

Tai Chi Introduction

What is Tai Chi? Performed by millions around the world, Tai Chi is a mind-body exercise rooted in multiple Asian traditions, including martial arts, traditional Chinese medicine and philosophy. Tai Chi integrates slow, intentional movements with breathing and cognitive skills like mindfulness and imagery. It aims to strengthen, relax and integrate the physical body and mind, enhance the natural flow of Qi (our vital energy or life force), and improve health, personal development and self-defense. Tai Chi is a physical exercise, a mental exercise and a choreographed dance all at the same time! It gently exercises all joints and muscles of the body and is ideal for people of all ages and levels of physical conditioning. Tai Chi may help you relieve stress, anxiety and tension, and increase your awareness by improving your balance, coordination and posture.

How can I use Tai Chi? Tai Chi is great for everyone either performed by itself or as a warm-up and a cool down from other exercises. You may do it before your regular exercise routine to increase speed, flexibility and awareness and afterwards to cool down and center your energy. Tai Chi can also be an effective mind/body, cross training exercise that may help people understand the biomechanics of many sports. Most importantly, the core Tai Chi principles can be integrated into your everyday life.

How can Tai Chi benefit you? Continual Tai Chi practice can stimulate your internal organs and improve circulation through the increased flow of Chi - your life force or internal energy. Potential health benefits and results:

Health Benefits	Potential Results
Relax - relieve stress & anxiety	Promotes a calm, centered approach
Releases tension	Less stiffness , more fluid movements
More patient mindset	Allows the body to stay connected and move as one unit
Improves breathing	Helps clear the mind, improves stamina
Lower high blood pressure	Reduces risk of heart issues
Boost immune system	Increases energy level
Improves balance & coordination	Better stability and "foot sense"
Improves posture, stretch & tone body	Better body alignment
Achieve better physical & emotional balance	Meditative movement helps calm nerves
Develop inner awareness & mental focus	More intuitive – “spiritually connected”
Increases joint & tendon flexibility, elasticity	Decreases risk of injury
Improves movement & fluidity	More circular flow & momentum
Improves sleep	More energy
Heightened body awareness	More alert and focused – less apt to fall
Gently stretches spine, joints & ligaments	More open body structure
More body power	Use of entire body can prevent injury
Low impact, easy to learn exercise	Easier on joints, simple exercise goal

What will you learn in a typical class?

- ☯ Warm-up exercises specific to Tai Chi
- ☯ A section of the traditional Yang family long form
- ☯ Various breathing or Chi Kung exercises, meditation and visualization techniques
- ☯ Understanding and applying the Tai Chi principles
- ☯ Some self-defense applications of the postures
- ☯ Basic Tai Chi theory and philosophy

For more information, please visit www.taichilee.com
Lee Atwater has practiced and taught traditional Yang style Tai Chi since 1990.