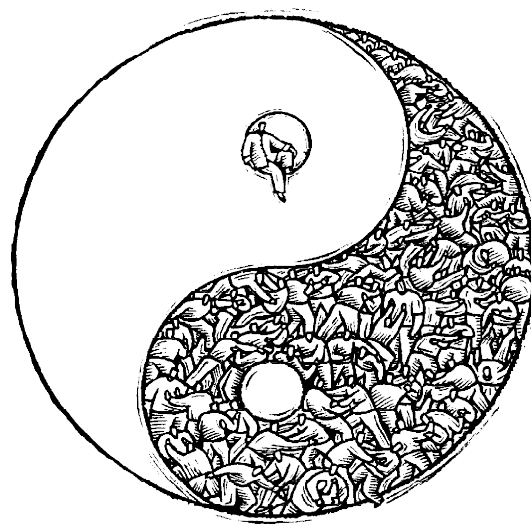


In the words of its founder, Bill Douglas, speaking about the atmosphere created when a large group of people share the experience of Tai Chi "[We are all connected]"

Looking at the photographs and videos from around the world When you see that look in all these diverse faces, from so many different lands, you can't help but deeply realize that we are indeed "one world and one breath"



I hope you agree!
by Heather Lomas - Chief Instructor



TAI CHI IN MY MIND'S EYE

I'm sure that I'm not alone in not practising the form enough outside of class. However, over ten years of classes I like to think that I have absorbed much of the philosophy arising out of the form. During 2023 I benefitted from my knowledge of Tai Chi form in an unexpectedly practical way. Undergoing eye surgery on two occasions and then having an unrelated MRI scan required that I remained relaxed and perfectly still for twenty minutes or so on each occasion. Not easy when you are in a situation that you cannot control, and natural anxiety threatens to overwhelm you! All procedures were pain-free I might add, if a little uncomfortable and the medical staff were all very reassuring.

This may not be for everyone of course, but I used my knowledge of Tai Chi to help me through all three experiences. I found that mentally practising the Form with controlled breathing, whilst silently repeating the often-heard guidance from Neil, our instructor, required so much concentration that the procedures were over much sooner than I had imagined. I had to concentrate even harder at times when, like occasionally in class, I faltered in the transition between some of the postures.

The bonus at the end of each procedure was that the medical staff complemented me on being a 'very good' co-operative patient which helps them to achieve a positive outcome for the patient.

No doubt other people have their own ways of dealing with these situations but I'm grateful to Kai Ming and particularly Neil for enabling me to develop this particular coping mechanism.

by Rob Taylor (Little Aston)



Simple exercises to ease lower back pain

We recently read a really helpful article in the British Heart Foundation magazine, Heart Matters, and thought it would be really helpful for our members. Here is an extract with a link at the end to their website. The Website includes more exercises and videos to support.

Staying active is important for your heart health. If you have lower back pain, these expert-approved exercises can help you move more comfortably.

Andrew Scard, cardiac rehabilitation specialist for Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, says that gentle exercises can help ease back pain and stiffness, while also increasing your strength and stamina so you are less likely to experience back pain in future.

For most people, back pain is not a serious problem and will improve within a few weeks. If you're unsure if it is safe for you to exercise, or if the pain is severe or does not improve, make an appointment with your doctor.

Start slowly and build up gradually

Begin by doing the **cat-cow** and **good morning** exercises 10 times, once or twice a week. If you are unable to do one of the exercises, then focus on those that you can do.

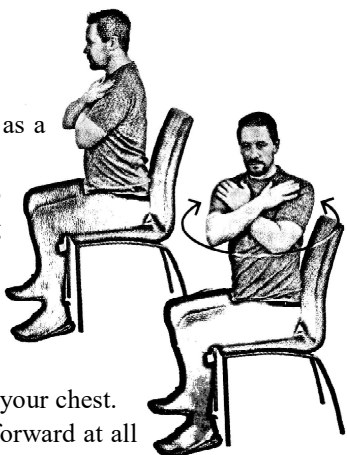
As the exercises become easier, gradually increase how often you do them and how many times you repeat them in each session.

Getting started with a warm-up

To prevent injury, it's important to warm up before doing these exercises. Do each of these stretches slowly and follow the steps carefully:

Seated trunk rotation

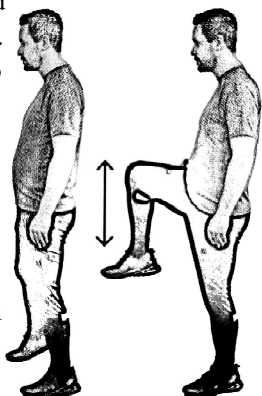
- Find a firm chair, such as a dining table chair.
- Sit slightly forward so your back is not resting on the back of the chair, with your legs bent 90 degrees at the knee and shoulder-width apart.
- Cross your arms across your chest.
- Keep your hips facing forward at all times.
- Slowly rotate to the right (as far as it's comfortable to move), then return to facing the front.
- Slowly rotate to the left (as far as it's comfortable to move), then return to facing the front.
- Repeat the movement 10 times on each side.



Knee Lifts

Tip: If you struggle with balance, hold onto the back of a chair or a worktop. Consider asking a friend or relative to be nearby in case you need extra help.

- Stand up straight with your legs shoulder-width apart.
- Put your arms by your side.
- Keeping your body in a straight line, slowly lower your body to the right, sliding your hand down your leg towards your knee.



- Reach as far as is comfortable for you.
- Slowly raise back up to standing straight and repeat on your left side.
- Repeat the movement 10 times on each side.

How should I feel while exercising?

Take the movement to the point where you can feel a light pull on the muscles. If you experience any pain, immediately stop what you're doing. Sharp pain is a sign that you have moved too far or that something is wrong.

While doing the exercises, it's important to engage your core. To do this you need to pull your belly button up and in towards your spine. You should feel the muscles tighten between your hips and be able to breathe normally.

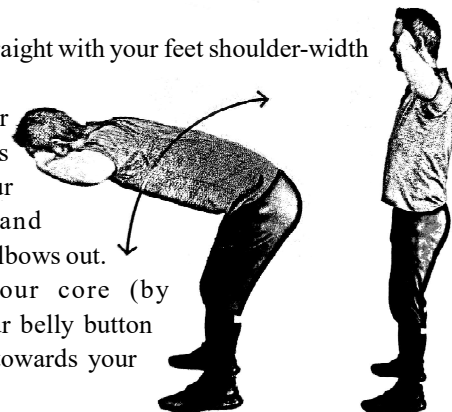
During the exercises, you may feel your muscles begin to tire. This is a sign they are being worked well. It's common to feel some muscle soreness the next day. Allow yourself time to recover before doing the exercises again. But if the exercises are making your pain worse, contact your doctor.

Tip: Do not hold your breath while doing the exercises.

Core strengthening exercises for lower back pain

Good mornings

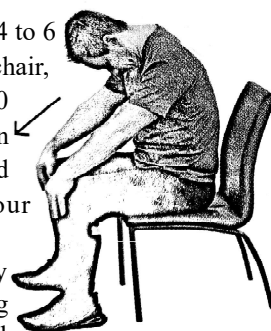
- Stand up straight with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Place your fingers against your temples and stick your elbows out.
- Engage your core (by pulling your belly button up and in towards your back).
- Slightly bend at your knees while you hinge at the hips and lower your upper body forward, keeping your back straight at all times.
- Lower as far as you feel comfortable to keep your back straight, aiming for horizontal (so that your body runs parallel with the floor).
- Slowly lift back up to standing while keeping your back straight.
- Breathe in while lowering and breathe out on the way back up to standing.



Stretches for lower back pain

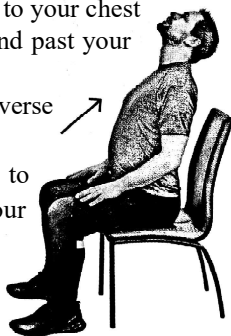
Seated cat-cow

- Find a firm chair with no arms, such as a dining table chair.
- Sit up straight, 10 to 15cm (4 to 6 inches) from the back of the chair, with your legs bent at 90 degrees, your feet placed on the floor, slightly apart, and your hands placed on your thighs.
- While breathing out, slowly round your back by bending forwards. Pull your stomach



inwards, dropping your chin down to your chest and moving your hands towards and past your knees.

- Hold for one to two seconds, then reverse the movement.
- While breathing in slowly, return to sitting up straight and then arch your back backwards, pushing your stomach out and looking up towards the ceiling. Your hands should move up your thighs closer to your body.
- Hold for one to two seconds, then repeat from the beginning.



Gentle exercises can help ease back pain and stiffness, while also increasing your strength.

For more details, exercises and videos please visit <https://shorturl.at/fhL37>

Thought this piece may amuse a few.

You don't always have to do "stuff." Or achieve "stuff".
You don't have to spend your free time productively.
You don't have to be doing Tai Chi and DIY and bread-making. Sometimes you can just "be" and feel things and get through, eat crisps and survive, and that is more than enough.

Taken from The Comfort Book by Matt Haig.

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 chuan.

Sessions are Sunday's 9.30-12.30 at £30 per person.

What3words locatoin <https://w3w.co/pits.level.cake>

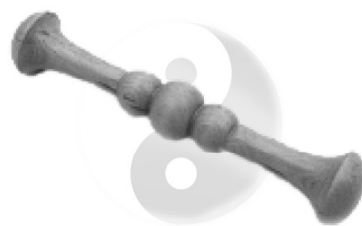
Training in 2024 starts with

12th May
9th June
7th July
11th August
6th October
10th November



**Weekend camp – 9.30am to 4pm
7th & 8th September**

Tai Chi Ruler Qigong



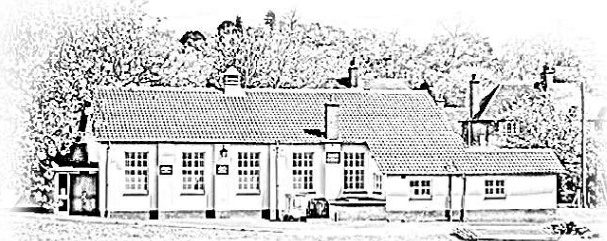
The Chi-kung set is designed to improve coordination and strengthen the body.

Thursday 6th June 1-4pm on zoom
The cost for the day will be £35 per person.

Contact Mark for more information on 07831 743737
or kaimingtaichi@outlook.com

The tai chi ruler comprises of relaxed, fluid, circular fluid movements synchronising the whole body, and they require a calm, quiet and meditative state of mind. The main difference is that the ruler is ideal for beginners as the movements are fewer and much easier to learn; less space is also required to practice.

The sets are practiced by holding a carved wood ruler (see picture above), measuring approx. 10 ½ inches, between the palms. The shape is designed to encourage connection and energy flow. Tai Chi ruler is a natural Chi-kung set.



Tai Chi Weekend September 2024

Each year we have a focus for the weekend camp and this year's is the 30th Anniversary of Kai Ming Association for Tai Chi Chuan.

Saturday 7th – The day will cover the 18 lower hand tai chi form

Sunday 8th - You will be learning qigong (chi-kung). We will focus on the three refinements of mind, body, and breath.

Cost

The cost per day will be £40 per person (Kai-Ming members) £60 (non-members)

More details at <https://shorturl.at/gtz06>

Venue:

Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville. B29 4AR.