arthritis foundation

TAI CHI

a program for better living

Safe and Effective: Outcomes Summary

Program Overview

Steeped in traditional Chinese culture, the movements of Tai Chi have been utilized for centuries to help people improve flexibility, increase muscular strength, promote correct body posture, and integrate the body and mind. In 1997, Dr. Paul Lam, a family physician and Tai Chi teacher, realized the benefit Tai Chi could have for people with arthritis and began developing the Twelve Movement Tai Chi for Arthritis Program.

The program, also referred to as the Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program, offers participants the opportunity to learn and practice twelve movements (six basic and six advanced) to deliver maximum relief from the main problems experienced by people with arthritis. Utilizing Tai Chi's Sun style for its ability to improve relaxation and its ease of use for older adults, the movements are taught backwards and forwards to improve mobility and offer a variety of combinations. In addition to the movements that are taught and practiced through the series of classes, the Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program includes an emphasis on warm-up and cool-down exercises, breathing techniques, and safety guidelines.

As demonstrated by its inclusion on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Arthritis Program Intervention "Watch List," the Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program is based on the proven results of a number of research studies and piloted programs. The movements that make up the core of the program have been shown to improve balance, reduce stiffness, and improve its participants' ability to perform daily tasks.

Evaluation Studies at a Glance

Author	Design	Results
Fransen, et al. 2007	Randomized controlled trial, pre-post test design (n=152)	Decreased pain Improved movement
Voukelatos, et al. 2007	Randomized controlled trial, (n=702)	Reduced falls
Song, et al. 2003	Randomized clinical trial (n=72)	Improved ability to perform tasks Improved balance Decreased Pain
Choi, Moon, & Song. 2005	Quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group (n=29)	Improved strength Improved flexibility

References

Choi, J., Moon, J., Song, R. (2005) Effects of Sun-style Tai chi exercise on physical fitness and fall prevention in fall-prone older adults. Journal of Advanced Nursing, 51, 150-157.

Fransen M, et al. (2007). Physical activity for osteoarthritis management: A randomized controlled clinical trial evaluating hydrotherapy or tai chi classes. Arthritis and Rheumatism (Arthritis Care and Research), 57, 407-414.

Song, R. et al. (2003). Effects of tai chi exercise on pain, balance, muscle strength, and perceived difficulties in physical functioning in older women with osteoarthritis: a randomized clinical trial. Journal of Rheumatology, 30, 2039-2044.

Voukelatos, A. et al. (2007). A randomized, controlled trail of Tai Chi for the prevention of falls. Journal of American Geriatrics Society, 55, 1185-1191.