

Tai Chi study shows improvement in physical and psychosocial symptoms

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T'ai Chi practice has scored high in an important recent study. On November 8, 2010, Leigh Callahan, PhD, presented the results at the American College of Rheumatology annual meeting. She is the lead author, and an associate professor at the University of North Carolina's School of Medicine. Dr. Callahan is also a member of the University's Thurston Arthritis Research Center.

Study participants with arthritis, including fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, and osteoarthritis, benefited by a course of Tai Chi. Dr. Callahan was quoted on [Science Daily online](#) on November 8 as saying they found this in both rural and urban settings, and in a northeastern and southeastern state.

To summarize the results of the study discussed on [Science Daily](#), the 354 participants were randomly divided into two groups. All of them were 18 or over, could move independently, and had arthritis that was doctor-diagnosed as well as self-reported. One group was given twice-weekly Tai Chi sessions over the course of eight weeks. The control group received the Tai Chi course only after the eight week course was over. Those who needed to do Tai Chi in a sitting position could be part of the study.

Both groups had evaluations before and after the eight weeks. One measure of performance was gait speed. Another was timed chair stands. According to a [different study](#) done in Australia and published in BioMed Central Geriatrics online August 3, a timed chair test means that seated participants can push themselves into a standing position. Measuring leg strength takes into consideration the amount of time they need to do so.

Two measures of balance were also done: standing on one leg, and reaching. The participants were also surveyed about their performing everyday tasks, health in general, and their feeling that they are able to attain goals.

At the end of the eight weeks, those who had participated in Tai Chi did have moderate improvements in the areas of pain, fatigue, and stiffness, well-being, feelings of ability to influence their own lives positively, and reach or balance.

The study was cited on Science Daily as: University of North Carolina School of Medicine (2010, November 8). Tai Chi relieved arthritis pain, improves reach, balance, well-being, study suggests. *ScienceDaily*, Retrieved December 8, 2010, from <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/11/101107202140.htm>

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