



National Center for
Complementary and
Integrative Health

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/taichi/introduction.htm>

Tai Chi and Qi Gong: In Depth

How much do we know about tai chi and qi gong?

Several clinical trials have evaluated the effects of tai chi and qi gong in people with various health conditions.

What the Science Says About the Effectiveness of Tai Chi and Qi Gong?

Practicing tai chi may help to improve balance and stability in older people and in those with Parkinson's disease, reduce back pain and pain from knee osteoarthritis, and improve quality of life in people with heart disease, cancer, and other chronic illnesses. Tai chi and qi gong may ease fibromyalgia pain and promote general quality of life. Qi gong may reduce chronic neck pain, but study results are mixed. Tai chi also may improve reasoning ability in older people.

Research findings suggest that practicing tai chi may improve balance and stability in older people and those with Parkinson's, reduce pain from knee osteoarthritis, help people cope with fibromyalgia and back pain, and promote quality of life and mood in people with heart failure and cancer. There's been less research on the effects of qi gong, but some studies suggest it may reduce chronic neck pain (although results are mixed) and pain from fibromyalgia. Qi gong also may help to improve general quality of life.

Both also may offer psychological benefits, such as reducing anxiety. However, differences in how the research on anxiety was conducted make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about this.

Safety of Tai Chi and Qi Gong?

Tai chi and qi gong appear to be safe practices. One NCCIH-supported review noted that tai chi is unlikely to result in serious injury but it may be associated with minor aches and pains. Women who are pregnant should talk with their health care providers before beginning tai chi, qi gong, or any other exercise program.