



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout February 5, 2023

### Matters of the Heart



February is the month I share with you “Matters of the Heart.” T'ai Chi has multiple heart-healthy effects in the body. For instance, some research studies suggest that Tai Chi can lower blood pressure. In these studies, those who practiced T'ai Chi for 3 months (2 times per week) significantly decreased their blood pressure, compared to those who didn't participate in the T'ai Chi program but participated in other activities.

Scientists at Harvard and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center followed 100 outpatients who had reduced heart-pumping function (“systolic heart failure”) and put them into two random groups of 50. One group took part in a 12-week tai chi-based exercise program, and the other group received time-matched education sessions. Both groups attended their sessions twice per week and were similar in terms of baseline

By the end of the study, people practicing T'ai Chi had greater improvements in quality of life, including increased confidence to perform various forms of exercise, increased daily activity levels, and greater feelings of well-being, as compared to people in the education-only cohort.

According to the researchers, T'ai Chi encourages gentle, flowing circular movements, balance and weight shifting, and practicing of breathing techniques. Tai Chi can be good for heart failure patients as it is "safe and has good rates of adherence."

This form of exercise may also be beneficial for people with hypertension, balance problems, and an impaired exercise capacity, the researchers write. The exercise appears to decrease anxiety, enhance vigor, and improve mood and is a safe alternative to moderate-intensity conventional exercise training.

The study is published in the April 25 2011 issues of the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

### **T'ai Chi is good for the heart, soul and mind**

