

Acupuncture Healthcare Specialists
23678 San Vicente Rd
Ramona, CA 92065
760-788 - 9862 Fax

THE BENEFITS OF TAI CHI EXERCISE

By Kelly McConville, L.Ac.

Acupuncture Healthcare Specialists

If you have travelled to China, visited Chinatowns in the United States, or watched TV showing Chinese life, you may have seen displays of middle age and older people performing exercises. The movements reflect grace and peacefulness. The postures reflect extreme flexibility and balance. It is likely they were performing Tai Chi.

There are many forms of exercise from China, including martial arts, boxing, internal breathing exercises, and the most popular and simple, Tai Chi. Tai Chi was developed over 700 years ago as a means of self-defense for monks. It has evolved into an exercise like yoga, with the same mental and physical benefits. Tai Chi's simplicity, gentle manner and multi-faceted health benefits make it an important option for many who want to increase flexibility and balance, promote relaxation and maintain a healthy balance in their lives.

Tai Chi means “moving life force” and is based on the Taoist belief that an obstruction of chi (body energy) will result in health problems. The goal is better body awareness and the fine-tuning of posture. This is accomplished with proper breathing and learning to keep the muscles and mind active but relaxed.

Tai Chi, performed in a standing position, is a series of slow, gentle movements of the arms and legs. The movements can be performed in an area the size of your patio. Participants can be any age or ability and injuries are very unlikely. There are different variations or styles of Tai Chi, but the basic movements are easy to remember. Health benefits include reduced mental and physical tension, improved joint and muscle flexibility. Studies show tai chi can reduce blood pressure. The ArthritisFoundation reports that rheumatologists often recommend Tai Chi for relieving pain from osteoarthritis and fibromyalgia. 1

I recommend that those interested in learning Tai Chi take a series of 8-12 group classes, under supervision. This way the student can learn the most effective movements and minimize any risk of injury. There are adult education classes or martial arts schools in Ramona, Poway or Rancho Bernardo. Once you learn the basic movements, called a “form”,

you can easily perform the “form” in as little as 5-10 minutes per day for optimal health.

If you have further interest, you can learn advanced techniques or multiple styles of this effective and time-tested exercise. As we age, our bodies become tight and inflexible.

Exercises like Tai Chi can prolong our physical capacities maintain mobility and thus “add life to our years”.

1. Reprinted from The San Diego Union Tribune, 12/20/2001. Denise Nelesen..

Mr. McConville is a licensed acupuncturist with offices in Poway and Ramona. Since 1996, he has provided relief to patients with a variety of health complaints. He operates a family practice, treating pain and gynecological syndromes, internal medicine, asthma/allergies and pediatrics. If you would like to learn more about the benefits of acupuncture, please contact Kelly McConville at 858-254-4781.