

## Tai chi could slow down Parkinson's disease

30th October 2023



Researchers have found that the Chinese martial art of tai chi could slow down the progression of Parkinson's disease by years. Tai chi, with its slow, meditative and deliberate movements, is known to benefit physical and mental well-being. Doctors

from the Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine conducted a five-year study on people with Parkinson's. The researchers discovered that the condition progressed at a slower rate in those who practiced tai chi. They observed fewer falls, and less dizziness and back pain in the tai chi practitioners. The researchers also noted that the cognitive function of the test participants who regularly practiced tai chi deteriorated more slowly.

Parkinson's disease is a brain disorder that affects the nerves and muscles. It progressively causes unintended or uncontrollable movements, such as shaking, stiffness, and difficulty with balance and coordination. People with Parkinson's may eventually have difficulties walking and talking. One of the most famous people with Parkinson's was the heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali. The researchers suggest that doing tai chi could keep symptoms of Parkinson's at bay for years. They said: "The long-term beneficial effect of tai chi on Parkinson's could prolong the time without disability, leading to a higher quality of life, a lower burden for caregivers and a reduction in drug use."

Sources: [people.com](https://people.com) / [independent.co.uk](https://independent.co.uk) / [medicalxpress.com](https://medicalxpress.com)

### Writing

Everyone should do tai chi or meditate every day to look after their brain.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

martial art / tai chi / Parkinson's / disease / meditative / well-being / dizziness / pain / brain disorder / nerves / muscles / shaking / balance / boxing / symptoms / drug use

### True / False

- 1) Tai chi is a martial art that originated in China. T / F
- 2) The article says tai chi is a key part of meditation. T / F
- 3) Researchers from a university in Beijing conducted a study. T / F
- 4) Test participants who did tai chi suffered slower cognitive decline. T / F
- 5) Parkinson's disease mainly affects the cardiovascular system. T / F
- 6) Parkinson's disease affects people's coordination and balance. T / F
- 7) The article says a former karate champion had Parkinson's disease. T / F
- 8) Tai chi could reduce the need for drugs to treat Parkinson's disease. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <b>progression</b>  | a. health         |
| 2. <b>deliberate</b>   | b. condition      |
| 3. <b>well-being</b>   | c. worsened       |
| 4. <b>observed</b>     | d. draw out       |
| 5. <b>deteriorated</b> | e. purposeful     |
| 6. <b>disorder</b>     | f. stability      |
| 7. <b>balance</b>      | g. signs          |
| 8. <b>symptoms</b>     | h. advance        |
| 9. <b>prolong</b>      | i. responsibility |
| 10. <b>burden</b>      | j. saw            |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Why do so many brain disorders affect older people?
- c) What do you know about brain disorders?
- d) Should we all do tai chi to keep Parkinson's at bay?
- e) Is there enough education about things like Parkinson's?
- f) How can we ensure there are caregivers for ageing populations?
- g) What do you hope to be doing in your later years?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Phrase Match

- |                                 |                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. tai chi could slow down      | a. affects the nerves   |
| 2. slow, meditative and         | b. more slowly          |
| 3. less                         | c. effect of tai chi    |
| 4. cognitive                    | d. deliberate movements |
| 5. deteriorated                 | e. for caregivers       |
| 6. a brain disorder that        | f. dizziness            |
| 7. difficulty with balance and  | g. the progression      |
| 8. keep symptoms of Parkinson's | h. coordination         |
| 9. The long-term beneficial     | i. at bay               |
| 10. a lower burden              | j. function             |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about tai chi?
- What do you know about martial arts?
- How can we keep our brain healthy?
- Do you worry about losing cognitive abilities?
- What do you do for your physical and mental well-being?
- Do you ever get dizzy or have back pain?
- How can we help people with Parkinson's?
- When will diseases like Parkinson's be a thing of the past?

## Spelling

- the Chinese iatlmra art of tai chi
- slow down the irorosgspen of Parkinson's
- tedimteiva and deliberate movements
- less zdeiiszn
- tai chi einartcitrspo
- aedreotetidr more slowly
- a brain ddsroire
- nerves and smcelsu
- euntylavel have difficulties walking
- keep smtpsmyo of Parkinson's at bay
- prolong the time without iisiatbyld
- a lower ebrdun for caregivers

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. a	4. j	5. c
6. b	7. f	8. g	9. d	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Tai Chi

You think tai chi is the best thing for brain health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): sleeping, learning a language or socializing.

### Role B – Sleeping

You think sleeping is the best thing for brain health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): tai chi, learning a language or socializing.

### Role C – Learning a Language

You think learning a language is the best thing for brain health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): sleeping, tai chi or socializing.

### Role D – Socializing

You think socializing is the best thing for brain health. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least effective of these (and why): sleeping, learning a language or tai chi.

## Speaking – Brain Health

Rank these with your partner. Put the best activities for brain health at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| • Tai chi    | • Learning a language |
| • Sleeping   | • Playing the piano   |
| • Reading    | • Crossword puzzles   |
| • Meditation | • Socializing         |

### Answers – True False

1 T	2 F	3 F	4 T	5 F	6 T	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.