

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

<https://www.taichinewsletters.co.uk>



call: 0121 251 6172

e-mail us: markpeters@kaiming.co.uk

serendipity

[ser-uh n-dip-i-tee] *noun.*

The occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way.

When reading the last 'Painting the Rainbow' newsletter (April 2025), the article about 'how Tai Chi can bring us together and make new friends' really struck home for me and so I would like to share my story.

When I was first asked if I would like to join Tai Chi I was a little apprehensive as I knew nothing about it except that it was a form of martial arts. However, after attending classes for a few years, I find Tai Chi so enjoyable and relaxing. After each session I leave feeling all my problems will be sorted and thinking do they really matter that much anyway.

I have met and made friends with such lovely people, and it is so nice to have a chat with them and maybe lunch or a coffee afterwards. One person in particular, Teresa, with whom I was chatting a couple of weeks after she had started, we talked about our families and where they were now living. I mentioned my daughter lived in Huntingdon in Cambridgeshire, she looked at me and said "oh, a close friend and neighbour of mine moved there a few years ago". I said, "so did a close friend of mine". I asked, "what was her name"? She said "Carol". I said "Carol H.J? She said "yes". Our faces must have looked a picture of amazement. Neither of us had seen Carol for about 35 years and not since our daughters Carol's, mine and Teresa's were six years old. (My daughter and Carols went to the same school, Teresa's didn't). Carol and I have kept touch by Christmas card and occasional phone calls. I've seen Carol recently since my daughter had moved five minutes from her. Of course, the three of us have got together a couple of times and we hope to see each other again soon. It is fate that we both decided to come to Tai Chi otherwise this would never have happened.

Thank you Tai Chi, and Mavis, for organising it initially and Neil for his brilliant teaching.

Ann Everall - Painting the Rainbow Class at Refresh Mind Body Spirit, United Reformed Church, Wylde Green

'Paint The Rainbow' – Tai Chi

By Adam Garratt – Lichfield Beacon Park Class

Tai Chi has quintessentially become the perfect way to get me out of my Winterly phase of demotivation. It provides my brain with enough time and space to leave my anxiety and stress behind, some of the stances encourage focus and attention which in turn ignite a zen state of mind, and with an ever growing class of attendees turning up each week, there are plenty of conversations to be had too.

Last year was an uneventful year for me. I was struggling to find work, I gained a painful knee injury after a walk in Malvern Hills with a friend - (which left me incapable of walking long distances for a month or so), and my mental health slumped after leaving my previous job due to a unique set of circumstances.

The existence of my social life was dwindling due to having lived in Lichfield for only a year and a half, and I'd been unsuccessful with making any new and local friends. My current friends mostly reside in Sutton Coldfield (the town in which I grew up in) and surrounding areas. Since my move to Lichfield I'd largely become an afterthought to them. I'd travel over to see them on more occasions than they'd travel to come and visit me.

Being fairly new to Lichfield, being unemployed, and seeing friends progressively less, left me with too much time to be alone with my thoughts. What started as a negative thought soon manifested into a negative mood and a lingering lack of motivation.

Earlier this year, I decided to get in touch with my GP and through the social prescriber, I was forwarded onto Sarah and the team here as 'Paint The Rainbow' – Tai Chi. Sarah and her new student Rueben have taught me a lot about composure and focus through the art of Tai Chi, and have helped me understand and perfect some of the positions through their clear and concise demonstrations and masterful guidance.

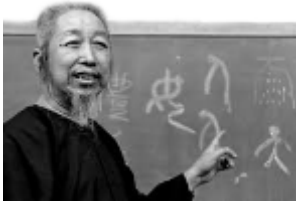
In class you're never expected to go beyond what you're comfortable and physically capable of doing. I find that the more you put in to Tai Chi, the more you will get out of it in return. Anyone can come along to the classes and give Tai Chi a whirl. It's a great way to flex stiff joints, revitalise forgotten muscles, and stretch your body. I'm really enjoying the classes especially learning new movements and positions along the way.

I've been coming to Tai Chi for 11 weeks now and I'm already seeing drastic improvements to my mental health and social life.

I feel like Tai Chi has enabled me to not only overcome my previous struggles, but has rewired my mind enough to stress less, and has finally given me a place in society where I can feel a sense of belonging in my new home city.

Want to learn something new?

Cheng Man Ching's 8 Exercises for Health



Thursday 14th August 1-4pm live on zoom £35

This set was taught by Prof. Cheng Man Ching in New York City between 1965 and 1974 and transmitted by Tam Gibbs. Rarely taught in the UK, I am offering this set for the first time ever on zoom.

Prof Cheng developed the set to give easier access to aspects of tai chi that would improve balance and mobility for some of students and friends. The eight movements are practiced walking and are based on movements from the tai chi form. The day is open to everyone from complete beginner to more experienced. The session will be recorded live and available to all who book.

You can book and pay online at: <https://shorturl.at/XK6cS>

Have You Got the Spine for it?

Humans are among a very few animals that move through the world in an upright position. The position puts stresses on the spine not experienced by four legged animals. The natural curves in our spine are thus important in providing shock absorption and structural integrity during upright, seated or standing activities.

I remember when I first began training in tai chi and being told a few of the standard tai chi postural adjustments, one of which was “tuck your tailbone under and straighten you back” or words to that effect... but how correct is this? How is our spine designed to function?

Many people are unaware that, as humans, we have three natural spinal curves that are formed in early childhood. We are born with one continuous C-shaped curve. As infants, when we begin to raise our heads, and later, when we push up on our hands to crawl, the concave (or lordotic) curves of the neck (the cervical spine) and low back (the lumbar spine) are formed. The convex curve of the mid-back where the ribs attach (the thoracic spine) is left over from the original C-shaped curve. Please note, some children walk before they crawl and never fully develop the spinal curves. The person with resulting straight spine (referred to as the ‘military spine’) is prone to neck and back problems as well as headaches related to structural stress.

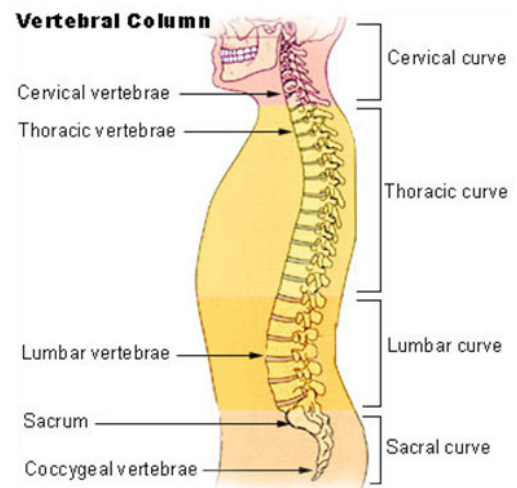
A healthy lower back depends on good structural alignment, unrestricted range of joint motion, maintenance of the lumbar curve, and the support of a sufficiently strong lower-back and

abdominal muscles. The practice of good posture while standing and sitting, along with daily exercise to maintain muscle tone and joint movement, will help to reduce the risks of lower back injury.

Tucking the tailbone is contrary to good back health as it can flatten the spine's lumbar curve, just as over-arching the lower back can put strain on vertebrae and cause tension in the back muscles. In the practice of tai chi form and push-hands the lower back with naturally tilt and release when changing weight and bending your knees. This action acts to mobilise the spine and feed the intervertebral discs, which work similar to a sponge.

Releasing the lower-back may be a better description than ‘tuck the tailbone’ as it aids natural positioning and promotes good spinal health.

The correct spine curves both act as a shock absorber and spring-like compressive power for tai chi application in all areas of life.



Every month we write newsletters for our tai chi & qigong students. Some months we get contributions from the classes but most months it is down to myself and Jenny (my wife) to ‘pull the rabbit out of the hat’...

What I’m saying is “We need you, please help”. Send in articles, poems, pictures, recipes, funny thoughts (tai chi related hopefully). You all have stories to share of how training in tai chi and qigong has impacted you, what you enjoy, what you struggle with etc. so please share it. You can email to markpeters@kaiming.co.uk or give to your instructor or even post it the good old fashioned way.

Thank you
Mark & Jenny Peters

World Tai Chi & Qigong Day 2025

26.04.2025



There is something 'special' about World Tai Chi & Qigong Day (WTC&QD). Nowadays there are so many identified 'Days' or 'Weeks' that very few people even know about, let alone take part in, like 'National Scrabble Day' (13 April) or 'National Time for a Cuppa Week' (1-8 May). Even World commemorative Days go unnoticed e.g. World Bicycle Day (3 June).

WTC&QD is different.

Its motto is 'One World - One Breath'.

This is a really powerful concept, especially when you realise that on that one specific day, within their particular Time Zones, millions of people in over 80 Countries across the Globe are taking part, performing various Qigong Sets and Tai Chi styles.... together, taking those breaths that we all appreciate during our practise of the art.

When we take part we join the World !

If you have never taken part in a Tai Chi group experience, joining with like-minded people of all ages - performing with students you know in your own Class, and with members of other Classes, as well as members from other areas studying with other Instructors then being part of WTC&QD is well worth making the effort to join.

This year, as last, my Kai Ming and Painting the Rainbow students came together from their various Classes to celebrate the Day in Beacon Park, Lichfield, Staffordshire during the morning, and others in Rosliston Forestry Centre, South Derbyshire in the afternoon. Some of my Lichfield students, as they did last year, made the commitment to travel and take part in both places.

Not everyone was able to stay for the whole two hours at each venue, but the majority did, and we moved through a programme of various Qigong Sets, and the Cheng Man Ching 37 Form with everyone, and displays of the Short Fan Form, the Broadsword, and the Thirteen Sword Secrets in the Straight Sword by my Kai Ming students.

The morning session in Beacon Park was an excellent celebration and made a definite impact on the members of the public walking past, many stopping to watch, and maybe have a go. This year the weather favoured us, and there was a definite element of excitement amongst the participants. It was an excellent turn out, and I am grateful to the other Instructors, Neil, Sarah, Linda, Tracey, and Mark for joining me to support. Although by far the majority of the participants, over 70 of them, were from my Lichfield Classes with the Kai Ming students resplendent in their red and black - we were also joined by students from other Classes in Stonnall, Little Aston, Lichfield, Shenstone, and Sutton Coldfield, and some Painting the Rainbow students from Lichfield, Wylde Green, and Burntwood.

This year, in Lichfield, in addition to the displays of the other weapon Forms we tried an experiment - a combined Display of the Short Cane Form by my students and students from the Little Aston Class. The result was a success even though there had been no prior practise together.

This year, too, in Beacon Park I was hoping to break a record and top the hundred mark of those taking part. Previous years had had 98 and 96 folk attend - but the 100 was my goal. We even had WTC&QD stickers for each participant - to be able to keep track of numbers.

Success ! We did it !

The final count in Lichfield was 102 participants - a fantastic achievement, and one everyone enjoyed !



Numbers in Rosliston were small in comparison as the date clashed with holiday dates for South Derbyshire, but it was an extremely enjoyable session, with members of the public joining in, and a PtR student joining all the way from the new Yoxall Class.

Kai Ming and Painting the Rainbow 2025 definitely contributed to 'One World - One Breathe' !

Thank you to everyone who took part in both venues - and I hope to see even more of you next year !

Heather Lomas - Chief Instructor



Is This Mindfulness?

Life is like a beef and mustard sandwich.

You can nibble your way delicately through it at a slow and steady pace, or you can occasionally take big bites and suddenly get a mustard "hit" where you go "WOW that was hot but the beef seemed so much tastier".

When you finish, and the heat goes, you have a lasting feeling of satisfaction that stays with you for a while.

If you only nibble you may not even notice the sandwich has gone!

I hope I have never been a nibbler..!

by Jenny Peters

