

Championing Whole Health with Tai Chi & Qigong

Empower and Equip People with Self-Care Strategies
to Strengthen Body, Heart-Mind, & Spirit



Aurora Health Care®

Now part of  **ADVOCATE**HEALTH

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Aurora Integrative Medicine

Disclosure

I have nothing to disclose



Objectives

After this presentation attendees will be able to:

1. Describe a major focus of Whole Health.
2. Articulate how Tai Chi and Qigong align with the Whole Health model of care.
3. Recognize the evidence that supports Tai Chi and Qigong as valuable Whole Health interventions.
4. **Experience the mindful and meditative movements of Tai Chi & Qigong.**



Whole Health

As defined by the VA ([Kligler, 2022](#)), a **major focus of Whole Health** is to provide an approach to care that **empowers** and **equips** a person to **take charge of their health and well-being and live their life to the fullest.**¹

GLOBAL ADVANCES
IN HEALTH AND MEDICINE

[Glob Adv Health Med.](#) 2022; 11: 2164957X221077214.

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PMCID: PMC8902183

PMID: [35273831](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35273831/)

Whole Health in the Veterans Health Administration

[Benjamin Kligler](#), MD, MPH¹

Whole Health

- “The Whole Health concept is rooted in a return to the traditional values which have informed healthcare for thousands of years that engaging the whole person, not just the **physical body** but the **emotional, mental and spiritual** aspects as well, is critical to healing.”
- This is not a new concept...



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

- Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) established this concept several thousand years ago.
- To this day TCM interventions are utilized to promote Whole Health of *Body, Heart-Mind and Spirit*.²

身 心 神

Body

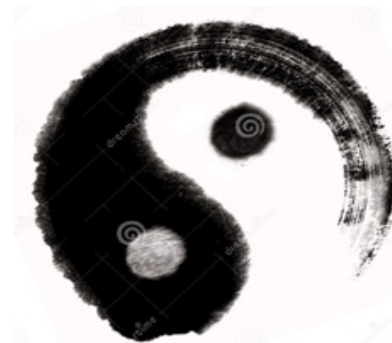
Heart-Mind

Spirit

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Rooted in the ancient philosophy "**Tao**" or the *Natural Way*.

To follow the "*Way*" you have to heighten your awareness of "**Wu Chi**".



Wu Chi recognized as the primordial energy of the universe that fuels the phenomenon of change, symbolized in the the **Yin-Yang** symbol.

The **Yin-Yang** symbol is also known as the **Tai Chi diagram**

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi & Qigong were developed as martial arts practices to empower and equip people to be able to protect their physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.³

太

Tai – “Supreme”

極

Chi – “Ultimate”

氣 功

Qi - “Vital Energy”

Gong - “Work”

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Purpose of practice:

Tai Chi: **"Supreme Ultimate"**

- Balance Yin-Yang through movement, mindfulness, and meditation to experience a sensation of connection b/w the body, heart-mind, & spirit, with the spirit energy of nature & the entire universe to be able to live life to the fullest.

太 極

Tai – "Supreme"

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Qigong: **"Vital Energy Cultivation"**

- Utilize muscle-tendon changing, functional exercises, to cultivate your Qi and your physical, emotional, and spiritual stamina to be able to live life to the fullest.

氣 功

Qi - "Vital Energy"

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Tai Chi & Qigong
Self-Care Strategies
to Strengthen:

身 心 神

Body

Heart-Mind

Spirit

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

What's the Evidence?

- A substantial body of published research has examined the health benefits of Tai Chi.
- In addition, a strong body of research is also emerging for Qigong, an even more ancient traditional Chinese wellness practice.
- Studies reveal Tai Chi and Qigong's biopsychosocial-spiritual benefits.



Biopsychosocial-spiritual Benefits

- Alleviates Pain (Kong et al., 2016)⁴
- Improves Upper and Lower Body Strength (Song et al., 2014)⁵
- Aids in Balance & Flexibility in Older Adults (Huang et al., 2024)⁶
- Improve Exercise Self-Efficacy in Heart Failure patients (Yeh et al., 2011)⁷
- Potentail treatment for fatigue in breast cancer. (Shima et al., 2022)⁸
- Improvements in mental and physical well-being evidenced by the reductions in depression and anxiety and improved quality of life (Sini et al., 2023)⁹
- Psychosocial well-being among elderly (Chan et al., 2017)¹⁰

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

How does it Work?

身

Body

Movement: Provides a form of [body weight training that builds strength, flexibility, and endurance](#).¹¹ The focus is on using your own body weight in all planes of motion rather than relying on external weights. This makes Tai Chi & Qigong a convenient and affordable way to stay fit and healthy.

心

Heart-Mind

Mindfulness: Provides an opportunity to practice emotional awareness. [Awareness is at the heart of the VA's Whole Health approach to health care](#)¹². It is a crucial life skill that allows you to confront and control negative emotions.¹³ Without this awareness, you are at the mercy of your biology.

神

Spirit

Meditation: Provides a "meditation invitation" to explore and experience a sensation of connection of your body, heart-mind, and spirit to the metaphysical spirit energy of nature and the universe. [Research reveals that meditation provides an accessible, self-care resource](#) that has potential value for mental health, behavioral self-regulation, and integrative medical care.¹⁴



Let's Begin!

NOTE: Please avoid or modify any exercise you feel you are unable to engage in at this time.

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi & Qigong

Wu Chi Stance:

1. Properly position your body
2. Breathe comfortably
3. Relax & expand
4. Quiet the mind

Purpose:

- Come into the moment non-judgmentally.
- Establish a sensation of connection b/w your body, heart-mind, and spirit with the spirit energy of nature and the entire universe.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi & Qigong Warm-up

1. Bear dance
2. Swirl cup of tea
3. Sway body like a dragon
4. Wave hands like clouds
5. Palm strike stretch

Purpose:

- Move Qi and Blood to prepare for exercise.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Qigong: Horse Stance

1. Steal the power of the earth
2. Pull back the reins
3. Twisted stance punch right
4. Twisted stance punch left

Purpose:

- Cultivate the flow of qi and blood to strengthen lower extremities to be able to engage in physically demanding endeavors.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Qigong: Tiger Sequence

1. Pet the tiger
2. Tame the tiger
3. Crouching tiger
4. Leap like a tiger

Purpose:

- Cultivate the flow of qi and blood in all planes of motion to maintain functional strength and flexibility.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Qigong: Balance Stances

1. Shield & Spear Pose
2. Tiger Pouncing Pose
3. Eagle Spreads Wings Pose
4. Carry the Incense Burner Pose
5. Kung fu Kick Pose

Purpose:

- Improve balance to prevent falls and improve functional mobility.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi 1-10

1. Preparation
 2. Beginning
 3. Ward off left
 4. Ward off right
 5. Roll back & press
 6. Push
 7. Apparent Closure
 8. Kick Left
 9. Kick Right
 10. Step forward and punch
- Return to Wu Chi



太 極

Tai – “Supreme”

Chi – “Ultimate”

Don't Think – Feel! Feel the balance of Yin-Yang and the sensation of connection of your body, heart-mind, & spirit as you explore and strengthen your relationship with spirit energy of nature and the universe.

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Qigong: Dragon protects baby dragon

1. Raise the sword
2. Swing the sword
3. Rock the baby dragon

Purpose:

- Cultivate the flow of qi and blood along the spine to prevent/treat upper and lower back pain.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Qigong: Open the door to nature

1. Step forward to push open the heavy door
2. Grow like a tree
3. Flow like water
4. Crash down like a waterfall
5. Paint the rainbow

Purpose:

- Strengthen upper and lower extremities in all planes of motion to enjoy all that nature has to offer.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

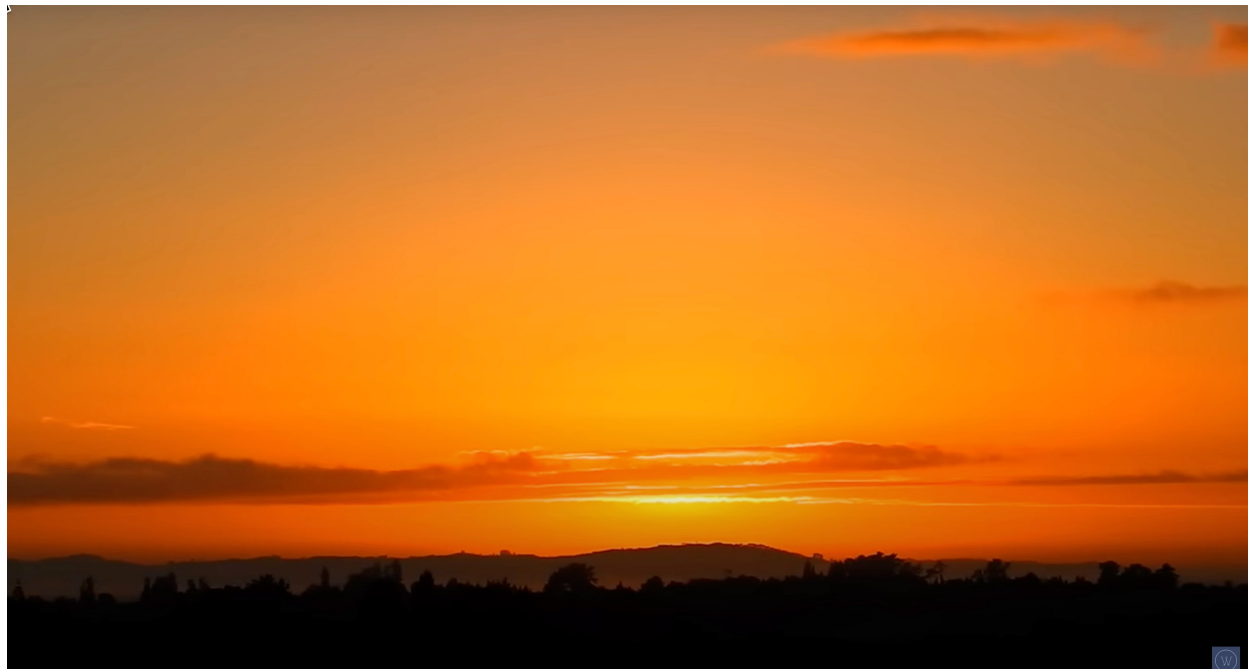
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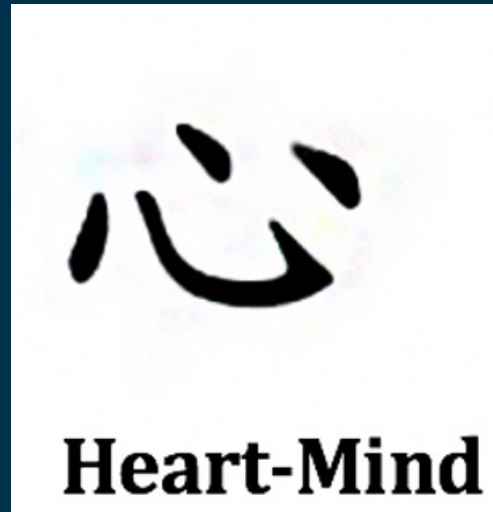
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Connect and flow with the speed of a sunrise or sunset.

Strengthen the Heart-Mind



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi, Qigong & Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

- For thousands of years TCM recognized how emotions impact an individual's *Heart-Mind* and health outcomes.



Heart-Mind

- In TCM the heart is intimately and inseparably connected to the mind and one's thoughts and emotions.
- This is best represented by ancient drawings that depict how emotions injure the heart.

Anxiety



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Anger



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Heart-Mind

Depression



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Sadness



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi, Qigong & Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

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Heart-Mind

Addiction



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Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

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Feel like flowing water, transparent as a mountain stream, as you move in all directions navigating the currents of change and challenge.

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Qigong: Turtle Sequence

NOTE: can raise blood pressure

1. Press outward
2. Pull upward
3. Raise head and look to right and left
4. Pull to the right
5. Pull to the left
6. Show the world how happy you are!

Purpose:

- Tonify every muscle of the body for improved functional ability.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Qigong: 8-Section Brocade

1. Owl looks behind
2. Hold up the sky
3. Separate sky & earth
4. Bend like bamboo
5. Punch with fierceness
6. Strengthen your courage
7. Bend bow to shoot the arrow
8. Bend backward and forward

Purpose:

- Stretch and strengthen your upper and lower body to be able to engage in physically demanding endeavors.



Strengthen the Spirit or Shen



Spirit/Shen

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi, Qigong & Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

- For thousands of years TCM recognized how Spirituality, or a person's *Shen*, can impact health outcomes.
- According to an ancient textbook on acupuncture:
"The plan for the treatment should be rooted in the patient's Shen"
- A person who presents with a strong *Shen* has greater resiliency and a greater chance of overcoming disease and injury versus a person with a weak *Shen*.
- This symbol depicts how a person can work to strengthen their *Shen* or Spirituality.



Spirit/Shen

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Tai Chi, Qigong & Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

- It symbolizes the “tools” we are given in life to cultivate our Shen through witnessing awe and wonder and engaging in purposeful work.
- Tai Chi and Qigong are examples of how people can work to strengthen their *Spiritual Wellbeing* and live life with greater meaning and purpose.

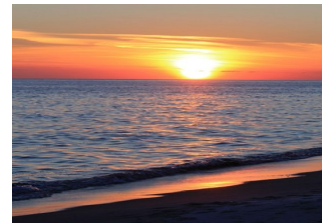
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Spirit/Shen

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Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

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Seek out opportunities to flow as you experience awe and wonder wherever you go to continually strengthen your *Body, Heart-Mind, & Spirit!*

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Assume Shoulder Width Apart Stance

Qigong: Beat the Earth Drum

1. Alternate arm swing with raising and pounding heels into the earth.

Purpose:

- Increase foot/gastrocnemius endurance and bone density.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Assume Shoulder Width Apart Stance

Qigong: Shake Branches of a Tree

1. Raise arms and hands over head
2. Flex and extend your knees as rapidly as you can for 1 minute

PURPOSE:

- Increase/maintain aerobic capacity.



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

Ultimately, practicing Tai Chi and Qigong is a personal journey, an invitation to connect with the energy of all that exists, and an opportunity to explore and define what physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing means to you.



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Feel a connection to the infinite power of the universe and the power you possess to overcome your challenges.

Resources: Tai Chi & Qigong

- **Learn to teach Tai Chi & Qigong**
- For more info: john.burns@aah.org

- **YouTube**
- **Tai Chi Fifteen Movement Form:**
https://youtu.be/MYF7OK_Fg_Y

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health Aurora Integrative Medicine



**In this scripted 2-Day Intensive
Learn how to teach Tai Chi & Qigong to
Improve Body, Heart-Mind, & Spirit**

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health Gratitude Practice



Peace & Respect

Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

REVIEW

- TC & QG Stance
- TC & QG Warm-up
- QG: Horse Stance
- QG: Tiger Sequence
- QG: Dragon Protects Baby Dragon
- QG: Open the Door to Nature
- QG: Turtle Sequence
- QG: 8-Section Brocade
- QG: Beat the Earth Drum
- QG: Shake Branches of a Tree
- Tai Chi 1-10



Tai Chi & Qigong for Whole Health

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Follow The Tao or The Way of Nature and the Universe!

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