



CELESTIAL TAI CHI COLLEGE NEWSLETTER

Term 2
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Broadsword Warriors at the Preston Centre receive their new College certificates from Senior Master Chin Min for completing the Broadsword routine. For more photos: www.facebook.com/celestialtaichi

Park Lessons

Sunday 28th April

Time: 10:00am to noon

Fairfield

Fairfield Park

Cnr Heidelberg Rd & Fairfield Park Dr
(Melway 30 J12)

Saturday 4th May

Time: 10:00am to noon

Malvern

Central Park

Cnr Burke & Wattletree Rds
(Melway 59 G10)

****Note the change of the Fairfield Park lesson from week 7 to week 5 for this term only****

All are welcome to the park lessons for a free introductory lesson, so please recommend these park sessions to anyone who may be considering starting tai chi.

Other Upcoming Events:

May 9-12

International Martial Arts Games

June 2

Philosophy Lesson



Preston Centre is running several tai chi levels in the first hour and teaches advanced forms in the second hour. The group has just finished the broadsword and is now starting the Wild Goose Qi Gong.



The teaching team at Preston is headed by Senior Master Chin Min and assisted by Instructor Wayne Bradborn, Assistant Instructors Anja Tanhane and Dave Brogden, Trainee Instructor Joy Muir and Senior Class Helpers Helen Maloney and Di McDonald.



World Tai Chi and Qigong Day

- ◆ **Saturday 27th April at 10am**
- ◆ **Alistair Knox Park**
- ◆ **Main Rd Eltham**

Celestial Tai Chi College will be celebrating World Tai Chi and Qigong Day in the lovely parklands of Eltham. Senior Master Chin Min will be taking the session, which will include different forms of qigong, tai chi and a demonstration. All are invited to join us for the morning.



Eltham group in the first hour with Instructor Judy Grant

A Story of Bowls Success, With Thanks to Tai Chi

In June 2011 I commenced Tai Chi lessons in Eltham. In November 2011 I made the semi finals of both the men's pairs and triples of the Victorian open bowls competition held in Shepparton.

In October 2012 I managed to win both the singles and pairs over 60 group championships. Playing off against other group winners I made the semi-finals of the Victorian over 60 singles championship.

I attribute this success to the discipline of Tai Chi. Important skills in playing lawn bowls are concentration, focus, visualisation, coordinated body movement, relaxation and breathing: all of which have been enhanced by the performing and practicing of Tai Chi.

I cannot emphasize enough how important these components of Tai Chi are to my sport of lawn bowls.

Terry Bain, Eltham

Practical tips for remembering tai chi

Do you have trouble remembering your tai chi? We all learn in different ways and at different speeds. It's good to take the time to think about what works for you. Take a moment to go back to the basics and consider some of the tips below to help you make the most of your tai chi.

At class:

*Watch your instructor like a hawk, or perhaps like a white crane. When you are at home, you focus on your hands, but when learning something new at class watch your instructor as much as possible. There are always many subtleties about the moves to pick up if you are looking carefully. If you don't have a good view of the instructor, move around until you do, or ask the instructor to move to different positions in the room.

*Ask questions. Instructors love questions! Don't wonder in silence - you can be sure that someone else will be wondering the same thing, so speak up.

*Get into the habit of counting all the repeated moves like the brush knees, repulse monkeys, cloud hands and jade ladies. You can follow your instructor at class, but at home it's easy to forget how many you've done and to find yourself facing the wrong direction.

*Don't worry if you think you are a slow learner, or others in your group appear to be catching on more quickly. It just doesn't matter. What does matter is how much you enjoy your tai chi.

*Go to the park lessons. It's wonderfully reassuring to see that everyone else looks much the same as you when doing tai chi. It's also valuable to be taught by a different instructor every now and then. If you feel you don't want to be doing tai chi out in public - be brave! It's worth it.

*Consider purchasing one or some of the learning aids produced by the College. Many will be familiar with the CD of Grand Master Eng Chor talking through the Yang form as this is frequently used in classes, but this is very useful for home practice as well. There is a DVD, two booklets that include the Lotus and Levels 1 and 2 (*Art of Moving Meditation* and *Tai Chi for Beginners*) and there are posters of the main tai chi postures. Talk to your instructor about what may be best for you.

At home:

*Be positive and banish all negative self-talk. Many of us have a tendency to beat ourselves up if we can't remember the moves. Being hard on yourself won't help you to learn; be kind instead! Replace any negative thoughts with something like, 'I can remember this', or even, 'Oh well! I'll skip that move and keep going'.

*Make notes that are meaningful to you. Simple bullet points may be enough to trigger a memory, or you may prefer detailed instructions. Write notes as soon as possible after class while the information is still fresh.

*Video yourself. Yes, this is not for everyone! But it is very beneficial to see yourself doing tai chi; often we think we're doing a move in a certain way only to find we actually look quite different.

*Visualise the movements while sitting quietly, or even while doing the dishes. Rehearsing in the mind is hugely beneficial - sort out the moves in your head before getting up to practice them. This is especially good for moves that you find physically strenuous.

*Do frequent quick practices of new material. This will give you the best chance of remembering both the basic routine and the subtleties. Do a few quick run-throughs the same day as class and for the next couple of days.

*Do a more formal practice a few times a week, if not every day. If you have made notes, read them before starting your session. Include as many limbering-up moves as you can remember before practicing your tai chi. Enjoy the flow and relax. DO NOT worry if you think you have a move wrong. Practicing something wrong is better than no practice at all. There is always next week at class to sort out any moves that you are not confident with.

A final word: These tips should help you to remember your tai chi a little better. But remember what's most important: that we *enjoy* our tai chi. If your hand is facing up when it should be facing down, does this really matter? Not really (unless you are training for a tai chi competition, which most of us are not). What matters is how much you enjoy your tai chi, so be gentle with yourself, relax and enjoy!

Suzette Hosken, Instructor at Eltham and Camberwell Centres

This edited article was first published in 2007

Moonee Valley Festival 2013

We are pleased to report that our College was once again represented at the annual Moonee Valley Festival - one of the larger community festivals, attracting thousands of people both locally and further afield. The College has been involved with this festival for many years now and it is always pleasing to be invited back each year. We are the only Tai Chi community group at the festival.



We were the first group to perform and gave a 15 minute demonstration on the main stage, which included the Lotus Qigong, Levels 1 & 2, and the Phoenix Fan. Margie, Dave and Joy did the demonstration, with Wayne providing a very smooth commentary from a microphone at the side of the stage. Tai Chi seemed a natural way to start the day and we received a very warm reception.

The rest of the day was spent at our stall, where we handed out brochures, shared information about Tai Chi classes and gave the occasional impromptu lesson. It was a very long, hot day, but really enjoyable and successful. Let's hope we managed to encourage more people to take up Tai Chi.

By Joy Muir, with Margie Brett, Jenny Brett, Wayne Bradborn, Dave Brogden & Doreen Giannini

At the end of the long day, Dave gave a solo demonstration of the art of perfect relaxation!



Tai Chi for the Not So Able

Tai Chi is one of the most universally recommended activities for people experiencing physical difficulties in their day-to-day lives. It has a proven track record for a gentle approach to recovery and maintenance for the damaged body.

Most of us take for granted that we can make our bodies do whatever we want, but sometimes, we have to face the fact that this is not so. However, it doesn't mean we can't participate; we need to explore and focus on what we **can** do rather than being discouraged and missing out.

Every group or class has someone who cannot quite physically complete the moves because their body restricts them. But there is a complexity to Tai Chi that, if explored, allows great benefit to be achieved. Every move has a basic outward form, but there are lots of little intricacies within the form that when we are fit and able, we may overlook. These are the subtle turn of the wrist, the fingers, the positioning of the feet, the turning of the hips, the head. There are lots of these within the basic form that are often missed, not even noticed, but highly achievable. It is well worth exploring or re-visiting each movement to find the little gems that exist.

It is of no concern if your hands don't work properly, that you cannot form a fist; but there is still great benefit in moving your wrist. The person who wobbles because they cannot balance may stand out, but if they put their foot down and complete the rest of the move, they are part of the group. There are lots of places to put your foot down if you break the moves down and retry them until you are comfortable. You may need to slow down a bit more so that you are not waiting at the end of each move for the rest of the group. This actually makes Tai Chi a lot easier to do.

Practice at home the moves that you struggle with in class. It is the same for everything. Practise makes perfect (or nearly). Can't interlock your fingers? Place one palm inside the other as if interlocked, complete the rest of the exercise as normal: the benefit will still be there. Can't stand on tiptoes? Raise your body so that your heels almost lift: you will still get a great stretch. If you can't do the balancing exercises in class, try them at home with a chair or similar to assist so that your participation is real. Don't over practise. It is meant to be enjoyable and fun. Wearing yourself out isn't helpful, but small sessions will provide a sense of well-being and achievement.

Make Tai Chi your friend, ask your instructor for extra insights and assistance to achieve your goals. They will be happy to assist you and will learn more themselves.

Linda Samson, Trainee Instructor at Eltham

College Dates 2013

March 18 to May 12: Term 2

March 28 – April 3:	College Break (Easter)
April 27:	World Tai Chi and Qigong Day
April 28:	Fairfield Park Lesson ** 10-12noon
May 4:	Malvern Park Lesson * 10-12noon
May 9 – May 12:	International Martial Arts Games

May 13 to July 30: Term 3

June 2:	Philosophy Lesson
June 22:	Malvern Park Lesson * 10-12noon
June 30:	Fairfield Park Lesson ** 10-12noon
July 1 – July 7:	College Break

July 8 to August 25: Term 4

August 17:	Malvern Park Lesson * 10-12noon
August 20 – September 3	China Silk Road Cultural Tour
August 25:	Fairfield Park Lesson ** 10-12noon

August 26 to October 20: Term 5

September 30 – October 6:	College Break
October 12:	Malvern Park Lesson * 10-12noon
October 20:	Fairfield Park Lesson ** 10-12

October 21 to December 8: Term 6

November 15 – 17:	College Tai Chi Retreat
November 30:	Malvern Park Lesson * 10-12noon
December 7:	College Annual Banquet 6pm
December 8:	Fairfield Park Lesson ** 10-12noon

* Park lesson at Central Park
Corner Burke & Wattletree Rds, East Malvern. Melway 59 G10

** Park Lesson at Fairfield Park
Corner Heidelberg Rd & Fairfield Park Dr, Fairfield. Melway 30 J12