

## Tai Chi/Qigong -Tips for Nurturing Good Health and Safe and Effective Practice

Tai Chi and Qigong are exercises that foster good health, relaxation, flexibility, and strength, and improved mind-body coordination. In general, you should feel relaxed and rejuvenated after a Tai Chi/Qigong practice. The benefits derived from Tai Chi/Qigong and your enjoyment of practicing will increase steadily as your routine becomes part of your regular schedule. Here are some guidelines to nurture your health and to help you develop safe and effective practice habits.

- ☯ Practice daily if possible. You get better results if you practice at the same time everyday. Choose a time that will not conflict with other activities and will generally be free from the pressures of your daily schedule. Be gentle but persistent in your efforts to establish a regular practice routine.
- ☯ Find a quiet place to practice where you are able to focus, feel comfortable and are not likely to be interrupted. Turn your phone down or off for this period so you can quiet your mind and not be startled suddenly.
- ☯ Try to alternate between moving and quiet components in each practice session. If you have an exceptionally busy day and are short on time, practice your sitting or standing Qigong as usual and then practice the Tai Chi movements later if you have time.
- ☯ Many students find enjoyment in practicing with someone else with whom they can share support and inspiration.
- ☯ Wear clothing that allows you to move freely and athletic or walking shoes that provide good support for your feet.
- ☯ Always bring your full attention to your Tai Chi/Qigong practices. Practice Tai Chi movements slowly, calmly, and smoothly. Practice Qigong with concentration and focus. Breathe naturally and allow the tension in your body to dissolve.
- ☯ Keep your mind relaxed, and peaceful while doing Tai Chi.
- ☯ Everyone is different and has different needs, so it is important to practice at your own rate, listening carefully to your body. Take rest breaks whenever you feel tired.

- ☯ **If you are upset or very emotional (excited, sad, or worried), you may want to postpone your practice until you are more settled. In the meantime, take a walk or talk**

1

**with a friend. Also if you are physically exhausted, take it easy. Pace yourself. You may do sitting Qigong instead of standing. Or you may practice just the movements, take a rest break and then practice some more if you feel like it.**

- ☯ **Always consult with your physician regarding your physical health. Do not practice Tai Chi in the early stages of a cold or other illness or if your physician restricts your activity. If any movement becomes painful, stop doing it and seek medical consultation.**
- ☯ **Practice is best if you are not too hungry or too full. Good times to practice are 1-1 ½ hours after a meal, or 1 hour before a meal.**
- ☯ **Be aware of your physical structure (posture) to avoid strain on your joints. Your feet are usually placed at shoulder width or slightly wider for better balance.**
- ☯ **Finish each individual exercise with the closing movement (Sink Qi and Wash Organs). Also do the closing movement after practicing sitting or standing Qigong.**
- ☯ **Conclude your Tai Chi/Qigong practice session with some of the finishing routines which we have practiced in class: massage your head, face, neck, ears and back. Shake and loosen arms and legs. Rotate the dantian.**
- ☯ **Be open and sensitive to the many possibilities for positive change, which will sometimes emerge in unexpected areas of your life. Be happy, optimistic and confident that you are doing something good for yourself as confirmed by centuries of Chinese cultural experience. And above all, don't forget....TAI CHI IS FUN!!! ENJOY!!!**