

U.S. Administration for Community Living Falls Prevention Grantee Tai Chi for Arthritis Information and Guidance

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidance regarding Tai Chi for Arthritis U.S. Administration for Community Living falls prevention grantees.

What is Tai Chi for Arthritis?

Developed by Dr. Paul Lam at the [Tai Chi for Health Institute](#) (TCHI), the program utilizes Tai Chi's Sun style for its ability to improve relaxation, balance and its ease of use for older adults. The movements are taught to both left and right sides and with turns to move forward and backward to improve mobility and offer a variety of combinations.

Tai Chi for Arthritis is led by a TCHI Board certified instructor, with each session including the following:

- Warm-up and cool-down exercises
- One or two movements per lesson, progressively leading to completing the six basic core movements and six advanced extension movements
- Breathing techniques
- Tai Chi principles including those relating to improving physical and mental balance

Movements are performed at a higher stance to make it easier for older participants and those with arthritis. Movements can be modified to accommodate mobility issues for any participant and can be done seated as a starting exercise.

Outcomes

Tai Chi for Arthritis has been shown to:

- Improve balance
- Increase muscular strength
- Improve mobility
- Increase flexibility
- Improve psychological health
- Decrease pain
- Prevent falls

Target Audience

The target audience is adults with or without arthritis, rheumatic diseases or related musculoskeletal conditions. The program is appropriate for people with mild, moderate and severe joint involvement and back pain. It is also appropriate for adults without arthritis who have a higher risk of falling.

Participation Requirements

The following are participation requirements for Tai Chi for Arthritis. Participants must:

- Attend a minimum of **16 hours of tai chi lessons**. This can be accomplished by attending one hour per week for 16 weeks or two hours per week for eight weeks.
- The class must be conducted by current TCHI Board certified instructors to maintain the fidelity of the program.
- Instructors should strongly encourage participants to practice the tai chi program at home for half an hour daily, at least four days per week. This can be done in one half hour session or two fifteen minute ones. Naturally, practice longer within the participant's comfort zone is even better.
 - Participants must attend at least one in-person class per week and be encouraged to practice at home.
 - An [instructional DVD](#) is available to help guide learning and home practice as well as other educational aids such as books, handbook and wall charts.

Tai Chi for Arthritis Training

Tai Chi for Arthritis has various levels of instructors, including certified instructors, senior trainers, and master trainers. All levels of instructors must fulfil all requirements and attend in person respective training workshops as well as conduct prior preparation for the training. They are required to complete update certification every two years, to maintain and develop the quality of tai chi and teaching skill, and to adhere to the codes of ethics.

Training requirements and all current authorized TCHI Board [Certified Instructors](#), [Senior Trainers](#), and [Master Trainers](#) are available on the [Tai Chi for Health Institute](#) website.

Fidelity in Tai Chi for Arthritis is achieved by the availability of DVDs and text book to review techniques, skill building workshops, instructor support by senior and master trainers, and instructor certification updates every two years.