



## *AATC HANDOUT*

# **TAI CHI AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT**

When most people think of exercising to manage weight they think of exercises that exhaust and strain but then again most people only manage short term gains in weight management before they either injure themselves in the exercise or find it too unpleasant to continue.

Tai Chi offers another solution. Weight management is about two things reducing calorie intake and increasing calorie expenditure. Tai Chi can assist in both these areas.

Reducing calorie intake is primarily a matter of managing your diet but it is well known that as we become stressed, nervous or anxious our desire for food changes some eat too little, most end up eating too much. Since Tai Chi relaxes and harmonises the body it can help us to desire less food. This is the best of all possible worlds because we are not depriving ourselves of food we want to eat but rather simply reducing our desire to eat.

The main benefits of Tai Chi on weight management come from its effects on the calorie consumption of the body. This is increased in a number of ways:

First, Tai Chi consumes around 360 Calories per hour as opposed to a sedentary activity which may consume 100 calories or less. If you practice your Tai Chi 3 times per week for 20 minutes you are practicing 50 hours per year. That's saving around 13000 calories per year. If you do one hours practice per day you save 90,000 calories per year that's about 10% of your total calorie intake and that's going to make a substantial difference.

The effects however do not stop there because when the body stops exercising the metabolism does not immediately return to normal but continues to burn extra calories for the next hour or so. This may double the calorie consumption effect. Also, Tai Chi builds muscle tissue the greater the ratio of muscle tissue to fat tissue the more calories per hour are burned. Finally Tai Chi provides you with the energy and vitality to live a more active lifestyle which again burns more calories.

So now you can manage your weight in a pleasant way that relaxes you, gives you more energy and avoids the risk of injury.