

# Tai Chi for Kupuna Health and Wellness



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# Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the principles of Tai Chi.
2. Explain how Tai Chi supports the physical, emotional, social and spiritual wellness for Kupuna (older adults).
3. Identify two benefits of Tai Chi and Qigong(deep breathing) for Kupuna.

# What is Tai Chi?

1. Tai Chi is a mind-body exercise that originated in ancient China where it started as a martial art.
2. It is “ moving meditation” and includes a series of gentle flowing movements to create harmony between the mind and body.
3. Qigong is deep(belly or diaphragm) breathing to improve internal strength and health (i.e. lungs, heart, kidneys, liver, eyes, etc.).

# Five Major Styles of Tai Chi



# Tai Chi Styles

- **Chen** is the oldest with fast and explosive movements; combined with slow and gentle movements.
- **Yang** most popular form and characterized by gentle, large frame movements.
- **Hao** Style focuses on internal force(lesser known style).
- **Wu** style is characterized by softness and emphasis is on re-directing incoming force with a slightly forward leaning posture.
- **Sun style** is the youngest of all the forms created in the early 1900's. This style has lots of Qigong movements and is characterized by lively steps, and has a slightly higher stance. Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention is based on Sun style developed by Dr. Paul Lam, Tai Chi Health Care Institute.

# Tai Chi for Health Institute (TCHI) Sun Style Arthritis and Falls Prevention:

- An Evidence-Based Practice for Falls Prevention for Older Adults.
- Adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and State of Hawaii Department of Health EMS and Falls Prevention Program.
- Recognized by the National Council on Aging.

# Benefits of Tai Chi Practice

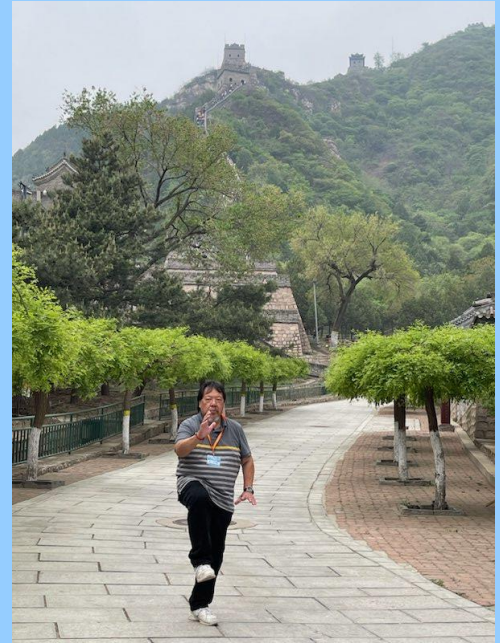
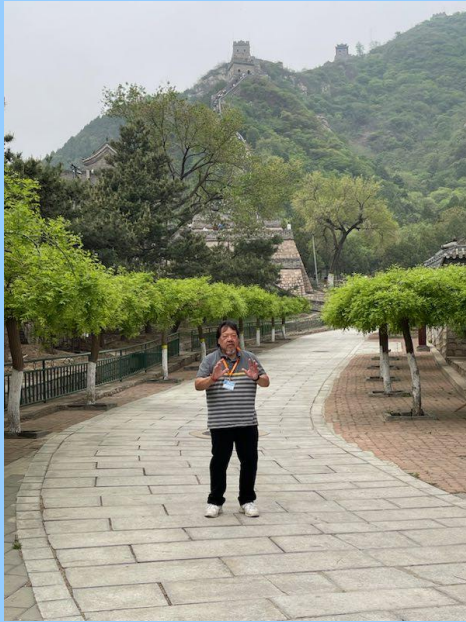
- **Improved health and wellness** - Improves attention span, helps promote a calm and relaxed mood.
- **Anyone can do it** – People of any age with any level of fitness can practice Tai Chi. It is low impact and safe when practiced correctly.
- **Deliberate movements** - Helps people feel grounded and present in their bodies and improves lower body extremity strength.
- **Cultivates one's Life Force** - The ultimate purpose of Tai Chi is to grow your Qi(pronounced chee) or inner life energy to flow smoothly and powerfully through your entire body.

# Tai Chi and Mindfulness for Wellness

- Tai Chi is a mind-body exercise that originated in ancient China where it started as a martial art. It is “moving meditation” and includes a series of gentle flowing movements to create harmony between the mind and body.
- Qigong is deep (belly or diaphragm) breathing to improve internal strength and health (i.e. lungs, heart, kidneys, liver, eyes,etc.).
- Better emotional health - It can improve mood management (i.e. decrease anxiety, promote empathy).
- Improves Awareness by being present and in the moment to decrease distractions.



# Tai Chi Principles



# Understanding Dan Tian

- The lower DanTian is **believed to be the center of energy storage**, it **also serves as the connection to the rest of the body**, and is otherwise known as the **core**.
- The location of the DanTian is in the lower belly, 1 thumb widths below the navel and 2 thumb widths inward behind the navel.
- Your Dan Tian, acts as a center point to sense your entire body. It is known as our physical center.
- The Dan Tian is the foundation for balance, breathing, rooted standing and full body awareness in martial arts and Qigong.

# Breathing

- Avoid holding your breath while moving.
- Inhale through through your nose; Exhale through your nose.
- Breathe with focus and using your DanTian (belly breathing).
- Women place your right hand below your navel; the left hand on top of the right hand.
- Men place your left hand below your navel; the right hand on top of the left hand.



# Body Posture

- Maintain an upright posture. Studies have shown that good posture strengthens the deep stabilizer muscles which support the spine.
- What's more, when you are upright you feel stronger and more positive. Qi flows better in a well aligned body.
- Balance is an essential part of Tai Chi. Like nature, we are happier and healthier when in harmony.



# Outward Movement

- Tai Chi movements are slow so that you can be mindful of them. Integrate your mind and body, to foster serenity; allow your body to flow continuously like water in the ocean.
- The continual flow gathers inner energy like hydraulic power, growing as it flows.
- Move as though you're moving against a gentle resistance with every movement to generate a soft inner power.



# Develop Internal Components



- Loosen or ‘松 – “Song” the joints. Relax with Tai Chi. Tensed joints hinder the flow of Qi.
- Consciously and gently stretch your joints from within. When your joints are Song, Qi moves smoothly and powerfully through.
- Song strengthens internal ligaments and muscles, enhancing the function of the joints.
- Develop a state of mental quietness or ‘静 – Jing’ You are more mindful of the present and the self when you are Jing, allowing your mind to be quiet from within.

# Tai Chi for Balance and Strength



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# Tai Chi Warm Up Practice

- For the mind to control the body, it also means the mind is calm, and has great clarity and concentration.
- Tai Chi will not only help you to remember your movements, but will create a lifelong journey of integrating your body, mind and spirit.





# Tai Chi Resources

1. Tai Chi for Health Institute, Website: [www.taichiproductions.com](http://www.taichiproductions.com)  
Tai Chi training and Certification courses in Hawaii.
2. State of Hawaii, Department of Health Email: [ipcp@doh.Hawaii.gov](mailto:ipcp@doh.Hawaii.gov). Phone: 808-733-9320 **Falls Prevention Resource guide**, Tai Chi for Health classes in Hawaii.
3. YMCA of Honolulu offers Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention on the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, and Kauai.
4. ” Harvard Medical School Guide to Tai Chi” by Peter M. Wayne, PhD with Mark L. Fuerst.
5. “ Teaching Tai Chi Effectively” by Dr. Paul Lam with Maureen Miller.