



## Water Tai Chi

Water Tai-Chi is described as a form of meditation in movement and involves gentle and fluid exercises that focus on the inherent flow of the limbs, arteries and muscles, opening up the meridians of chi so that chi can circulate freely throughout the body. It aims to reduce stress and still the mind, bringing balance, health and rejuvenation. The exercises can be practiced on land or in water and assist with weight loss, stimulate the metabolism, increases energy, improves the skin, massages and tones the muscles and joints, free up and deepen breathing, improves the posture, and develop intuition and insight.

The benefits of learning and practicing Tai-Chi in water rather than on land are that the clumsiness, stiffness and heaviness experienced on land are quickly and easily overcome in water, and connecting to the fluidic external environment helps to free the emotions and mind so that the person is more receptive to the inherent fluidity inside their bodies.

A combination of the principals of water fitness and the graceful flowing movements of Water Tai Chi. The resistive and supportive qualities of the water provide an ideal environment for the slow, rounded movements of Tai Chi. Works on balance, strength, flexibility and relaxation.

Lao Tzu spoke of the virtues of water: Water is unselfish, life giving, never asking for reward, able to infiltrate into and out of every place. Nothing is softer than water or more fluid. Water doesn't struggle. It does not resist. It goes into any space available. It takes the shape of its container. Like water, Tai Chi flows smoothly and offers no resistance. It yields, changes shape, moves into any available space. Like water, Tai Chi meets hardness with softness. If someone pushes you, you yield and change shape. Like water, Tai Chi can be soft as four ounces or powerful as a thousand pounds.

### Drag and Viscosity

Water tai chi is different from the traditional land version in that the resistive and supportive qualities of water provide an ideal environment for slow, rounded, flowing movements. Water provides about 12 times the resistance of air, so the body naturally moves more slowly in the water due to drag forces.

**Drag, the resistance encountered as the body moves through water, increases with the length of the limbs, or levers. A long lever is a fully extended arm or leg, while a short lever is a flexed arm or leg. Water tai chi exercises utilize both short and long levers.**

**The viscosity of water will naturally slow down a moving body. Viscosity is the friction between molecules of a liquid or gas, which causes them to adhere to each other (cohesion) and, in water, to a submerged body (adhesion). Water is more viscous than air, and this friction between molecules is what causes resistance to motion. The effects of drag and viscosity naturally promote the slow motion-like movements of tai chi.**

### **1) Special Considerations for Adapting Tai Chi to the Water**

- **Maintain adequate core temperature of participants. Water movements are performed approximately 4 times faster than comparable land movements.**
- **Position in mid-rib cage to chest depth water to allow for stabilization.**
- **Optional wearing of water shoes for improved traction, footing, grounding and protection.**

### **2) Movements Techniques for Water T'ai Chi**

- **Works with spring loaded joints**
- **Uses only the amount of energy needed to execute movements, adds the quality of relaxation.**
- **Works from a lower center of gravity, softening knees.**
- **Creates circular movements to work intrinsic muscles, gently expanding the range of motion.**
- **Shift and transfer body weight as you move to integrate leg power.**
- **Develops coordination of arm and hand motions to the whole body, moving as if your spine was a third arm.**
- **Moves from the center, using the abdominal muscles. The center is the energy source.**

## **WATER T'AI CHI EXERCISES**

**Brush Knee Push**

**Part the Wild Horses Mane**

**Double Cloud Waving Hands**

**Single Cloud Waving Hand**

**Five Animal Qigong**

**Five Element Qigong**

**Lifting Pressing Water**



**Single Whip**

**Sweep The Sea**

## **CONCLUSION**

**Participants of all ages can enjoy and appreciate the unique, graceful, and flowing movements of tai chi. The mind-body concepts of the ancient martial art of tai chi combined with the gentle qualities of water exercise attract people looking for alternative ways to de-stress and bring balance to their lives.**

**Everyone, especially seniors, benefit from water tai chi's emphasis on balance and posture. The Arthritis Foundation, a long time supporter of water exercise, recently stated tai chi might be the ideal exercise for arthritis sufferers. Studies are underway concerning possible uses in treating the elderly for loss of balance and frequent falls.**

**Focusing on mind, body and spirit while experiencing a perfect blend of motions that incorporates the relationship of the entire body to the feet, center and grounding. The slow movements of Tai Chi will allow you to develop a graceful and powerful use of your whole body while improving strength, flexibility, and balance.**