

Qigong offers a program for physical, emotional health

By Diane Goble
Correspondent

We are tuned into heart health (walking, cardio, stretching, strengthening) and paying more attention to our diet (eliminating fats and high-fructose corn syrup, eating more fruits and veggies), but we live such highly active lifestyles, always on the go, a million things to do, that we never give our mind a rest or consider our inner needs. Little do we realize that where the mind goes, the “chi” goes ... and this little secret puts us in control.

Qigong (pronounced chee gung) originated over 5,000 years ago; tai chi, over 4,000 years ago. The origin of reiki also goes back thousands of years and has only recently been rediscovered and gained acceptance along with acupuncture. They all work with the energy that surrounds and moves through the body to enhance the flow and restore balance to the system.

The times are in our favor — East has met West and integrated, or complementary medicine has evolved to treat the whole person. By

combining an understanding of the two models, we can use our mental concentration, strengthened through the practice of qigong, to relieve energy blockages and activate the production of hormones by the pineal and pituitary glands.

This stimulates the entire endocrine system to seek balance and causes it to function more effectively, which mitigates disease processes and improves healing. This may also be the key to slowing down the aging process.

Medicine is just a temporary solution if you don't change your thinking and your lifestyle. For prevention and follow-up care, a practice like qigong helps you treat your mind by changing the way you look at your sickness and your life. It helps you take greater responsibility for your health and wellness by getting to the root of the problem and strengthening the natural immune system. By taking in energy, cleansing the qi, and dispensing the toxic energy outward, you allow the energy to flow freely without forming blockages. After a while you come to understand your

body and its signals better, and instinctively make better health choices.

Qigong, which means “cultivating energy,” combines slow movements, deep breathing and meditation to promote flexibility and increase strength without stressing the joints. It is similar to tai chi but slower, and is for people of all ages and physical abilities. It can be an important component of a well-rounded health and wellness program along with aerobic exercise and strength training.

Dr. Andrew Weil, a well-known practitioner of integrative medicine, says, “Older people may find qigong helpful in maintaining flexibility, balance and general vitality. Most importantly, it can help preserve function, independence and protection from falls.” He recommends it as a highly effective stress-management tool.

Research suggests practicing qigong regularly can lower blood pressure, reduce the frequency and severity of asthma attacks, promote the healing of ulcers, reduce arthritis pain, and even enhance immunity. In China, it is recommended

to cancer patients to reduce fatigue and other side effects of conventional cancer treatments.

Learning a mind-body exercise is similar to learning a new language with its own vocabulary and rules. It takes focused attention and keeps us in the present moment where we are able to let go of our attachments to how we think things should be. This positive outlook leads to a sense of peacefulness and well-being.

Doing this practice out-of-doors puts us in touch with nature and connects us to a truth larger than ourselves. Older adults find it helps their search for meaning in life and creates a deep sense of richness and unity in the autumn of their lives.

Joyce Brown, who has been a licensed occupational therapist for 36 years, has been teaching qigong classes in Sisters for the last 11 years. She is also a reiki practitioner offering treatments and classes in Soaring Crane (long form) Qigong, and meditation classes at her home or at Green Ridge Physical Therapy (depending on the weather).

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For information, contact Joyce Brown at 541-420-5875 or joyce52brown@gmail.com.

Dawn Song has also been teaching qigong in Sisters for eight years. She offers weekly group and private classes, and a weekly practice group in her home qigong studio.

“The benefits of a qigong practice permeate one's life,” she says.

For information, contact her by email at DawnSong@DawnSong.com or by text to 541-207-7266 (no phone calls, please).



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