

Congratulation for your decision! You decide to register for a Tai Chi Class with the Tai Chi Club. Maybe a friend spoke to you about it or maybe your doctor recommended it or maybe you were just curious.

As the first class approaches, you wonder and ponder a thousand questions. Here is a quick summary on what to expect.

**Try to get to the first class with a 10-15 minutes advance.** This will allow you to familiarize yourself with the place and its facilities as well as getting a sense of the club and its members.

**Wear loose fitting clothes and shoes with thin soles.** When you are comfortable, it is easier to relax. Being relaxed is an essential component in Tai Chi.

**Bring a bottle of water, eat something light.** Although Tai Chi is not a cardio workout, you will be physically exerting yourself. Stay hydrated!

**Turn off your cellphone or set it on vibrate.** You will need all of your concentration to fully comprehend this art. Use this time to practice being in the present moment. No worrying about what happened during the day or what may happen in the evening. Stay present!



Our class usually begins with the teacher saying WUJI (definition: Mother of Tai Chi, Nothingness, a state of emptiness). This is the signal to stop what you are doing, empty your mind, keep silent and clear out your thoughts. Students settle down and align themselves into clear rows and columns.



Class begins with a salute. This is the greeting between Teachers and Students.

## Warm-up

Before learning or practicing, a warm-up is initiated. Usually it will always start with a few loosening of the joints movements. Use this time to release yourself from the day's events. You are now doing something for yourself. Slow down your breathing. Relax those shoulders. Untighten your facial muscles (smile slightly).

The second part of the warm-up is usually some type of Qi Gong. Breathe naturally and slowly.

## Class

Now you are ready to learn. Your group will always have a teacher and an assistant teacher. If you are with friends, try to minimize your interactions with them during class. Be respectful towards the teachers and towards the other students. Tai Chi is an art that requires mindfulness, patience and perseverance.

In the beginning, you may feel many emotions. Some of them good, some of them not so good. This is normal. Do not try to squash those emotions let them flow through you - like your breathe. Some classes you will understand everything and be in the flow. Other days, you will understand nothing and your balance will fail you. This is normal. It is part of the learning experience. Take your time. Breathe deeply and thoughtfully. Immerse yourself in this century old activity.



Class ends with a salute. We salute and thank our teachers for the lessons learned.

Then we clap our hands out loud for taking the time to do something wonderful for ourselves.

## After Class

There are many reasons why you may want to learn Tai Chi. If one of them is to be able to do the form on your own, when you get home do the moves that you learned in class before going to bed.

If possible, do them everyday. Do not worry about being correct or not. The important thing is to find a way to introduce Tai Chi into your everyday life. When you return to class, you will be able to correct if necessary.

If you know other students, see if you can practice with them.

There is no shortcut to learning Tai Chi. Every day that you practice, it is like you are putting savings in the bank. Everyday you don't practice, it is like you are spending. More practice, more gain. Less practice, less gain. No practice, no gain.

Use your time wisely!

