

Health Benefits of Tai Chi



Grand Master Chen Zhenglei

Rex Archer, MD MPH

Director, Population and Public Health
Professor, Curriculum and Integrated Learning
College of Osteopathic Medicine

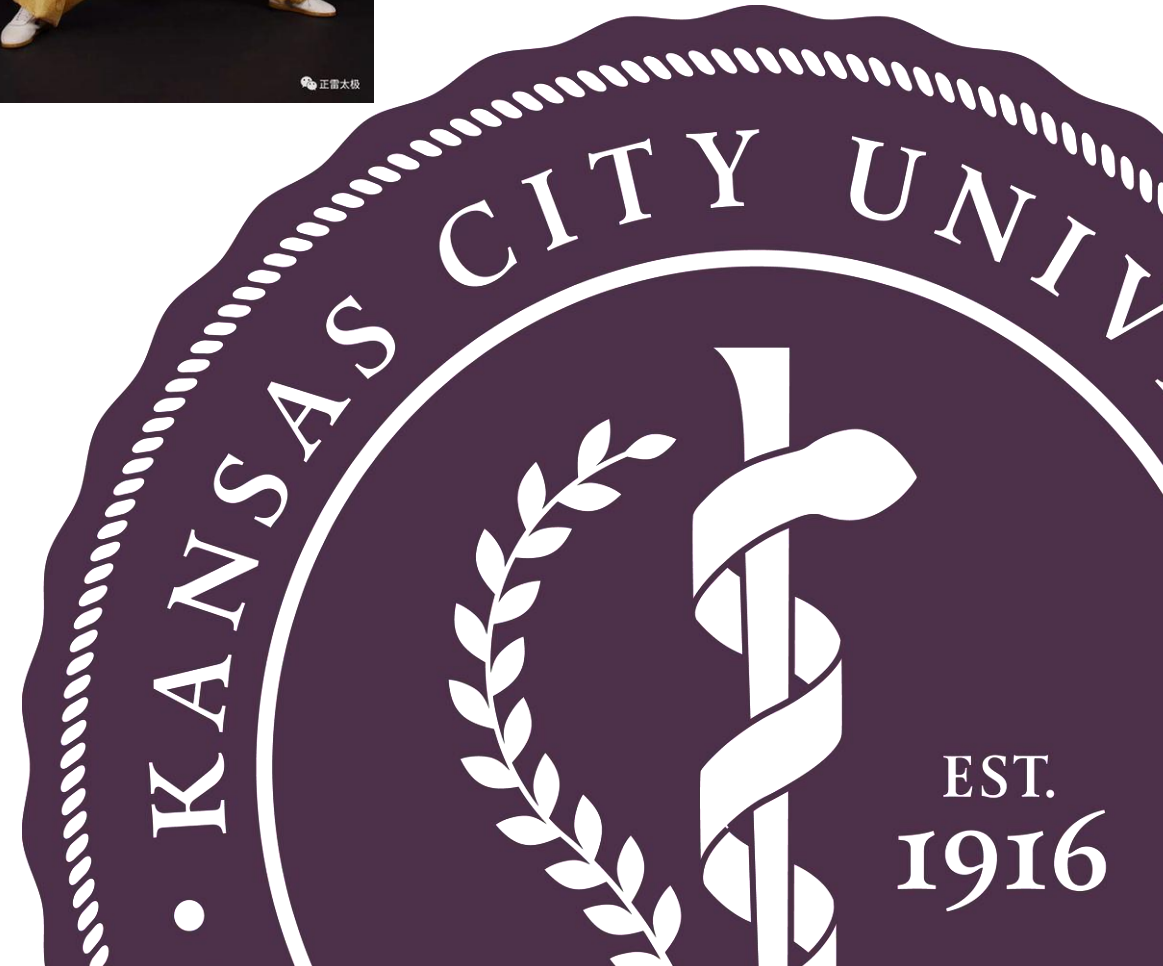


t. 816-654-7644
1750 Independence Ave
Kansas City, MO 64106



KCU-COM RArcher@kansascity.edu

 @RexArcherMD



Health Benefits of Tai Chi

What is the evidence?

Patricia Huston MD CCFP MPH

&

Bruce McFarlane MD CCFP FCFP



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EDITOR'S KEY POINTS

- ✓ Tai chi is a meditative martial art that consists of a series of gentle movements designed to strengthen and relax the body and mind. Increasingly, its therapeutic effects have come under study.
- ✓ This review aims to summarize the evidence on the therapeutic and fitness benefits of tai chi so that clinicians can offer evidence-based recommendations to their patients.
- ✓ More than 500 studies and 120 systematic reviews have been published.
- ✓ The strongest evidence of benefit is for preventing falls in older adults living in the community, osteoarthritis, Parkinson disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease rehabilitation, improving cognitive capacity, and improving balance and aerobic capacity.



KEY FEATURES OF TAI CHI

Feature	Description
Mindfulness	Awareness of the current moment is cultivated during tai chi by focusing on the body's position, movements, and sensations
Imagery	Images are used as a learning strategy (e.g., one of the moves is called wave hands like clouds)
Structural Alignment	Movements are biomechanically efficient, calling for the least amount of effort
Flexibility & Relaxation	Circular and flowing motions provide dynamic stretching and help to shift the body and mind into a state of deeper relaxation



KEY FEATURES OF TAI CHI, (CONT.)

Feature	Description
Strength and balance	Placing weight on one foot at a time in a slightly flexed position leads to greater strength in the lower extremities and improved balance
Natural breathing	Rhythmic breathing with movement appears to improve gas exchange and promote calmnes
Social support	Positive interactions within a community give a sense of belonging and support
Integration of body, mind, and spirit	Tai chi creates a practical framework for living a more holistic life



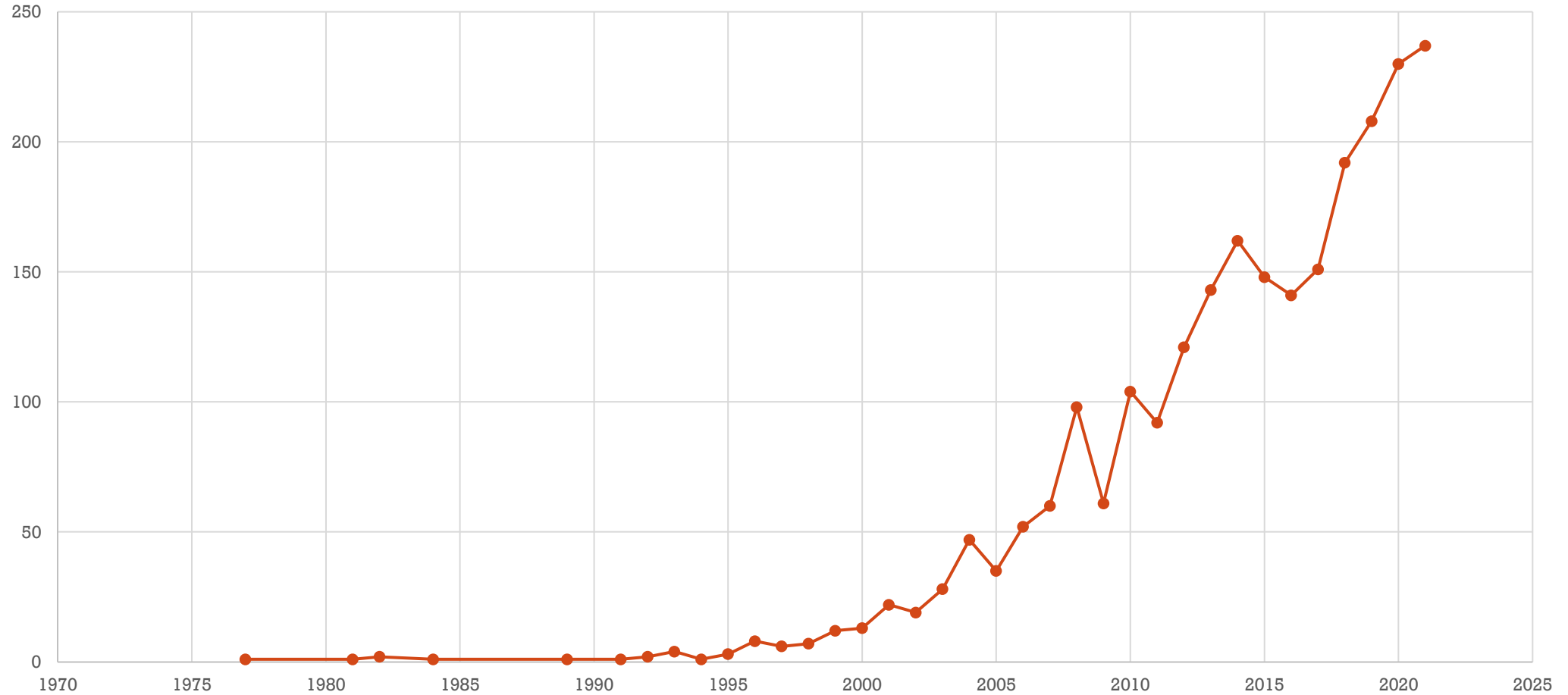
MAIN MESSAGE

- Research on tai chi has exploded in the past 45 years. A bibliometric analysis of clinical studies published between 1958 and 2013 found more than 500 studies on tai chi from 21 countries, 5 mostly supported by government funding.
- The number of articles published on tai chi in PubMed journals has been increasing exponentially (Figure 1). In 2015 there were, on average, 15 articles published each month.
- Evidence was reviewed for general health and fitness and 25 different conditions and then organized according to the quality of evidence for benefit: excellent, good, fair, preliminary, or evidence of no direct benefit.



PubMed search results 1977 – 2021 (updated graph)

((tai chi[Text Word]) OR (tai chi[Title/Abstract])) OR (tai chi[MeSH Terms])



TAI CHI RESEARCH: SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE FROM 120 SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND RECENT CLINICAL TRIAL

Excellent Evidence of Benefits	Good Evidence of Benefits	Fair Evidence of Benefits	Preliminary Evidence of Benefits	Evidence of No Direct Benefits
Specific Conditions				
Preventing falls 6-19 14 systematic reviews	Depression 69-77 8 systematic reviews	Quality of life for cancer patients 100-107 7 systematic reviews	Stroke prevention 127 • 1 systematic review	Diabetes (eg, HbA1c) 149-153 • 4 systematic reviews
Osteoarthritis 25-38 • 10 systematic reviews	Cardiac rehabilitation 78-88 • 6 systematic reviews	Fibromyalgia 108-114 • 4 systematic reviews	Anxiety 69, 129 • 2 systematic reviews	Rheumatoid arthritis 154-157 • 3 systematic reviews
Parkinson disease 39-53 • 8 systematic reviews	Stroke rehabilitation 89-95 • 5 systematic reviews	Hypertension 117-121 • 4 systematic reviews	Low back pain 130-133 • 1 systematic review	Chronic heart failure 158-160 • 2 systematic reviews
COPD rehabilitation 54-59 • 6 systematic reviews	Cognitive impairment and dementia 65, 98 • 2 systematic reviews	Osteoporosis 122-126 • 3 systematic reviews	Postoperative arm mobility in breast cancer patients 134 • 1 systematic review	
Improving cognitive capacity 62-68 • 5 systematic reviews			Multiple sclerosis 135-138 Schizophrenia 139, 140 PTSD 141, 142 Attention deficit disorder 143, 144 After brain and spinal cord injury 146, 14	



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TAI CHI RESEARCH: SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE FROM 120 SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Excellent Evidence of Benefits

Good Evidence of Benefits

Fair Evidence of Benefits

Preliminary Evidence of Benefits

General Health and Fitness Benefits

Balance,161-173 • 10 systematic reviews

Strength159,178-182 • 2 systematic reviews

Well-being69,183-185 • 4 systematic reviews

Flexibility163,173,178,182 • 1 systematic review

Aerobic capacity159,174-178 • 5 systematic reviews

Sleep186-191 • 2 systematic reviews

Conclusion

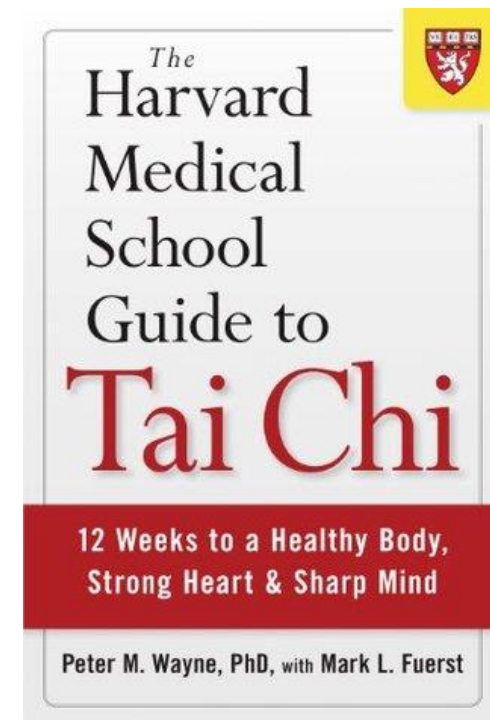
“Physicians can now provide evidence-based recommendations on tai chi to their patients, understanding that this is an active area of research.

As with any exercise program, ongoing medical follow-up for any clinical condition is indicated.”

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Additional Resource:
The Harvard Medical School
Guide to Tai Chi, 2013

Peter M. Wayne, PhD, with Mark L. Fuerst



Demonstrations of Chen Style Tai Chi

True Tai Chi® Group – Wash. DC 6:36 minutes (similar to local Three Dragons Way*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljQKy2G0BpM>

Grand Master Chen Zheng Lei Demonstrates Chen Style Tai Chi 陈正雷大师表演

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSklD1go8Jk>

Stunning Chen Style Tai Chi 5:25 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0LkJ2bv1rg>

Form #1 74 movements, 13:45 minutes

Chen Taijiquan - Chen Zhenglei - Lao Jia Yi Lu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTyIQm-Bj4>

Form #2 41 movements 4:29 minutes

Chen Taijiquan - Laojia Er Lu (Pao Chui)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSncrvodX4s>