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Foreword

Tai Chi, as it's practiced in the west nowadays, may perhaps best be thought of as a moving class of yoga and meditation blended. There are a number of supposed forms (occasionally likewise called 'sets') which consist of a succession of movements. A lot of these movements are originally deduced from the martial arts (and maybe even more ancestrally than that, from the innate movements of creatures and birds) while the way they're performed in Tai Chi is slowly, gently and gracefully with fluid and even transitions between them.

For a lot of practitioners the focus in doing them isn't, most importantly, martial, but as a meditative exercising for the body. In Chinese philosophy and medicine there lives the concept of 'chi', a life force that animates the body. Among the professed aims of Tai Chi is to further the circulation of this 'chi' inside the body, the notion being that by doing so the health and life force of the individual are enhanced. This 'chi' mobilizes in patterns that are closely related to the nervous and vascular system and therefore the notion is closely affiliated with that of the practice of acupuncture and additional oriental healing arts.

Healing Properties Of Tai Chi

Learn About The Miracle Exercise Of Tai Chi!

Chapter 1:

Introduction To Tai Chi

Synopsis

A fast growing art form to some, while to others a practice of defense training, with the added benefits to health.

Typically practiced for a variety of reasons it's generally known for its hard and soft martial art techniques, demonstrative styles for competitions and for longevity.



The Fundamentals

Originating from China, it's beautiful movements are both slow and fluid. This style of non aggressive movements is what attracts most people to take up Tai chi. Largely popular among the older ages it is not becoming an excepted art form to the younger generation too.

Tai chi training generally involves the theories and practices evolved in agreement with many Chinese philosophical principals some of which include Taoism and Confucianism tenants.

Instinctively focusing the mind solely on the movements of the body in connection with the surroundings, tai chi helps to bring about a state of mental calm and clarity. The obvious benefits to which are general health improvements and better stress management in the individual.

Though there is no rule about its dress code, generally loose fitting and comfortable clothing accompanied with a pair of flat soled footwear is a recommended prerequisite.

In-depth understanding of the fundamentals of tai chi is not necessary if one is interested in trying out this form of art. Loosely it is explained as moving by the use of leverage though the joints based on the idea of relaxation and concentrated coordination to ensure minimal or no muscle tension, in order to neutralize, yield or initiate responsive movements.

Three primary aspects are addressed when practicing Tai chi. Health, meditation and martial arts. An unhealthy state of body is hardly any

use to the success needed; therefore using the different movements taught in tai chi, the individual is able to be one with body and mind.

The fluid and slow movements also don't cause undue stress to the individual. Meditation cultivates the ability to focus and remain calm in all situations while maintaining acute awareness of the surroundings.

Martial art is where the ability to perform self defense movements in combat, to gauge the responses to outside forces.



Chapter 2:

About Healing With Tai Chi

Synopsis

Tai chi is an ancient art form of defense using the oneness of body and mind through fluid movements that seem almost non aggressive in style. However looks can be deceiving because although the movements are slow and fluid, they are no less precise and can produce the desired results effectively.



A Healing Experience

Tai chi has no real age limitations. Predominantly practiced by the aged percentage of society, in more recent times the younger set has taken a keen interest in the art form. Hence the age range from 8 to 88 is not surprising.

Once one is fairly familiar with the art form of tai chi and its various movements, the results of energy being quickly and amazingly delivered throughout the body is indeed incredible. This energy transcends all possible oppositions the body may have acquired.

Practicing tai chi allows the individual to awaken the deep inner peace from within. This is made possible because of the slow and almost gentle movements that Tai chi adopts when compared to other martial art forms which seem to take on more aggressive movement patterns.

Many tai chi practitioners also lay claim to the fact that this art form helps to promote greater health benefits for some medical conditions like heart diseases, high blood pressure, arthritis, migraine and other stress related medical problems.

This is mainly because the core idea behind tai chi is to harness the yin and yang properties for the betterment of health through slow and delicate movements which are very precise indeed.

These precise movements help to push energy forces throughout body and bring the body to an optimum health condition.

Tai chi with its calming effects also helps to bring about the resolve of any emotional or spiritual crisis.

As the focus is on the precise body movement and breathing, the thought process is distracted from its original crisis state.



Chapter 3:

What To Think About When Considering Tai Chi

Synopsis

In this fast pace world of today, engaging in something that requires patience and time is somewhat of an out of norm thinking. Most people are looking for quick fixes and don't really want to take the time and effort to explore other avenues that don't follow this pattern.



What Has To Happen

Before embarking on any new adventure or idea, ideally one should take the trouble to learn as much as possible on the subject matter. Some people simply jumped into taking up tai chi without really understanding its tenants.

Tai chi is basically a slow and gentle movement martial art form which can be also used as an exercise regimen. In the Asian culture most practitioner are from the older generation, simply because of its gentle basic features.

If a younger person takes up tai chi without understanding this basic concept, chances are impatience will set in and that is the direct opposite results from what tai chi is meant to achieve.

Again because tai chi is predominantly a gentler option to choose when embarking on an exercise regiment or martial arts training, it is really quite hard to break out into profuse sweating bouts.

As these tai chi exercises uniformly last for only about an hour – when done as a leisure exercise, breaking into a sweaty mess is unlikely. Only serious tai chi participants who work out for longer periods of time can expect some form of perspiration.

Tai chi sessions should ideally be carried out in quiet, serene surroundings. As a higher level of concentration is required to

perform all the various precise movements, someone who is easily distracted would find it difficult to concentrate and thus not get the optimum results tai chi purportedly promises.

Learning the various movements that contribute to the success of practicing tai chi can also prove to be quite a challenge. All the movements are expected to be memorized well. As tai chi is normally done as a group activity, not knowing the respective movements can be distracting.



Chapter 4:

What To Think About When Considering Tai Chi For Health

Synopsis

The practice of various forms of martial arts has been around for ages and there are many varieties and variants to choose from. Taking the time to do a little research before making that choice is very important, as this will eventually dictate the success level garnered from the choice made.



Some Things To Consider

There are many aspects to consider when deciding to choose tai chi for either exercise or martial arts training. If an individual already has a preexisting medical condition which limits the time and type of activity followed, then tai chi is a good option to choose.

Being a predominantly gentle and slow moving art form, the level of stress on the body, while practicing tai chi, is quite mild when compared to other forms available.

Opting to choose tai chi as a martial art training regiment or as an exercise is also suitable as it does not require any medications or other supplementary additions. Those already on medications that don't cause an immobile state of body can embark on some tai chi sessions.

Tai chi is also a good choice to make when recovering from bone related injuries. An individual with an osteoporosis condition can greatly benefit from taking up tai chi.

Because of its low impact style movements, people with weak or fractured bone conditions are able to strengthen their bones after practicing tai chi for a period of time.

Tai chi also helps to develop muscle strength and balance in the health of an older age group. As most elderly people increasingly lose their ability to maintain good balance, using tai chi can help to correct this problem.

The social aspect of taking up tai chi is another advantage to consider. Tai chi is commonly practiced as a group exercise. This allows the participants to interact with each other before and after the sessions, thus providing the much needed and important platform for socializing.



Chapter 5:

Basic Tai Chi Benefits

Synopsis

There has always been a percentage of fascination linked to the mysteries of ancient Chinese art forms. Some of these forms have become known and popularized outside Chinese mainland because of this fascination. The various forms of martial arts are just one of these interesting elements of which Tai chi is a part of.

Tai chi is a gentle and slow moving form of martial arts, which is also used as an exercise regimen. As tai chi can be used for both purposes, it has become increasingly popular with all ages of society today.



General Benefits

Tai chi has been known for its many benefits, from improving the general health of an individual to helping to arrest certain diseases or even helping to eliminate some chronic conditions altogether. This slow and gentle form of movements benefits the individual through the muscular aspect and balancing of the body. In being able to have better control of muscles and balancing issues, the older generation can avoid the many instances of fractures as a result of falls.

Those suffering for illnesses and diseases have sometimes chosen to take up tai chi and found that it benefited them a great deal. Tai chi also is instrumental in teaching an individual how to acquire a calm and quiet state of mind, thus bringing down the stress levels considerably. These stress levels are often the main contributing factors to causing the many diseases that are suffered by people today. By bringing down these stress levels through the practice of tai chi, many people have attested to the positive results shown in the general health conditions of their bodies.

Another problem area tai chi can play a positive role in, is the social aspect derived from taking up this past time. Most elderly people are often left to their own devices to entertain themselves. If there is no social interaction with others, then illnesses like depression can set in. therefore taking up tai chi allows the individual the opportunity to socialize.

Chapter 6:

More Advantages Of Tai Chi

Synopsis

Besides the obvious use of tai chi as a form of martial arts, tai chi can also be used as a tool to enhance the general well being of an individual.

The energy derived from these gentle set of movements is quite astounding. It can sometimes be wrongly perceived as to soft and impressive in benefiting an individual.



Additional Benefits

There are many areas worth exploring using the tai chi method. One of which is arthritis. Most arthritis sufferers are already at a disadvantage because of their advanced age, so choosing tai chi which can tailor a set of specific movements to help the condition is indeed advantages. Coping with the tai chi regiment of movements will not in any way further stress the patient.

Tai chi is also purported to be able to correct the body posture and various spinal ailments. Most people complain of some form of back pain or another. This is mostly due to bad posture and other unnecessary strains put on the spine area. Tai chi helps to release the tension and pressure build up caused by slouching or slumping.

By distributing the weight throughout the body through various arm, leg and hand movements, tai chi helps to vary the load on joint surfaces thus increasing the flow of natural lubricant and nutrients into the joints. The fluid movements that are typical to tai chi often disguises the incredibly high percentage of joint movements and rotations. All this eventually translates to better and more coordinated movements especially for the aged. A certain amount of flexibility is also gained when tai chi is practiced regularly. Thus pains from conditions like lumbago, arthritis and sciatica can be eliminated.

The ability to achieve the high levels of peace is also another benefit to practicing Tai chi. The relaxed state of mind these slow and gentle movements create is something to be admired indeed.

Chapter 7:

The Correct Practice Of Tai Chi

Synopsis

The tai chi form calls for that your posture be balanced and stable and your movements harmonious. You'll note that you have not over-exerted yourself and that your breathing is regular. With practice you ought to feel exhilarated and energetic.

The tai chi form ought to be fluid and continuous, even during position shifts, giving the appearance of an easy, flowing river. Observe that all of your movements should be round and smooth.

This will give ease and strength to your posture, and your energy will be able to flux unimpeded. Both the arms and legs ought to be coordinated. The movements ought to originate from the body and synchronize with the arms and legs.

Let breathing to be natural - don't try to control it.

How To Do It

Utilize the conscious mind to direct the movements - 'The mind ought to lead the body'. This will formulate deep concentration.

While practicing the form, feel yourself making the movement somewhat before you perform it. In that way you'll be engaging the brain as well as the body. Without this 'leading' of the movements, you won't be practicing tai chi correctly. Don't allow your thoughts to scatter. Hold your thinking on the exercise at hand. Leave out all extraneous disturbances.

Check out your posture:

- Is your breathing natural and concentrated in the lower abdomen?
- Is your head held high and are your shoulders at ease?
- Are your spine and trunk upright?
- Is your weight equally distributed on 2 feet to start the exercise?

Do the tai chi solo exercise in a calm and tranquil place. Noise won't allow the mind to be calm and uninterrupted.

Center only on the tai chi movements. Every technique ought to be performed as perfectly as conceivable, linking one with another, not letting one technique be any more important than those following or preceding.

Sooner or later the body will respond to the mind, performing the exercise more smoothly and precisely.

If your thinking is disturbed by anxiety or agitated in some manner, don't practice. Let your thinking return to normal before exercising with tai chi.

When you're told to relax, this doesn't imply that your body ought to be limp: the spine ought to be straight and the head upright.

Your posture should be 'correct' - not leaning to the left or right, forwards or backwards. Utilization only enough energy to execute the movement correctly, i.e. with the bare minimum of movement.

As you move through the exercises, feel as though your arms are floating.

Hold the head as though it were suspended from above. This mental imagery will let the head be supported with the least measure of muscular tension, as the body will respond naturally to the mental image instead of attempting to impose a rigid discipline if you 'attempt' to hold it upright.

Move your head in chorus with the body. The head shouldn't be allowed to move individually from the body.

Pull the chin in somewhat and allow the jaw to relax. The facial muscles ought to be soft, without expression.

Practice daily, either in the morning or evening. Try not to miss out days as this will hinder your progress. Tai chi is meant to be utilized, not simply learned. The longer you practice tai chi right, the more perfect it will get, and the greater the advantages.

Go to a good tai chi class if possible: the advantage of good first-hand tuition may be significant.

If you've acquaintances you can practice with, so much the better. Company during training may see you through the 'bad' days. Once the form is mastered and the advantages become apparent, you'll need no exterior encouragement. Tai chi will become a crucial part of your day, just like brushing your teeth.

Pick out a quiet, clean place to exercise, preferably in the outdoors. The best places are under trees, where the air is pure. Practicing inside is quite acceptable, particularly during bad weather. Make sure that the room is well ventilated and warm.

When practicing, move like you were walking through water or watching a slow motion play back. 'Slow', 'smooth' and 'constant' ought to be your watchwords. Don't change the tempo when you're changing position.

Always keep the knees bent and move smoothly frontwards or backwards. Don't look down, simply straight ahead. Keep the same height while practicing - unbending the knees will make you bob up and down, which will break the flow and make your form seem clumsy.

Chapter 8:

Effective Use

Synopsis

Tai chi has gained popularity because of its style which is predominantly gentle when compared to other forms of martial arts. The smooth flowing and fluid movements is the basis of this gentle form of martial arts, thus making it very assessable to a wide range of age groups.

Predominantly practiced by the older generation because of this feature, it is now also gaining popularity among the younger set that prefer a gentler style of exercise.



Getting Guidance

Tai chi has many positive attributes most of which centre around the main theme of connecting body and mind in a calm and serene manner. Though experimenting on tai chi without any proper guidance is not deadly, it is however recommended that the individual take the trouble to attend a few well trained sessions before venturing out on their own. Under the correct and experienced guidance, tai chi can help alleviate a variety of medical and health problems.

The main causes of many diseases and illness is somehow always linked to stress. With the practice of tai chi, stress levels in an individual can be brought under control using the techniques learned.

Also many ailments are popularly thought to be centered around or are caused by negative energy in the body system. Tai chi uses a series of controlled movements to channel this negative energy out of the body system effectively.

Tai chi has also been known to be able to address specific health problems effectively. In consulting an experienced tai chi practitioner one can then follow a set of specific movement and breathing techniques to arrest the particular health issue.

It should be noted that tai chi must be practiced at regular and consistent schedules. Failure to keep the consistency results in less than optimum levels of benefit.

Chapter 9:

Researching Tai Chi

Synopsis

Doing a little research, before embarking on something new, is always a wise decision to make. Research before trying out a martial arts regiment or an exercise regiment is no exception.



Looking Into It

With the help of the internet, almost any information can be acquired instantly. Information about locations, styles, origins, popularity is just some of the things available for any interested party.

Tai chi is gradually becoming somewhat of a new age phenomenon for the younger set. Long practiced by ancient cultures for various reasons, tai chi is no longer confined to the Asian continent.

This martial art form is gaining popularity in some European countries too, because of its gentle, slow and fluid movements. However a vast majority of people using tai chi do so as a form of exercise. This applies more so to the older more aged generation.

There are also many established societies both international and local that have been formed to cater to the needs and interest of tai chi practitioners. Some of which are:

- International Taoist Tai Chi Society
- Chuan Tai Chi Foundation
- Hiromi Tai Chi
- Wellness Spa Tai Chi
- Yang and Chen Tai Chi Schools

With the help of the internet, locations can be found, closest to the individual's needs.

Although some people opt to practice tai chi in the privacy of their own homes, the tendency to eventually lose interest is quite possible. Besides the social interaction factor, joining a suitable tai chi group

would have other advantages. Practicing tai chi regularly is the best way to experience the overall significant improvement in an individual's health.

By practicing tai chi regularly, one can also become proficient enough to move up to higher levels and learn new techniques. Taking the time, to locate a tai chi centre or society nearest and most suits the individual's needs, is the best way to go.



Chapter 10:

The Things You'll Miss Out On By Not Using Tai Chi

Synopsis

Human nature is such that taking the time to understand something is often overlooked in favor of diving in enthusiastically. Many times people try something only to discard it quickly and move on to the next fad.

There are always new “discoveries” that tout themselves as the best, biggest, most important thing of the present. Most of these fads come and go, in the blink of an eye.



Trusting In The Art

Therefore taking the time and trouble to really explore the tenants of Tai chi is indeed a wonderful use of time and resources. Tai chi has many benefits on many levels. Medically, physically, spiritually to name a few, are just some of the areas one can garner positive impact and results.

Popularly thought of as an older age group activity, tai chi is proving to be quite the contrary. Perhaps the slow and gentle movements which form the basis of tai chi are the contributing misleading factors to this popular assumption.

One of the most noticeable advantages of practicing tai chi is the calmness it encourages each individual to experience. This state of calmness is what contributes to the healing process in the body which always reacts negatively to any form of stress. It is not unusual for stress to be targeted as the main cause for health problems.

In embarking on tai chi as an alternative to better health conditions, people who suffer from diseases like osteoporosis and other bone deteriorating conditions have experienced significant improvement. Its success rate is probably due to the low impact movements that don't cause further stress to the already poor bone condition.

Overlooking the social impact Tai chi can offer the individual is sad to say the least. Most elderly people are left to their own devices to entertain themselves, thus by joining a tai chi group they are not only improving their physical health but also perhaps improving their mental health too.

Wrapping Up

Experience the gentle flowing, movements of Tai Chi and treat your entire body to an easy and relaxing workout. Say bye-bye to sweating, puffing and panting. Say hello to feeling cool, calm, invigorated and energized. Simply 15 minutes a day is your pass to better health, fitness, peace of mind and so much more, as your brain and body work in harmony for brilliant results.

In addition to its physical advantages, tai chi is stated, by the Chinese, to have particular psychological effects too. Tai Chi, as a form of meditation, is thought to help one empathize and to enable one to deal with other people more effectively.

This latter function is rooted in one's discovering how to control oneself. This self-control may come about through 2 principal beliefs found in the Tao Te Ching and I Ching.

These 2 beliefs are the central Taoist notions of yin and yang. Though these 2 precepts are seen as opposites, the one inevitably merges into the other, producing the natural balance of self and world, hence the classic symbol of tai chi.

The tai chi form is meant to enable one to bring the precepts of yin and yang back into their underlying, natural harmony. The elemental effect of this harmony, according to Taoism and Tai Chi, is one's physical and spiritual welfare.

Hopefully this book has sparked your interest and you will get started with Tai Chi.