

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

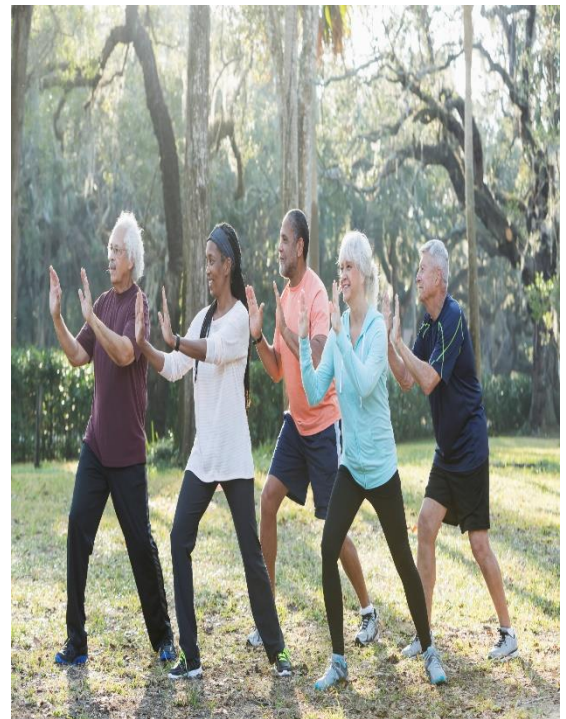
- Noncompetitive, self-paced system of gentle physical exercise and stretching.
- Low impact, puts minimal stress on muscles or joints, making it very suitable for older adults.
- During movement the participant should breathe deeply & naturally, focusing movements.
- Requires no special equipment and can be done indoors or outdoors.
- As with all therapies, consult with your 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 or flexibility
 - May also help with:
 - Improving sleep
 - Reducing falls in older adults

✓ What Else You Should Do

- Try a non-drug treatment and document the impact on your pain in your [Pain Diary](#)
- Write down and share information about your pain with your healthcare provider.



Resources

1. Harvard Medical School. (2022). *The health benefits of tai chi*. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-health-benefits-of-tai-chi> Accessed 9/19/2022.
2. National Council on Aging (2021). *The health benefits of Tai Chis and How to Get Started*. https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Veteran_Public/Home_Practice.asp. Accessed 2/20/2023.
3. Urits I, Schwartz RH, Orhurhu V, Maganty NV, Reilly BT, Patel PM, Wie C, Kaye AD, Mancuso KF, Kaye AJ, Viswanath O. A Comprehensive Review of Alternative Therapies for the Management of Chronic Pain Patients: Acupuncture, Tai Chi, Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine, and Chiropractic Care. *Adv Ther*. 2021 Jan;38(1):76-89. doi: 10.1007/s12325-020-01554-0. Epub 2020 Nov 12. PMID: 33184777; PMCID: PMC7854390.

Revised February 2023