

Tai Chi Ch'uan

Melissa Sioux Stark-Stewart grew up in California and began her physical training as a Ballet dancer. In 1993, she began studying Yang Style Tai Chi Chuan with Sifu Clarence Burris at the Chinese Martial Arts Institute in Fairfax, Virginia. She soon became a Black Belt level instructor at the institute and went on to demonstrate and teach Tai Chi in a number of different facilities across the nation and in Europe.

In 1995, she was instrumental in developing a Tai Chi program for seniors and the physically impaired at the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College. This special program emphasized muscle tone, stress reduction and breathing which are essential for individuals challenged by physical limitations.



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More recently, she developed and taught Tai Chi programs for employees at TRW/Esperian, Beckman, 3M and IBM. She also developed programs and presented classes for several Fitness Centers and Day Spas across the nation. She is currently offering classes at L.A. Fitness in Anaheim Hills, as well as, private classes around the Orange County area.

Melissa traveled to China in 1997 and obtained additional certification by completing an intensive Tai Chi master class at the prestigious Sha Shi Hai Institute in Beijing.

Additionally, she has also studied and achieved proficiency in meditation, relaxation therapy, strength training, yoga, longevity stick, and nutrition. She integrates these disciplines into her Tai Chi program to provide a balanced mental and physical training opportunity.

Tai Chi is a martial art based upon the principals of Chinese medicine, spiritual harmony and meditation. It utilizes slow movements to strengthen the muscles, improve coordination and increase flexibility. The breathing methods practiced in Tai Chi enhance deep relaxation of body and mind. Through the centuries, this peaceful "martial way" has proven effective in relieving stress and in improving a person's general well being.

Although Tai Chi is an ancient martial art, it currently ranks high among the leading fitness activities. Studying the movements of Tai Chi is challenging, fun and relaxing. Students learn to improve their mental concentration, balance, and gracefulness.

Studying this art does not require special clothing, equipment or space. Students may practice alone or in a group, and each student can develop at their own pace.

Do You Have Time?

There are 168 hours in each week. Typically, 56 hours of these hours are spent sleeping; 21 are set aside for meals; 40 to 50 are devoted to work, school and study. Therefore, approximately 41 hours still remain to do activities to take care of other needs. Participation in a Tai Chi class requires only 2 hours of class time and less than 1 hour of practice on your own each week. This means that there are at least 38 hours left to take care of all other needs.

Benefits of Tai Chi for Seniors and Tai Chi are synonymous. A study sponsored by the National Institute on Aging, conducted at a prominent university in Georgia in 1995 was published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). This study showed that Tai Chi was the only exercise that statistically and significantly decreased the number of falls among the elderly. Falls are the sixth largest cause of death among seniors, and contribute to a general health decline even when they're not direct cause of death. The Tai Chi practitioners reported a 25% decrease in injuries from falls. Preventing falls is certainly an important goal for the senior population.

Class Times Are Flexible

***Private, semiprivate
and group classes are
available.***



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*Tai
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