

Getting Started on your Tai Chi journey



Your Guide to Learning with us

Thank you for your interest in learning Tai Chi.

We know that starting something new can feel exciting, but also a little daunting. This guide has been created to help you understand what to expect, how we teach and whether our approach is the right fit for you.



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What is Tai Chi?

Tai Chi is much more than learning a sequence of movements. It's an opportunity to develop greater awareness, confidence and ease in the way you move,.



If you've ever watched a group of people moving slowly and gracefully together in a park, you've probably seen Tai Chi. It is a gentle movement practice that combines slow, flowing movements with relaxed breathing and mindful attention. Although the movements are unhurried, they are purposeful. Each movement flows naturally into the next, creating a moving meditation that helps calm the mind while gently exercising the body. One of the wonderful things about Tai Chi is that it can be adapted for almost everyone. It can be practised standing, seated, or with movements modified to suit different abilities and health conditions.

Where did Tai Chi come from?

Tai Chi (or Tai Chi Chuan) originated in China several hundred years ago. It was originally developed as a martial art, but over time people discovered its wider benefits for health, balance, relaxation and wellbeing. Today, millions of people around the world practise Tai Chi, not for self-defence, but to help them move more comfortably, improve their balance, reduce stress and feel more connected to themselves. There are several different styles of Tai Chi. At Movement In Mind we teach Yang Style and Sun Style Tai Chi, adapting movements where needed so that everyone can take part safely and confidently.



For many people, the greatest benefit isn't mastering the movements. It's how they begin to feel in everyday life.



Why do people practise Tai Chi?

People come to Tai Chi for many different reasons. Some want to improve their balance or become more mobile. Others are looking for gentle exercise after illness or injury. Many simply want a way to slow down, manage stress and find a little more calm in everyday life.

With regular practice, people often notice improvements in:

- Balance and stability
- Flexibility and mobility
- Strength and posture
- Coordination
- Breathing
- Confidence in movement
- Relaxation
- Resilience

Supporting both body and mind

At Movement In Mind, we see Tai Chi as much more than exercise.

Moving slowly allows you to notice how your body feels without judgement. Your breathing becomes steadier. Your muscles begin to soften. Your nervous system has an opportunity to settle. Many people describe leaving a class feeling lighter, calmer and more grounded than when they arrived.

Research continues to show that regular Tai Chi practice can support physical health, emotional wellbeing and healthy ageing. But perhaps most importantly, it offers something increasingly rare: time to slow down, pay attention and simply be present.

A practice that grows with you

One of the beautiful things about Tai Chi is that there is always something new to discover. At first, you're learning where your hands and feet go. As your confidence grows, you begin to notice your posture, breathing, balance and the quality of your movement. Over time, the practice becomes less about remembering a sequence and more about moving with ease, awareness and enjoyment.

There is no finish line and no pressure to be perfect. Everyone learns at their own pace, and every practice teaches you something new.



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Tai Chi isn't something you master in a few weeks. It's a lifelong practice that continues to grow with you, supporting your health, your confidence and your wellbeing for years to come.

Our Approach

We believe learning Tai Chi should feel welcoming, supportive and enjoyable.



Our classes aren't about getting everything right or keeping up with everyone else. They're about discovering what works for your body, building confidence over time, and enjoying the process of learning.

Learning, not performing

Tai Chi isn't a performance at Movement In Mind. There are no auditions, no grades to pass and no expectation that your movements should look exactly like anyone else's. We encourage curiosity rather than perfection. Every class is an opportunity to learn something new, whether that's a movement, a principle or simply noticing how your body feels today.

Move at your own pace

Everyone arrives with different experiences, abilities and goals. Some people have practised movement all their lives. Others are returning after illness, living with a health condition, or trying something completely new. You are always encouraged to work at a pace that feels comfortable for you. There is no pressure to keep up, and taking breaks is always perfectly okay.

We adapt where needed.

Our classes are designed to be accessible. Many movements can be adapted to suit your needs. We regularly offer standing and seated options, adjust movements where appropriate, and encourage you to listen to your own body.



The aim isn't to force your body into a movement. It's to discover how the movement can work for you.



No competition, no comparison

Tai Chi is a personal practice. It's easy to compare ourselves with others, but everyone learns differently and progresses at their own pace. Our classes are supportive rather than competitive. We celebrate small steps, quiet progress and the confidence that grows through regular practice.

A welcoming community

One of the things our members value most is the sense of community. People often tell us they feel accepted from the moment they walk through the door. Friendships develop naturally, people encourage one another, and there's always a warm welcome whether it's your first class or your hundredth. You don't need to fit in before you arrive—you already belong.

Evidence-informed, rooted in tradition

Tai Chi has a long history, and we respect its traditional principles while also drawing on current research into movement, health and wellbeing. Our teaching is informed by professional training and experience in Tai Chi, Qi Gong, Dance Movement Psychotherapy, falls prevention, somatic practice and working with people living with a wide range of health conditions. This means our classes are both authentic and practical, helping you enjoy the richness of Tai Chi in ways that support everyday life.

Gentle encouragement

Learning something new takes time. We'll encourage you, answer your questions and support you as your confidence grows, but we'll never rush you or expect perfection.

Whether your goal is better balance, greater mobility, more confidence, or simply finding an hour each week that's just for you, we'll help you take the next step. Because every journey begins with a single movement, and every movement counts.

We don't expect everyone to progress at the same speed. Every group develops differently, and we'll spend as much time as needed helping everyone build confidence before moving on.



Is Tai Chi Right For Me?

If you're wondering whether Tai Chi is right for you, you're not alone. It's one of the questions we're asked most often.



The simple answer is: probably yes. You don't need to be fit, flexible or coordinated to begin. You don't need any previous experience, special clothing or natural ability. You simply need a willingness to give it a try.

Tai Chi may be a good fit if you:

- Would like to improve your balance or mobility.
- Feel stiff or less confident in your movement.
- Want a gentle form of exercise that's kind to your joints.
- Are looking for ways to manage stress and feel calmer.
- Live with a long-term health condition and want to move safely.
- Spend a lot of time caring for others and would like some time for yourself.
- Want to improve your strength, posture and coordination.
- Enjoy learning new skills at a relaxed pace.
- Would like to meet friendly, like-minded people.

You don't have to be "good at exercise"

Many people arrive feeling nervous because they think they're too old, too stiff, too unfit or too self-conscious. The truth is, most of our members felt exactly the same when they first started. Tai Chi isn't about pushing through discomfort or trying to keep up.



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It's about learning to move with awareness, working within your own comfort and gradually building confidence over time.



Living with a health condition?

Many of our members join us because they're living with arthritis, chronic pain, balance difficulties, Parkinson's, fibromyalgia, long-term health conditions, or they're recovering from illness or injury. Our teaching is gentle and adaptable, and movements can often be modified to suit your individual needs. We offer standing and seated options where appropriate, and you'll always be encouraged to work within your own abilities. If you have a medical condition or any concerns about exercising, it's always sensible to speak with your healthcare professional before starting a new activity.

What if I'm nervous?

It's completely normal to feel a little anxious about trying something new. We understand that walking into your first class can feel like the hardest part. That's why we aim to create a welcoming, relaxed environment where there's no pressure to get everything right. Everyone was a beginner once, and you'll be supported every step of the way.

Still not sure?

That's perfectly okay. Our introductory sessions and foundation courses are designed to help you experience Tai Chi for yourself, ask questions and discover whether it's something you enjoy. You don't need to decide whether Tai Chi is for life before you begin. You just need to take the first step.

People who enjoy your classes are usually those who:

- ✓ enjoy learning
- ✓ are happy to practise between classes
- ✓ understand that Tai Chi develops over time
- ✓ value a friendly community
- ✓ want to improve wellbeing through regular practice



If you're looking for a one-off experience or a quick fix, our approach may not be the right fit—and that's perfectly okay. We believe the greatest benefits come through regular practice over time.

Our Beginners Course

The Learn Tai Chi Course is the ideal place to begin if you've never practised Tai Chi before.



Over six weeks, you'll be introduced to the foundations of Tai Chi in a relaxed, supportive environment. Each class builds naturally on the last, giving you time to become familiar with the movements without feeling rushed.

We keep our groups small so that everyone has the opportunity to learn at their own pace. You'll receive individual guidance when you need it, and there's plenty of time to ask questions along the way.

There is no expectation to remember everything immediately. Tai Chi is a practice that develops through repetition, patience and curiosity. Each week you'll revisit familiar movements while gradually adding new ones, allowing your confidence to grow naturally.

To help you continue between classes, you'll also have access to online practice videos. Many people find that spending just a few minutes practising at home helps the movements become more familiar and makes each week's class feel even more enjoyable.

Throughout the course you'll discover not only the movements themselves, but also the principles that make Tai Chi such a rewarding practice—balance, relaxation, posture, breathing and moving with awareness.

Most importantly, you'll learn in a friendly and encouraging atmosphere where questions are always welcome. Everyone starts as a beginner, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

By the end of the course, you'll have a solid foundation in Tai Chi and the confidence to continue your journey, whether that's by joining one of our regular classes or continuing your practice in another way.



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*This isn't about becoming perfect in six weeks.
It's about discovering a practice that can support
your health and wellbeing for years to come.*

Learning Between Classes

Learning Tai Chi doesn't stop when the class finishes.



In fact, some of the most valuable learning happens between sessions, as your body begins to remember the movements and you become more familiar with the flow. That's why everyone on our Learn Tai Chi Course has access to the Course Hub.

Your Course Hub includes practice videos, helpful reminders and resources to support your learning at home. You can revisit the movements as often as you like, helping you build confidence at your own pace. Don't worry if you only have a few minutes. With Tai Chi, little and often is usually far more beneficial than an occasional long practice. Even five or ten minutes can help reinforce what you've learned and make the next class feel more familiar.

And if life gets in the way? Missing a class isn't a disaster. We know that holidays, family commitments, appointments and the unexpected sometimes happen. The practice videos mean you can catch up with the movements you've missed, and we're always happy to answer questions when you return.

Tai Chi is a lifelong practice, not a race. There is no pressure to keep up or be perfect. Everyone learns at their own pace, and we're here to help you enjoy the journey. The aim isn't to practise for hours every day. It's simply to keep gently reconnecting with the movements, allowing your confidence and understanding to grow, one step at a time.



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valuable than trying to remember
everything at once.*

Where We Meet



Our classes take place in a warm, welcoming community venue where you'll be greeted with a friendly smile and a relaxed atmosphere. We want you to feel comfortable from the moment you arrive.

There is plenty of parking, so no stress of searching for a space. We also aim to make our classes as accessible as possible.



The venue has step-free access, and our teaching can be adapted to suit a wide range of abilities, with standing and seated options available where appropriate.

There's no intimidating gym environment or noisy fitness studio -just a cosy space where you can focus on moving, learning and enjoying your practice.

One of the lovely features of our venue is the open field next door. It provides a natural backdrop throughout the year, and we practice outside in fine weather to extend that sense of calm.

If you have any questions about access, mobility or whether the venue will meet your needs, please get in touch. We're always happy to help and want you to feel confident before your first visit.



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Our goal is simple: to provide a space where you can relax, feel supported and enjoy learning Tai Chi at your own pace.

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are answers to some of the questions we're asked most often by people who are thinking about joining a Learn Tai Chi Course.

Do I need to be fit?

Not at all. Tai Chi is designed to meet you where you are. You don't need to be fit, flexible or coordinated before you start. The course is suitable for complete beginners, and you'll always be encouraged to work at your own pace.

What should I wear?

Wear whatever you feel comfortable moving in. Loose, comfortable clothing is ideal, along with flat, supportive shoes that allow you to move safely. There's no special uniform or equipment to buy.

Do I need a yoga mat?

No. Our classes are practised standing, with seated options available where appropriate. You won't need a yoga mat or any special equipment.

What if I can't remember the movements?

That's completely normal! Nobody remembers everything after one class. Learning happens gradually through repetition, and everyone forgets things from time to time. That's one of the reasons we provide practice videos and encourage questions throughout the course.

Will I hold the class back?

Absolutely not. Everyone in the course is a beginner, and everyone learns at a different pace. Our classes are supportive, not competitive, and there's no pressure to keep up with anyone else.

What happens after the six-week course?

By the end of the course, you'll have a solid foundation and can choose what you'd like to do next. Many people continue by joining one of our regular classes, where they build on what they've learned and continue developing their practice. Others decide to repeat the course to build confidence, or simply take some time before returning later. There's no pressure—just the opportunity to continue when you're ready.



What Happens Next?

By the end of your Learn Tai Chi Course, you'll have a good understanding of the foundations and, hopefully, a sense of just how rewarding Tai Chi can be.

There are two equally valid ways to continue your journey.
The right choice simply depends on what feels best for you.

Option One: Join the Wellness Membership

Many people choose to continue with our Wellness Membership. Membership allows you to keep learning in a supportive community while enjoying the flexibility to practise in different ways.

As a member, you'll have access to:

- Regular in-person classes to continue developing your Tai Chi.
- Live online sessions if you prefer to practise from home or want an extra session during the week.
- The Members' Hub, with a growing library of practice videos, wellbeing resources and exclusive content.
- A friendly community of people learning and growing together.

Tai Chi is learned through regular practice, and membership provides the opportunity to keep building your skills while enjoying all the wider benefits of being part of Movement In Mind.

Option Two: Repeat the Learn Tai Chi Course

Some people choose to take the Learn Tai Chi Course again before moving on to regular classes. This is a popular option, especially if you've missed a few sessions, would like more time to build your confidence, or simply enjoy learning at a slower pace. Repeating the course gives you the chance to revisit the foundations, deepen your understanding and allow the movements to become more familiar before taking the next step. Many participants tell us they notice much more the second time around because they're no longer concentrating quite so hard on remembering where their hands and feet go.

There's no right or wrong choice

Tai Chi isn't about rushing from one stage to the next. Some people feel ready to continue straight into membership. Others prefer to spend a little longer strengthening the basics. Both approaches are equally valuable, and both lead to the same place—a practice that continues to grow over time.



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We'll help you decide which option feels right for you, and whatever you choose, you'll continue to be supported on your Tai Chi journey.

About Movement In Mind

Movement In Mind was created from a simple belief: that movement can be a powerful way to support health, wellbeing and connection.

We know how daunting it can feel to walk into a room full of strangers and try something new. That's why we've built the kind of Tai Chi practice we would want to join ourselves.

We believe Tai Chi is for everyone—not just the naturally fit or flexible. Our approach is gentle, inclusive and person-centred, helping people discover the benefits of mindful movement in a way that feels safe, enjoyable and sustainable.



Classes are led by Shirley Brocklehurst, a qualified Tai Chi instructor, Dance Movement Psychotherapist and Postural Stability Instructor. Shirley brings together many years of experience teaching movement for health and wellbeing, with specialist knowledge of working with people living with long-term health conditions, chronic pain, stress, anxiety and the natural changes that come with ageing.



Supporting Shirley is Tony, who helps create the warm, friendly atmosphere that so many members value.

Together, they are committed to making everyone feel welcome, whether it's your very first class or you've been practising for years.

Movement In Mind is a small social enterprise with community at its heart. Our aim is not simply to teach Tai Chi, but to create opportunities for people to move well, feel supported and enjoy learning together.



We believe that wellbeing grows through small, consistent steps - and that every movement matters.

Before You Join

Choosing a Tai Chi class is a personal decision, and we want you to feel confident that Movement In Mind is the right place to begin your journey.



Rather than asking you to make a quick decision, we'd encourage you to take a little time to get to know us first.

This guide, together with our free taster session and frequently asked questions, will give you a good sense of how we teach, what to expect, and whether our approach feels right for you.

Before booking, we'd encourage you to:

- ✓ Watch the free taster session.
- ✓ Read through this guide.
- ✓ Explore the Frequently Asked Questions.
- ✓ Make sure our approach feels like the right fit for you.

If, after that, you feel excited to begin, we'll be delighted to welcome you to your first class.



We'd love to welcome you

*Starting something new can feel like a big step,
but you don't have to do it alone.*



Learning Tai Chi isn't about getting everything right. It's about becoming more aware of yourself, enjoying the process of learning, and discovering a practice that can support you throughout every stage of life.

Whether your goal is to move with greater ease, improve your balance, find a sense of calm, or simply take some time for yourself each week, you'll be welcomed into a friendly and supportive community where everyone learns at their own pace.

We hope this guide has given you a feel for what Movement In Mind is all about and answered some of the questions you may have had about getting started.

When you're ready, we'd be delighted to welcome you to your first class and help you take the first steps on your Tai Chi journey.

Book Your Place

If you're ready to begin, we'd love to see you on our next Learn Tai Chi Course.
Come as you are. We'll take it one movement at a time.



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