

T'ai Chi Chih Background Information

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T'ai Chi Chih® is a series of 19 movements and 1 pose that together make up a moving meditation that balances the vital energy within us, which the Chinese call *chi*.

Developed in 1974 by Justin Stone, a now-90-year-old teacher living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, T'ai Chi Chih has spread mostly through word-of-mouth in a grassroots fashion among students enthusiastic about its extraordinary benefits. In the past 30 years, more than 2,200 teachers have been accredited and now practice throughout France, Italy, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and other countries. Tens of thousands more have been students.

Most people who practice T'ai Chi Chih regularly report that they feel calmer, more balanced, and more energized. Many people report improvements in the symptoms of arthritis, fibromyalgia, stroke, high blood pressure and other illnesses.

Stone explains the health improvements in both physical and metaphysical terms. "With the accumulation of *chi* through T'ai Chi Chih, permanent changes in the metabolism and the thinking process take place," he says. "The renewed energy conditions the whole way of life and joy becomes our natural heritage."

Over the years, "nine out of ten" of the hundreds of letters Stone has received from students worldwide say "T'ai Chi Chih has changed my life," he reports.

The growing popular interest in T'ai Chi Chih has caught the attention of academics, and initial research studies show promising results:

- Researchers at the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles reported in 2003 that doing T'ai Chi Chih improved immune system functioning and helped protect elderly people from outbreaks of shingles.
 - Irwin, Michael R., MD *et al*: "Effects of a Behavioral Intervention, T'ai Chi Chih, on Varicella-Zoster Virus Specific Immunity and Health Functioning in Older Adults," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 2003 65: 824-830.
- Researchers at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse reported in 2006 that T'ai Chi Chih practitioners reported feeling a greater sense of well-being and less stress.

