FAST FACTS: Tai chi

Tai chi (pronounced TIE-CHEE), an ancient Chinese tradition, was originally developed for self-defense but has developed into a graceful form of exercise and can reduce pain through strengthening and improving flexibility and balance. Tai chi involves a series of slow, gentle, smooth movements.

✓ Core Components of Tai chi
- Noncompetitive, self-paced system of gentle physical exercise and stretching.
- Low impact, puts minimal stress on muscles or joints, making it very suitable for older adults.
- During movement the participant should breathe deeply and naturally, focusing on movements.
- Requires no special equipment and can be done indoors or outdoors.
- As with all therapies, consult with your family member healthcare provider before trying Tai chi.

✓ Benefits of Tai chi
- Research indicates Tai chi shows promise with:
  - Chronic pain reduction
  - Decreasing stress, anxiety, and depression
  - Increasing energy
  - Improving aerobic capacity
  - Improving balance and flexibility
  - May also help with:
    - Improving sleep
    - Reducing falls in older adults

✓ What Else You Should Do
- Encourage your family member to try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on their pain in their Pain Diary.
- Write down and share information about your family member’s pain with their healthcare provider.

Resources

