

June 2008

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Inner Strength

now

A *Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts* PUBLICATION
FULFILLING THE NEED FOR PERSONAL SAFETY & WELLNESS

Breast cancer survivor, Mindy Greenfield, attributes her recovery to her practice of Ba Gua Zhang at the Blue Dragon School (see page 2 inside)

Why I Stopped Practicing T'ai Chi

There was a time when I practiced Tai Ji Quan (T'ai Chi Chuan, Tai Chi) for three hours each day. I practiced the Guang Ping Yang Family Style form for one hour each in the morning when I awoke, afternoon, and evening, before turning in for bed. How wonderful it was pushing and pulling mountains in my mind while executing the various movements. I would seemingly enter a dream state where nothing else existed, and when I would finish a round it would feel like awakening from a deep restful sleep. Truly a mov-

ing meditation. What I learned doing this consistently cannot be adequately expressed in words.

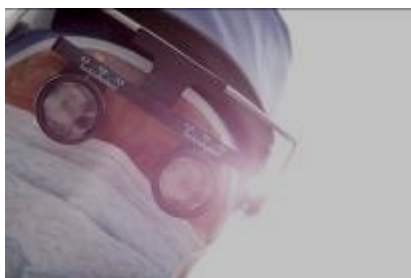
So why in the world would I stop??

Tai Chi is Qi Gong

The way Tai Chi is practiced for the most part today is simply *Qi Gong* (pronounced, "chee gung" and also written as Ch'i Kung and Chi Kung) or, in English, "Energy Work". The "work" in this case is "exercise".

This is not to say that true Tai Chi Chuan isn't effective for self defense,

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Beating Cancer With Exercise

The Sunday, May 18, 2008 issue of The Record had the following article on its front page: "Strength to beat cancer: New research shows the healing power of exercise." This was really great to see. The article starts with "The standard weapons in the fight against cancer—surgery, chemotherapy and radiation—may soon be joined by something far simpler: exercise." It also discusses how new research is showing that regular exercise is reducing the risk of breast cancer returning or prostate cancer advancing.

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No More T'ai Chi



Focus your energy.

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because it is. However, that is not how most people are practicing and not something that will magically happen without proper training.

So, if the form is essentially an energy circulation exercise and moving meditation as most use it, how do we evaluate it? Can we improve on it?

What is Good Exercise?

My teacher since 1991,

Master Bok-Nam Park, has been very specific on how to examine the usefulness of a particular form or any exercise.

Regardless of who created it, how famous they were, or how great a master is in the history of a particular form or exercise, there is a simple litmus test that reveals the true value: How many joints are used? How many angles are these joints used from? Are they

brought to their full range of motion? Will this range be increased to its natural potential by frequently executing these movements? How does this exercise effect the organs?

Master Park frequently discusses: "There are about 650 muscles and 360 joints in the human body. Of these muscles, some get more work when used fast, some get more work when used

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"I can now do back to back classes, and I don't even know where my inhaler is."

A year and a half ago, when I began Chi Kung classes, I could barely make it through the 13-Exercises Warm-up without wheezing and using my inhaler .

When I added the Kung Fu classes, I couldn't get through palm strikes without resting. I have lung disease, and last August we found spots.

Fear is an incredible moti-

vator. Meticulously following a regime of both classes, acupuncture, breathing exercises and meditation, combined with my own indomitable spirit, I can now do back to back classes, and I don't even know where my inhaler is. It's difficult for most people to understand not being able to breathe. It's like trying to explain what water tastes

like. Indeed there is a fluidity in taking a clean, clear breath and letting it go without making a sound. Something I had not been able to do for almost 18 years, until now, with 18 months of Ba Gua. So, if I inappropriately jump for joy, pump a fist, or burst into tears at the end of a Kung fu class, you now know why.

—Mindy Greenfield

Beating Cancer



Who needs a treadmill?

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An expert on cancer and exercise at Yale University School of Medicine, Melinda Irwin, says that exercise will become a "targeted therapy", similar to current methods. Exercise promotes better circu-

lation. A key factor in fatigue is poor circulation, so those who exercise regularly will feel less fatigued. When we feel less tired it's easy to have a more positive outlook which is sure to positively impact recovery from serious illness.

It's great to see modern research confirming this.

People cannot simply rely on their doctors to keep them healthy. It isn't enough. We must each take a proactive stance in our efforts for good health. Doing so is also empowering. So, it's official: Exercise is very powerful medicine.

Q&A

Q: With so many things to practice and limited time, how do I know what to practice when I have a chance?

A: (Part 2) This month's focus is on martial skills. There's a saying, "Repetition is the mother of skill." Anything you do regularly will eventually feel natural for you. Practicing everything just to remember it is no more than

review. We cannot become proficient with everything at the same time. Develop one or two skills every 3 to 6 months and you'll be amazed at how everything else improves too.

Make a program for yourself and decide that you're going to commit 10, 20, or 30 minutes (you decide) to one thing every day, or every other day. If every day, then you could commit to two things, alternating each day. Ask yourself, "What skill would I like to get good at?" (striking, kicking, footwork, a specific

form, etc.) and then stick with it for 3 to 6 months, depending on the skill and commitment.

If you choose a form, be honest with evaluating the individual skills within it. You may need to back off and get good at parts first. If the parts are bad the whole is bad.

Remember, the more focused you are during this practice the better results you'll get. Your skills work is also great for fitness. Add this training to last month's advice and you're done!



**"If you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know."
Louis Armstrong**

No More T'ai Chi

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slow."

Complete exercise includes both fast and slow aspects. The slower movements stimulate the deepest muscle fibers and literally squeeze circulation to the deepest levels, while fast contractions would pull quickly on tendons, which then pull strongly on bones, thickening

and strengthening them in the process. Goodbye osteoporosis. Also, you never know when you will trip, slip on ice, or have to make a quick adjustment to avoid something coming your way. If those muscles are atrophied, injury is likely.

Yin and Yang

We cannot move without a muscle contraction. When more of

the joints are used more muscles are used, period. When the muscle contracts it uses energy and blood which then moves out of it. When the muscle relaxes fresh energy and blood moves in.

When this principle is applied to the movements executed we can greatly enhance the effects, re-

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updates

Like Ancient Times—Students Caring For Their Practice Place

You can't get much more traditional than students showing up in numbers that exceeded supplies for our annual Spring Cleaning. Here's the crew: Laura Ahern, Joe Alonzo, Jim

Broaddus, Alan Chirino, Erik Dellith, Matt Fellner, Andre Fries, Tony Keomurjian, Chrissa Lieberman, Joseph MacDiarmid, Lina Martin, Suzanne Moschetto, Jim O'Leary, Thomasina Robinson, Gerard Servito, Paul Toscano, Shifu, Mrs., and Forrest Ahles, and three Russos (Shifu's sister and nieces, Alexia and Ashley). We're proud to say we have lots of students, not customers.

Meditation Class—Every Thursday at 8:30pm
For Non-Students to attend, Call 201-385-3130 and let us know you're coming.

Be a part of our Kung Fu Demo! Or just come out for support and watch. For the latest on where and when, talk to Ms. Moschetto.

Attention Blue Dragon School Students

Is your martial arts practice positively impacting your everyday life? Have a story or experience to tell? Others could benefit so help spread the word! Email a few sentences or paragraphs to lsn@BlueDragonKungFu.com



No More T'ai Chi

"How wonderful it was pushing and pulling mountains in my mind while executing the various movements. I would seemingly enter a dream state where nothing else existed, and when I would finish a round it would feel like awakening from a deep restful sleep."

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sulting in a far stronger sensation of circulation.

Ultimately, this is why I no

longer practice Tai Chi.

In addition to all that I loved about practicing Tai Chi, Ba Gua Qi

Gong also has a much stronger effect on the circulation and overall feeling of suppleness. So, rather than be married to what I had already invested countless hours to over the years, I

simply moved on and up to what I found to be more profound and effective, due to the principles involved.

I have referred to the Ba Gua Zhang taught by Master Park as "The Smart Martial Art" because with full engagement

of the mind, and the breath coordinated with the movements, I have found nothing as powerful to literally squeeze out and release stress throughout the body and calm the mind.

"...literally squeeze out and release stress throughout the body."

Shifu Ahles

"I'm not young enough to know everything."

J.M. Barrie

Visit us on the web at: www.BlueDragonKungFu.com

Our Philosophy

We believe that real martial arts were designed to stop the fighting, both within and without.

Not for violence, but for peace.

Not to beat down, but to build up.

Not to compete, but to work together for understanding.

Not for tournaments and trophies, but for discipline and respect.

To master the mind, by training the body.



Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts

53 S. Washington Avenue
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

“ My practice at the Blue Dragon School means so much to me that I cannot fathom the thought without it in my life.

Practicing martial arts has given me so much in a short time that I cannot think of any other activity that can match it. It gives you better health, learning to enjoy and experience the present moment the way life was meant to be. I've also enjoyed an improved body that is becoming leaner and more flexible by each passing day. It has made me a better dad, husband, employer and has made me handle daily situations in a much more reasonable and logical way. I always know I'm prepared for challenges!

Karim Ben-Fredj, Bergenfield, age 45 ”

Have a friend or family member interested in trying a Free Introductory Lesson? Let us know.

Call 201-385-3130

events

Family Festival Kung Fu & Chi Kung Demonstration:

The Blue Dragon School of Martial Arts was invited to demonstrate at the Family Festival Fund Raiser in Englewood, NJ on Saturday, May 17, 2008. It was a beautiful day and the demo went great. We received lots of terrific feedback and there was a lot of expressed interest in the School. Students, ranging from 7-year-old Forrest Ahles to 75-year-old Charlene Brewer, demonstrated along with Shifu Ahles announcing. Matthew Fellner, Suzanne Moschetto, and Shifu Ahles each had flawless solo performances. Amazing what "time and effort" can really accomplish!

Ch'iang Shan Pa Kua Chang Summer Training Camp:

Wednesday June 11th - Sunday,

June 15th, 2008 (New record attendance from NJ—the Blue Dragon School—this year!) School is closed during camp.

Kung Fu & Chi Kung Demonstration:

Come see us at the Bergenfield Family Fun Day in Memorial Park Sun., June 22, 2008. Time T.B.A.

New 5-Week Beginner Chi Kung starting July 1st:

Tell friends and family. Great opportunity to experience Chi Kung for themselves. Tuesday nights.

Youth Summer Program including new Padded Weapons course!

10:30-12:30 Tues/Thurs for 6 wks starting July 1st.

A Surprise Is Being Planned For This Fall -

To be announced in the July issue!