

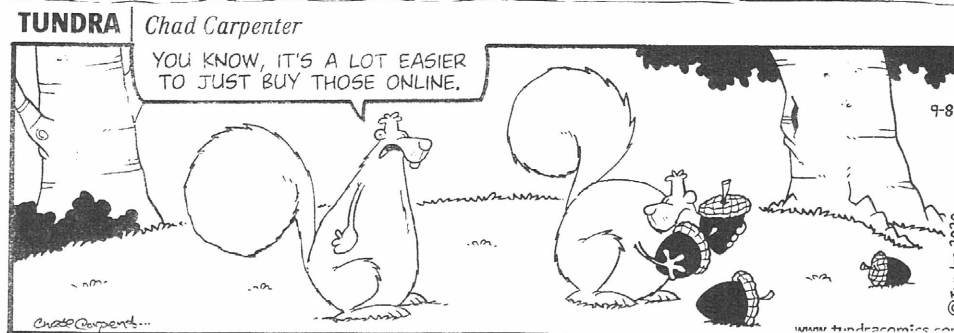
Tai Chi



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Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout Week of November 8, 2020

Welcome to the New World



In some ways, I feel I am in a battle against the stressors brought on by the pandemic. Like any invasion our very existence and way of life has been threatened and the wages of war has its consequences. The mental fatigue of constant vigilance to be safe and to protect not only ourselves but people we love and care about requires alert attention. Not only is this fatiguing but it is stressful in its own right.

As we go forward, I am reminded that we need to keep our eye on the ball. I have written about the strategies to maintain our health and wellbeing so this handout is a reminder of what research tells us. From the Blue Zone Study, here once again are those strategies that have the potential to keeping us safe and sane.

Exercise

Even low- to moderate-intensity physical activity can help counteract stress-induced inflammation in the body. It can also increase neuronal connections in the brain. Walking is the best next to T'ai Chi, of course. Walking and T'ai Chi share a common thread- both move the body in a natural way; the way the body is intended to move.

Meditation and mindfulness

Research shows activities that allow us to "stop the world and get off" can lead to positive, structural and functional changes in the brain.

Fostering social connections

Talking to family and friends, even virtually, or staring into a pet's eyes can release a hormone that may counteract inflammation. Connecting to the universe by experiencing moments of awe is good for our health and wellbeing.

Learning something new

Whether it's a formal class or taking up a casual hobby, learning supports brain plasticity, the ability to change and adapt as a result of experience, which can be protective against depression and other mental fatigue.

"We shouldn't think of this stressful situation as a negative sentence for the brain," said Harkness, the psychology professor in Ontario. "Because stress changes the brain, that means positive stuff can change the brain, too. And there is plenty we can do to help ourselves feel better in the face of adversity."

Humor and Laughter

It's true: laughter is strong medicine. It draws people together in ways that trigger healthy physical and emotional changes in the body. Laughter strengthens your immune system, boosts mood, diminishes pain, and protects you from the damaging effects of stress. If it were not for the comedians, I would have lost it long ago.

May you find some peace, calm, gratitude, moments of awe and laughter

Linda

