



CALIFORNIA KUNG FU & TAI CHI INSTITUTE

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NEWSLETTER



*In dwelling, be close to the land.
In meditation, go deep in the heart.
In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.
In speech, be true.*

Tao Te Ching

Translation by Gia Fu Feng
and Jane English

KUNG FU



The Benefits of Practicing Chinese Martial Arts

Wushu is the term used for Chinese Martial Arts although in the West, people are more familiar with the term Kung Fu. Wushu is an important part of the cultural heritage of China. Originally, Wushu was a method used for defense and survival. Today it reigns as the most popular sport in China and a training method for bringing mind, body and spirit into balance.

The internal aspect of Wushu contributes to its health-keeping effects while the external aspect underlines its combative value. The benefits of practice include:

● **Fitness and Health**

Fitness involves physical strength in addition to the ability to react quickly, work hard and think clearly. Health refers not just to being free from illness, but also possessing the ability to sleep soundly, work energetically and remain calm, yet alert, in all situations.

More than just a physical exercise, Kung Fu develops the inner faculties of vital energy and mental agility. A Kung Fu practitioner exhibits zest and vitality in both work and play and

possesses a calmness of mind and clarity of

thought even in demanding situations.

● **Knowledge of Self-Defense**

Even though armed and unarmed combat are no longer part of modern day society, Kung Fu practitioners appreciate the origins of the art and learn the self-defense concepts of the movements they practice.

With practice and dedication, a Kung Fu student gains mastery of the art and in so doing also gains self-confidence. As such, this self-confidence may be viewed as a psychological self-defense and may be applied to non-combative life situations such as a taking a school exam or interviewing for a new job.

● **Character Training**

Kung Fu training emphasizes moral development as well as physical development. Values such as respect, courage, tolerance and reverence for life are an integral part of Kung Fu training.

In essence, the very nature of Kung Fu training is a lesson in character building. Endurance, perseverance, discipline, and a calm disposition are all prerequisites for advancing in this art, and are especially crucial at the higher levels of training.

All the qualities acquired through Kung Fu training are transferable to, impact and benefit our daily life.

TAI CHI

The Benefits of Practicing Tai Chi

Tai Chi is a centuries-old Chinese martial art that descends from Qigong (the ancient Chinese discipline rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine). Most modern styles of Tai Chi trace their development to at least one of the five traditional schools: Chen, Yang, Wu/Hao, Wu and Sun.



Today, over 20 percent of the world's population practices Tai Chi. The physical benefits of practicing Tai Chi are many. To cite a few:

Tai Chi's low impact causes no joint damage, while its weight bearing aspect encourages development of bone mass and connective tissue. A recent study by The George Institute for International Health found Tai Chi to have positive health benefits for musculoskeletal pain. The results of the first comprehensive analysis suggest that Tai Chi practice produces positive effects for decreasing pain and disability among those who suffer from arthritis.

The movements in Tai Chi and shifts of balance when transitioning from one posture to the next strengthen the legs while conditioning the tendons and ligaments of the ankles, knees and hips, thus increasing their range of motion and making them more resilient and less prone to injury.

Tai Chi practice helps improve balance. As reported by an Emory University study, Tai Chi practitioners fall only half as often as those practicing other balance training programs.

While strengthening and balancing the body, Tai Chi also promotes the smooth circulation of blood and energy (Qi) in the body. This in turn, helps boost the immune system, lowers high blood pressure, slows the aging process, enhances the body's natural



healing powers (such as recovery from injury), and increases breathing capacity.

Practicing Tai Chi also helps us to slow down the pace of our life, reducing mental and emotional tension and anxiety. In so doing, this practice counteracts the unhealthy effects of the frantic pace of modern life. In *The Ten Basic Principles of Tai Chi Ch'uan*, Yang Chenfu (one of the founders of Tai Chi) wrote, "In Tai Chi Ch'uan, movements are born in peacefulness; even when in motion, all remains calm."

Mentally and emotionally, the fluid movements of Tai Chi serve as a moving meditation that reduces stress, returns us to a state of calm and provides a way to cultivate body and mind making both more flexible, sensitive and responsive.

QIGONG



The Benefits of Practicing Qigong

Qigong, China's 3000-year old Internal Art practice of self-healing, combines the energy work of Traditional Chinese Medicine with meditation, breath practices, and gentle movement. The effectiveness of Qigong has been proven in China by its beneficial impact on the health of millions of people over thousands of years. The gentle and flowing movements were designed to encourage the flow of Qi through the energy channels (meridians) and open the acupuncture points along those channels.

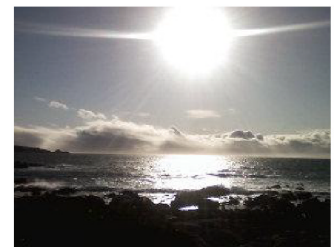
The goal of practicing Qigong is to ensure that Qi circulates evenly in the body. This helps practitioners resist or overcome Qi imbalances or blockages and their resulting disharmonies.

Qigong lowers blood pressure, pulse rates, metabolic rates and oxygen demands. Qigong improves blood circulation, bolsters the immune system and stimulates the conductivity of the energy channels through which Qi flows.

Qigong offers individuals a way to achieve a relaxed, harmonious state of dynamic equilibrium improving health and creating a sense of oneness.

The hard science behind the benefits of Qigong practice is impressive - there are over 3500 studies proving that regular practice is highly effective in preventing and healing chronic illness. A 20-year study on Qigong showed a 50% reduction in the stroke mortality rate for those who practiced this art.

Even Dr. Mehmet Oz, author and frequent guest on Oprah, has referred to Qigong as "the secret to anti-aging" and the "miracle exercise" for people seeking to avoid illness and the need to take medication. Qigong's popularity is growing in this country as the ultimate answer for a low-cost, self-care health system.



From
Arts

Martials
to

Internal Arts, thousands of years ago, the Ancients discovered the methods and practices for cultivating, sustaining and prolonging life. Today, we still benefit from their wisdom in our practices of Kung Fu, Tai Chi and Qigong. By mindfully practicing these arts, we align our body, mind and spirit. In so doing, we not only enhance our lives but also through our practice are led to the avenues in which we can fulfill the life-purpose and contribution imbued within each of us.