

# Parkinson's Disease & Tai Chi

Parkinson's disease is a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system that often impairs the sufferer's motor skills, speech, and other functions. It is characterized by muscle rigidity, tremor, a slowing of physical movement (bradykinesia) and a loss of physical movement (akinesia) in extreme cases

Parkinson's disease is progressive, meaning the signs and symptoms become worse over time. There may be effective interventions that could perhaps slow the progress of the disease. If you have Parkinson's, you'd likely be best off to use everything your body is, every which way, on a regular basis.

Tai Chi can help reduce the gradual loss of balance that Parkinson's sufferers often experience.

Tai Chi movements rotate the human body in about 95% of the ways the body can move. (Swimming rotates about 65%)

Tai Chi is the most powerful balance and coordination enhancing exercise known.

**Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, published in Gait and Posture (Oct 2008)**

Found that people with mild to moderately severe Parkinson's disease showed improved balance, walking ability, and overall well-being after 20 tai chi sessions.

**Lyonne Carreiro - Parkinson's disease care coordinator at the University of Florida in Jacksonville**

The Tai Chi patients were less likely than controls to have an increase in the severity of their Parkinson's disease and less likely to have a decline in motor function.

**Mayo Clinic**  
Recommends Tai Chi

**Dr. Darlene Lobel. - Shands Hospital in Jacksonville, Florida**

Tai Chi helps ease the symptoms of Parkinson's for patients.

"By mimicking smooth movements, it's very helpful to patients. It helps to re-train the brain, if you will,"

Some patients could see improvements within just a few sessions.

**Dr. Mark Guttman, director of the Centre for Movement Disorders in Markham, Ontario.**

Recommends people with Parkinson's do exercises that involve a lot of stretching, similar to the movements of tai chi.

**Bill Douglas is the Tai Chi Expert at DrWeil.com**

For people with Parkinson's, who often see their balance deteriorate as their condition progresses, it is unforgivable for them to not be informed of Tai Chi's potential benefits at the earliest stage possible while their balance is still good.

**The Cleveland Clinic of Neuroscience Center**

Encourages Parkinson's Disease patients to seek out a hobby or activity they can enjoy and stick with such as "Tai Chi" and other activities.

**The Parkinson's Society of Canada**

Recommends Tai Chi for Parkinson's patients, suggesting "Tai Chi may prevent or at least slow down the onset of degenerative diseases; in the long run, it can reduce need for rehabilitative care."

**Oregon Research Institute  
Oregon Health and Science University  
National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)**

*Study of Tai Chi Exercise and Balance in Persons with Parkinson's Disease - This study is not yet open for participant recruitment.*

The study is designed to determine the effects of Tai Chi training on balance and gait in persons with Parkinson's disease.

Given the research that has exposed the many physical, mental, and emotional benefits Tai Chi offers, for physicians to not educate themselves on this and share their knowledge with each and every patient is tantamount to mal-practice. ~ Bill Douglas the Tai Chi Expert at DrWeil.com