



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

When a student has had a HIPREPLACEMENT.

Many students who have hip replacements have had arthritis for many years which has limited their exercise regime and if they are already Tai Chi student's maybe they have had some problems with the depth and width of some stances in the form.

A hip replacement is still considered quite a major surgery and recovery may be prolonged for some people depending on their state of health before the surgery. The body has to regain strength and with the help of physiotherapy go from walker to crutches to cane.

Surgery and recovery has come a long way since hip replacements first came on the scene and many people are now able to return to full mobility in much less time than previously.

Generally commencing or returning to Tai Chi classes would be reasonable after a month following the operation if all has gone well and the incision is healed. The stances of the form will enable the student to "feel" their body and know where the weaknesses are, like the ankle and thigh muscles. They may have to adapt the stance at first but a good tip is to tell them to slowly shift their weight and relax on the leg, and when it is at a weak point or slight pain at that point advise them to direct their breath down into that area and relax again.

They can even use this exercise if in discomfort in bed or sitting. Remember the old saying "where the breath goes the Chi goes"

Many of the exercises post operative start in bed to prevent dislocation of the

joint and to regain range of movement. Leg raises, slide leg to side, and pull heel to perineum are some.

Then follow standing exercises as they progress in their recovery. Of course things differ from hospital to hospital and surgeons views and physiotherapists may vary but generally the aim of the recovery period and beyond is to take things at the patients pace and to safeguard causing problems with their "brand new hip" by "running before they can walk", overdoing it too soon.

Work with your student at a pace that they feel their body is allowing, they will know when their body is becoming stronger and more confident.

The weight changing, and later as healing and muscle strength returns, golden cock and repulse monkey are good parts of the form to practice in class and at home. The secret is taking your time and breathe your way to recovery!



THE BIG B! AND HOW TO AVOID IT.

It has been said by THE BRITISH PAIN SOCIETY that 10,000,000 people in the UK are affected by back pain and that it costs the economy £5 billion pounds in lost revenue every year. It may be secondary to another condition so that curing the back pain will not solve the

underlying problem, so that the pain can then re-occur maybe over and over again. Causes of back pain can literally range from inactivity to over activity and everything in between. It is not normally the result of a serious accident or disease, but more likely to result from a sprain, strain, pinched nerve, or perhaps a minor injury.

Many cases will resolve themselves in a few days or within the month; others will need to consult their GP. (Severe or continued pain should never be ignored or self medicated)

Stress tightens muscles that are then vulnerable to injury or strain. This in turn can lead to depression that can bring on poor lifestyle choices such as over-eating (weight gain), smoking etc. that then exacerbates the back pain.

However it is not all "doom and gloom". Awareness of risk factors means that issues can be identified before they become a real problem.

SOME OF THE MORE SIMPLE COMMON RISK FACTORS ARE

- Driving in a hunched position.
- Driving for long periods without taking a break.
- Overuse of muscles, usually due to sport or repetitive movements (Repetitive Strain Injury RSI)
- Being overweight. Extra weight places more pressure on the spine.
- Smoking can damage muscle tissue and affect circulation and is often partnered with a sedentary lifestyle (maybe because smoking can cause breathlessness that predisposes to less activity)
- Pregnancy. The excess weight of carrying a baby can place additional strain on the spine.

- Medication. Long term use of medication is known to weaken bones (especially corticosteroids)
- Stress. Causes muscle tension in the back that can lead to pain, depression and poor lifestyle choices.

TIPS AND ADVICE

Avoid sleeping in an awkward position (in a chair) as this can cause neck pain. Sitting in a draught can cause neck ache (muscle ache). Apply heat by using a hot water bottle (protect with a cover so not too warm) now there are also many microwavable heat packs available, some containing Lavender or soothing herbs. These items may reduce pain and spasm of the muscles.

- Sleep on a low firm pillow.
- Avoid driving until pain resolved.
- Stress will contribute to back ache. In addition caffeine, dehydration, lack of sleep and low sodium can increase risk of spasm/cramping.
- Treat spasm with heat.
- Treat inflammation with ice.
- Don't try to vigorously exercise back pain away. Take slow steps to recovery.
- Sleep with pillows under legs to elevate them.
- Try easy stretches in line with your state of healing.

Postural treatments work in 50-60% of patients

Acupuncture and massage do work for some and are worth investigating making sure you check the practitioner is registered with the governing body of their profession.

Maintain good posture at all times. (Tai Chi and Alexander technique)

Keep moving to keep mobile. Too much rest will allow muscles to weaken and delay recovery.

Walking, swimming, (especially backstroke and using exercise bikes are all excellent ways to strengthen back muscles.

Always bend with your knees and your hips, **NOT** your back.

Never bend and twist at the same time.

Always lift and carry objects close to the body.

In conclusion, simple back pain is something we could all suffer with as we get older, the technical term when you ring for your X-Ray results seems to be "Wear and Tear" and the treatment? — pain killers when required!

However being aware of posture, risks and remedies can make life a lot easier. Your local chemist is now much better equipped to give you good advice and also they will refer you to your GP if they feel it necessary.



But guess what? One of the most effective mobilising and strengthen exercises you can do, both for prevention and recover, is Tai Chi. It is a whole body musculoskeletal training system. It is also a mind and body approach to wellness so acts to ease stress and anxiety by mindful practice. Just 15 minutes per day can show real benefits with improved circulation, mobility, muscle tone and posture.

Even push-hands is designed to improve balance awareness



Some Thoughts on Tai Chi Qigong - The Big Picture.

Tai Chi Qi Gong is an intermediate step in a student's development.

It bridges the beginner's understanding of the simple form to the experienced player's sense of total body movement. It focuses players on internal issues such as coordinating movements of the upper and lower body, integrating breathing and movement, in short, "feeling" what's happening.

It correctly focuses people of all abilities on the same essentials of their unique and individual minds and bodies. Players of all talents, from the most flexible and strongest to the most physically challenged become peers in progress. What Tai Chi Qi Gong adds is a systemic path to follow and to share with others. It demonstrates a clear sequence of movements that are easy to demonstrate, analyse and measure for progress. Qi Gong's beauty is that each player learns what they individually need in the sequence and combinations that make sense for THEIR bodies, their minds and their purposes.

Do not seek to become powerful;
seek only to release fear from the body-
mind.

Do not chase after joy;
only breathe out your pain, your grief,
your loss.

Do not ask for mastery;
ask only to shed that which is
unnatural and disharmonious.

Darkness and day follow each other.
Heavy is the root of light, stillness is
the mother of movement.

Emptiness is the source of ten
thousand things.
release, breathe, shed, stand still, un-do
let your tears fall into the earth beneath
your feet
let your sorrows sink and become your
root

what you thought was weakness will
become your strength
where fear has been dissolved, laughter
blossoms;
after looking inward
the spirit rises

By Don Ethan Miller

