



News from the Arthritis Foundation

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TAI CHI HEALTHY CHOICE FOR PEOPLE WITH ARTHRITIS *Arthritis Foundation Offers New Joint-Safe Activity*

ATLANTA – For centuries, Tai Chi has been practiced in China as an effective exercise for physical and mental well-being. Now, the Arthritis Foundation is launching a new joint-safe Tai Chi program designed to improve the quality of life for people with arthritis, as more and more people turn to alternative approaches to address chronic conditions.

Tai Chi from the Arthritis Foundation is designed for people of all ages seeking a joint-safe exercise routine, but particularly those with mild to moderate arthritis.

Research shows moderate physical activity helps people with arthritis feel better and relieves pain. Tai Chi may be especially suitable for people with joint problems because its movements are slow and gentle, and the level of exertion can be adjusted to suit each person's physical condition. In addition, the movements in the style of Tai Chi used by the Arthritis Foundation are performed at higher stances, which make it easier and more comfortable to learn.

Tai Chi from the Arthritis Foundation provides another exercise option for people with arthritis who may be seeking easy and affordable variety in their fitness routine from a trusted source. "It's a great way to feel great, stay fit and keep moving," said Shannon Whetstone Mescher, M.Ed., CHES, Vice President of Programs and Services for the Arthritis Foundation.

The benefits of Tai Chi may include reduced pain and stiffness, improved concentration and memory, greater balance, increased flexibility, enhanced muscle strength, along with improved ability to cope with stress and depression.

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“While an individualized workout plan is crucial, some people like the added fun and encouragement of group exercise,” added Mescher. “*Tai Chi from the Arthritis Foundation* combines the fun and support of a social group, with the benefits of a well-designed exercise routine from a trusted source -- the Arthritis Foundation.”

“Because of Tai Chi’s focus on muscle strengthening and flexibility, it should be good for fundamentally all types of arthritis,” said John H. Klippel, M.D., medical director of the Arthritis Foundation. “The slow concentrated movements of Tai Chi make it ideal for those whose joints and bones can’t take the jarring effects of many other forms of exercise.”

Before beginning any physical activity program, check with your doctor. Also, if you think you have arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation urges you to seek an early and specific diagnosis. With more than 100 forms of arthritis and related diseases, a specific diagnosis is critical because each form requires a different treatment.

For a FREE copy of the brochure, *Exercise and Your Arthritis*, contact the Arthritis Foundation at 800-283-7800 or on the Web site at www.arthritis.org.

The Arthritis Foundation is the only nationwide, nonprofit health organization helping people take greater control of arthritis by leading efforts to prevent, control and cure arthritis and related diseases – the nation's number one cause of disability.

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