



Wudang

A MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

7/17



From Sifu Paul

Greetings, everyone,

After a beautiful and sunny solstice, the season of fire is in full swing. My study-retreat with Michael Winn in North Carolina was a full and balanced mix of medical and spiritual qigong, meditation, and classroom study, both indoors and out. A typical day began at 7:30 with an hour of qigong, 90 minutes for breakfast, then a 3-hour morning session combining classroom and practice periods. Then came a 2.5-hour lunch break and another 3-hour afternoon class followed by dinner at 7:30. The weather was beautiful, and all meals were eaten outdoors. The cool mountain air and the vigorous schedule were exhilarating. I filled an entire notebook with my notes and an entire body with qi. I am still processing the wealth of information that will begin to make its way into the studio.

In this issue, we have an article on the prevention of falling with T'ai Chi, updates on our matching grant, new classes in July, a gentle beginning to our poster campaign, and more.

Balancing Act

There is a growing body of scientific studies and medical research supporting the many health benefits of a regular T'ai Chi practice. Some of these benefits include greater flexibility and strength, mental and physical stress reduction, lower blood pressure, greater bone density, efficient respiration, and more. Among the many health benefits attributed to T'ai Chi practice, one that seems to be getting a lot of attention is T'ai Chi's ability to improve balance and reduce the incidence of falling, particularly among the elderly.



Nearly 40 percent of people over 65 and half of those over 80 will fall each year. Falling is the leading cause of injury-related death in people over age 65. More than 800,000 older adults are hospitalized each year after a fall, many because of a broken hip or head injury.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls in older adults cost nearly \$31 billion in direct medical health-care costs. As the number of aging people in the U.S. rises, the CDC estimates both the number of falls and their total health-care cost will only continue to rise.

A recent article featuring a study of T'ai Chi and the incidence of falling in an elderly population published the following results:

"In a meta-analysis of 18 different studies involving over 3,800 participants who were 65 years and older, researchers determined those who practiced tai chi at least once weekly had a 20 percent lower chance of falling than those who did not practice tai chi.

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Healing Tao instructor
Michael Winn

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Science shows that
T'ai Chi improves
balance, reduces falls

“The researchers compared senior (elderly) students against how much time they spent practicing tai chi, the style and the falling risk for the individuals. They found any amount of tai chi exercise was associated with a lower risk of falling as compared to control groups. As the frequency of the sessions increased from once weekly to three times weekly, the risk reduction jumped from 5 to 64 percent.

“The researchers felt performing tai chi improved the participants’ knee extension strength, flexibility and balance, and reduced the risk of falls. As this was a meta-analysis, the researchers were only able to measure the variables previous studies had included.

“One of the benefits of tai chi is that it is non-competitive, non-aggressive and a self-paced program that doesn’t require physical strength, agility or flexibility to begin. Participants gain strength and flexibility through practice. Some of the essential principles are fluidity of movement, breath control and mental concentration. The practice of tai chi encompasses cardiovascular fitness, flexibility and strength.”

Another study revealed mental improvements in elderly people who practiced T'ai Chi.

“Research also demonstrates the practice of tai chi may improve mental attention and executive control in the elderly when the participants were motivated to pursue the practice.

“Tai chi participants have also demonstrated an increase in brain volume, which is significant as this indicator often declines with age. In this study participants practiced tai chi for 40 weeks, being tested at 20 weeks and 40 weeks, demonstrating improvements at both testing periods. Another study from Harvard Medical School demonstrated similar results in an even shorter time span.”

Whatever your motivation for beginning a T'ai Chi practice, learning to love the art and engaging in regular and correct practice will produce a myriad of health benefits according to the scientific evidence—and, of course, your own experience.



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Tim Dennis displays
the new studio sign
Design by Todd Nesser
Creation by Tim Dennis
and Ruthann Godollei
Photo by
Ruthann Godollei

A Sign of Something New

At our spring celebration in March, a sign at the outside entrance of our building that featured our new name and logo greeted all of our members and guests as they entered the building. The sign was designed by Todd Nesser and covered the old yin-yang symbol that had been there for years. Reactions to the new sign were overwhelmingly positive. A few weeks later, the sign mysteriously disappeared.

Mystery solved! It was a temporary sign mounted on foam board and installed just for the celebration. The new permanent sign has now been silk-screened onto Plexiglas.

Studio members Ruthann Godollei and Tim Dennis created it. Ruthann Godollei is a master printmaker and professor of art and chair of the art department at Macalester College. She graciously offered the use of the art department at Mac for the creation of the sign and her expertise in the silk-screening process. Tim and Todd installed it over our old sign. The elegant design and professional execution symbolize beautifully the energy of our new studio. Thank you Ruthann, Todd, and Tim.

Contact Us

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

Email: mail@tctaichi.org

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Congratulations

Congratulations to studio member Craig Upright, a professor of sociology at Winona State University, who was selected as this year's Professor of the Year by the WSU Student Senate on behalf of the student body.



“Think of qigong not as an exercise but as a language to communicate with the qi field.”

New Classes, Class Schedule Changes, Continuing Classes

Saturday, July 8, the 12 Animals class (10:30–11:30) will begin learning the Bear.

Saturday, July 8, the 43 Postures class (11:30–12:30) will be open to people who have completed the Solo Form and want to learn the first Symmetry of the 43 form. This form will give you a deeper understanding of your Solo Form and develop skills in partner work. It's also a lot of fun.

Those who have been working on Symmetry 4 will start Symmetry 5.

Tuesday evening, July 11, the 43 Postures class (1st, 3rd, 5th Tuesdays) will begin learning Symmetry 4.

Wednesday, July 12, at 7:30 p.m., we will begin learning the 6 Healing Sounds 5 Animals Qigong. Originally called the 6 Healing Breaths in ancient China, this is a calming energy practice that uses movement, sound, and visualization to balance the emotions and work with the energy of the body's five major organs. The healing sounds and animals are simple to learn and can be used individually or in a set to transform stress into vitality. The class runs for eight weeks.

Help Spread the Word about Twin Cities T'ai Chi Ch'uan

If you frequent a coffee house, co-op, or any venue with a bulletin board, please take some posters and pushpins from the information room at the studio and let your community know who we are. Postering has always been an effective way to build our membership and share the experience of T'ai Chi.

Third Quarter Round-Up

July is the height of the summer season in Minnesota. Picnics, the Fourth of July, outdoor concerts, T'ai Chi in the park; it's a joy to be out in the warm, sunny weather in the summertime. July is also the start of a new quarter.

When paying your studio tuition this quarter, please consider rounding up and donating to our Challenge Grant campaign. If the studio can raise \$3,000 from its members and match a donation already given, we can raise an additional \$6,000 for a total of \$12,000. If you are a member at the \$165 level, consider rounding up to \$200. If you are a \$270 member, consider rounding up to \$300. Just indicate when paying your tuition that you want the extra amount to go to the matching fund grant and not the general fund.

For an extra \$1 a day during the month of July, we can reach our goal and secure this generous gift.



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Congratulations to
Professor of the Year
Craig Upright!

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Qigong wisdom from
Healing Tao meditation
instructor Michael Winn

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Classroom altar at
Sifu Paul's Healing Tao
meditation workshop