

What is Tai Chi?

Tai Chi is a gentle form of exercise, done in slow motion. Tai Chi movements use the whole body.

What are the benefits of Tai Chi?

Our bodies change as we grow older. We lose muscle and our muscles are less strong. We may become less steady on our feet. Our reflexes get slower. We may get stiff and have pain in our joints. Our bones may become less strong.



Tai chi helps build:

- Better physical condition
- Stronger muscles
- Flexibility: easier to bend and move [safely]
- Better coordination: more able to control how our body moves
- Feeling calm and less stressed
- Better balance, more steady on our feet

How does Tai Chi prevent falls?

As we do the Tai Chi movements over time, our muscles get stronger, and we become more flexible and less stiff. Our balance will get better too. We also learn to pay attention to the way we move. All of these work together to make us less likely to fall.

People who do Tai Chi regularly get many other health benefits.

Research has shown that Tai Chi can help with many different conditions: These include:

- Older women's bone loss (osteoporosis or brittle bones)
- Depression
- Fibromyalgia symptoms, such as muscle pain, fatigue, and insomnia
- Osteoarthritis of the knee (Stiff and painful knees)
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Feelings of stress and tension

Who can do Tai Chi?

- Anyone can learn and benefit from doing Tai Chi.

What happens in a Tai Chi class?

The classes are lead by a certified instructor who has been trained to teaching Tai Chi. The instructor will show and explain how to do each movement. The instructor will also give extra help if you need this.

First: The group will warm-up: This includes easy motions, such as shoulder circles, turning the head from side to side, or rocking back and forth [to] help you to loosen your muscles and joints and focus on your breath and body.

Next: Learn and practice tai chi movements

You will learn 12 basic movements, one at a time. Learning Tai Chi is like learning to dance because the movements flow gently from one to another.

You will learn one movement at a time. After several classes, you will be able to do all of the movements without stopping.

Breathing deeply is also part of Tai Chi. *Tai Chi movements will help you breathe deeply and slowly.* Breathing this way will] help you relax your mind. It also gives you more energy.

Would Tai Chi be good for me?

Tai chi is very safe, and you don't need special clothing or equipment. You should ask your doctor about taking Tai Chi classes If you have health problems and have not been active.

What do Alaskans say about Tai Chi?

Deb Lessmeier, MD at Family Practice says:

“I recommend aerobic, strengthening, stretching and balance exercises to most of my patients. I also recommend stress reduction techniques. Tai chi incorporates most of these in an easy, fun, and rewarding way. It is really a seemingly effortless way to get moving and encourage the body to heal. “

Michelle Klawonn, Juneau says:

Since the onset of my movement disorder, balance was a real issue for me. I was falling down a couple times per week. Since starting Tai Chi and practicing it regularly, my balance has improved so much that I am back to hiking, wading rivers for fly fishing, and just going for walks. I am no longer afraid to walk, and I'm confident about my balance, even in the winter.