

# What is martial Tai Chi?

*FACT: It is not possible to practice a form sequence correctly until you understand the original martial purpose behind its movements.*

Tai Chi's health and stress-reduction benefits are so powerful that often the martial art aspects of Tai Chi are not emphasized, particularly in the West. Most people who never practice Tai Chi consider it too slow and only for seniors. Real, traditional Tai Chi is nothing less than and nothing more than a fighting art. Like any fighting art, it is a systemization of combative physical skills, principles and strategies. People used to call Tai Chi Cotton Boxing (Mian Quan) due to its softness. In recent decades, Tai Chi has been modified or simplified and many of its martial art applications have been removed. We certainly cannot conclude that Tai Chi is the most powerful martial art, but we can say with confidence that Tai Chi can be an effective martial art and it processes the explosive features for both defensive and offensive purposes.

Tai Chi is an internal martial art. This means that every movement in the form must not only have self-defense applications, but must also strengthen the internal organs, joints and energy channels of the body. You might say that internal martial arts strengthen from the inside out, and external martial arts (like Karate, Kempo, or Tae Kwon Do) strengthen from the outside in.

Tai Chi is initially always practiced slowly, which has several advantages. Moving slowly thoroughly develops the muscles (because no parts of the movements are glossed over). You can feel the difference yourself by standing up and raising and lowering one leg at normal speed, and then trying to do the same movement in slow motion. Moving slowly and gracefully actually takes considerably more muscle control and focus.

The slow pace also allows the movements to sink deep into the body's 'muscle memory'. Later, when the movements are sped up to practice the martial art applications, they can be practiced smoothly, without unnecessary tension, which allows them to be performed extremely quickly.

Modern life often results in tension being stored in our body, including our muscles. Moving slowly is one of the most powerful ways to train the body to move without tension, which removes one of the primary barriers to speed and power.

Tai Chi Chuan (martial arts of tai chi) requires a degree of emotional maturity as well as physical and mental co-ordination. Due to this we limit classes to 18 years of age and older. We actively embrace the spirit of equal opportunities, so no one over 18 will be excluded on grounds of gender, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or age. Reasonable adjustments will be made for students with disabilities.

Rather than seeing Chinese martial practice as an opportunity to immerse ourselves in China's cultural and religious history, we endeavor to make our classes as culturally neutral as possible to make training

accessible to people from all backgrounds, or none at all. Techniques, tactics and concepts are explained in English, so as to avoid misunderstanding or vagueness. Any cultural concepts we discuss are of a purely practical nature, relating solely to fighting theories.

Martial skill - the original purpose for these arts is sadly missing from the vast majority of schools claiming to practice them. We exist to teach people practical self-defense and combat skills based in the foundations and concepts of tai chi chuan.

<http://dovertaichinh.jimdo.com/>



The Way Tai Chi System (c)