

Tai Chi for Health and Balance

WHAT IS IT?

Tai Chi for Health and Balance is an enjoyable exercise program that can improve balance, relieve pain, and enhance overall health and functionality. It involves slow, deliberate movements that are easy to learn and suitable for all ability levels. The essential principles of Tai Chi include mind and body integration, fluid movements, controlled breathing, and mental concentration. Tai Chi is one of the most effective exercises for promoting the health of both mind and body, helping people to relax and feel better.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Tai Chi for Health and Balance is best suited for community-dwelling older adults and people with a history of falls, balance disorders, leg muscle weakness, abnormal gait, or walking difficulty. It can be done seated and can accommodate people with a mild level of mobility difficulty (e.g., occasional cane users).

WHAT DOES IT DO?

The program focuses heavily on the development of functional balance. It has been extensively researched, with initial exploratory studies showing the value of Tai Chi in reducing falls. The largest study of **Tai Chi for Health and Balance** (also known as Tai Chi for Arthritis and Falls Prevention), conducted by Professor Leigh Callahan and colleagues from the University of North Carolina, shows significant health benefits for people with all types of arthritis. This landmark study, published in the *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity* in 2016, found significant pain relief, less stiffness, and better ability to manage daily living. Participants reported improved overall wellness and balance. The program is also proven to reduce pain and increase socialization.



What participants are saying:

- **86% feel more satisfied with life**
- **95% would recommend this program to a friend or family member**



To make a referral or register for an upcoming workshop, visit healthylivingforme.org

HOW TO DISCUSS WITH PATIENTS

Older adults highly value their independence and often worry about the implications of being labeled as a fall risk. They may not openly discuss fears or concerns about falling, so it may be necessary for you to initiate the discussion. Emphasize that the goal of this program is to keep them independent, active, and at home for as long as possible. Highlight that the program is safe and fun, and although Tai Chi may seem unusual in Western culture, it has been shown to be very helpful for this purpose. Mention the social benefits of the program and that many people like them have experienced significant improvement and enjoyment. This can encourage them to participate and see the potential benefits for themselves.