

# Tai Chi

## **What Is It?**

Tai Chi is a form of exercise that originated in China. Recently it has been shown to be an effective part of an exercise regimen for older adults, increasing flexibility, posture, and strength.\*

## **Who Can Benefit from Tai Chi?**

Everyone can benefit in some way. Tai Chi is particularly helpful for individuals with arthritis, gait or balance disorders, or falls.

## **How Does Tai Chi Work?**

The exercises of Tai Chi have been shown to increase flexibility, muscle strength, and overall fitness. Each of these components is an important element of care for someone with arthritis or an unsteady gait.

- Tai Chi exercises are gentle.
- Tai Chi exercises all joints and muscles of the body.
- Tai Chi is easy to learn and requires no special equipment.
- Many practitioners of Tai Chi believe that it has an ability to improve one's overall outlook on life by improving the body-mind connection.

## **How Can I Get Started?**

Most people do best with personal instruction or perhaps a video after individualized training. An 80-minute video, *Tai Chi for Arthritis*, is available from the Arthritis Foundation. In addition, the Arthritis Foundation can lead you to instructors in your local area.

You can contact the Arthritis Foundation at P.O. Box 7669, Atlanta, GA 30357-0669. Phone: 404-872-7100

Web site: [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)

\* Journal of the American Geriatrics Society. 1996 May 44(5): 489-97.