

## **What is Tai Chi?**

Tai Chi is best known as the form of exercise that has been popularised by images of old Chinese people practicing graceful flowing movements in the park. These movements, now practiced by old and young alike throughout the world, are an important part of Tai Chi systems. Tai Chi originates from China where it developed as a martial art incorporating the principles of subduing the hard with the soft and adapting and sticking to the opponents' movements.

## **What is Chen Style Tai Chi?**

Modern academics place the origins of Tai Chi in the Chen village in Henan province of mainland China about 350 years ago. The name Tai Chi was first applied in the late eighteenth century when the relationship with the central Taoist theories of the opposing and yet interdependent principles in nature (Yin and Yang) were documented. Chen Style Tai Chi is practiced both for its health and exercise benefits and as an effective method for self defence and can be seen as a series of coordinated movements which flow smoothly and gracefully into each other combined with Chi Gong breathing techniques. Chen Style Tai Chi is both a complete martial system and a comprehensive form of exercise that promotes fitness, co-ordination, and relaxation.

## **Tai Chi and Health**

When practicing Tai Chi, the practitioner's consciousness, breathing, and actions are all closely connected. The transfer and focus of the practitioner's energy corresponds to the network of meridians joining the acupuncture points used in traditional Chinese medicine. Tai Chi exercises stimulate blood circulation and the inner organs, as well as improving strength and muscle control and help to improve health, co-ordination, and posture promoting general fitness and weight loss. Tai Chi stimulates the body and calms the mind, resulting in a balanced outlook and an overall improved sense of well being.

## **Tai Chi Push Hands**

Push-hands is a practice method of traditional Tai Chi martial arts. Two students with their arms in contact practice twining and sticking actions to develop the sense of touch, awareness and balance within the body. This is the training method where Tai Chi movements connect with martial arts applications, and develops the understanding of how small forces can defeat strong physical power.

## **Who can practice Tai Chi?**

Tai Chi is suitable for people of all ages and levels of physical fitness. The movements can be performed slowly and gently for health benefits or faster and more powerfully for self-defence applications.