

Wudang

Twin Cities T'ai Chi

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TEACHING THE ART, SCIENCE, AND SPIRIT OF T'AI CHI

From Sifu Paul

Greetings, everyone,

Happy May Day and springtime, a truly joyful season of the year.

It's also the time when we can take our T'ai Chi practice outside and enjoy the flow of the form out in nature. Our outdoor class begins Thursday, May 2, at Hampden Park (weather permitting). The beginning weapons class has moved to Wednesday at 7:30 (see the class description on page 3).

April is a special month for me: this year, I celebrate 42 years of T'ai Chi practice.

We're already looking ahead to our summer picnic, which will be on August 3 this year, so please save the date.

Spring and summer are great times for travel and other activities—sometimes making it hard to keep your T'ai Chi practice in the lineup. In this issue, I offer a few ideas on how to form habits that will help you keep the rhythm of practice going.

I look forward to seeing you at the studio and in the park.

Graduation News

Congratulations to the following members for their dedication to learning the complete Yang Style Cane Form:

Larry Elder
Libby Frost
Melissa Johnson
Paul Stever



T'ai Chi in the Park

Every spring, summer, and into the fall, our T'ai Chi class moves outdoors to Hampden Park (993 Hampden Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114) under the large linden tree at the southeast end of the park. This year, we will meet on Thursdays.

- The 5:30 p.m. period is for those who haven't finished learning the Solo Form, so come at that time if you'd like to get corrections and learn some new movements.
- The T'ai Chi class begins at 6:00 p.m. with a short lesson or movement practice that's followed by warm-ups and Qigong.
- We do a full Solo Form together, finishing around 7:15 p.m.
- A 20- to 30-minute weapons review follows, then the 12 Animals practice for those who know that set.

The birds, squirrels, and rabbits don't mind sharing their space, and one summer, a mother

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T'ai Chi in the Park starts in May!

Hampden Park
993 Hampden Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55114

hawk raised her young and gave flying lessons overhead. A good time was had by all. Please join us for T'ai Chi in the Park. See you there.

Weather Happens

T'ai Chi practice in the park can be amazing. But occasionally, the weather makes it impossible—even unsafe—to do. In case of bad weather, any class cancellations will be posted a few ways: (1) on our website's landing page as a red ribbon at the top of the page, (2) on our Facebook page, and sometimes, if time permits, (3) as an email sent to your inbox. If the weather looks questionable, please check these information sources. The park class will then move to the studio.



Happy Birthday, Grandmaster Choi

On March 29, Wai-lun Choi turned 85 years old. Master Choi began practicing martial arts in 1957, studying Tibetan Lama under Chan Kuen Ng. He continued his studies in Mai Jung Lo Hon, Northern Praying Mantis, Northern Shaolin, herbal medicine, and bonesetting under Poon Mao-yung in Hong Kong.

In 1963, Wai-lun Choi was accepted as a pupil of Chan Yik Yan, where he studied the internal arts: T'ai Chi, Pa Kua, Hsing-I, Yi-Ch'uan, and Liu Ho Pa Fa, of which Chan was the current lineage holder/grandmaster.

Wai-lun Choi continued his studies with Master Chan until he opened his school in Chicago in 1972. While in Hong Kong,



Master Choi taught at the Hua Yuek Shin Yih Institute of Physical Culture (1965–1969) and then opened his first martial arts studio in 1969, where he taught Liu Ho Ba Fa to the general public for the first time.

In 1971, Wai-lun Choi, as part of the Hong Kong delegation, won the Southeast Asian Hand-to-Hand Martial Arts Tournament in Singapore. He defeated the reigning champion, Wong Chai Leung, and earned the nickname Canon Fist. It was the results of this competition that convinced Grand Master Chan Yik Yan to designate Wai-lun Choi the successor to the Liu Ho Ba Fa system. Grandmaster Choi taught in Chicago from 1972–2005.

Paul Abdella studied Liu Ho Pa Fa, Hsing-I, T'ai Chi, Qigong, Pushing-Hands, and Sword with Master Choi in Chicago and Minnesota from 1995–2005.

Contact Us

For timely updates, follow Twin Cities T'ai Chi Ch'uan on Facebook.

Email: mail@tctaichi.org

Website: tctaichi.org

Phone: 651.767.0267.

All articles and other content created by Paul Abdella unless otherwise noted.

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Happy 85th birthday,
Grandmaster Choi!

T'ai Chi Saber Begins Wednesday, May 1

The Yang-Style Dao (broadsword/saber) Form will be taught Wednesday evening at 7:30 p.m. beginning May 1, after the Solo Form class. If you have finished learning the Solo Form and can perform it on your own, you may come to this class and learn the T'ai Chi Saber form.

This is an enjoyable form to learn, with active footwork and lively swordplay that will help develop your T'ai Chi Solo Form and ability to move your energy beyond your hands.

Upcoming Classes and Changes to the Schedule

Monday

T'ai Chi Solo Form: 6:00–7:15 p.m. (& Zoom)

Qigong and Meditation: 7:30–8:30 p.m.

Tuesday

T'ai Chi Symmetries:

- Level 1: 6:00–7:15 p.m., Group 1: Symmetries 1 and 2; Group 2: Symmetries 4 and 5
- Level 2: 7:15–8:30 p.m., Symmetry 7 and the Linking Form

Wednesday

Beginning Solo Form Fundamentals:
12:30–1:45 p.m.

Beginning Solo Form: 6:00–7:15 p.m.

Beginning Weapons: 7:30–8:30 p.m.

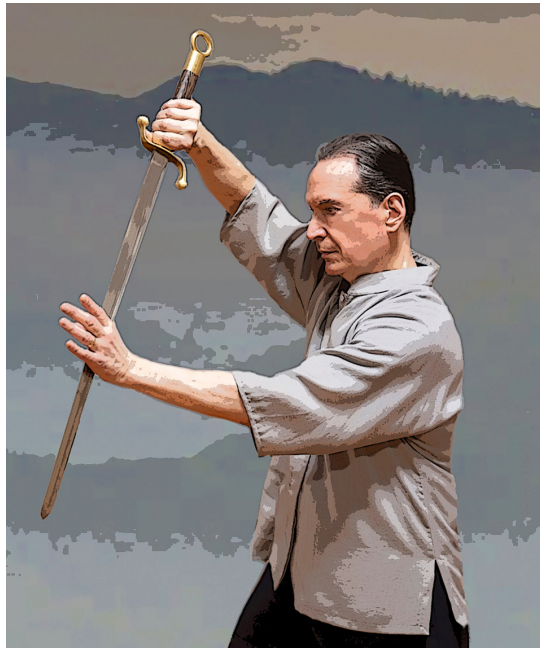
Thursday

T'ai Chi in the Park

- Solo Form: 6:00–7:15 p.m.
- Weapons Review: 7:15–7:45 p.m.
- 12 Animals Review: 7:45–8:15 p.m.

Saturday

Beginning Solo Form Sections 2 and 3:
10:15–11:30 a.m.



Common Warm-Up & Qigong:
11:00–11:30 a.m.

Beginning Solo Form Section 1:
11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Solo Form: 12:30–1:45 p.m. (& Zoom)

Excellence in Our Community

Studio Members

Hedy Trip received a fellowship from the Loft Literary Center and a Minnesota State Arts grant to produce a manuscript of her memoirs. While not writing or reading, she spends time with her grandkids.

Narate Keys released the soundtrack album from her play *Aspara*, a musical about a love story dating back to the early 12th century in Narate's native country, Cambodia. Narate wrote the manuscript and lyrics for the musical. The album was recorded in Minneapolis and features local musicians.

Paul Stever directs the choir and plays the piano for a masterwork by Norwegian composer Andre Arneson. May 18, 7:00 p.m. Pilgrim Lutheran Church.

Tom Reich displays his handmade wooden kaleidoscopes, bowls, goblets, and other objects at the Saint Paul Art Crawl at the Union Depot, St. Paul.

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T'ai Chi Saber begins
May 1.

The Rhythms of Life and Practice

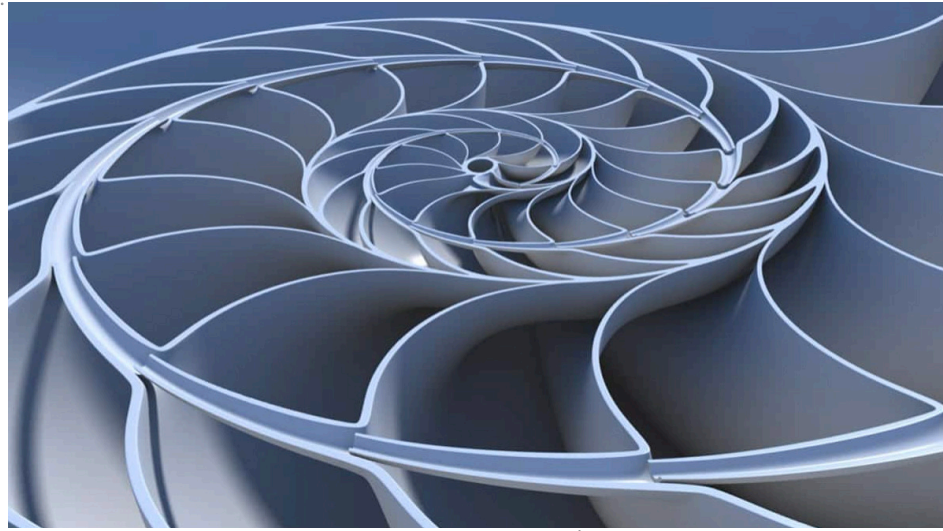
Rhythm plays an important role in how we perceive and connect with the world around us and is integral in our work and social lives, our health, and how we age.

Our world is a symphony of rhythms produced in nature, in the universe, and in ourselves. Modern life has lost much of its attunement to the cycles of nature. The practice of T'ai Chi can return us to the natural rhythms within us. The gentle and natural rhythm of the Solo Form, with its expanding and contracting nature, slow, deep breathing, and hypnotic repetition of postures, overcomes the stresses and off-rhythm nature of a life driven by mechanical time. It is important for us to continually refine our movements through repetition and the attention to detail that can stimulate the natural vitality within us.

One crucial rhythm that must be present in order for this to occur is the rhythm of regular practice.



Practice is closely associated with setting goals, such as the goal of learning the Solo Form, gaining better balance, becoming more flexible and more relaxed, etc. Author and habits expert James Clear suggests, “You don’t rise to the level of your goals; you fall to the level of your systems.” He further explains, “Goals are about the results you want to achieve; systems are about the processes that lead to those results.”



Creating a system of behavior change that develops habits that are repeatable and that you can stick to is a challenge. Creating a system of reliable prompts can make developing a practice that lasts much easier to do.

A habit is a behavior that has been repeated enough times to become automatic. The process of creating a habit can be reduced to four simple steps:

1. Cue—a stimulus that triggers and predicts a reward. If you want to create a cue that motivates you to practice T'ai Chi, make it as obvious as possible, like hanging your T'ai Chi clothes where you can see them when you get up, for example.
2. Craving—the energy and motivation behind every habit, response, and reward. Without craving a change, there’s no reason to take action. You don’t crave the habit itself but the benefit it delivers. In order to satisfy a craving to practice, make it as attractive as possible, such as by viewing films of high-level masters doing the form that you want to emulate.
3. Response—the habit you perform, such as practicing T'ai Chi. Whether or not you respond depends on how motivated you are and the level of difficulty associated with the action. It also depends on your ability—whether you are able to do it, which is why being a beginner at something is more challenging. The best way to create a response is to make it easy. If you don’t have time one day for a complete

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If you establish a regular practice, external events won't eclipse the natural rhythm of your days.

practice, do a shortened form, a section or two of the Long Form, or even just a few postures during your practice time. Coming to class and practicing with other motivated classmates makes practice easier and more enjoyable.

4. Reward—the benefit of every habit. The reward needs to be satisfying, or you won't repeat the behavior. Find the core practice with the greatest reward, such as the joint-release stretching, Qigong, or a favorite section of the form, and build your practice around that.

If there's a deficiency in any of the four stages, you won't form a habit. Without the first

three steps, you won't start a behavior, and without the fourth step, you won't repeat it.

A system of good practice habits solves problems and builds proficiency using the least energy and effort possible.

The best time to practice is at the same time every day. Let this time become the foundation for your daily schedule, and you will establish the rhythm of your day rather than letting external events dictate the rhythm you have to follow. Let T'ai Chi serve your purpose and not contribute to your stress. T'ai Chi done with intention and rhythm will bring us into balance and deepen our enjoyment of life.

