

April 27, 2007

2007 MGS CONFERENCE

TAI CHI : INCREASE MOBILITY, IMPROVE FITNESS & PREVENT FALLS

Russell F. Smiley. Ph.D.

Some Questions and Answers:

What Is Tai Chi?

Often referred to as moving meditation, Tai Chi is now known as one of the most effective exercises for physical and mental well being. Tai Chi's slow, fluid, gentle, graceful and circular movements relax the body, deepen the breath and calm the mind. The end result is a more integrated mind and body. Being more in harmony with one's inner and outer self can lead to a happier, healthier, and more fulfilled life.

Why Tai Chi as a Form of Exercise?

While Tai Chi has its origins as an internal martial art, it is practiced throughout the world because of its many health benefits. Scientific studies have verified that Tai Chi increases flexibility, muscular strength and fitness. It exercises the entire body, is easy and inexpensive to learn, and is suitable for almost anyone.

How Does Tai Chi Help?

Tai chi is especially suited as a therapy for FALL PREVENTION because its movements are slow and gentle, and the level of exertion can be adjusted for each person's physical condition. When the whole body moves, muscles, joints and ligaments benefit. With the movements directed by the mind, mental concentration is improved. With frequent repetition, patience and relaxation are cultivated. All of this can help to improve balance, lessen fear and physical discomfort, and uplift the spirit.

Why the Sun Style of Tai Chi?

Even though there are many styles of Tai Chi, the Sun Style was found to be more suitable for beginners and those who are less physically active. Some of the characteristics are:

1. Agile Steps - where the forward and backward foot motions improve mobility;
2. Qigong Movements – to help with breathing and relaxation;
3. Higher Stances – which means it is kinder to the knee joints & seniors;
4. Artistic Depth – to hold the learner's interest; and,
5. Compliance – greater likelihood of continuing the exercise.

Dr. Russell Smiley can be contacted at Normandale Community College where he teaches Tai Chi

**email: Russell.smiley@normandale.edu
telephone: (952) 487 8409 or (952) 897 1847
MGS Conference 2007**

**TAI CHI: INCREASE MOBILITY, IMPROVE FITNESS & PREVENT FALLS
Russell F. Smiley, Ph.D.**

ADDITION RESOURCES:

World Tai Chi & Qigong Day. April 28, 2007, Normandale Community College, Bloomington, MN.

From 9:00 am to 1:00 pm in the Gymnasium on the northside of the campus.

9700 France Avenue South

Follow signs to the Japanese Garden and Kopp Student Center.

This is a free event with a Dragon Dance, demonstrations of Chen, Sun & Yang Tai Chi styles, free seminars, Spring Forest Qigong healing sessions, and closing meditation

For Information about Tai Chi classes:

Normandale Community College. Beginning classes start in June 2007, September 2007, and January 2008. For information: (952) 487 7289 or (952) 487 8409

For information about Tai Chi for Arthritis Instructor Certification Trainings.

Next Training Summer 2007. Please contact Russell Smiley

Russell.smiley@normandale.edu or Keith Root keith@nbds.com or call (952) 487 8409.

Other sites of Tai Chi classes may be community centers, fitness centers, recreation centers, and community education programs, senior centers.

Two Websites of Interest:

www.taichiproductions.com Dr. Paul Lam's website. Find copies of his newsletters, educational products, classes, and Tai Chi related articles.

www.Worldtaichiday.org This website can link you to other World Tai Chi events around the world. It also provide a list of instructors and summaries of the health benefits of Tai Chi.

**SEVEN RECENT TAI CHI PUBLICATIONS
FROM PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS**

- Chan, K., Qin, L., Lau, M., Woo, J., Szeki, A., Choy, W., et al. (2004).** A randomized prospective study of the effects of Tai Chi Chun exercise on bone mineral density. *Archives of Physical & Medical Rehabilitation*, 85, 717-722.
- Choi, J.H., Moon, J.S., Song, R. (2005).** The effects of Sun-Style Tai Chi exercise on physical fitness and fall prevention in fall prone adults. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 51, 150-157.
- Li, F., Harmer, P., Fisher, J. K., MCAuley. (2004).** Tai Chi: Improving functional balance and predicting subsequent falls in older persons. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 36, 2046-2052.
- Li, F., Fisher, F., Harmer, P., Irbe, D., Tearse, R. G., Weimer, C. (2004).** Tai Chi and self-rated quality of sleep and daytime sleepiness in older adults: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of American Geriatrics Society*, 52, 892-900.
- Wang, C., Collet, J. P., Lau, J. (2004).** The effect of Tai Chi on health outcomes in patients with chronic conditions. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 164, 493-501.
- Yeh, G. Y., Wood, M. J., Lorell, B.H., Stevenson, L. W., Eisenberg, D. M., Wayne, P. M., et al. (2004).** Effects of Tai Chi mind-body movement therapy on functional status and exercise capacity in patients with chronic heart failure: A randomized controlled trial. *American Journal of Medicine*, 117, 541-548.
- Zhang, J.G., Ishikawa-Takata, k.,et al. (2006).** The effects of Tai Chi Chuan on physiological function and fear of falling in the less robust elderly: An intervention study for preventing falls. *Archives of Gerontology Geriatrics*, 42, 107-116.