

HEALTH

Fighting Fit

Stiff joints from a life well lived? High blood pressure from working too hard? Find the remedy in Tai Chi, and get more than you bargained for

Although brilliant for your health and fitness, both mentally and physically, Tai Chi is a formidable fighting style which you will love getting to grips with. In China, Tai Chi is considered the pinnacle of martial arts. Bruce Lee would have been training in it by now, if the fast living had not caught up with him!

WHY DO I NEED TAI CHI?

Too much pressure on the back playing golf, or the physical exertion required by sailing or skiing (tough on the knees), may have left you with nagging pains that you just cannot seem to shake.

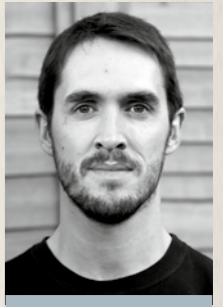
Nobody wants to give up on the activities they enjoy due to physical discomfort. Many years of pursuing your career; sitting at an office desk staring at computer screens and driving too far too often, can leave you with bad posture, adversely affect your health, and give you high stress levels.

All these elements of modern living take their toll eventually and, if not mediated or remedied in some way, can lead to loss of lifestyle, discomfort, and possibly even joint problems and/or replacements in the not so near future. ➔

Tai Chi helps maintain flexibility and strength



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Richard Wagstaff

Richard has studied and taught Fujian White Crane Suang Yang Tai Chi and Kung Fu for almost 20 years

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WHAT CAN TAI CHI DO FOR ME?

If you would like to find something that helps improve and develop your body, iron out the kinks, and return everything to shipshape and Bristol fashion – while at the same time learning to fight like a tiger – Tai Chi can be the answer, and is an excellent form of physical ‘rehab’. There is no need to give up on the fun or the work in your life, and you can get on with the interesting job of seeing how much energy you can still spend, invest, lose and earn again.

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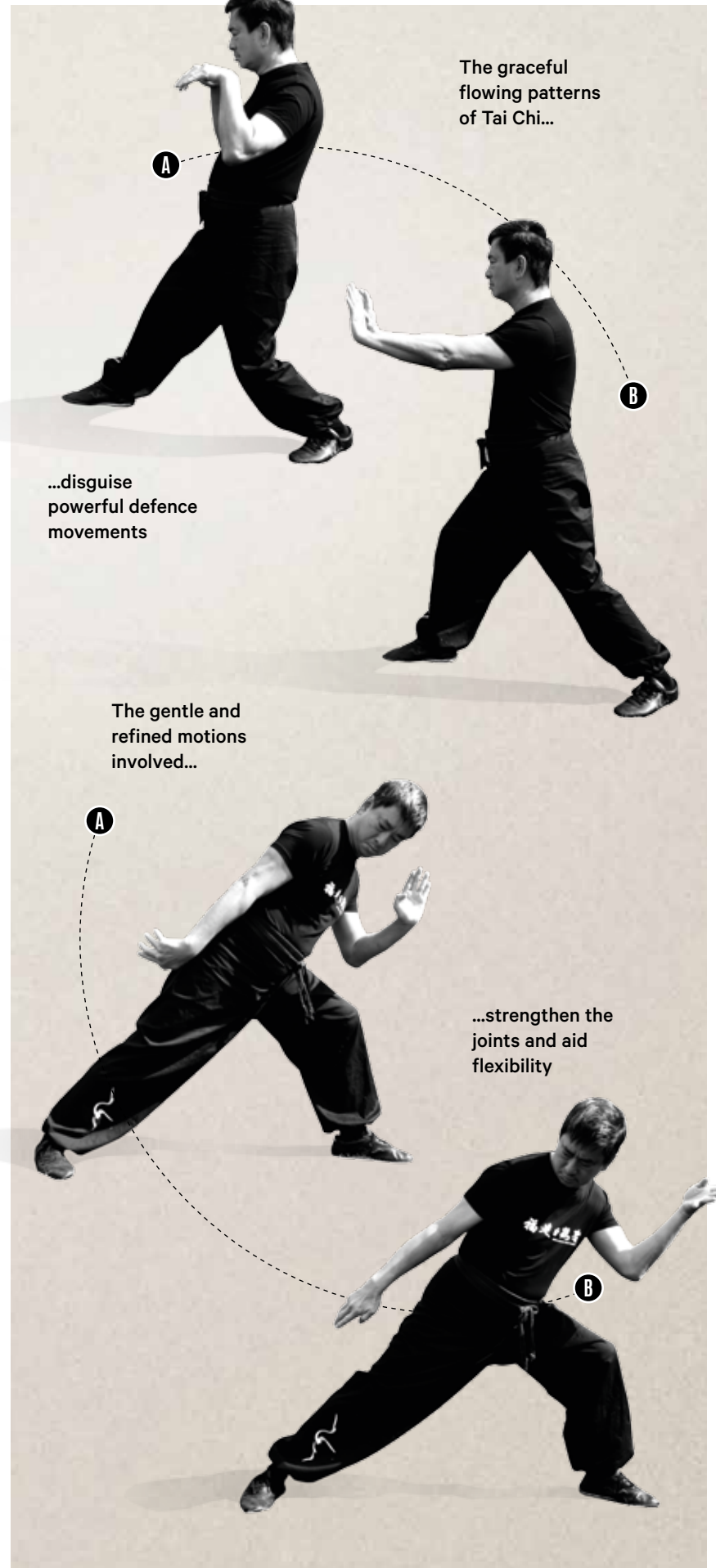
START WITH THE CORE

Core strength has become a buzzword in many forms of training and exercise in recent years, but Tai Chi has had core strength at its heart for centuries. Its continuously moving nature, while always maintaining one’s balance, encourages and promotes core stability leading to improved posture. Each movement is driven from the legs, which over time will become very strong – remember, a tree is only as stable as its roots!

This style of ‘ground-up’ training allows the body to move freely whilst at the same time maintaining the postural correctness that the flowing movements will demand of you.

Tai Chi provides a combination of joint strength and mobility, core stability and muscular strength, which will increase your ability in any other physical activities you might still want to pursue. This allows you to practice your sporting activities, whatever they may be, long after your contemporaries may have had to ‘retire’.

Tai Chi is practiced slowly and is a low impact form of training. Slow movement improves joint strength and flexibility by focusing on gently stretching the tendons and ligaments around the joints as well as



strengthening and increasing the muscle mass. Training Tai Chi therefore increases the stability of the ankles, knees and hips and allows the large muscles to work without putting strain on to the mechanical workings of the joints. This, in turn, decreases the wear and degradation of cartilage around the joints. And, as you are bearing your own weight during each movement, your bones will maintain their density.

INNER SPACE

During practice, continuous deep breathing helps to increase lung capacity and in turn improves blood circulation. Tai Chi has also been linked with improvements in blood pressure, which is no bad thing if you consider all the stress that comes with work, play, and bringing up a family (even if they have now grown up!).

Sometimes life can leave you feeling battered and bruised and many practitioners find that practicing Tai Chi brings them new energy for the next stage in their lives and beyond. Learning a skill that requires your

physical and mental engagement increases your self-confidence, helps stave off depression and improves your sense of wellbeing.

Tai Chi is accessible even if you have not done anything similar before. You

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take it at your own pace, the slow movements making it relatively easy to follow, and you can begin from any level of fitness, no matter how bad you think you might be. You require no equipment and practice requires little space, which makes it very easy to train if you are regularly travelling for business, or away simply enjoying the world. The only thing you might need is a little patience at first.

FIGHTING ART

I teach a form of Tai Chi known as Suang Yang Bai He Rou Rouen Chuen, which translates as ‘Frost and Sun White Crane Soft and Gentle Art’. The style is made up of one long pattern of 66 movements, practised in one continuous flow.

The aim of this art is to achieve a strong, supple, pliable body, which is able to generate moving power that can be focused on a target. This energy can be used either to heal or defend – Fujian White Crane Tai Chi is a classical Chinese martial art, and as such it contains all the martial elements of a true fighting style – so, as well as boosting your health, there are a multitude of fighting techniques to practise and master.

Practising Tai Chi is a great way to re-engage with yourself and your own needs after many years of working hard for others. 

Master Ngo

Fujian White Crane Kung Fu was founded in the UK in 1977 by 65-year-old Master Ngo. He was born in Singapore and began his training in classical Chinese martial arts at the age of six. During his teenage years he continued his training under the guidance of the famous Master Ang Liang Huat. Dennis holds 6th Dan from the Chinese Wushu Association. Dennis is married to Sharon Ngo (5th Dan from the Chinese Wushu Association), and they both travel extensively to take Fujian White Crane Kung Fu and Tai Chi around the world.

