

Tai Chi

Traditional Chinese Medicine is a healing system of Eastern Medicine developed in China more than 2000 years ago, the key to good health being the harmonious and balanced functioning of body mind and spirit. To achieve this it is necessary for the flow of life energy, qi, (pronounced chi) to flow unrestricted through pathways known as meridians.

Tai Chi consists of slow controlled movements. The aim of the exercises is to unblock the chi valves along the meridian lines and to strengthen the energy force travelling through them. Each meridian line is associated with an organ or section of the body. Some are concerned with controlling our emotions, helping to keep us stress free. The flowing movements practised regularly can lead to a feeling of wellbeing, both physically and emotionally. Over time the internal energy, qi, is converted to an internal force called Jing, and that in turn produces more internal energy.

In addition to our exercises for ensuring smooth flow of our energy force, we have a set of Tai Chi exercises that channel the qi to particular organs of the body. These are Qi Gong exercises. In Qi Gong we have coordinated movement, breathing and awareness.

Tai Chi is suitable for most people as the exercises are low impact, however it is always a good idea to check with the doctor first if there are medical conditions that require approval. The format is the mind and body working together in a calm relaxed way and for those with physical challenges the exercises can be just as effective from a sitting position. The NHS has conducted research into Tai Chi and suggests that practising regularly can be beneficial for improving balance in older people and therefore reduce the risk of falls. There is some evidence that mobility in the ankle, hip and knee in people with rheumatoid arthritis can be achieved. There is evidence that circulation can improve, also blood pressure and flexibility. Tai Chi can help to reduce stress and anxiety. Apart from health benefits it is possible to feel tranquillity, feeling at one with nature whilst still part of the world. A spiritual experience in a non religious sense.

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