



## Tai Chi - Movement and Meditation Programs

### Intended Audience

All members including people living with cancer, family members and significant caregivers.

### Program Description

Tai Chi is an ancient Chinese exercise that involves gentle movements, performed with the intention of connecting mind and body. Sometimes described as “meditation in motion” this program requires deep focus and concentration as one stays in the moment and develops the mindfulness that Tai Chi promotes. In the Wellspring context, Tai Chi is an effective tool for members on their healing journey. The short sequences of movement can be practiced daily for calming, relaxation, balance and harmony, all vital properties of health and wholeness.

### Benefits and Impact

Tai Chi has been practiced for hundreds of years – a proven method of replenishing energy, deepening mindfulness, improving balance and expanding flexibility. Participants on a quest for healing find this program deeply calming, with a centring effect that helps alleviate pain, fear and anxiety. As the mind is quieted and the body strengthened, the spirit is lifted to its natural state of peace and tranquility.

### What to Expect at a Session

Participants warm up using Qigong breathing exercises and then gradually move into a sequence of poses and standing movements that flow naturally, so the body is in constant fluid motion. Each week participants practice previous poses they’ve learned and new sequences are introduced. Movement is always slow and gentle with a focus on deep breathing and mindfulness. Each class culminates with an enriching visualization exercise, or a walking or standing meditation. An introductory session for people with less experience is offered each season, with the option to move to the more advanced class.

### Participant Comments

*“I absolutely love Tai Chi. The facilitator is a very patient, kind, and caring teacher.”*

*“This class is very pleasant and calming. I liked the ability to stay in the moment.”*

*“I enjoyed the relaxation and beauty of movement, unique movements and individualized creativity.”*

### What the Research Says:

Recent studies have indicated that Tai Chi enhances the immune system and relieves pain, anxiety, and stress in cancer patients and survivors (Maciel, L., Cancerwise, MD Anderson Cancer Center, 2010).

Lorenzo Cohen, PhD., professor in the departments of Behavioral Science and General Oncology and director of the Integrative Medicine Program at MD Anderson, says he often recommends tai chi to patients because of its overall health benefits (Maciel, L., Cancerwise, MD Anderson Cancer Center, 2010).

### Program Frequency:

**1 hour** per week  
**12 weeks** per program  
**2 programs** per session  
 Winter, spring/summer, fall  
 Tai Chi Retreat: Leighton Centre in summer

**Optimum Class Size: 16**

### Related Programs:

Qigong  
 Yoga: Functional  
 Yoga: Restorative  
 Yoga: For Well-Being

