

What is Tai Chi? (*Origin: China 2000+ years ago*)

- A moving meditation based on the circulation of “chi”, life’s energy force (believed to be blocked in the presence of disease)
- Comprised of continuous, flowing movements – basis from martial arts
- Tai chi chih: a simplified style consisting of 19 basic movements and one pose

What is Yoga? (*Origin: India 5000+years ago*)

- Holding stationary poses or moving into a flowing series of poses
- Integration of mind, body and spirit
- Restoring balance in the body with emphasis on proper body alignment (especially Iyengar style yoga, which uses many props for support)

Benefits of Tai Chi and Yoga for those with Parkinson’s Disease:

- Promotes conscious awareness of movement and actions (beneficial since automatic motions are affected by Parkinson’s)
- Increases awareness of proper body alignment/posture
- Improves balance with reduced fall risk (supported by numerous studies)
- Enhances flexibility
- Affords a greater sense of well-being
- Offers relaxation which can help to lessen Parkinson’s symptoms (tremor, rigidity) or manage medication side effects such as dyskinesia
- Improves breath support and control
- Helps to build healthy bones through weight-bearing activities (important in fighting osteoporosis)
- Increases strength, especially in core muscles (abdominals, hips and back)

Resources

- Parkinson’s and the Art of Moving* by John Argue; book and video/DVD (www.parkinsonsexercise.com)
- Easy Tai Chi-Qigong* by Don and Victoria Fiore; DVD (www.taichihealthproducts.com/videos.php)
- Yoga for the Rest of Us* by Peggy Cappy DVD/video (www.publicvideostore.org)
- The Book of Exercise and Yoga for Those with Parkinson’s Disease; Using Movement and Meditation to Manage Symptoms* by Lori Newell (www.createspace.com)

Involving Your Team

- Consult your physician to seek medical clearance before beginning
- Find classes suited to your personal needs and fitness level
- Check instructor credentials, as well as their knowledge of Parkinson’s
- One on one instruction or classes allow for individualized recommendations and appropriate modifications to avoid injury.