

Tai Chi—What Is All The Fuss About?

Tai Chi is becoming a serious exercise form for both physical and mental health.

Recently there have been a number of research studies that have been published on the benefits of Tai Chi. One of the most recent showed that bone loss could be slowed down up to three times the normal levels in people who suffer from osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a condition where the bones become brittle. It naturally occurs as we age. Some people get a more advanced form of this condition and then it is considered a disease state. Research shows very favorably that the bones can become less brittle, balance and strength improve, and people report and demonstrate less fear of falling.

For those of you who have problems with chronic pain or arthritis, you can also do Tai Chi. It slowly improved the movement of joints, helps to strengthen muscles not used, and gradually you start to find that you can do things with more ease. There as been some research done by the Australian Arthritis Foundation. Some people notice that stairs become easier. You can use the movements in Tai Chi to do all your daily activities so everything starts to have a flow. Just think how much easier it could be to open a door, lift a box, or just stand in line at the bank.

Two new forms of Tai Chi have come to Nova Scotia. They are starting to put our province on the map for new methods of assisting people with keeping healthy, keeping their bones strong, and helping to keep this going well into their golden years. It is also an easy method of exercising for all ages. Some forms are for adults and others have been adapted for children.

Keep a look out for Tai Chi for Osteoporosis classes. For those looking for a more vigorous form of Tai Chi including, kicks, punches, and using your knees, keep a watch for information on Sun Style 73 form Tai Chi. For thos who are looking for the martial arts applications of Tai Chi and its use for defense, contact your local Defense Training business.

The long term benefits of studying and practicing Tai Chi is the stress reduction. We all lead very busy lives, and often are not able to do all the exercise we could or have a healthy means of dealing with stress. When you are able to do exercise, you are better able to cope with daily stress. The good news is, although Tai Chi does not look like a very vigorous exercise, it does slowly and continually improve the body.

Memory is utilized to focus and learn the movements in a Tai Chi form. You need to learn to stay calm and centered so you can check the movements and how you are doing them. As you get used to the movements, they get easier to do and then you notice that you have the Tai Chi flow.

So keep happy and go with the Tai Chi flow.

Janice Webber is a physiotherapist who uses the tai chi principles in her exercise classes. These classes are a part of the Tai Chi 4 Health program. They include Sun Style 73 form, short and long Tai Chi for Arthritis, Tai Chi for Osteoporosis.

Janice Webber holds Tai Chi classes in Halifax and Dartmouth. You can reach her at (902) 469-3214, at a Body In Balance Therapy Centre or check out www.taichi4health.ca for details and class schedules.