

Tai Chi Ch'uan

Often shortened to **Taiji** or **Tai Chi** in English usage, **T'ai Chi Ch'uan** or **Tàijíquán** is an internal Chinese martial art practised for both its defence training and its health benefits. It is non-competitive, gentle, and generally slow-paced. Contrary to the Western concept of "no pain, no gain" one hour of Tai Chi actually burns more calories than surfing, and nearly as many as downhill skiing, so it can also be a very good workout. Over time practicing Tai Chi will increase strength, flexibility, body awareness and mental concentration, resulting in improved health.

It is practised for a variety of other personal reasons, including its hard and soft martial art technique, for demonstration competitions, and for longevity. As a result, a number of various training forms exist, both traditional and modern, which correspond to those aims.

Today, Tai Chi has spread worldwide. Most modern styles of Tai Chi trace their development to at least one of the five traditional schools: Chen, Yang, Wu (Hao), Wu, and Sun.



Chinese Welfare Services of SA Inc Fan Form Demonstration

In the last twenty years or so, Tai Chi classes that purely emphasise health have become popular in hospitals and clinics, as well as community and senior centres. This has occurred as the Baby Boomers generation has aged, and the art's reputation as a low-stress training method for seniors has become better known.

Practicing Tai Chi has many benefits including:-

- Promoting better balance;
- Improving body coordination;
- Achieving a deep relaxation;
- Maintaining correct body posture;
- Cultivating internal energy, known as Qi (pronounced "Chi")
- Improving memory;
- Controlling the pace of breathing; and
- Strengthening the body and the function of our organs.

A 2011 overview of existing research on Tai Chi's health effects found evidence of medical benefit for preventing falls, improving mental health, and general health in elderly people. No conclusive evidence was found for other conditions, but the practice of Tai Chi is encouraged by the National Parkinson Foundation, Diabetes Australia and Arthritis Australia.