

Tai Chi

Tai chi is a traditional Chinese exercise method. Each gentle exercise or stretch slowly flows into the next movement without pause. This ensures that your body is in constant motion.

Studies have shown that tai chi's focus on slow smooth movements, breath control and relaxation is as effective as many other forms of exercise and treatment. Tai chi can help to reduce one's sense of pain, maintain strength and reduce symptoms of depression. It also helps to improve sleep, balance, cardiopulmonary health, and overall feelings of well-being.

GETTING STARTED

Tai chi is self-paced and low-impact. These aspects enable most people to be able to practice it — no matter their age and physical ability. It works well for people who find movement difficult. Tai chi even can be done while you sit in a chair.

All types of tai chi are not the same. There are a number of choices. All are related but emphasize different features of the discipline. Because there are different types of tai chi as well as instructor styles, you may want to visit a class, talk to the instructor, and ask to watch a session before joining.

Search online to find tai chi classes near you. Or contact local fitness centers, senior centers and YMCA or YWCA sites. If you are new to tai chi, these national registries can help you find classes and specialized health practitioners:

- **Tai Chi Foundation:** taichifoundation.org/
- **American Tai Chi and QiGong Association:** americantaichi.org/index.asp?imgtab=3



CAUTION

Ask a member of your care team if tai chi is appropriate for you and your medical condition. Many people can do tai chi if they follow these precautions:

- No leg or arm movements after a joint replacement surgery and any other type of limb surgery.
- No standing balance postures if you are at risk of falling or have lower extremity weight bearing precautions.
- No arm raises after shoulder and cardiac surgery.
- If you had spinal-fusion surgery, for 3 months after surgery do not bend or twist your neck or lower back.

OTHER RESOURCES

You can learn more about tai chi from these resources:

- **Handout:** [Tai chi: Discover the many possible health benefits sharedfiles.mayoclinic.org/bedside/ope/GNT-20232980.html](http://Tai%20chi:%20Discover%20the%20many%20possible%20health%20benefits%20sharedfiles.mayoclinic.org/bedside/ope/GNT-20232980.html)
- **Video:** [Gentle Movements Tai Chi Qigong mayoclinic.org/pe?mc=MC5997](http://Gentle%20Movements%20Tai%20Chi%20Qigong%20mayoclinic.org/pe?mc=MC5997)
- **Video:** [Beginning Level Short Form Tai Chi Foundation: vimeo.com/398652087](http://Beginning%20Level%20Short%20Form%20Tai%20Chi%20Foundation:%20vimeo.com/398652087)
- **YouTube** can also be a good video resource. It provides access to many instructional videos as well as more focused videos to help you master tai chi movements. Be sure to modify as needed to adhere to any precautions.

