



Complements Integrative Medicine Quarterly News



Mindful Movement: Tai Chi, Qigong & Yoga

Greetings!

At this time of year we seem to try to pack in so many activities. Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day there are family gatherings, shopping, gift-making, and the office holiday party to name a few. Good intentions of getting so many things done can leave you feeling drained, and worse, prone to whatever bug is going around.

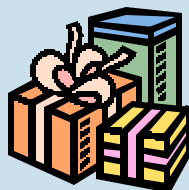
In this issue, we introduce the concept of mindful movement. Even if you are familiar with these ancient, holistic practices, now is a good time to become even more aware of using them to bring your mind and body to a balanced and healthful place.

Sheila Belzer, our resident Yoga instructor shares her wisdom of coming to the mat and how, through the breath, we can move into the present moment. Bob Ellal shares his personal story of how the ancient practice of Qigong was a powerful tool in helping him heal from a devastating disease. Also in this issue, you will learn how Tai Chi can play an important role in helping people with chronic pain begin to find relief in the mindful movements that have been described as "meditation in motion".

All of these mindful movement practices can help us focus our intention on developing healthy minds and bodies. What a gift that would be to give to ourselves. Happy Holidays everyone!

Kelly

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The Appeal of Yoga; Or Why Everyone is Carrying a Mat!

by Sheila H. Belzer,
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Instructor

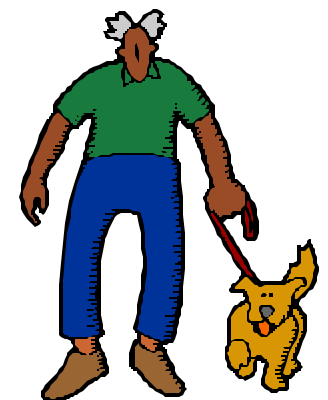
Currently there are many books and Internet sites to supply Yoga definitions and posture detail. I thought I would use this opportunity to share thoughts, insights and observations from my personal practice, workshops I have attended, and from students that have come my way over the past years. Included at the end of this article is a resource list of local studios and some books on Yoga that I have enjoyed. I hope this will assist you in your practice, inspire you to take your first Yoga class, or simply answer basic questions.

I would guess there are as many reasons for coming to the Yoga mat as there are people trying Yoga classes every day around the world. The good news is that there is something for everyone. At any age, at any stage in your life, you can find Yoga poses designed to bring benefits to both

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The Healing Love of Pets & Pet Therapy—March, 2006

In 2005, the Hospital's Pet Therapy program celebrated its 10-year anniversary. In our next issue, we will celebrate the bonds between humans and animals. Kelley Boothby, Manager in Volunteer Services will share her first-hand knowledge of the Pet Therapy program. We will also explore how our pets can help us heal better, and lead healthier and happier lives. If you have a story about a special bond between you and your animal companion, please send it along for this next issue.

The Appeal of Yoga continued from page 1

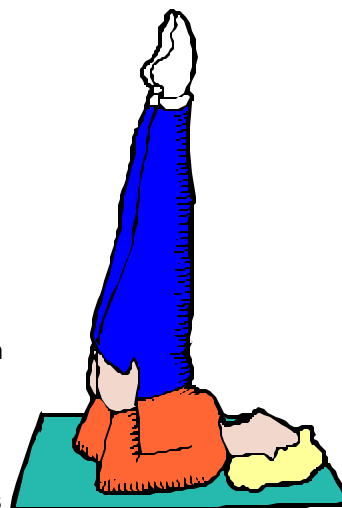
body and mind. There are classes that are vigorous in nature, somewhat aerobic and fast-paced. Some traditions string postures into what is known as a “posture flow” and can move quite quickly. Others spend time developing one posture at a time or practice with longer holding times for each posture or “asana”.

Studios may add heat to the room in an attempt to warm and loosen muscles, or use props such as ties, belts, blocks or blankets to modify or intensify the poses. Some styles focus almost entirely on intense breathing (pranayama) techniques, and some are restorative and quite gentle. Yoga can be done in a chair, on a bed top, with children, senior citizens, or handicapped populations. The challenge and key to enjoying your yoga may be as simple or difficult as finding the right match to an instructor or studio providing locations and class times that fit your schedule and personal taste. Though tapes and books are the first choice for many, there is no substitute for the watchful eye of a teacher and the experience of being in a class with others. It may be encouraging to know that studios are likely to offer a free first class, removing any financial commitment at the onset.

It would be unusual not to have heard from a news or personal source about the benefits of yoga. Yoga is a growing industry in this country that can be both awesome and confusing. I have noticed that it is nearly impossible to listen to a newscast, watch a sitcom, read a magazine or newspaper and not hear something about yoga. Either in jest or as a serious recommendation yoga is a buzz word in our current health and wellness culture. Yoga has become part of our every day language and for some part of every day life. I have heard many testimonials from people attributing major life transformations to the practice of yoga. Either on the physical level or emotional/spiritual plane, I am always reminded of the power this ancient practice has on our minds and bodies.

An overview:

One of the ancient purposes for all the yoga postures, as I have been told, is to gain core strength and hip flexibility to sustain a seated lotus posture for long periods of time. This is required as part of a traditional meditation practice in order to achieve higher states of consciousness and ultimately enlightenment. That is it, a strong healthy temple from which to experience the divine. There is no mention of the “perfect butt” or abdominal “six pack” in the yogic scriptures. This is not to say that it is somehow wrong to desire physical changes that go beyond how we feel to how we appear. Simply acknowledging the depth of the practice offers a slightly different perception. The flow may be the same, the physical challenges identical, but it is my belief that when the purpose shifts to encompass this broader view, the experience and approach is broadened to our benefit. I will also say that regardless of one's initial intention, if the experience is good, folks tend to return to the mat and in doing so gain many of the benefits that in turn keep them coming back for more. This is a cycle worth acquiring!



Since I have not set out to explain how yoga works or report on the many foundational and philosophical principles of the practice, I will offer some general guidelines and thoughts that I find most interesting and alluring about my time on the mat. My hope is to stir interest for new practitioners or insight for those with a well-worn mat in their possession.

The physical side:

Each posture presents us with the opportunity to engage muscles, anchor the mind to the body with breath, and deal with the intensity of arising sensations. All of this happens in a moment rooted in the present. To be engaged completely is to be safe and to be prepared for instruction about body alignments that bring benefits on many levels. Instruction may come from a teacher's voice or from your internal storage of facts and intuition about a particular posture. It is worthwhile to consider the distinction between thinking about something and experiencing it with your senses void of descriptions, judgments, likes or dislikes.

Going to the edge:

The “edge” is generally thought of as a point of transformation for both physical and mental aspects of the practice. To be engaged at the edge is to move towards a physical limit where sensation is the strongest and going any deeper or further would feel like over exertion or strain. While holding back from sensation reduces the physical benefits of a pose, moving past the edge into pain is by no means the objective. The concept of balance comes to mind here for exploration both on and off the mat. Observing how the edge is approached and embraced can be interesting. Working within this

The Appeal of Yoga *continued*

space requires attention to detail and the willingness to move into a physical challenge. Permission to back off of the edge can be equally valuable in many ways. It is important to remember that though the edge is intense we are able to hold a posture at that level for several minutes or about five full breaths. In asking our bodies to hold a little longer or to bend a bit more deeply we can move beyond yesterday's limits into something unknown, an experience that reframes the body's limits and the expectations of our mind. Edges change regularly as does the practice and can be reflective of many other areas in life.

The mind-body connection:

One of the goals of holding a posture is to fully engage both mind and body without strain. Alert, engaged, and present at your edge define a part of the practice described as "witnessing" and is associated with aspects of meditation. In this case a moving meditation that often describes the Kripalu tradition in which I have been trained. Consider how emotionally charged your thoughts may be, how this translates to the body, and how restful it is to just "be" without thought. Sensation and breath awareness becomes the anchor to unfolding experience in which we give the mind a rest and the body a prescribed physical challenge to create strength and flexibility. Sound like a marvelous duo? It is this combination that makes Yoga such an alluring discipline for many. Remember, the goal of practicing Yoga is not just to do better Yoga, it is to cultivate balance in the body and mind such that life flows harmoniously. Additionally, stronger more flexible bodies are known to last longer with fewer necessary repairs. Yoga is a powerful tool for general health and wellness that I believe has the potential to keep us all fit and happy. An important step toward achieving benefits from your practice, as much as good instruction or form, is the ability to embrace the discipline and practice with regularity.

The breath, energy lines and alignment:

It is generic yet fair to say one should breathe fully and completely during all movement and while holding any posture. A full breath begins in the belly and moves up towards the chin slowly. The exhalation is controlled, smooth and of equal length to the inhalation. Inhalation rounds the belly outward while the end of the exhalation finds the belly reaching in towards the spine. Sounds easier than it may be. Practitioners often note how quickly they forget to breathe when trying something new or focusing intently on a particular area of the body. Attention to breathing provides the body with fresh oxygen and the mind with an additional anchor to the present moment. The power of our breath to focus, heal and energize is also a great subject for much discussion.

Additionally, as we move and settle into postures the lines we create with our bodies should be straight. If you have the opportunity to practice in front of a mirror you may be surprised by what feels straight and the adjustment you can make to further approach that position once you can see your own outline. I will caution, this is a generalization. There are many reasons for less than straight arms or spines. We are working towards a personal goal in which progress of all proportion is noted and should be appreciated.

It is helpful to come into a posture as you know it physically and scan the body using basic principles of alignment. Create a firm connection to the floor with all parts of the body that form the base (knees or hands, not just feet), lengthen the spine without arching the lower back (pelvic bowl should remain in a neutral position), extend the spine in opposite directions keeping shoulder blades engaged behind you, draw awareness and energy to your core while sending breath and awareness liberally around the body as you reach your full expression of the posture (asana). Total emersion into the body, into the moment, and into the self, is achieved and combined with all the physical benefits available from stretching and engaging, twisting and lengthening with care.

Which style is best for me?

Differences in Yoga styles may be associated with anything from its originating location in India to the American yogi who, in developing a student following, worked with a physical therapist and decided that ancient postures designed for the small bodies of Indian men, who practiced from birth, needed alterations to be safe and accessible to the average American. For an in-depth description of a particular Yoga style I suggest an Internet search. You might ask for assistance with such a search from your friendly library staff! I would suggest asking about the style of Yoga before attending a class and some detail on the philosophy of the studio or individual instructor. Lately there is a tendency for instructors to state an "eclectic" approach which means they have either studied in many places and bring you what they feel is the best of all worlds, or they are not trained in teaching and will give you what they have read or seen. There is no way to know which class will be best for you. Keep in mind that within one studio there will be different levels offered

Continued on page 4

The Appeal of Yoga *continued*

and teachers with varying styles. Personally I have learned something from everyone, which is not to say I would return to all of the classes I have attended.

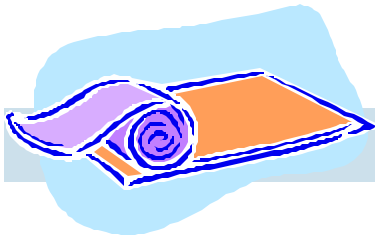
A common description of Yoga classes in adult education flyers is that of “Hatha Yoga.” Please note, a basic definition of Hatha Yoga is any Yoga that employs physical postures. A class listing of Hatha Yoga does not let you know much about the kind of flow or intention of the experience. Other kinds of Yoga:

- Janu – the path of knowledge and wisdom gained through the study of scripture.
- Raja – known as Ashtanga (eight limbed Yoga) or “Royal Yoga”, it is a systematic approach to self-realization.
- Karma – the practice of selfless service, predominately action oriented (community service).
- Bhakti – the way of devotion practiced by rituals of reverence such as chanting, prayer, or meditation.

Don't be shy to ask for a specific description if you want to know ahead of time what to expect from a class. Keep in mind the overall flexibility of Yoga itself and the many ways it has come to be modified as a version of the ancient teaching. As long as we do not get hooked on thinking there is ONE kind of Yoga that is “right” we can explore new formats, teachers, settings and approaches that may meet the changing needs of our bodies, minds and lives at any given time.

A final note:

It is important to note that along with the wide range of benefits associated with Yoga is an increasing list of injuries. Keep in mind that working at your edge while honoring personal limitation is a challenge for many minds accustomed to the push of competition. A teacher is only a guide, the energy of the class an inspiration, but ultimately each one of us is responsible for our own safety and well-being. I hope you will try a class if you have not, or come to your practice with clarity, acceptance and the intention to return regularly.



Local Yoga Studios

Samahdi

983 Main Street
Manchester, CT
646-4341

Full class schedule: beginner to advance/prenatal etc.
(No website address available.)

Facilitated Healing

346 Main Street
Cromwell, CT
860-635-0509
www.cromwellyogastudio.com

Heart Song

264 No. Main Street
E. Longmeadow, MA
413-525-0720
www.heartsongyogacenter.com

This site has links to a variety of other great Yoga sources. Full class schedule, massage, teacher training, evening programs/meditation etc, excellent teaching staff. Well worth the trip !!!!

Sacred River Yoga

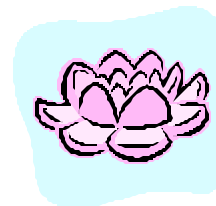
Glastonbury, Main Street
www.sacredriver.com

Go to their website for a class schedule.

West Hartford Yoga

32 Jansen Court
West Hartford, CT 06110 .
860.953.YOGA
<http://westhartfordyoga.com/index.htm>

Full class schedule, varying styles and levels, qualified instructors, ample parking. For a full schedule and studio information visit their website.



Yoga Reading and Resources

READING

- **Light on Yoga** by B.K.S. Iyengar
A classic! This has a great preface on the history and philosophy of Yoga with ALL the classical postures pictured and detailed for benefits.
- **Living Your Yoga** by Judith Lasater
Inspirational. Written by a long time practitioner/wife/mother, view on “Yoga off the mat” in our daily lives.
- **Into the Heart of Truth**
Philosophy. Very readable, practical and helpful applications of the Nyamas (our relationships with self and others).
- **The Secret of the Yamas** by John McAfee
A spiritual guide to being with ourselves.
- **Moving Into Stillness** by Erich Schiffman
A “how to” book with a beautiful preface about moving into stillness with the breath! Details of postures, alignments, benefits etc.
- **Yoga for Wellness** by: Gary Kraftsow
Specific postures for healing specific issues in the body.

INTERNET WEBSITES



- www.Kripalu.org
or call Kripalu for a free catalogue 1-800-741-7353
- www.Yogasite.com
- www.Deeppeace.com
Great site for Yoga inspiration and information
- www.Anusara.com
Another great site for Yoga inspiration and information

Google will take you to any specific information about Yoga (if you ask correctly!)

MAGAZINES

- **Yoga Journal**
Varied articles about postures, teaching, spirituality and related personal growth topics, places to take classes, retreats, book/tape reviews etc.
- **Yoga International**
Less commercial than Yoga Journal, fewer ads; articles on philosophy, life style etc.

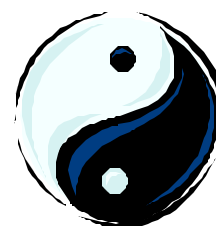
For more information: Sheila Belzer can be reached by sending email to: Sbelzer@harthosp.org.

Tai Chi: Ancient Exercise for Our Health Today

by Kelly Taylor, Certified Instructor, Tai Chi for Arthritis

Say the words “Tai Chi” and most people see an image of early morning in a Beijing park where a large group of men and women are moving in a slow, deliberate pattern that seems like an exotic dance known as Tai Chi. Practiced by millions of people, Tai Chi (abbreviated for T'ai Chi Ch'uan and pronounced tie chee chuwan) is an ancient martial art that today is becoming one of the most popular exercise systems in the world. There are many variations on the beginning history of Tai Chi. The first written reference is found in the Book of Changes, *I Ching*, over 3,000 years ago during the Zhou Dynasty (1100-1221 BC). What is known is that it was a heritage passed on through a small number of families in China, and was not widely taught until the 20th century. Each family developed a particular style, known as the form. Today there are four well-known styles of Tai Chi that are referred to by their family names: Chen, Yang, Wu, and Sun.

The phrase T'ai Chi Ch'uan translates as "the ultimate of ultimates," drawing on the traditional Chinese Taoist beliefs in the interdependence of yin and yang. Yin and yang is symbolized as a circle divided into lighter and darker sides and is a representation of Tai Chi. Qualities of yin include being inward, smooth, receiving, listening and dark. Qualities of yang include outward, rough, sending, speaking, and light. Chinese philosophy is based on the belief that these opposing forces complement each other and can be complete only when balanced in harmony. Illness is said to occur when these forces are unbalanced. Skilled Tai Chi practitioners use the strength of the earth (yin) and the energy of the heavens (yang) to focus their physical and spiritual energies so that mind and body work together, in balance, to improve health and prevent illness.



Principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine

Practiced for over three thousand years, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is a complete system of diagnosis and treatment, using principles very different from Western medicine. TCM doctors study patterns of imbalance (yin and yang) in the patient and then develop a treatment plan to restore balance, rather than focusing on treatment for a specific disease or disorder. Treatments and healing techniques are based on bringing balance, quality and flow of “chi” (also spelled qi). To fully understand Traditional Chinese Medicine one must understand the fundamentals of chi. Chi is said to be essential to health, and is called the “vital energy” which separates life from death. Illness is then considered a result of disturbances in the flow of chi. TCM uses techniques and methods such as acupuncture, massage, herbal medicine and Qigong (a Chinese system of movement and breathing exercises designed to stimulate and improve the circulation of chi) to restore the proper balance of yin and yang, and improve the flow of chi through the body.

TAI CHI AS A COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY

Although Western research is in the early stages of evaluating the therapeutic significance of Tai Chi, a search of the medical literature does reveal over 300 articles by entering the term Tai Chi into the National Library of Medicine's *Medline* and *CINAHL* databases, and limiting the results to English language. However, only a small percentage of these are clinical studies or systematic reviews. The results of the studies that have been done are inconsistent due to such a wide variation in the type of study, age and gender of study subjects, the type of Tai Chi used and the duration of the Tai Chi exercise. What is significant is that even in the small number of Western studies conducted to date, Tai Chi has been found to have a beneficial effect in several areas of functioning in the studied populations: reducing falls in the elderly and improving balance; improved strength and flexibility; increased sense of confidence; improved emotional and psychological well-being. Areas of research which show great promise, but which need further study include reducing blood pressure, improving cardio-respiratory function and improving symptoms associated with multiple sclerosis.

Tai Chi and Chronic Pain

There are an estimated 75 to 80 million people in the United States believed to suffer from chronic pain. Causes and treatment of chronic pain vary. What is consistently known is that chronic pain can last for months, years or even a lifetime, effecting daily life activities and overall quality of life. Depression, loss of appetite, insomnia, and poor daily

Tai Chi continued

functioning skills are some of the affects of chronic pain. Sufferers often fall into two categories: those with ongoing illness such as cancer, arthritis or chronic disease, and those who suffer from old injuries that have not resolved, such as an old back injury.

One of the most recognized causes of chronic pain is arthritis. There are over 100 forms of arthritis, with the most common being osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and gout. In its many forms, arthritis is a chronic condition found worldwide with an estimated one in six suffering from some form of the disease. Osteoarthritis, a chronic degenerative joint disease that affects weight-bearing joints, is the leading cause of disability in persons 65 years and older in the United States. Leading causes of pain and disability for the arthritis patient include: stiffness, limited or decreased range of motion, joint instability, inflammation, and muscle atrophy. Pain is often the worst symptom associated with the various forms of arthritis, and can be accompanied by inflammation. Continued chronic pain and inflammation can lead to permanent joint damage.

Chronic pain and arthritis present complex issues both in diagnosis and treatment. As individuals age, they may develop multiple diseases such as heart disease, or diabetes in addition to some form of arthritis. Treatment is also often difficult and challenging for both patient and health care practitioner, and may involve several approaches including drugs, exercise, counseling, physical therapy, and in severe cases, surgery. Some of the frustrations resulting from this process have led patients to try alternative and complementary therapies. A treatment plan that uses the best of both worlds, integrating traditional medical practice with a complementary therapy which best fits the patient's needs, helps reduce frustration and improve well-being for both patient and health care practitioner.

When the health care practitioner and patient determine that exercise is an appropriate component of the medical treatment plan, the type of exercise must be determined to fit the particular needs and safety of the patient. Patients with pain, stiffness and loss of mobility often develop guarded body movements and may be reluctant to begin an exercise program. Tai Chi is a gentle, slow movement therapy that can easily be adjusted to fit a patient's level of ability. It is important for both the health care practitioner and patient to understand the different forms of Tai Chi in order to find an appropriate teacher and class. Four major forms of Tai Chi and suitability are listed below:

Four Major Forms of Tai Chi

Form	Descriptive Style	Suitability
Yang	Slow, large fluid movements; gentle and graceful	All ages and most levels of physical condition
Chen	Physical; slow and soft movements combined with fast and hard movements; explosive power and low stances	Best for those in good to excellent physical condition
Wu	Mid-paced; compact and soft movements with a slight, forward-leaning posture	All ages and most levels of physical condition
Sun	Compact and flowing with agile steps; high stance; contains Qigong movements which add breathing and relaxation	All ages and most levels of physical condition

There are variations on these traditional forms of Tai Chi that have evolved to meet the needs of Western society. As mentioned in the history, the forms were originally taught within the family system. Teachers who brought Tai Chi to

Continued on page 8

Tai Chi continued

the United States, for example, found that they could be successful if they adapted Tai Chi instruction to fit the ideal of the Western world in relation to fitness and exercise training. Some martial arts schools added a Tai Chi class to their curriculum, while fitness centers adapted variations on the original forms to fit into their programs. Today, many teachers are not Chinese, nor have studied with a traditional Chinese master. The Tai Chi form taught may resemble the original, depending on the skill of the teacher and their philosophy of teaching a strictly traditional form or a variation.

For the purpose of incorporating Tai Chi into the medical management for pain and arthritis, some of the variations in the Tai Chi form may give people with limited mobility an opportunity to participate in an exercise and relaxation activity which has many beneficial effects. Two variations worth mentioning, for people with pain, stiffness, loss of mobility, and other similar limitations, are *Chair Tai Chi* and *Tai Chi for Arthritis*.

Chair Tai Chi incorporates Tai Chi principles into an exercise program from a chair. Participants are guided through the form using the upper body, arms and hands, with emphasis on gentle turning, bending, and stretching. Students may be instructed to visualize the legs and foot movements, or encouraged to move their lower extremities as much as possible from the seated position. *Chair Tai Chi* can promote confidence and a sense of accomplishment in persons not able to perform other types of exercise.

Tai Chi for Arthritis is a program specifically developed with consideration for the pain and guarded movements of the arthritis sufferer, and has features to improve flexibility and muscle strength. Qigong exercises are incorporated into this form to promote relaxation and reduce stress through slow, deep breathing and rhythmic movements. The *Tai Chi for Arthritis* program is supported by the Arthritis Foundation and was developed by Dr. Paul Lam, an Australian family physician, and arthritis sufferer himself, along with a team of tai chi instructors, a physical therapist and two rheumatologists. Although there is no licensing or teaching validation for Tai Chi instructors, the *Tai Chi for Arthritis* program requires instructors to be trained and certified before teaching this form. The importance of understanding the mechanisms of arthritis and ramifications of inappropriate movements for the arthritis patient is critical to improving the patient's outcome.

No matter which form of Tai Chi is determined to be appropriate, a list of benefits can be experienced by anyone who takes up practice:

- Slow, deep breathing increases relaxation and concentration; reduces stress
- Alternating steps of applying full weight and stepping back and forth throughout the form, improves muscle and bone strength and balance
- Positions practiced in the form promote correct posture; increases flexibility
- Enhances quality of life through improved functional mobility

Finding an Appropriate Tai Chi Teacher and Class

Tai Chi can provide benefits to the average person wishing to become more fit and relaxed. In addition, a critical part of working with people who have chronic pain and arthritis is to encourage participation in activities to improve their daily functioning and quality of life. Tai Chi has the components necessary to provide an improved sense of well-being for anyone practicing the form.

The checklist on the next page may be used to assist in finding an appropriate Tai Chi teacher and class.



Tai Chi Checklist

Checklist for finding a Tai Chi Teacher and Class Appropriate for You

- Check local fitness/health organization or hospitals for available classes. Classes offered at martial arts schools may emphasize the martial arts and competition, with little emphasis on Tai Chi for health and well-being.
- Ask what form of Tai Chi is being taught, including if Tai Chi for Arthritis or other adapted forms are being taught. An adapted form may be appropriate if you have medical concerns.
- Is the location of the class accessible? Will it be easy to get to weekly scheduled classes? Is it accessible for you if you have limited mobility?
- What is the teacher's background and credentials? Does the teacher have experience working with people who have a medical concern such as chronic pain or arthritis. Is the teacher certified in a special form such as Tai Chi for Arthritis?
- Ask if the teacher can adapt to your specific health needs and concerns, if applicable.
- Ask if you can watch or try out a class to see if it fits your specific needs.

Be selective in finding an appropriate teacher and class. If one class does not feel like a good fit, try another. Finding the right class will help you feel motivated to integrate this holistic exercise system into your daily living activities.

Some Helpful Warning Signs Which Indicate that You Should Find Another Class

- The teacher says: "No pain, no gain". Exercise should not hurt. Except for some mild discomfort when first beginning, pain should not be a part of your exercise routine.
- The teacher has you do extreme stretching or bouncing into your stretch. Any extreme movement, including extreme stretching can cause damage. Bouncing into a stretch does not help muscles to relax and may actually cause tightness. Stretch out slowly and within a comfortable range.
- The teacher has you compete with others in the class to see "who can be the best". Tai Chi takes time to learn, and each individual learns at his or her own speed and within his or her own limitations.

Be proud of what you can accomplish for yourself!

Tai Chi Resources

There are numerous resources on Tai Chi. A packet of information is available, free on request, by emailing Kelly Taylor at: ktaylor@harthosp.org.

Tai Chi Websites

- Hartford Hospital Integrative Medicine: <http://harthosp.org/IntMed/taichi.htm>
- Dr. Paul Lam's Tai Chi Productions: <http://www.taichiproductions.com/index.php>
- Tai Chi Magazine: <http://www.tai-chi.com/>
- National Qigong Association: <http://www.nqa.org/>





Visit Integrative Medicine's Prosperity Garden for stress free shopping!




Sandy's clearing the shelves to make room for new holiday items and some old favorites too!

What's coming?

 New jewelry—bracelets, earrings and necklaces, and some holiday pins

 Journals and Cards from Little Dog Art including new collage Christmas cards and card-making kits

 Holiday stocking stuffers, cute bears, and a selection of ornaments



And there's more to come. Check in with the staff to see what's new.

Holiday Potluck December 15th



Thursday, December 15 Holiday Potluck

Join the staff of the Integrative Medicine Department and Health Science Libraries—co-sponsors of the Lunch and Learn Series—for a festive holiday lunch.

It's potluck – so bring your favorite healthy dish and the recipe (with ten copies please) to share with colleagues and friends.

**Noon to 1 pm
HH—ERC, Room 216**

Please call Health Referral at 545-1888 to register so that we have a count for paper goods.



Integrative Medicine Services and Gift Certificates

During the month of **December**, think of a Gift Certificate for Holiday gift giving. It's not only a special gift, think of how stress free your shopping will be!

Gift Certificates are available for a variety of complementary therapies offered by the Integrative Medicine Department. Certificates can be purchased

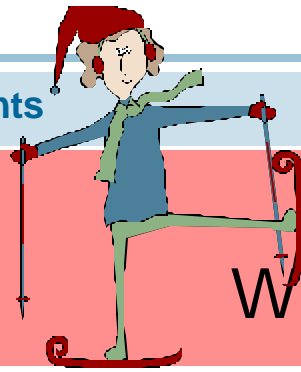
for hospitalized patients, as well as by hospital employees and by the general public. Instead of flowers, consider a gift certificate for a relaxing and stress reducing massage or other available

therapy. See the chart below for gift certificate availability. Call 860-545-4444 for more information.



GIFT CERTIFICATES ARE AVAILABLE FOR:

	<u>Inpatients</u>	<u>General Public</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Acupuncture	_____	\$70/session	Ask about our employee discounts!
Massage	\$35/session	\$60/session	
Energy Medicine (Reiki, Touch Therapy, Reflexology)	_____	\$60/session	



Winter 2006

Health Science Libraries and Integrative Medicine
Lunch & Learn Series

- **Thursday, January 5, 2006, HH-ERC-216, 12-1 pm**
The Many Faces of Integrative Pain Management (Part 1 of a 3 part series)
Pain Management Panel Discussion
This panel discussion will cover the role of Integrative Medicine in pain management. The panel will also be available to answer your questions. Questions can be sent ahead to: Debby Hackett at Dhackett@hartosp.org. Integrative Medicine panel members will include: Marcia Rothwell, Licensed Massage Therapist and Director, Darrin D'Agostino, DO, Medical Director, Susan Bisbee-White, L.Ac. Acupuncturist, and Alice Moore, RN, Reiki Master.
- **Thursday, January 19, 2006, HH-ERC-216, 12-1 pm**
The Day I Died; The Mind, The Brain, and Near-Death Experiences (VIDEO)
Recent studies of cardiac arrest survivors suggest that near-death experiences may occur at times when the brain has actually stopped functioning. Accounts of NDE's shared by the people who experienced them, are analyzed by researchers and skeptics alike. Please join us for the informative video originally presented by the BBC.
- **Thursday, February 2, 2006, HH-ERC-216, 12-1 pm**
The Many Faces of Integrative Pain Management (Part 2 of a 3 part series)
Stress and Relaxation and Its Role in Pain Management
Better understand the physiology of stress and relaxation as presented in this 2nd of a 3 part series. Alice Moore, RN, Reiki Master will teach us how simple tools such as breathing techniques, progressive muscle relaxation and Guided Imagery can be beneficial for relaxation and pain reduction.
- **Thursday, February 16, 2006, HH Main Cafeteria, 11:30 am—1:30 pm**
The Global Art Project (GAP)
Come together with the Integrative Medicine Department's ART for Healing program as we join people around the world participating in creating a work of art to express a vision of peace and global unity. A global exchange will take place in April when the art travels across the world in a living network that connects people of diverse cultural backgrounds.
- **Thursday, March 2, 2006, HH-ERC-216, 12-1 pm**
The Many Faces of Integrative Pain Management (Part 3 of a 3 part series)
Guided Imagery and Self-Reflective Writing
Discover unique tools to manage pain and stress in your life. Images are fixed in our senses and have the unique power to bypass our analytical and physical pathways. Using Guided Imagery, we can connect these images with our experiences and process them through writing, helping to reduce symptoms that result from pain and stress. Diana Boehnert, Artist-in-Residence will teach us simple and effective tools that you can implement yourself with limited time, materials, and experience.
- **Thursday, March 16, 2006**
Managing the Affects of Cancer Treatment with Acupuncture
Acupuncture can be a useful therapy to have during cancer treatments. Susan Bisbee-White, Hartford Hospital Acupuncturist, will share information about how patients can get relief from nausea, have improved energy, less neuropathy and, of course, reduced stress when they have incorporated acupuncture in the cancer treatment regimen.

To register for these free programs, please call Health Referral Service 860-545-1888



Member of the Woman's Life Partnership

My View: Using the Mind, Body and Chemotherapy to Beat Cancer

by Bob Ellal, Chi Kung Practitioner

Learning that you have Stage Four lymphoma cancer is a bad way to start a morning. That's exactly what happened to me one day early in February 1991. While the first Gulf War raged in Iraq, I contemplated my diagnosis and my future.

I knew I was in the very good hands of Dr. Stacy Nerenstone of the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center at Hartford Hospital. But I also knew that because of the stage of the cancer my chances of survival were not good. My life was on the line, and I didn't feel comfortable sitting back and hoping that the chemotherapy alone (with a strong dose of prayer) would cure me.



So I decided to take action. I researched everything I could about people who had survived cancer—especially advanced cases—and followed their lead. The common thread among them was that they had enlisted their minds to help their bodies fight the disease. They used the

techniques of meditation and visualization, but always as an adjunct to Western treatment. Mind/body medicine was a complement to, not a replacement for, allopathic treatment.

I learned visualizations used by patients of the Simontons, pioneers of the infant science of psychoneuroimmunology. I read the books of Bernie Siegel. I agreed with him that you could use your mind and body to heal, but not that people caused their own cancers, which caused excessive guilt. I read the *Relaxation Response* by Herbert Benson, M.D. All the techniques used by survivors included some form of relaxed breathing in combination with meditation or visualization techniques.

Many of the visualizations used by patients consisted of violent imagery—Pac Men eating the cancer cells, knights sticking lances into the tumors, sharks swallowing fish, and so on. I instinctively felt that it was working at cross-purposes to use violent imagery while you were trying to relax.

So I created my own visualization. I imagined my diseased right hip and pelvis (bone lymphoma) as a beach littered with jellyfish eggs. As a wave came

ashore, I inhaled deeply. As the wave sucked back into the sea, I exhaled and it took the weak jellyfish eggs (cancer cells) out into the ocean to be filtered away. Thus I combined my breathing and the action of my mind. After six months of monster doses of CHOP chemotherapy and visualizing several times a day, the cancer was gone.

The Cancer Returns—and I Learn Chi Kung: Chinese Mind/Body Medicine

About 15 months later the cancer relapsed, cropping up in my left hip this time. Dr. Nerenstone decided that because my cancer was a nasty mix of small cell/large cell lymphoma, only a stem cell transplant had a chance of arresting it for good. So I was scheduled for a transplant in Beth Israel in Boston in 1993.

In the time of remission, my visualization practice had lapsed. I had nothing to fight against, and I thought I was cured, so why bother? But now I knew I had to go deeper into the meditative arts both to help my immune system fight the disease and to keep my body and will strong to survive the debilitating effects of high-dose chemotherapy.

I did more research and learned that the Chinese had been practicing an art of mind/body medicine for thousands of years. It was called Chi Kung (or Qigong). The words meant "energy study." Chi Kung is designed to integrate the mind, body and spirit so all elements of a person are acting as one.

Everything starts with a person's breathing; long, slow abdominal breathing is used in conjunction with sitting, standing, lying or moving Chi Kung exercises. Abdominal breathing means you are filling the lungs from the bottom up, getting more oxygen to the blood, and moving the diaphragm downward to massage and stimulate the internal organs. It slows your thoughts and calms the mind and body. It's the foundation of good health, and something that has been lost in the West, where most people breathe shallowly from the chest.

I learned a Chi Kung set, from a local teacher, that from a standing position included various arm movements timed in conjunction with the breathing. The arm movements were designed to open meridians and channels of energy, which the Chinese believe course through the body. It is the basic idea behind Acupuncture—when energy channels are open, good health follows; when energy becomes stuck, it stagnates and disease follows. Then an acupuncturist uses needles to open the meridians and promote a return to health. I practiced Chi Kung diligently, and "sailed"

through the stem cell transplant in record time without any nausea, diarrhea or other ill effects. When I left Boston, I was clear of cancer. I felt cured.

The Cancer Relapses Again—and I Connect With a Chi Kung Master

Again, about 15 months later in late 1994 the lymphoma returned, this time in my right shoulder. Again, because of the type and grade of lymphoma, Dr. Nerenstone arranged for a second stem cell transplant, this time at the UCONN Health Center in Farmington.

I knew I had to go deeper into the meditative arts to survive the high-dose chemotherapy of a second transplant, so I contacted a master of Chi Kung, Kung Fu and Tai Chi Chuan in Boston named Dr. Yang Jwing-Ming. Coincidentally, his top disciple, a master in his own right, was traveling to Connecticut once a week to teach classes. His name was Ramel Rones (Rami), and he became my private teacher.

Rami taught me the finer points of using my breathing as a tool. He showed me Chi Kung sets from White Crane Kung Fu that would gently massage my cancer-battered body. He showed me tiger claw exercises with visualizations to stimulate my bone marrow. He showed me standing post meditation, the most difficult Chi Kung exercise, which opens all the major Acupuncture meridians in the body. The Chinese also believe that it stimulates both the lymphatic system and the thymus gland, vital components of the immune system.

So I practiced for several hours a day during the months of my preliminary chemotherapy, which was designed to shrink the tumor in my shoulder. And I got results. Because I'd had an earlier stem cell transplant, the doctors thought I wouldn't mobilize stem cells in sufficient quantities for a second transplant. The high dose chemotherapy used supposedly suppresses a person's immune system for life. They thought they'd have to use my bone marrow, a much more impure product with greater risk.

But I mobilized stem cells, against tremendous odds. And I set a record for getting out of the hospital and suffered little ill effects. Using the Chi Kung had kept me relaxed, and strengthened my will. That I knew for certain. I believe it also helped my immune system fight the cancer.

About a year later a tiny tumor appeared in my spine. It pressed against my sciatic nerve and made it difficult to urinate. It was the most frightening of the instances of cancer. I'd been through just about every type of

chemotherapy in existence, so Dr. Nerenstone tried CHOP again. I cranked up my Chi Kung practice, holding the standing post posture known as "Embrace the Tree" for over an hour at a time (you squat and hold your arms in a large arc in front of your chest, as though you're holding a tree).

In a month the pain was gone, and tests showed the cancer had disappeared. That was almost nine years ago and I've been cancer free ever since. Clearly, chemotherapy had saved my life. But the practice of Chi Kung had kept me calm and strong to survive so the chemotherapy could do its job.

Every day I practice Chi Kung. It keeps me calm, greatly reducing my stress level. It empowers me, because I am doing something positive to enhance my health. And, after two stem cell transplants, my immune system should be suppressed—but it isn't. I haven't had a cold in years and I've never gotten a flu shot. Despite the cancer damage to my hips, spine, shoulder and neck, I use no painkillers—and I've been able to give up my anti-inflammatory medications too. I am healthy. Last year I saw my two sons suit up for the same high school football team I played for thirty years ago. It doesn't get any better than that.

You may see the spelling of Chi Kung as either Qigong or Chi Kung. Both refer to the same practice.

Bob Ellal continues his practice of Chi Kung and is well and living in Connecticut. To contact Bob with your questions about Chi Kung, please email him at: rcellal@sbcglobal.net



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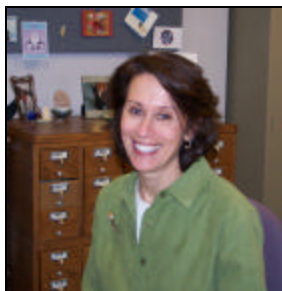
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Staff Profile - Sheila Belzer



Sheila began her Yoga practice in a quaint church in Rye, New York in the early 90's with Bikram's style classes. She discovered Kripalu style Yoga upon moving to Connecticut in 1994 and began teaching classes in an area studio in 1998. Sheila completed teacher training and became a Certified Kripalu Instructor in January 2000.

Sheila has also been practicing Transcendental Meditation since 1976 and finds the two disciplines enhance one another quite well. She has attended workshops with various senior teachers in the traditions and styles of Anusara, Iyengar, Restorative, and Vinyasa Yoga. The owner of her own Yoga studio for a brief period, she now teaches a weekly lunch time class for Hartford Hospital staff and shares the benefits of Chair Yoga at health fairs and community events.

Sheila's professional focus during recent years has been in library work, and she currently holds a position at the Hospital's Health Science Libraries. This year Sheila received her MLS from Simmons College in Boston.

Now living in New Haven, Connecticut, Sheila shares her life with assorted teenagers, young adults, a wonderful and patient "significant other" and according to some, the world's best cat, Murray.

What's Cooking? All Natural Recipes



Cranberry Pear Crisp

Ingredients:

3 or 4 pears, cored and sliced
1 cup chopped cranberries
1/2 cup oats
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 stick butter
1/4 cup chopped walnuts

Directions:

1. Place the pears and the cranberries in an 8 x 8-inch pan.

2. In a medium bowl, mix the oats, flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
3. Melt the butter and stir into the mixture.
4. Spread the mixture over the fruit.
5. Sprinkle with walnuts.
6. Microwave on high for 10 minutes or until pears are soft.
7. Serve warm with ice cream or frozen yogurt.

Makes 6 servings

Per Serving: 297 calories; 4 g protein; 47 g total carbohydrates; 12 g fat; 5 g saturated fat; 20 mg cholesterol; 8 g fiber; 28 g sugar; 65 mg sodium.

Overheard !

Meditation purifies and strengthens your heart. It steadies your nerves. It augments the brain power. It shows you the next step in the spiritual path.

Sri Swami Sivananda

