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DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TAI CHI CHUAN & QI GONG

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WHAT IS QI GONG ?

Qi Gong (pronounced 'chee kong') means 'energy practice' and began around the time of the Yellow Emperor 4500 years ago. It is deeply intertwined with the philosophy of Tao (yin and yang) and the Chinese way of life, and is practiced in schools, universities & hospitals. Qi Gong is a daily self-renewal method that tunes the body, breath and mind and brings them into unity. Originally, Qi Gong was based on Taoist and Buddhist healing techniques that improve the flow of energy between humans and nature including acupuncture, herbs, massage, breathing, meditation and exercise. Today, Health Qi Gong encourages a regular practice of breathing, stretching and meditation to increase the flow of Qi (natural healing energy), restore health and make the body youthful again.

WHAT IS TAI CHI ?

Tai Chi Chuan (pronounced 'tie jee chuen') means 'fist of the mind' and is an internal style of Qi Gong called Nei Gong. Tai Chi began 1000 years ago with Taoist monks experimenting with moving meditation and the physical interpretation of the philosophy of Tao. Later, Chinese military leaders interwove their own style of martial arts with Shaolin Qi Gong into the original Taoist system, such as activating tendons more than muscles, and focusing the earth force to a single point of contact. Originally, Tai Chi Chuan was a spiritual practice for self-improvement, and a fast and powerful free-form martial art for self-defence. Today, Tai Chi For Health combines slow simplified martial arts movements into a relaxed aerobic set for health, which makes it look and feel very similar to Health Qi Gong.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE ?

Both have their roots in Tao philosophy and yin yang theory. Both use the mind to lead the qi through the meridian system in the body. Both have healing benefits that can stimulate efficient qi circulation, loosen the joints, stretch the muscles, strengthen the bones, massage the organs, expand the lungs, wash the marrow bone, energize the brain, and cleanse the consciousness for spiritual enlightenment.

* The main difference is that the original Tai Chi Chuan was created as a martial art and incorporates martial arts into a moving meditation for self-defence with health benefits. Original Tai Chi Chuan has Pushing Hands partner exercises, Martial Qi Gong and advanced body mechanics to generate explosive power for self-defence which Health Qi Gong does not.

Tai Chi Chuan (Taijiquan) and Qi Gong (Chi Kung) are two forms of mind-body exercise from ancient China that have more similarities than differences. Most people who practice Tai Chi Chuan also incorporate Qi Gong into their practice as they result in similar benefits including increased oxygenation of the whole body, mental calmness and renewed strength and vitality. Tai Chi Chuan and Qi Gong both centre around the philosophy of cultivating Qi, the life force or vital energy in our body. Both involve good posture and gentle movements. Both practices integrate breath with movement and use cognitive skills such as imagery and visualization to heighten awareness of energy circulation. One major difference is that Tai Chi Chuan was originally created as a martial art with all its movements being either attacking, defensive and neutralizing. Tai Chi Chuan also has partner exercises known as Pushing Hands for developing advanced techniques, self-defence and martial power. Health Qi Gong is not a martial art and does not have any self-defence movements or Pushing Hands exercises. Health Qi Gong can be practiced sitting, standing and moving, but Tai Chi Chuan only has moving exercises. People get confused because when practiced slowly for health and relaxation Tai Chi Chuan is categorized as a form of Health Qi Gong. However, both are easy to do, benefit everyone, and the



results can be extraordinary. Each lesson builds on the next which helps to create a conversation of sensing, feeling and resting that engages your whole system in a process where old habits can be replaced by new awareness and skill. To train the mind to deeply connect with the language of the body is an art. As your own inner wisdom awakens it guides you through your healing journey and beyond.

HOW IT WORKS

Tai Chi focuses on relaxation, body alignment and breathing, and has very distinct mechanisms of benefit unique from conventional vigorous exercise. Tai Chi emphasizes sensory learning which results in movement that is more flexible, pleasurable and free from aches and pains. Guided by the instructor's experience and encouragement you let go of all tensions and move more gently and lovingly with improved posture and alignment. A sense of space, lightness and openness is created by relaxing the mind in the present moment through the felt connection to your body's Qi (internal healing energy). Reduced muscle tension, combined with slow, deeper breaths, results in greater blood flow and oxygen distribution throughout the entire body (including the organs), as opposed to more vigorous exercise where muscles are tense and only the main muscle groups are usually affected. Relaxed mindful movement increases blood oxygen saturation and diffusion resulting in enhanced metabolic function, which increases the disease-fighting and healing abilities of the body.

