

INTRODUCTION TO T'AI CHI

When 'playing' tai chi "you become totally absorbed'. It can be likened to a child playing a game, and like a child you are not easily distracted by outside influences. The play is light hearted and as concentration becomes stronger you are more able to focus and the mind becomes free.

DOES TAI CHI CONFLICT WITH OTHER SPORT?

The answer is NO. Most sports are competitive and success depends on you playing well. You become tense and lots of the moves are hard on the body. Tai chi is completely the opposite. It is not a competition, everyone works at their own level, it is not exhausting, the body becomes relaxed, therefore relaxing the mind and possibly lowering blood pressure. All the moves are gentle following the natural moves of nature. It will help your game of sport by focusing more on concentration, balance and coordination, helping you with speed of reaction, foot movement and ability to change direction quicker. "Consider a person wishing to cross a lake IN windy weather. They would battle across the wind using force. Now think of a boat with sails, you use the wind to your advantage by tacking across the lake using a lot less effort."

YIN AND YANG

Yin and yang are present in absolutely everything e.g. up and down, in and out, male and female, hot and cold, for a few examples YIN is female and dark; YANG is light and male BUT one cannot exist without the other. The symbol is likened to a circle with two fishes curled inside one another with two seeds of the opposite colour within each. Think of an apex of a roof which slants away from each other. During the day the sun shines on one side and is YANG and then as the sun moves around YANG becomes YIN as it goes into shade.

In the 'supreme ultimate' the symbol for tai chi the dark side is seen as on the left representing darkness (or pre-natal) birth and the light side is on the right side of the circle representing birth.

Opposites are used all the time in tai chi - advancing retreating, stepping forward, stepping back, hands up and then down and so on.

IS THERE ANY DANGER OF INJURY?

Tai chi is a gentle activity and as there are no forceful movements there is very little danger of injury. Indeed it will loosen up the body on the whole and bring about small changes in the muscle and bone structure as you learn to relax. If for example you may have hunched up your shoulders for years you will find that you may experience a little discomfort in that area as you relax but gradually those knots of tension will undo.

GOOD LUCK!