

NEWSLETTER

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BOOK DONATION

Art from the Pa Kua class has donated four books to the club library:

Secrets of the Samurai
Essence of Aikido
Seven Steps To Inner Power
Warrior Athlete: Body, Mind & Spirit
Thank you Art.

TWO MORE BOOKS

1. A String of Pearls by Michael Gilman is an excellent Tai Chi companion book for beginners and advanced students.
2. Yu Shen Lianhuan Baguazhang translated by Joseph Crandall on the Gao style/branch of Cheng Ting Hua pa kua. This books covers the 64 energies used in Pa Kua applications.

Club Rules

- ◆ Relax
- ◆ Practice if you're not receiving instruction
- ◆ Practice softly, gently and mindfully.
- ◆ Don't rush. This applies to your learning as well as your forms.
- ◆ Talk during class should be either instructions or questions. Move to another room if you need to visit.
- ◆ Ask questions.
- ◆ Help one another.
- ◆ No pain, don't force any movement, be conformable.
- ◆ Club fee is due the first week of the month, I budge the month by this! Please pay on time.
- ◆ Evening class are 7-9:00,(9-9:30 practice) the club doors open at 6:30 unless you are scheduled for a private session. Doors will close at 9:35! Coming earlier may interrupt my dinner or resting period!

WHEN TO PHONE

If for some 'important' reason you need to miss a class the only reason to phone is if there are 4 or less of you in the particular session or if it's a private lesson. No need to 'check in' since I know you'll practice an extra hour each day that particular week to make up for you missing a class.

CLUB SUMMER RETREAT

July 25,26,27,&28th

Last month a few of us spend the day at Washington Park to check out practice areas and the camp ground. WOW! What a beautiful place. There were large flat rocks on the water to practice, a field by a cliff, a small mountainous area; all overlooking the islands. I am in the process of checking out motels for those who don't want to camp. There are of course camp grounds and RV hook ups. The beauty of this site is that if you have family members that aren't interested in T'ai-chi or Pa Kua they can come and visit Anacortes, La Conner, or jump the ferry to Victoria. Also to my delight there will be several high quality instructors visiting. I would like this to be a good informative practice retreat with equal time to enjoy the beauty of the area. More details

CONGRATULATIONS

Go to Chris Matthews for receiving his San Shou 7-8-9 completion certificate.

CLUB STORE

T'ai-chi Man T-shirts \$18.40

1996 FALL SCHEDULE

Chen Tai Chi: Wed 7-8pm This class is no closed for the following year.

T'ien Shan Chi Kung: Thurs 9-10:30a NO CLASSES DECEMBER!

Liang- I Chuan: Sat 9-9:45am

Basics/Beginning - Saturday 10-noon beginning class for Yang t'ai-chi and Pa Kua

Tuesday Continuing Yang Tai Chi:

Thursday Continuing Pa Kua: NO CLASSES DECEMBER

Sifu's T'ai-chi Book (our system) \$37.50

Pa Kua Chi Kung Book \$8.65

Misc. Video Tapes \$37.50

Sun Hsi-kung Pa Kua Book \$20.00

Gene's Beginning T'ai-chi Book \$10.00

HAVE YOU MOVED?

If so be sure I have your new phone # and address. Should class, workshops or lessons be changed or canceled I may need to contact you quickly. Also if you have an e-mail address please be sure I have it.

1997 COMING ATTRACTIONS

After the advanced group complete the Liang-I Chuan I will start a Saturday am Tai Chi Cane / Aiki Staff class. 1997 will be the year of the cane and staffs.

No Metal Swords

The security force at Woodland Park Zoo asks that we don't practice with metal swords in the park. The Seattle police didn't seem to have a problem with it but the park security was worried about scaring people as we practice. Wood swords are ok though.

BOOK OF THE MONTH:

The T'ai Chi Boxing Chronicle

by Kuo Lien-Ying

translated by Guttman

T'ai Chi's Role In Physical Fitness

© by Harvey Kurland 1996



I read a bumper sticker that said "T'AI-CHI - THE ULTIMATE EXERCISE" but is it? How does tai-chi ch'uan fit into the concept of physical fitness?

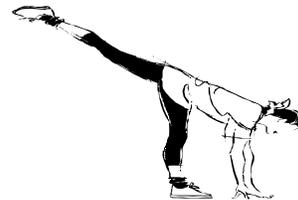
Because I am an exercise physiologist this is something I look at seriously. Most people do t'ai-chi because it makes them feel good, for moving meditation or to prevent and control certain medical conditions. It has some other novel benefits, as it teaches you to relax and fights stress and t'ai-chi helps balance and coordination. In Chinese medicine it is thought t'ai-chi helps to balance the body's chi flow. These benefits are not usually found in traditional sports. But there are many others parts to ultimate fitness. Relaxation and stress reduction are one part. Aerobic fitness, flexibility, muscular strength, muscular endurance and balance are other important components of physical fitness. It is also a martial art.

My research found that t'ai-chi slow form is a low intensity aerobic exercise (3 METS), suitable for older people and those who have a low aerobic capacity (Sports Med., Training and Rehab., 1992, Vol. 3, p 228). Aerobic exercise strengthens the cardiovascular, respiratory and aerobic enzyme systems in the muscles. To strengthen the aerobic system you have to stress it past normal comfort levels with a training load. The ideal load is 60% to 80% of your maximum capacity, for healthy people. If you use too light a load, e.g. 30% of your capacity, you may not see much of an improvement in your aerobic capacity. Though recent research has shown even regular long duration, low intensity exercise does promote good health and maintains current levels of fitness. My research found that the slow t'ai-chi form is similar to walking at 3 MPH in aerobic intensity (average Volume of 10.5 ml/kg/min). For moderately and highly fit people (maximal capacities over 40 ml/kg/min) the slow form is not enough for a training load. Fast form, two person form and pushing hands increase the training load.

Usually the percentage of heart rate is used for setting training intensity, such as 65% of predicted maximum heart rate. (Predicted heart rate is 220 minus your age and is accurate to +/- 20 beats) Heart

rate is correlated to how hard you are working. Of course knowing your true maximum heart rate works better in figuring this out, but that entails a maximal stress test, which is expensive. Many labs don't like to do maximal tests, due to increased risks to patients, so they use your predicted maximum heart rate too. They may stop the test when you get to a percentage of predicted maximum. Fast walking, jogging, stair climbing and bicycling are all good aerobic exercises.

The minimum amount of time to begin getting aerobic training benefit seems to be 20 minutes, three times a week. Below this level there is no guarantee of training effect. Actually most of the significant health benefits occur at a level of exercise that uses 300 calories per session (or day) at least 3 alternating days a week, independent of load. This is the threshold level that fat loss and increasing HDL's (good cholesterol) starts. The time can be divided into smaller 10 minutes sessions, where three 100 calorie sessions are equivalent to one 300 calorie session. This is equivalent to an hour to one-and-a-half hours of t'ai-chi ch'uan form exercise or 3 miles of walking, depending on your weight. Certain medications and disease can influence heart rate so always check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.



Other components of fitness include flexibility, muscular endurance, strength, body fat, coordination, balance, agility, power, and speed. Balance is

an important life preserving skill that has been shown by researchers to improve with the practice of t'ai-chi ch'uan. Recent research (J Am Geriatr Soc 44:489-497, 1996) showed that improved balance due to t'ai-chi can help reduce falls in the elderly (mean age 76.2 years). T'ai-chi was shown to reduce the risk of multiple falls by 47.5%. The researchers concluded that, "A moderate TC intervention can impact favorably on defined biomedical and psychosocial indices of frailty. This intervention can also have favorable effects upon the occurrence of falls." Or in others words they felt stronger and were less likely to fall down.

Flexibility is another specific component of fitness. Age is usually related to a decrease in fitness, but experts agree that decrease in flexibility is more of a non-use or disuse problem. A reduction in flexibility is related to muscle pain and injury. When people do not stretch and try to maintain their range of motion,

they lose flexibility. This rigidity can impair daily activities. Some of our nei kung (internal work) exercises, e.g. 24 breathing exercise and clam, specifically help to maintain and increase flexibility. Floor stretches are also very good. If you stop doing flexibility exercise you will revert back to your original range of motion. Doing the 24 (12 animal) nei kung daily will help you maintain your flexibility.

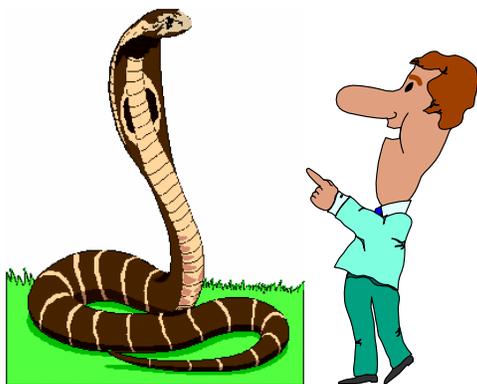
Other components of fitness include muscle strength and muscular endurance. Strength is necessary for completing daily activities such as lifting objects, grocery bags, moving furniture, and getting out of bed. It was found that by increasing the strength of seniors with weight training, that formerly bedridden seniors were able to get out of bed and take care of their personal needs. Maximum strength reduces with age, but with regular exercise this can be delayed or turned around, just as in the case of flexibility. T'ai-chi can help maintain and increase the strength of the legs and arms to a point, but it is not as efficient as weight training. Pushing hands also helps develop a very specific type of strength. In t'ai-chi we develop what is called "internal strength," based on sensitivity and body dynamics, and is different than brute strength. T'ai-chi can help to maintain your fitness if done regularly.

Harvey Kurland received his Masters Degree from the University of Washington and has dedicated himself to public health issues for the last 30 years. He has degrees in public health education and exercise physiology. He is a certificated chief instructor of t'ai-chi ch'uan by Grandmaster Tchoung Ta-tchen and teaches at the University of California at Riverside and Loma Linda University. He also holds certification from the American College of Sports Medicine and International Sports Sciences Association.

COORDINATION OF MIND AND BODY

"Oh please, I'm still trying to coordinate my hands and feet!" Once in a while I'll get that.

There is a misconception that some people are physically coordinated and some aren't. We all have the potential for good physical coordination it's just



Yes, that's it suspend the head top.
Next try Snake Creeps Down

each of us has slightly different materials (body & mind) to work with. For some it appears things come easy (appears is the key word) and there is an assumption that you either have it or you don't. Well, we all can't be concert pianists but we can learn to practice the scales and perhaps play some small piece. . . all it takes is *PRACTICE*.

However when it comes to the coordination of mind and body we're all born with this unity. Unfortunately it's something we grow out of, or as I prefer to think, we're taught out of and we adapt unhealthy habits. Of course let's put the blame where it should be: modern society.

As a child there is no separation between body and awareness. A child is present, in the moment fully experiencing what's going on. As we get older we start focusing on the future and the past, what was and what may happen. We start focusing on things out there in the 'real' world instead of us, our lives, our feelings, our experiences, the NOW, and then remembering them later.

When mind and body begin to harmonize there is a peacefulness and an alertness, a naturalness. This is one of the reasons that Tai Chi, Pa Kua, Chi Kung, Aikido and some spiritual disciplines like Yoga and Zen are popular. Their practice results in a peacefulness and thus moves us toward a healthier body and life.

As we practice our art, due to the deliberate or slowness of the movements our mind has no choice but to be in the present, here - now noticing and guiding the body to the required forms. Ideally we practice until we can perform a movement with 100% focus and awareness. Unfortunately after some practitioners learn the forms they practice by rote and their mind gets scattered and goes off wandering. During the time when the mind focuses primarily on what the body is doing there is a single focus of all mental energies toward and into the body. At this time there isn't any energy being wasted or scattered away by mental tension, assumptions and worry. (Much of our energy is tied up and scattered away by mental activity.)

During practice there is less scattering of energy (both mental and physical). When the mind becomes single pointed it has a chance to calm down and rest. When the mind is calm there is greater awareness permitted in the present. There is greater access to natural energy and personal power.

The mind and body are really one, in Tai Chi terms they are yin and yang, insubstantial and substantial. Different sides of one coin. As we slow down, relax

and live in the present the friction between them becomes minimal and we're able to relax , enjoy and live in the present. When we're in the present we have time to smell the perfume of the flowers, enjoy the beauty of the cloud formation, notice the singing of the stream.

This harmony just takes practice so that we become accustom to it, once we do it'll be nothing special, just life (a healthier life). And I'm sure there'll be other stuff to refine. Now we like to think that there are special occasions or places where we can practice. When I get to class, after work, once I get home, once the kids are out . . .

Your homework for life that I've given you is doing the same thing; coordination of mind and body! It just sounded different: are you comfortable? Check to make sure you're comfortable every stop light, every commercial, every line you wait in. In order to be comfortable your mind has to be present and 'listen' to your body and the current situation. As you do this mind and body are harmonized.

Students are fond of saying they didn't have time to practice this or that form. This coordination is more important than the forms since we're doing and practicing the art in order to achieve this coordination all the time. Class time is to study the principles, real life is to practice what we've been studying.

In nature energy, like water, will seek it's own level. It will flow where it needs to, it will flow where it can and move around obstacles. The same is true to a great extend with the energy in our bodies. Without interference our energy will work on keeping all parts of our body working correctly. Energy will be focused on areas weak, that need to be healed, the low spots. When this is taken care of it will begin to store a surplus in our cells to use when needed.

As our mind and body harmonize there is less distractions or interference for our energy to encounter so we may maintain optimal health. When the mind is scattered or worried it ties up much energy, robbing areas that may need it just to support our system. The calmer the mind, the more

present the mind the more energy is freed up to do whatever needs to be done.

On a physical level the harmony of mind and body increases our strength and efficiency. More importantly, for me, is that the harmony of mind and body helps us move toward a sense of spirit, an area of calmness and an outlook of security.

Now, put this down and practice! Listen to your movements as you practice a form, feel as you take up

a standing meditation posture. Listen to the silence as you sit in meditation, or simply: empty your mind.

ATD

SUGGESTED READING LIST

The Spirit of Aikido	K. Ueshiba
Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body	B.K. Frantzis
Energy Theory and Cultivation	Johnson
The Way of Energy	Lam Kam Chuen
Cheng Shi Baguazhang translation - Crandall	Ma/Liu
Pa Kua Chang for Fitness & Self-Defense	Smith/Pittman
Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain	Al Chung-liang Huang
T'ai Chi Ch'uan Ta Wen	Chen Wei-Ming
Cheng Tzu's 13 Treatises on T'ai Chi Ch'uan	Cheng Man Ch'ing
Advanced T'ai-Chi Form Instructions	Cheng Man-Ch'ing
Yang Family Secret Transmissions	Douglas Wile
The T'ai Chi Boxing Chronicle	Kuo Lien-Ying
The Essence of T'ai Chi Ch'uan	Lo/Inn/Amacker/Foe
Gateway to the Miraculous There Are No Secrets	Wolfe Lowenthal
Seven Taoist Masters: A Folk Novel of China	Wolfe Lowenthal
A Warrior Blends with Life: A Modern Tao	Eva Wong (translator)
Vitality Energy Spirit A Taoist Sourcebook	Michael LaTorra
SString of Pearls	Thomas Cleary
Ki in Daily Life	Michael Gilman
Bagua Quan Zhen Chuan / Crandall	Koichi Tohei
	Sun Xikun