

Ancient Techniques - Modern Results

As the music hums in the background, the class members begin their fluid movements. They inhale as one pose melts into the next.

Dave Raecke, who has been practicing tai chi at the Wellness Center for the past couple of years, says, “Tai chi was developed from Chinese martial arts. It emphasizes controlled, slow breath and movements; and balance and meditation that connects mind and body. It is an “all-body” exercise that improves muscles, joints, ligaments and internal organs— working all parts of the body and improving blood flow and tone.”



Dave Raecke mimics tai chi instructor, Carrie Blair, as she works with the members on the 24 forms of tai chi.

Throughout the room, you can hear laughter between stretches of silence as the class focuses on the more difficult positions. These positions may require moving the lower body slowly toward the floor or raising a leg for an extended period of time -- moves that help strengthen the lower body while improving balance.

Carrie Blair, tai chi instructor at the Wellness Center, has been practicing this ancient tradition for 27 years. “Tai chi helps you relax totally. This class is especially great for aging adults; it strengthens the legs and improves balance, stability and posture. “

What keeps this group of loyal members coming back to the weekly Wednesday tai chi class? Being able to put on jeans without holding onto something for balance and support, and walking up stairs without depending on hand rails are just a couple of reasons. Individual members each are motivated by different factors, but they all agree that tai chi has helped them as they age.

Carrie not only provides the class with strengthening instructions, but also works individually with the members to help them learn to perform the moves correctly to avoid injury and reap the maximum benefits.

Dave shares, “One of the physical issues I have is not being very flexible—tai chi has helped. I also have an overall feeling of better fitness and an understanding of the meditative focus that relieves stress.”

“This class encourages you to push your limits, mentally and physically,” says Carrie. “The members find value in tai chi, and that’s what keeps them coming back.”

Tai Chi is held every Wednesday from 9-10:15 a.m. at the Wellness Center. For more information on this class or another group class, please contact us at 540-316-2640.