



# 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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### WE NEED YOU!



#### Become a Painting the Rainbow Tai Chi Qigong Instructor

Have you ever thought you'd like to help out at your tai chi class? Have you ever wondered what is needed to start the journey of becoming an instructor? Would you like to help other people, maybe even have your own class?

Maybe 2020 is your year to get involved... We're always looking for keen personable people as there are so many people out there that can benefit from attending classes but we need more people to make that possible.

If you are interested, please contact Jenny or Mark on 0121 251 6172 or maybe speak to your instructor as they will have a list of the requirements.

#### ARTHRITIS AND ME PART TWO.

A couple of years ago I wrote an article for the newsletter called "Arthritis for Beginners" after I developed this painful condition following contracting a form of flu virus which triggered it.

I gained lots of information from the Arthritis website and also took from it advice and suggestions to help me manage my particular symptoms.

My own form of the condition then was called "Palendronic Arthritis" which can lead on to the rheumatoid form.

Today I think it has developed more into "Osteo-Arthritis" of my joints, mainly

fingers, wrists, elbows, shoulders. most likely caused by all the years working as a nurse lifting patients, a common occupational complaint.

Many of my past colleagues also have back, knee and hip problems diagnosed as "wear and tear" on X-Ray.

I also get the odd problem in these areas but I feel if I had not practised Tai Chi for 30 years and focused on correct alignment of the spine knees etc they would be much worse.

The mindfulness of "Tai Chi Walking" (feeling the ground and your root") has also helped greatly with the unstable joints that change with air pressure (weather). And helped keep the balance which can prevent falls, another common problem in over 55s

I have found through trial and error things to ease the effects of this chronic condition which although is not curable I feel can be at least be "managed" without the harsh sometimes toxic medications which are what we have at the moment.

There is a big research programme taking place at Birmingham University at the moment on the inflammatory process which hopefully will bring about some changes in the treatment of inflammatory diseases and the auto-immune process that includes Arthritis.

Having said that it does depend on the severity of your problem and doctors do rely on regular blood tests which monitor Inflammatory Markers which show the progression of your arthritis and how much inflammation is in your body as it can affect many areas including the chest and other organs if left untreated.

At the moment although I have the odd week where my joints (mainly fingers and wrists) are stiff and painful for a few days (mostly if I forget and carry heavy shopping bags or lift something I know I shouldn't LOL)

My only medication at present is Paracetamol taken if really necessary, and FENBID GEL to rub into painful areas which I have found really helpful.

If a joint is painful during the day I use it at night before I go to bed and most times it has calmed the inflammation and pain down by morning.

On days when I get up with aching joints ("the screws") as they were called in bygone days a warm shower, sometimes directing the water on my shoulders while exercising the joint really gets rid of the stiffness and ache fast for me.

I wear arthritis fingerless pressure gloves on days my fingers are painful, stiff, or swollen and occasionally at night, as they do seem to keep them from swelling overnight so that I can get my rings on in the morning !!!

I bought a juicer and have blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries, liquidized with apple juice (or just water if preferred) most mornings as all the red and dark fruits are a natural anti-inflammatory. (Except tomatoes, which I loved!!!! and have had to stop eating) If you don't have or want to invest in a juicer then COLD PRESSED pure fruit juice is a good substitute (which is what I began with) but you have to watch the sugar content on the ingredients, especially in some of the "Naked" range. If you suffer from reflux or indigestion you may have to have them with natural bio yoghurt as I do sometimes.

\*It is said many arthritis sufferers can forecast the weather by the pain and instability of their joints and that is true in many cases as research now finds that depending on the atmospheric pressure the joints can move up to a 3<sup>rd</sup> of an inch, so rain and cold days can be seen to influence this. I know I am worse on wet days and much less achy in the heat.

I have also increased intake of green vegetables, kale being recommended and avocado pears, plus red onions, beetroot, all natural anti-inflammatory

I did try cutting out Dairy products initially but made no difference so still enjoy them in limited quantities as don't want to increase weight too much to put extra pressure on joints.

I limit exercise if a joint has a flare up, which thankfully occur less often now, and wear a wrist support to rest the area after rubbing in Fenbrid if I have a day when I have tendonitis or carpal tunnel pain, generally through overuse the day before; You do need to do this as soon as you get twinges of pain the same with knee joint flare up. Fibrin and Knee support really helps minimise it for me. Do not use the anti-inflammatory gels in large quantities because small quantities may be absorbed into the blood stream (as in Aromatherapy) and can cause indigestion pain if you, like me have reflux etc. It is not a problem otherwise and works well to ease the pain and stiffness.

I bought an electric mixture last year for making my Christmas cakes as I found previously even the stirring of the mixture can cause the joint to be very painful the next day

I go to my GP twice a year for blood tests, you can choose to be monitored by them or the hospital once stable, and if the GP thinks you need to be referred back to them he will do that.

At my last visit he said my inflammatory markers were improved and we chatted about treatments if I ever need them, but he agreed they all can have side effects and have to be monitored carefully so was

happy at this point for me to carry on with what he called my "Super Foods" .

He felt I had adapted my lifestyle well and I told him the one thing I had learnt was to respect my arthritis but not to give in to it.

The only thing I cannot improve is the fatigue that some days sweeps over me, usually following a day when I have felt so good that I try to catch up with housework etc and don't pace myself.

I then take it easy for that day and try to suppress the feeling of guilt for being a "couch potatoe"

Many people have commented on the Arthritis Website that some arthritis sufferers live with the constant feeling that flu can give you plus tiredness. Sometimes harder than to deal with than the pain which medication can help.

Your body is programmed to try and heal itself but we still need to help and assist it as much as we can.

I strongly recommend that you always take your consultants advice and if he feels you should be on medication then that is what you should do.

I did agree with mine that I could try to manage my arthritis as naturally as I could without the stronger arthritic medications, and he told me which would be the best for me with fewer side effects if I my efforts did not work. He also recommended that I take Vitamin D.

I have added High strength VIT C, garlic caps, and Omega fish oil caps, and sometimes the odd magnesium tab for muscle and nerve function. Sounds a lot but only once a day and feel they have helped me.

At the end of the day all you can do is try to find what works for you and when in doubt consult the on-line Arthritis Website.

By Jenny Peters



**This is the story of how the fir tree became the Christmas tree.**

At the time when the Christ Child was born all the people, the animals, and the

trees, and plants were very happy. The Child was born to bring peace and happiness to the whole world. People came daily to see the little One, and they always brought gifts with them.

There were three trees standing near the crypt which saw the people, and they wished that they, too, might give presents to the Christ Child.

The Palm said: "I will choose my most beautiful leaf, and place it as a fan over the Child."

"And I," said the Olive, "will sprinkle sweet-smelling oil upon His head."

"What can I give to the Child?" asked the Fir, who stood near.

"You!" cried the others. "You have nothing to offer Him. Your needles would prick Him, and your tears are sticky."

So the poor little Fir tree was very unhappy, and it said: "Yes, you are right. I have nothing to offer the Christ Child."

Now, quite near the trees stood the Christmas Angel, who had heard all that the trees had said. The Angel was sorry for the Fir tree who was so lowly and without envy of the other trees. So, when it was dark, and the stars came out, he begged a few of the little stars to come down and rest upon the branches of the Fir tree. They did as the Christmas Angel asked, and the Fir tree shone suddenly with a beautiful light.

And, at that very moment, the Christ Child opened His eyes—for He had been asleep—and as the lovely light fell upon Him He smiled.

Every year people keep the dear Christmas Child's birthday by giving gifts to each other, and every year, in remembrance of His first birthday, the Christmas Angel places in every house a fir tree, also. Covered with starry candles it shines for the children as the stars shone for the Christ Child. The Fir tree was rewarded for its meekness, for to no other tree is it given to shine upon so many happy faces.