

Guidelines for Selecting a Tai Chi Class or Service

When selecting a service such as gym membership or exercise classes, most of us do so without much thought. After all, we're very familiar with these services and will no doubt have studied the advertising material and decided on what looks or sounds suitable. In fact, it could be argued, that a lot of these services are so well established within the community and often so similar to each other, that price and location are just about the only thing left to consider.

So why should Tai Chi be any different in this respect?

To answer this question, just ask yourself - What is Tai Chi? The fact is, whilst most of us have heard of Tai Chi, very few people know what Tai Chi really is.

Tai Chi looks deceptively simple. However it is a very complex and diverse art, with numerous different styles. In fact, it can take decades to master. This deception is further compounded because, what is sometimes called Tai Chi, can by definition, not be Tai Chi at all. Many of the hobby' or 'hybrid' classes in the community fall into this category. Some people even confuse Tai Chi with other things, such as Tae kwon Do for example.

All things considered, selecting a Tai Chi class or service obviously requires a little bit of homework. For starters, knowing what Tai Chi really is and what it encompasses will help considerably.

Here are a few typical questions we are often asked at the Australian Academy of Tai Chi, which may answer some general queries about Tai Chi and assist with selecting a class.

What, by definition, is Tai Chi?

This is not an easy question to answer concisely, though in essence it is a Chinese health exercise system. For it to qualify as Tai Chi, the exercises must be performed according to certain criteria. It is within this basis, that many of the often publicised health benefits of Tai Chi are contained.

What does this art encompass?

Tai Chi evolved from several different backgrounds. These backgrounds have roughly formed a basis for areas of teaching which are focused on in classes. The three basic areas are; Martial arts, Philosophy and General Health and Fitness. Focus will differ from school to school and other related arts such as Chi Kung or massage are sometimes incorporated.

Why would I want to do Tai Chi?

There are numerous reasons, the most common relate to health and relaxation. Tai Chi improves balance, enhances the immune systems, helps with hypertension and has many other health related benefits. So anybody wanting to learn how to relax and improve their well being is likely to benefit from Tai Chi.

How long does Tai Chi take to learn?

General beginners' classes are usually run over 8 or 10 weeks at 1 hour a week, plus your own practice time. However, not all classes lead on to more comprehensive training and to learn Tai Chi properly requires ongoing training and practice. For example, the Australian



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Academy of Tai Chi provides approximately 18 months to 2 years training to enable students to acquire their basic skills. For some, Tai Chi becomes a life long passion.

Do all instructors undergo more or less the same training?

Definitely not. The level and quality of training instructors receive, varies significantly. To properly teach a complex art like Tai Chi requires years of training in both Tai Chi and in teaching techniques. It pays to ask questions and to check the credentials of the organisation or individual running the class. Never just accept somebody's word that they are trained.

I just want some exercise and a bit of relaxation, is a good quality class really necessary?

No matter what your reason for joining a class, always look for quality. Teaching standards exist for good reasons. (Never use price and location as a main guide for selecting a class).

We are confident the above information will assist when selecting a Tai Chi class. Use this information to formulate your own questions to ensure the selection you make, is the right one.

If you are purchasing a service for a group there may be additional points to consider.

- * *Provider background*
- * *Substantiation of training standards and qualifications of individual instructors.*
- * *Back up service in case of instructor absence*
- * *What happens if your clients are unable to attend?*
- * *Learning back up services*
- * *Legal requirements (Insurance, workplace safety etc).*
- * *Price justification*

For any further queries please contact us
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