

Tai Chi Benefits – References/Links

- ✓ **Knee problems** are common as we age. *The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*, conducted a study on older adults using 20 weeks of Tai Chi training. The overall findings suggest that Tai Chi training improves knee extensor strength and force control in older adults.
- ✓ *Harvard Women's Health Watch* reported an Emory University study showing that Tai Chi may possibly **improve elasticity in ligaments and tendons**, create stronger knee flexors and extensors, and create better posture.
- ✓ Tai Chi teaches inner strength while **toning muscles, increasing flexibility**, and boosting immune power. It is also said to reduce stress, store up energy, increase body awareness, and improve balance and coordination. *Men's Health Magazine*. 8 Mar/Apr 1993
- ✓ New 2011 guidelines about **fall prevention** in older people from the *American Geriatrics Society* recommend tai chi because it targets strength, gait and balance. Research has shown that tai chi can improve balance and coordination, as well as reduce the risk of falls.
- ✓ In a 2009 study from *Tufts University*, people over 65 with knee osteoarthritis who took tai chi classes twice weekly for 12 weeks experienced less pain and had **improved physical function**, compared to a group that did stretching and received counseling.
- ✓ Tai chi **promotes relaxation and can relieve tension and anxiety**. In a 2008 *UCLA study*, older people with moderate sleep complaints who took up tai chi reported better sleep and daytime functioning after 25 weeks.
- ✓ Dr. Oz hosts a very popular TV health show called *the Dr. Oz Show*, which is syndicated in 120 countries. Recently, he visited many countries to find the health secrets. During the interview, **Dr. Oz said that he loves Tai Chi** because Tai Chi is about energizing the body with little simple movements. Dr. Oz explained that Chinese people developed Tai Chi for longevity. It cultivates the energy to help the body build balance, flexibility and strength.
- ✓ *World Tai Chi Day* (worldtaichiday.org) - The same force used in golf is brought to bear in tennis. If you play tennis, you will also find an increased sense of control. Sometimes tennis players will describe a sense of slowing down, as if Tai Chi practice made the game seem a bit slower than before. **Tennis players** will also often discover less pressure in the knees after practicing Tai Chi. Consciously moving from the dan tien can bring less pressure to bear on the knees when coming to an abrupt halt because when the head or upper body leads the movement, the knees must work harder to stop your momentum. Tai Chi can also give you an off day exercise that is soothing to the joints, but still keeps the mind and body working together at a fine edge. You may be able to

have fewer days on the court, while still improving your game, which may save your knees as well.

- ✓ *Time Magazine* – Why Tai Chi is the Perfect Exercise – The slow-motion martial art builds strength, agility and, best of all, balance. August 5, 2002
- ✓ *Women's Health Magazine* 2005 – The easy exercise that keeps women young – drop pounds, outsmart arthritis pain, strengthen bones, bust stress and boost energy.
- ✓ *Time Magazine* September 2001 – Meditation in Motion – Gentle, fluid movements of tai chi for arthritis sufferers.
- ✓ *Better Fitness* – Tai Chi is a good low-impact workout for those living with chronic illness – by Michael O'Shea, Ph.D, fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine
- ✓ GetFitNow – Better Balance with Tai Chi, *Parade magazine* May 2009 by Michael O'Shea
- ✓ Tai Chi is Good Exercise All Around, letter to Dr. Anthony Komaroff, *Trenton Times* Feb. 20, 2012

Links to Articles

- **Tai chi training appears to reduce balance impairments in patients with mild-to-moderate Parkinson's disease**, with additional benefits of improved functional capacity and reduced falls. *New England Journal of Medicine* – Feb. 9, 2012 - <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1107911#t=article>
- **This gentle form of exercise can prevent or ease many ills of aging and could be the perfect activity for the rest of your life.** *Harvard Medical School* - http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletters/Harvard_Womens_Health_Watch/2009/May/The-health-benefits-of-tai-chi
- **Health Benefits of Tai Chi and Qigong** - <http://www.webmd.com/balance/health-benefits-tai-chi-qigong>
- **World Tai Chi and Qigong Day Medical Research** - <http://worldtaichiday.org/WTCQDHlthBenft.html>
- **Harvard Magazine – Easing Ills through Tai Chi** - <http://harvardmagazine.com/2010/01/researchers-study-tai-chi-benefits>

Other References

- Tai Chi offers gentle, stylized exercises to tone the body and soothe the spirit. New York Times, July 16, 1997
- Relax and relieve stress, lowering the incidence of anxiety and depression (Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 1989 Vol 33(2) 197-206).
- Improve breathing capacity (Hawaii Medical Journal Vol 51, No 8, Aug 1992)
- Lower high blood pressure (American Journal of Chinese Medicine 1981 Spr Vol 9 (1) and Hawaii Medical Journal Vol 51 No 8, Aug. 1992).
- Boost the immune system (Prevention Magazine v. 42 May 1990, p. 14-15)
- Improve balance and coordination **twice** as effectively as other balance training (Prevention Magazine, v. 46, Dec. 1994 p. 71-72 and USA Today, May 1996)
- Improve postural control while stretching, toning and relaxing the body in a cumulative way that no other exercise can achieve (American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 1992 April Vol 46 (4) 295-300).
- Achieve a better physical and emotional balance, develop inner awareness and mental focus and increase joint flexibility (suitable for arthritis sufferers – American Journal of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, June 1991, 70 (3) p 136-141).

