

[IMAGE]

Tai Chi Beneficial for Parkinson's

For thousands of years, Tai Chi has been practiced all over the world for its health benefits such as improving strength and flexibility through slow, graceful movements.

Fortunately for Parkinson's patients, this practice is proving to be extremely beneficial in tackling the disease's most common symptoms such as bad balance. Symptoms of the brain disorder include tremors and stiff, jerky movements that can affect walking and other activities.

In a recent study by the Oregon Research Institute in Eugene, Tai Chi was tested in 195 people with mild-to-moderate Parkinson's disease.

The Institute had these participants attend group classes twice a week of either tai chi or two other kinds of exercise — stretching and resistance training.

The tai chi routine was tailored for the Parkinson's patients, with a focus on "swing and sway" motions and weight-shifting, according to researchers.

The results?

After six months of classes, the tai chi group did significantly better than the stretching group in tests of balance, control, walking and other measures. Compared with resistance training, the tai chi group did better in balance, control and stride, and about the same in other tests.

Tai chi training was also better than stretching in reducing falls, and as effective as resistance training, according to the study.

If you know someone who is suffering from Parkinson's disease, let them know about this new finding and get them started practicing Tai Chi for their long-term health.

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