Benefits of Tai Chi

Tai Chi is safe (Li 2014 and Wayne 2012) and suitable for everyone, male or female, young or old, unfit or super-fit, people with or without a disability (Khor 1993, p.26).

The benefits of Tai Chi are physical, mental, emotional and spiritual (Khor 1993, p.25). With regular practice research has shown that Tai Chi may help:

- Improve exercise capacity (Taylor-Pilae 2008 and Yeh 2009)
- Control and reduce pain (Ye 2014)
- Increase flexibility (Huang Y 2015)
- Strengthen tendons, bones (Song 2010) and muscles (Liu 2011)
- Enhance the body's immune system (Zeng 2014)
- Reduce blood pressure (Sun J 2015 and Xiong 2015)
- Improve balance – sitting (Lee 2015) and standing (Huang Y 2015 and Song 2015)
- Reduce fear, risk and rate of falls (Gillespie 2012, Huang T-T 2011 & Huang Z-G 2017)
- Improve self-efficacy and exercise adherence (Li G 2014 & Yang J H 2017)
- Improve cardiovascular performance (Nery 2015)
- Improve respiratory function (Leung 2012 and Wu W 2014)
- Improve sleep (Chan 2016 and Lu 2017)
- Improve quality of life (Wang X 2015 and Zeng 2014)
- Reduce stress, depression and anxiety (Wang C 2010)
- Improve cognitive function (Sungkarat 2016 and Wu Y 2013)

As a healing art Tai Chi is widely used by the Chinese to alleviate and sometimes cure insomnia, arthritis, rheumatism, anaemia, chronic indigestion, listlessness, mental strain, depression and nervous breakdown (Khor 1993, p.25).

In the West Tai Chi has been principally used for falls prevention in the elderly. However, the fact that Tai Chi is such a gentle form of exercise makes it excellent in the rehabilitation of many other conditions such as:

- Bariatrics – Weight control (Dechamps 2009)
- Cardiac Rehab – Coronary Heart Disease (Gu 2017 & Salmoirago-Blotcher 2017)
- Chronic Pain – Fibromyalgia (Jones 2012), Low Back Pain (Hall 2016)
- Mental Illness – Depression (Wang X 2015), Schizophrenia (Ho 2012)
- Neurological – Multiple Sclerosis (Taylor 2017), Parkinson's Disease (Song 2017 and Yang Y 2015), Stroke (Taylor-Pilae 2012 and Zheng 2015), Traumatic Brain Injury (Blake 2009)
- Oncology and Palliative care – Breast Cancer (Pan 2015), Fatigue (Hsu 2016)
- Pulmonary Rehab – COPD (Ngai 2016)
- Osteoporosis (Wang Y 2017)
- Rheumatology – Rheumatoid arthritis (Han 2004 and Wang C 2008), Osteoarthritis (Lauche 2013)

The skills learned in Tai Chi can also be used to enhance any activity such as:

- Sports – Running, horse riding, golf, skiing, rock climbing, wind surfing etc.
- Ergonomics – Moving and handling techniques
- Art – Dancer, actor, sculptor and musician (Khor 1993, p.25, Yu 2003, p.13)

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