



Mental Health Benefits of tai chi.

By Meg Hutton

Regular practice of tai chi can have profound positive effects on the mental health and wellbeing of students and instructors.

Many students are quite surprised when they begin tai chi to find that they feel relaxed when they come into the class room and hear soothing music playing. They are also pleasantly surprised to find that while in class they forget about many things like heat waves and cold days that we experience in Adelaide or the things they have to deal with after class, such as meals, work, bills or taking care of family. Focusing on the moves and working in time with the rest of the class fully absorbs the mind. In turn giving the brain a rest while exercising improves the ability to deal with whatever issues/tasks/decisions that need attention.

The benefits commonly experienced early on are :

- ✓ *Improved sleeping*
- ✓ *A feeling of relaxation in class*
- ✓ *Lifting of depression while doing tai chi*
- ✓ *Relief from work stress and a hectic life style while in class or practicing*
- ✓ *“Giving the brain a rest from the clutter of daily life”.*
- ✓ *Feeling refreshed after class*

The longer term benefits are:

- ✓ *A flexible, healthy body with good circulation and breathing which in turn has a very positive influence on mental health*
- ✓ *Lowering of blood pressure where it has previously been high*
- ✓ *Calmness in daily life*
- ✓ *An ability to cope with problems in a calm, logical and efficient way*
- ✓ *A general feeling of well being.*
- ✓ *Energy and flexibility to enjoy life no matter what the age*
- ✓ *Improved memory and mental alertness*
- ✓ *An improved ability to accept life as it comes*

Please turn over

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Bend with the Wind

*On a rugged southern coastline,
Where the winter winds howl,
They blast native trees with cold, salty air.*

*The trees respond to the strength of the wind with a graceful bow.
Growing straight, rigid and proud would cause their demise
So they bend as they grow.*

*Rounded, almost horizontal, beautiful, and strong
The wildest storms can do no harm to the trees.
They bend their backs to the wind and protect their sturdy roots.
The wind blows harmlessly over them
And the trees sway gracefully and submit to the wind.*

*Bend with the wind
Let the unpredictable winds of life
Flow over you, around you
Making you grow stronger with each passing year.*

Meg Hutton