



# Agar-Hutton Tai Chi Academy

## Newsletter 9

### NEWS

#### **Moving venue.**

We are moving our Monday afternoon class from Stanwick to Raunds, a village about two miles away. The new venue is bigger and better and classes start there on Monday 13th September at 4 p.m.

#### **Short meditation break.**

On my current ToDo list is to get back to doing regular seated meditation. Used to do it but 'life got in the way' and I stopped. So the other day I left the office and went and sat down to meditate. I sat and cleared my mind.... 30 seconds later I suddenly remembered an urgent chore that I needed to do and so that was the end of the meditation break. However, a start, no matter how small, is still a start and regular meditation sessions are going to change from a ToDo to a DOING !!!

#### **Tai Chi will wait.**

I recently had a private student come for a lesson, her previous lesson was nearly two years ago and yes, she had forgotten some things - but Tai Chi doesn't mind. The art is very forgiving and no matter how long a break between lessons or between practice sessions, it is always OK to go back and do some Tai Chi. The great thing about Tai Chi is that every time you practice it is a healthy and worthwhile endeavour.

Compare, if you will, Tai Chi with weightlifting, if you had a max lift of 100Kgs and then stopped lifting for a year, it is unlikely that you could go and lift 100Kgs without hurting yourself. Leave Tai Chi for a year and you can absolutely go back and 'Tai Chi' again... Of course, even better is to go and Tai Chi now.

### WHAT TO DO THIS WEEKEND?

*"The weekends are too short for sleep!"*

*- Bryant A. Loney -*

As I start to write this item for the newsletter it's Friday 27th August, and I'm considering what my Tai Chi practice plans for the weekend will be. I have a number of things I want to work on including a couple of Tai Chi forms that need a bit of a dusting off.

Plans are good things to have. Even better is when you keep to your plans. One of the things that practicing Tai Chi does is to strengthen your mental muscles - there are aspects of Tai Chi that are hard to get right and practicing them is not just a physical pursuit but also a mental one that requires concentration, discipline, and fortitude.

Plans are different to goals, for me the goal is the outcome and the plan is how I get to a goal. Most of my plans do NOT take me to a goal they just take me in the general direction that will eventually result in my achieving my goal - that's because I am a great believer in flexible goals and flexible goals require plans that take you there in a step by step cross country having a look around as you go manner rather than one long but direct train-ride.

You might be wondering why here, in this Tai Chi newsletter, I discuss things like planning or as in a past topic 'goal setting'? Well it's because Tai Chi is not just a martial art or a health art, it is a Life Art. Tai Chi can help you with virtually every aspect of your life if you let it.



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### **FOLLOW THE RULES - 5**

And the next topic - 'Practice Slowly'.

Tai Chi is most generally practiced slowly... but as it's origin was as a way of fighting, why move slowly?

There are a number of reasons for that but first a fact that you may or may not know. Tai Chi is practiced slowly - often but not always - so although the slow movements are the ones more often seen, that is not all there is...

The first reason for practicing slowly is to aid with the deep relaxation that is an integral part of Tai Chi. Being as relaxed as possible is obviously great from a health and wellness viewpoint but it's also useful to be relaxed in combat. A relaxed mind responds quicker and with greater tactical ability than one that is tense (let alone, one frozen by the flight or fight response). Relaxed muscles move faster than tense ones so that your practical fighting skills work best when you are relaxed.

Next is to allow the instructor and yourself to see exactly how you are positioning and moving your body, things which can be critically important. There is an interesting dichotomy that exists in Tai Chi (and most martial arts) which is that being exact and precise in everything that you do is not important, except

when it is important. Who decides when precision is or is not called for, well in combat, it's easy, just ask the survivors. In Tai Chi for health, ask the instructor.

That last paragraph leads on to why learning from random videos on the Internet is not always a good idea. If you are doing something that is wrong and also important... Who will tell you?

A practical reason for practicing slowly is so that you can do more. I studied Karate for over 30 years and one of the disadvantages for most older Karateka is that your body just won't let you train as hard and for as long as when you were young. Tai Chi, because the movements are slow and (relatively) gentle, can be practiced for a much longer period of time. I regularly have weeks where I practice/teach for over 15 hours and that is not too hard to do.

Leaving the best to last, practicing slowly lets you meditate - now there is an overlap between 'relaxation' and 'meditation' but perhaps the simplest test is losing track of time - if you decide to do Tai Chi for twenty minutes and 'twenty minutes' later an hour or more has actually passed by, then you were probably 'in the zone' and have been benefiting greatly.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH...

[www.taichitraining.pro](http://www.taichitraining.pro)

**Thank you for being part of our Tai Chi 'family' and remember that Tai Chi is the best gift that you can give both to yourself and to others you care about.**