

# Tai Chi Offers A Wealth of Health Benefits



For women or the ageing, it provides an ideal activity for life.

Perth, WA, 7 April 2014 — Fatigue, pain, stress...practitioners and those in the know say all those ills may be alleviated by the ancient martial art of Tai Chi.

Michelle Monks, Gym Manager at the Warwick Women's Workout, says Tai Chi provides an ideal 'exercise' for anyone, but especially women, the overweight, or the aged.

"You don't have to be in tip-top shape to practice it," Monks says. "It's a very forgiving, easygoing art no matter what condition you're in physically."

Tai Chi (pronounced "chee") is a martial art developed in ancient China. Typically practised outside, Tai Chi incorporates slow, controlled movements. It also emphasises correct posture in order to evoke awareness of the body and its motions.

For people of varied abilities and physical conditions, Tai Chi is low-impact, gentle, and best of all, relaxing — offering the benefits of traditional mindfulness meditation without the sweat and breathlessness of typical high intensity exercise.

Monks says, "One of the best things about Tai Chi is you won't need special equipment, workout clothes or shoes, and it can be practised indoors or outside, alone, or with a group of many others."

It is said that Tai Chi can help reduce anxiety. For those suffering the effects of mood imbalances or depression, Tai Chi may be able to offer improvement. Engaging in its gentle movements is often considered desirable over medication for anxiety.

A US study was conducted amongst people who suffer from fibromyalgia, a complicated and generally misunderstood pain syndrome that troubles the joints. Tai Chi's exercises can help alleviate tautness in both the muscles and joints, in turn helping increase the flexibility and inflammation. The study found that aged non-sufferers of fibro also saw improvement with knee pain and joint and muscles became less prone to stress and injury. Tai Chi is a weight-bearing exercise, in turn making it ideal for maintaining bone strength.

"Many people who practise Tai Chi swear by it for the experience of sleeping better and more deeply," Monks says. "For those who suffer from insomnia, it's a great way to help fall asleep more quickly and wake up refreshed the next day."

Practitioners surmise Tai Chi's gentle physical movements and controlled breathing work powerfully against toxins and internal disease.

"You should always consult your doctor first before beginning any exercise or regimen," Monks advises. "Tai Chi should never be considered a 'magic elixir', or something that will fix everything that ails you, but its benefits are real when practised regularly."

"If you suffer from chronic illness, or if you're overweight or haven't undertaken exercise of late, Tai Chi can be very helpful, but your health care provider should be able to make that assessment first," Monks says.

After consulting with your physician, Monks recommends searching for a certified instructor.

"It may look simple, but one cannot 'learn' Tai Chi from simply reading a book or watching a DVD," Monks says. It should only be taught by an instructor certified in the martial art. Monks recommends obtaining feedback from the instructor to be sure one's movements are done correctly. Ideally, she says, the instructor should have at least 10 years of experience.

Warwick Women's Workout in Perth offers Tai Chi sessions off-circuit at their women's fitness facility. Contact Michelle Monks about exploring the benefits of this ancient martial art. View their webpage at <http://www.warwickwomensworkout.com.au> or contact them by phone at (08) 9342 9028.

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