

Tai Chi & Qigong

In all things, balance is the key

Qigong (Chi Gong) practice can be traced back over 4,000 years - its health theory being drawn from traditional Chinese medicine and its guiding principle from the Chinese philosophy of the Tao (the way of nature). Its foundation is singular (but repeated), natural movements, combining gentle stretching and natural breathing, which increase natural bodily energy, or Chi.

Tai Chi is an extension of Qigong. Its foundation lies in the original singular Qigong movements, combining them into a soft, gentle and flowing sequence which enhances the flow of Chi. (It is also a soft, 'internal' Chinese martial art but the Academy does not teach it for martial purposes).

Tai Chi and Qigong are famous for their relaxation qualities and graceful movements. However, underneath this veneer of carefree softness lies a fascinating art. The learning of this art can be divided into three distinct stages:

Gentle relaxation exercise - gentle stretching, rhythmic movement, imagery and natural breathing.

Health reinforcement - body alignment, extension stretching, increased circulation, mental focus and internal/external co-ordination (balance). As a weight-bearing exercise it is second to none.

Application - awareness of the philosophical principles, stress management and application to everyday living. (The self-defence aspect is another application).

The Academy focus is Relaxation and Health

What is relaxation? The dictionary definition of 'relaxation' is, "A stopping of bodily or mental effort". Thus, relaxation is when both body and mind are at ease.

Why is relaxation so important? Genuine relaxation has a therapeutic effect on both the mind and the body, allowing us times of calmness and stillness. We may think we are 'relaxing' on the sofa but we can still be tense and stressed, both physically and mentally. Stress can also effect the sleep state, which should be a natural recuperation time. Relaxation is the antidote to stress, allowing the body, as a whole, to run at its optimum level.



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Why is stress damaging? Today's living conditions and rushed lifestyle subject our bodies to immense stress and tension. Some stress is beneficial but when it exceeds what our bodies and minds can cope with, then the build-up can have a damaging effect on health and well-being. It is a fact that some 85% of illnesses are stress related.

How do Tai Chi & Qigong help? Relaxation is a learned response and our courses will show you how to relax both the body and mind through the practice of Tai Chi & Qigong. The soft, gentle and flowing movements, combined with natural breathing, have the therapeutic effect of slowing down the pace, relaxing the body and mind and renewing energy.

What are the Health benefits? Along with the body-mind relaxation, Tai Chi and Qigong movements quieten the nervous system, benefit the heart and circulatory system, loosen stiff joints, tone up muscles and aid digestion. It is particularly beneficial for those suffering from arthritis, hypertension, asthma, insomnia, anxiety and many other ailments, and brings an extremely beneficial approach to health and well-being.

Will it improve my fitness level? Tai Chi and Qigong utilise the principles of non-physical exertion whilst providing general body fitness by way of corrective breathing and controlled gentle stretching, gradually developing and strengthening the whole body naturally and evenly, without stress or strain.

Is it suitable for all ages? YES! Tai Chi and Qigong is suitable for everyone, regardless of age. Everybody, from children through to the older age group, needs to relax and maintain health. Our students are all ages and from all walks of life. If you are in your later years, this non-strenuous and non-competitive activity can be particularly beneficial.

What if I am suffering from a particular illness? Naturally, any illness or disease has its own particular symptoms and treatment methods but the practice of Tai Chi & Qigong has been proven by western medical science to have beneficial effects in a multitude of areas. Basically, disease is just that, dis-ease within the body. If the body is not at ease and functioning at its optimum level, then disease has the potential to occur. Many illnesses build up over a period of time, thus, by ignoring the minor symptoms, we allow what originally started as a minor imbalance to become a major one. Because Tai Chi & Qigong work by balancing the body, regular practice will help to build and restore all bodily systems. A good analogy is the domino theory. When the first one is set off, it has an effect on all others. So, too, do Tai Chi and Qigong have the same effect, as no part of the body works in isolation.



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