

Why you should try Tai Chi



Tai Chi is a gentle exercise option that's low in impact but high in reward.

It makes use of slow and careful movements that continuously shift your centre of gravity. Making it a safe way to practice your balance control.

And it's [suitable for older adults with chronic illness](#). Allowing you to improve your health without exacerbating existing issues.

It's cost-effective and versatile, too. You can practice Tai Chi outside with others, or in the comfort and convenience of your own home.

All in all, there are many reasons you should consider giving Tai Chi a go.

The benefits of gentle exercise

Regular light exercise, such as Tai Chi or [chair yoga](#), has many benefits for older people.

- It helps you manage your cholesterol and [blood pressure](#).
- It helps with conditions such as [Type 2 Diabetes](#), affecting how the body responds to insulin.
- Regular movement reduces risk of bone fractures by maintaining bone density. This is useful in managing [osteoporosis](#).
- Low impact exercise helps with [arthritis](#). In fact, Tai Chi is proven to [aid physical and mental health](#) in patients with knee osteoarthritis.

Learn more about [exercise for healthy ageing](#) and exercise [recommendations for older people](#).

Okay, but why try Tai Chi, specifically?

The health benefits of Tai Chi

Tai Chi's health benefits are many and well-studied.

A [2021 study](#) found Tai Chi significantly improves cardiorespiratory fitness in older people. As well as strength, balance, mobility, sleep, and even cognition. And it reduces falls and stroke risk factors.

It improves mobility and balance in older people more effectively than conventional exercise. And it's more efficient too. This is according to a [2023 literature review](#).

Reduce your risk of falling

Tai Chi has been found to successfully [decrease the rate of falls in older people](#). It practices your posture control, trunk rotation, weight transfer, and strength. All of which improve your balance.

[According to Harvard Health Publishing](#), Tai Chi trains your proprioception. That's your ability to sense your body's position in space. It also builds your muscle strength and flexibility. Strengthening your upper and lower limbs, as well as the core muscles of your back and abdomen. This all makes it easier for you to recover from a stumble. Which reduces your fear of falling. Which, incidentally, makes falling less likely.

Learn more about [exercise for falls prevention](#) and [balance exercises to try at home](#).



The mental health benefits of Tai Chi

Tai Chi could help you practice mindfulness. That's a type of calm mental state.

Now, you don't have to be interested in the history of Tai Chi to enjoy it as a physical exercise. However, like yoga, Tai Chi has roots in a spiritual philosophy. So, it comes with built-in breathing techniques and meditation practices. To encourage calmness in your mind and body.

It's also an opportunity to join a group and connect with people in your area. [Staying connected with your community](#) is an important aspect of your mental health. And it's a big part of ageing well.

How do I get started with Tai Chi?

Getting started

First, put on loose, comfortable clothes. You can go barefoot or wear flexible shoes with thin soles.

You should be able to find a class in your area by looking online or checking your nearest community centre. You can even observe a class before participating, in many cases. You can also follow videos online, if you prefer to try it out at home.

If you're opting to follow instructional videos at home, have someone join you. And choose somewhere nice to practice. Make sure you have room to extend your arms around you. Check there's nothing on the floor or in your way. It might also be nice to find a place with natural light and a pleasant view.



Important information

Before you begin any new exercises, remember to listen to your body. Stop and seek advice from a medical professional if you feel new or increasing pain. Get immediate help if you feel dizzy, clammy, or short of breath.

Some exercises may not be for you. Consult a medical professional if you are unsure.

Use Tai Chi to develop your fitness skills

You can practice Tai Chi a little bit every day. Soon enough, you might find you can exercise for a longer time each day.

[The Health Department](#) recommends you do 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise on as many days as you can manage. But whatever you choose to do, even a little bit will go a long way.

Get advice from your healthcare professional when planning a new exercise regimen.

More helpful information

If you would like to find local exercise classes, social activities, and helpful tips, try the [LiveUp quiz](#), or free call **1800 951 971**.

CONTACT US

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LiveUp is a healthy ageing initiative funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care.