



Tai Chi

Physical Activity Phase 2



MOVE! Scheduling: 303-283-5300
Or 303-283-5496

MOVE! Into Tai Chi....



Tai Chi is a form of an ancient eastern martial arts practice called Qigong, and is also rooted in Chinese medicine and meditation. Tai chi emphasizes mindfulness of the body and breath. It is practiced in the East to align "chi" which is thought to be the life force energy. By aligning the "chi", a practitioner of Tai Chi manages stress, pain and dysfunction while promoting peace within their mind and body.

Benefits of Tai Chi:

- Weight management
- Improved strength
- Improved flexibility
- Improved balance and decreased risk of falls
- Improved coordination
- Improved breathing
- Stress reduction
- Low-impact activity
- Can be performed in a variety of settings: inside, outside, seated
- Improved ease of performing activities of daily living
- Economical

A few tips for practice:

1. Focus on your breathing and being in the present moment
2. Listen to your body, never force a pose or position!
3. Emphasize slow, controlled movements



The Exercises

The following warm-up exercises are not formal Tai Chi exercises (called "forms"), but they do emphasize movements that are often used in Tai Chi.

Below are also some beginning exercises inspired by Tai Chi forms:

Standing in the Wu-Chi Position
Relaxing the Neck
Lowering the Shoulders
Painting the Wall
Two Full Moons
Playing the Accordions
Swimming On Land

The following Tai Chi Forms will enhance your stability of movement, strength and mind-body connection

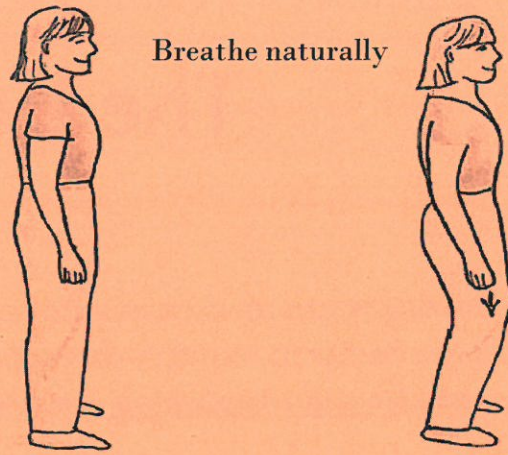
Lifting the Knees
Turning the Balloon
Opening the Curtain
Swimming In Deep Water
Blocking To The Diagonal
The Mare Parts It's Mane
Soft Step
Working the Oar

Each exercise is to be done six or more times before flowing into the next movement

Adapted from: "Step-by-Step Tai Chi-The Natural Way to Strength and Health" by Master Lam Kam Chuen

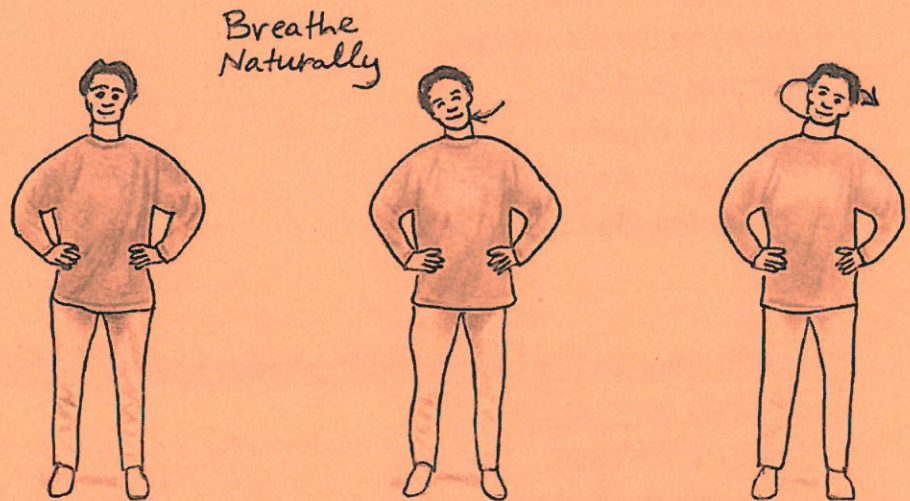
Standing in the WU CHI position

The position of primal energy. You should practice it at the beginning of all movements from this point forward and should remain in this position until complete.



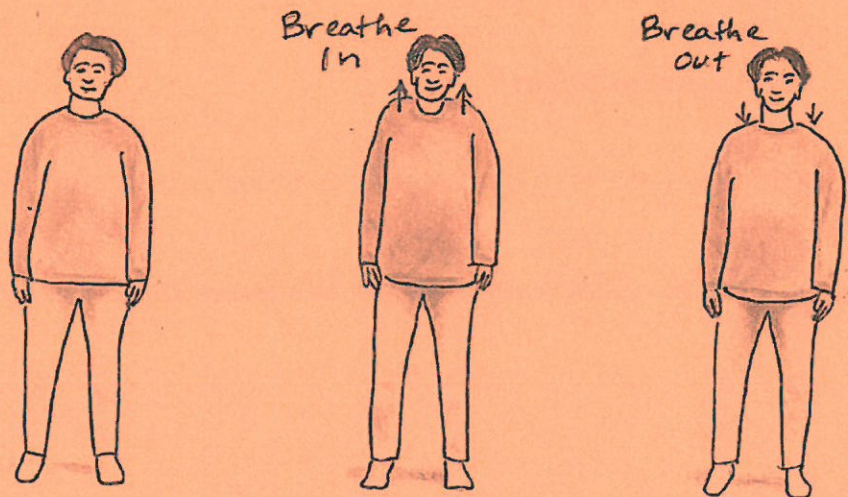
Relaxing the Neck

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Remain still while gently letting your neck roll in a clockwise position. The idea is to release tension from your neck, not stretch it.



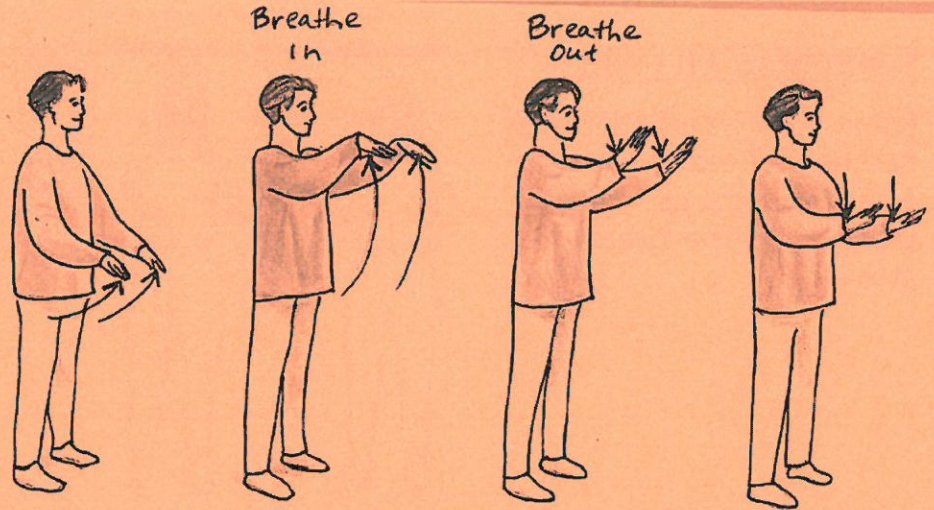
Lowering the Shoulders

Breathe in and slowly raise both shoulders. Breathe out and gently lower both shoulders. Drop your hands as low as they can go and leave them there for 1 second.



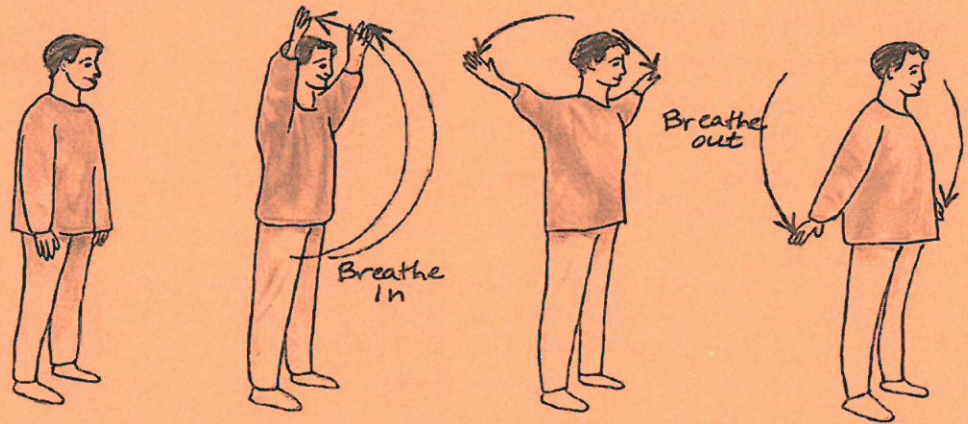
Painting the Wall

Gently raise your hands as if you were painting a wall up to head height. Then slowly bring your hands to waist level.



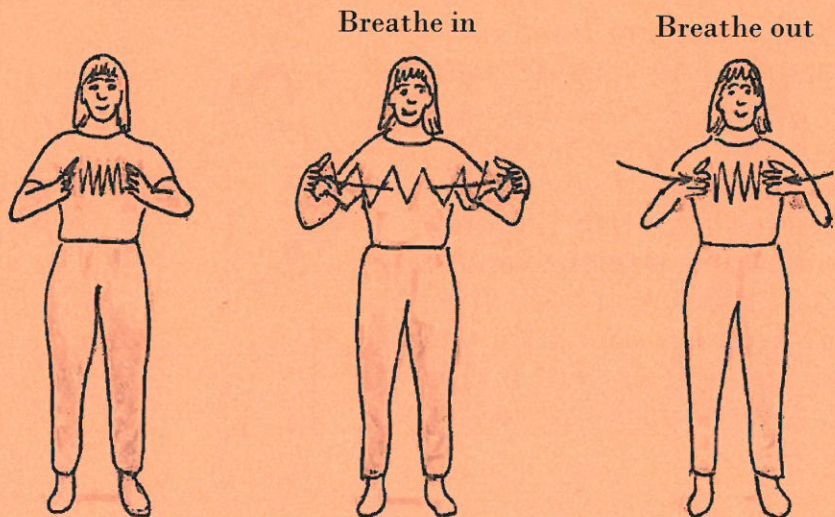
Two Full-Moons

Slowly raise both arms in front of you and around, making large circles like two full moons. Adjust the speed to your breathing.



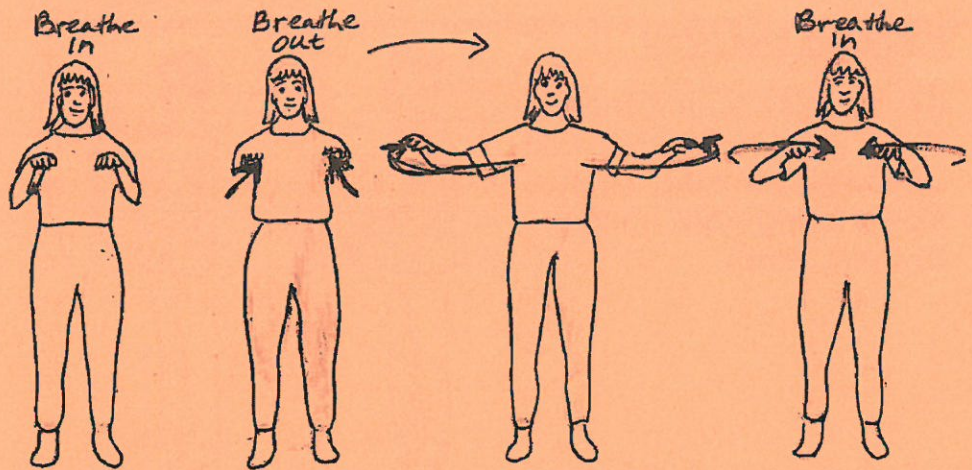
Playing the Accordion

Raise hands up to chest level. Gently move your arms outward as if you were opening the bellows of an accordion. Bring arms back as if you were closing it.



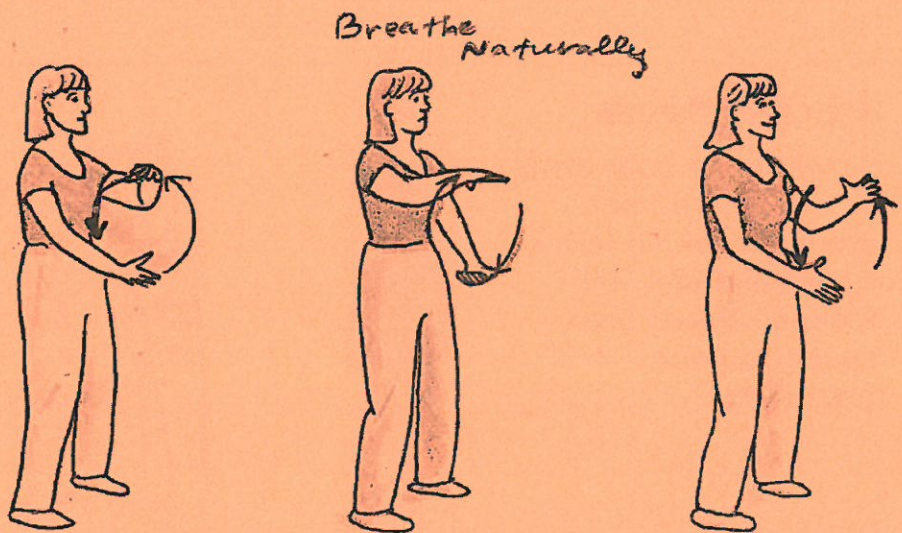
Swimming on Land

Raise your hands to chest height and extend your arms forward as if you were using the breast stroke.



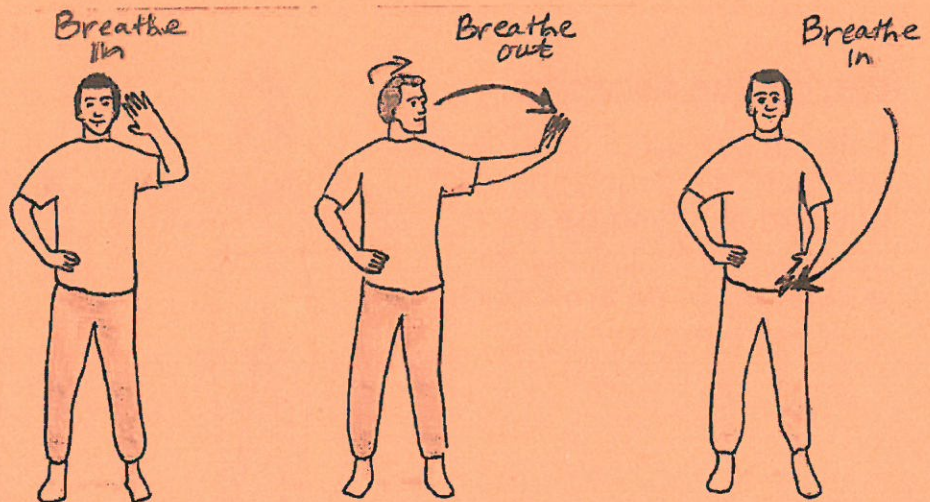
Turning the Balloon

Take your left hand and place it in front of your chest with palms down and your right hand in front of navel with palms upward. Rotate the imaginary balloon so that your right hand is on top and your left is on the bottom, then repeat.



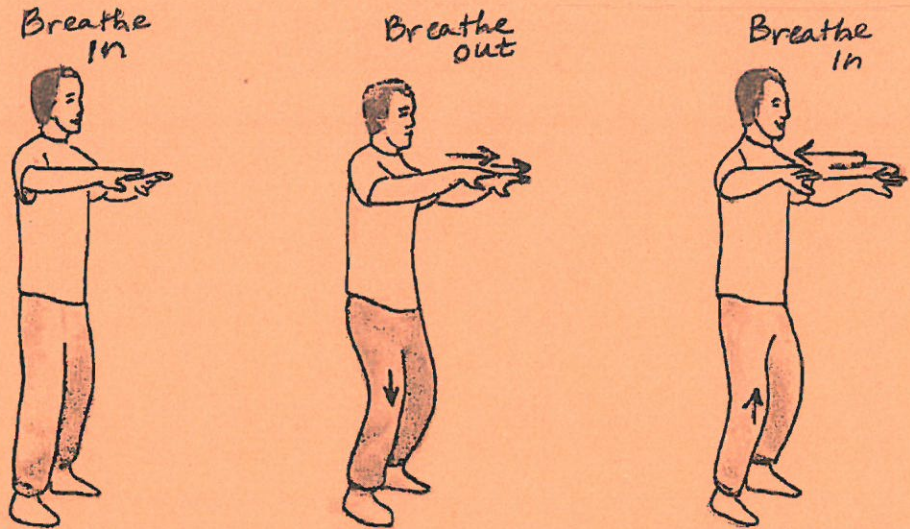
Opening the Curtain

Place your right hand on your hip and your left hand by your head with palms forward. Move your left hand over as if you were opening a curtain without completely straightening your elbow. Your head should follow in a gaze. Point your left hand downward and bring in a curve down to waist level.



Swimming in Deep Water

Similar to the swimming on land. Raise hands to chest height and as you extend your arms forward, sink down in a slightly deeper Wu Chi position. As you bring your arms back, straighten your knees enough to raise up.



- Complete -

Interested in learning more?

- As with any program, if you are thinking about beginning a Tai Chi program, consult your Primary Care Provider for any advice they may have.
- Try a class at your local gym or senior center. Many facilities often allow you to take the first class for free and offer discounts to veterans.
- Explore the library for books and DVDs to learn more about Tai Chi!
- Ask your Tai Chi instructor questions about their practice. Ask other students in the class how they enjoy the class.

**St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center Free Yoga Class (1008 Minnequa Ave, Pueblo, CO 81004)
FREE!!**

When: Every Tuesday & Thursday From 3:00PM to 4:00 PM

Where: Second Floor Mental Health Meeting Room

Details: No experience needed. All equipment supplied. This is a beginner to intermediate class that will support veterans looking to manage stress.

