

Teen Tai Chi FAQ

What is the difference between tai chi and yoga?

Tai chi is Chinese. Yoga is Indian. Yoga does not have a self-defense component; in its traditional and historic form, tai chi was developed for victory on the battlefield. Today both are mind/body pursuits practiced worldwide primarily for their health and fitness benefits. We highly recommend you purchase Master Arthur Rosenfeld's book *Tai Chi—The Perfect Exercise*, available online and at bookstores everywhere, for a full treatment of the art.

Will practicing tai chi turn my child into a crazed ninja killer?

No. Ninjas are Japanese. Tai chi is Chinese. Rather than making your child more aggressive, tai chi will likely make him or her calmer, more self-aware and focused, more sensitive to internal and external energies, and more agile and less likely to trip over your leg or stub a toe against the coffee table.

Will practicing tai chi help my child get into a better college?

We do not have any direct experience with this. We do, however, know that tai chi training for teens is rare and exclusive in this country, and the presence on applications of a unique course of study (particularly with a nationally lauded teacher) can't be anything but a plus. Besides, everything Chinese is important these days. By the time our kids are grown, it will be a Chinese world.

Is there a discount program available?

As this particular program is new, we prefer you pay the \$25 per class fee in cash or check. In the months to come, as the class builds, we plan to be able to accept credit cards and to offer family and prepay discounts.

Must I sign a contract or pay a registration fee?

Unlike many other schools, no contracts, registration fees, or other upfront commitments are required. We value simplicity. The only thing you need to sign is a standard liability waiver.

Can I participate with my child?

In order to serve as many children as possible, we'd like to suggest you attend the adult classes listed on another handout and detailed on our website. Please visit the site. We spent a small Mercedes building it for you. Over time, as the program grows and we had offerings, we hope to add a parent/child class.

I've seen tai chi people practice with swords. Will my child be learning weapons, and if so, are they safe?

Before people practiced tai chi for fun and for health, weapons such as swords and spears were the order of the day. These remain valuable training tools, and kids adore them. After the basics are mastered we use inexpensive foam and wooden versions. We have an absolutely *perfect* safety record.

Is there any special clothing required?

We will ask you to buy a school t-shirt as the group solidifies. In the meantime, please send your child in loose, comfortable clothing that allows stretching. To keep the floors clean we require a pair of shoes dedicated exclusively to the practice. Fei Yue sneakers (all the style rage these days), barefoot running shoes (Merrell, New Balance, Saucony, Nike, Adidas, etc.) or kung fu slippers are fine.

Does it help if my child has done karate or tae kwon do?

In our 34 years of martial arts experience, we have learned that there is absolutely no correlation between ultimate success in tai chi and a person's hand-to-eye coordination, previous martial arts experience, flexibility, strength, stamina, or all-around athleticism. Being a gifted athlete is always wonderful, but in the case of tai chi it is no guarantee of anything. What counts most is having an inquiring mind, patience, and "stick-with-it-ness".

My child is easily distracted. Will tai chi help?

Particularly if you limit the use of TV and personal electronics, eliminate sugar and dairy products from your child's diet, and make sure your child gets enough sleep, tai chi is likely to significantly enhance your child's ability to concentrate.

If my child excels, can he or she participate in competitions?

As the program builds, we will offer competition events within the school. Over time, we plan to build a team of kids who will do exceedingly well in national kung fu competition. Even so, the most important competitive dimension that tai chi offers is the cultivation of the self and the desire to deepen and improve character, health, skill, and understanding.

Are there belts in tai chi?

Traditionally, the answer was no, as the skills and benefits of practice have always been their own reward. Still, in this busy world we all need a little extra motivation. Accordingly, we use colored Chinese sashes, worn around the waist, as a mark of progress. As the program deepens, we will have occasional level tests, for which there will be a fee.

Is advanced training available?

We plan to begin advanced classes when we have enough children who have reached sufficient level to warrant it.

What about private lessons?

We have a limited number of slots with qualified instructors available for private lessons. Lessons with Master Rosenfeld himself—because of his commitments to books, television, and teaching worldwide—are by invitation only, and are considered a special mark of character and achievement.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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