Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance Elders Program

What is Tai Ji Quan and how is it effective?

- A research-based balance training regimen designed for older adults and people with balance disorders. Fuzhong Li, Ph.D., a Senior Scientist at Oregon Research Institute, developed the program.
- An adapted exercise program from the traditional art of Tai Ji Quan to help improve balance, mobility, walking and physical and mental well-being.
- The program is specifically tailored to train balance, self-awareness, and controlling body movements in performing various activities of daily life and teaches breathing techniques for relaxation.
- During the 24-week program, Elders practice 8 forms of balance techniques along with a variety of easy to difficult drills and increasingly challenge the ability to control and adapt to posturally demanding activities.
- The class can be taught to any age group.

Far too often, we see many Elders using a canes or walkers to help assist them with walking. We also hear that they have fallen and broke their hip or arm, twisted their ankles, and bruised arms/limbs/eyes, which is really disheartening to see those that you care about in this type of condition. So our goal with the Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance Elders Program was to help rebuild and retrain their body to move at varies speeds, range of motion, and base of support.

https://tjqmbb.org/

The link takes you directly into the Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance program that LTBB took part in for their Falls Prevention Program. It shares the statistics and other useful information regarding the success of the program.

Tai Ji Quan: Moving For Better Balance®

Classes

No prior experience necessary!

Join us to improve your balance through participating in an evidence-based, adapted Tai Ji Quan program

Benefits:

- Improving muscle strength, balance, flexibility, and mobility
- Reducing risk of falls

Tai Ji Quan Information

DATE/TIME: **Mondays & Thursdays from 9:15am – 10:15am**
Mondays & Wednesdays from 3pm – 4pm

LOCATION: **Monday/Thursday at LTBB Native Way Two**
Monday/Wednesday at LTBB Community Center

ATTIRE: Wear comfortable, cotton exercise clothing; dress light

COST: **FREE**

TEACHERS: Tamela Okuly-Shananaquet
Marlene Gasco

QUESTIONS CALL:

Elders Dept	(231)242-1423
Healthy Heart Dept	(231)242-1616

J.R., 77 years-old, says that doing Tai Ji was very refreshing. It does help with getting rid of some aches and pains that she experienced every day.

- Classes are available twice a week.
- The duration of the class is aimed towards 60 minutes of exercise, which includes a warm-up and cool down sections.
- Class locations varied depending on weather conditions. During the warmer months, classes were generally outside at designated local areas.

The Eight Forms Routine

- Form #1 Move the Ball
- Form #2 Part Wild Horse's Mane
- Form #3 Single Whip
- Form #4 Wave Hands Like Clouds
- Form #5 Repulse Monkey
- Form #6 Brush Knees
- Form #7 Fair Lady Works at Shuttles
- Form #8 Grasp Peacock's Tail

Along with the 8 forms that were taught, we, as teachers, worked on:

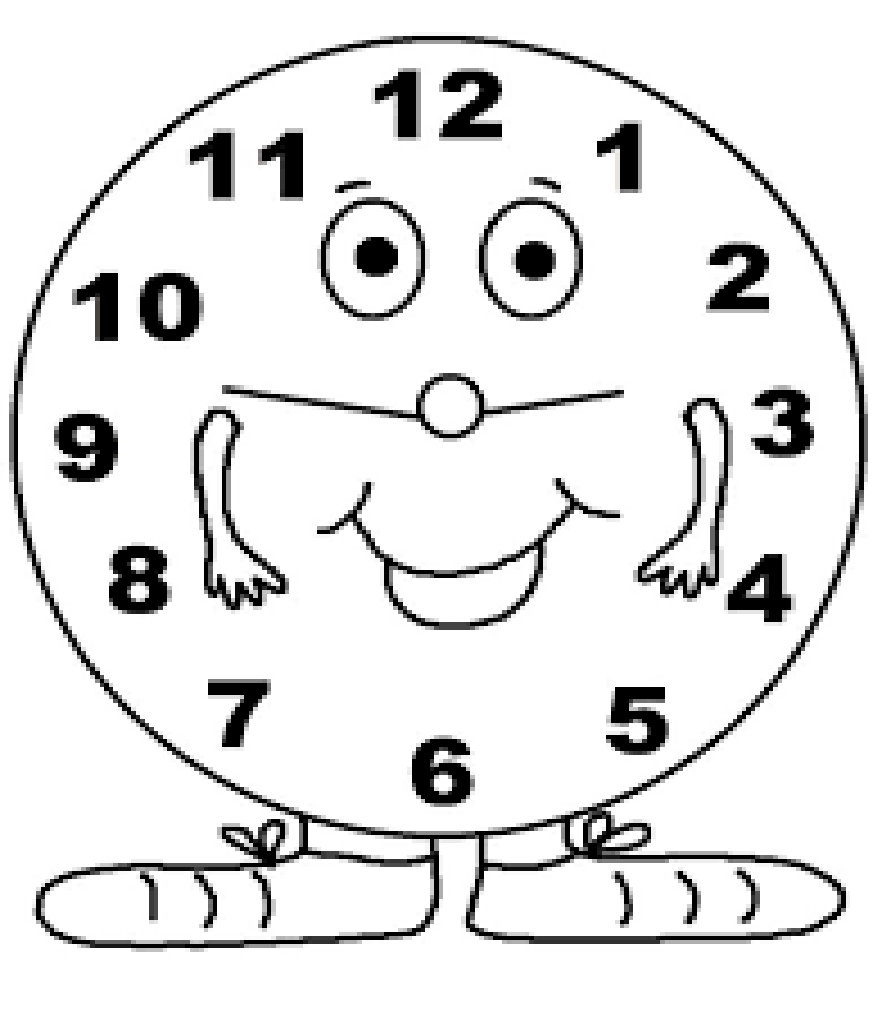
*Rotational Weight Shifting

*Engage in “toes-lift” move and a “heel-to-toes” progression while stepping

*Engage in coordinated eyes & head movements

*Coordinated breathing that synchronized with postural movements

*Moved the center of gravity near the end of base support



Ankle Sways

Think of swaying around a clock.

Feet at the center, knees bent, good posture (straight spine)

Weight shift forward toward 12 o'clock front of the feet. Then back to center.

Weight shift back toward 6 o'clock on the heels. Then back to center.

Weight shift to left or right towards 3 or 9 o'clock on the outside of the feet. Then back to center.

Diagonals:

Weight shift forward left or right towards 1 or 11 o'clock on the front of the feet. Then back to center.

Weight shift back left or right towards 4/5 o'clock and 7/8 o'clock on the heels. Then back to center.

Past Experiences as Ortho/Psychiatric-Nurse

Promotes wide base of support before standing

Moving to the front of the chair

- Decreases the stress of the hips when standing
- Some movements involve scanning your environment

Deep breathing

- Promotes oxygenation of the whole body
- Oxygenation helps to release stress

The Spirituality & Connection to Our Native Beliefs

Connection to Odawa Spirituality

- Some of the movements connect with the energy of our Mother Earth.
- Some movements push Manoduc (negative) energy away from you
- Some movements pull Nishin (positive) energy towards you
- Hands form a ball or circle in which we all live

The Making of the Butterfly

- Some of the movements make a butterfly which is a sign of everlasting life.

Tai Ji: Master Trainer, Runjie Yu (aka Catherine)

Tai Ji Quan Instructor with Teachers

Right to left: Runjie Yu (aka Catherine), Arlene Naganashe R.N., Tammy Okuly-Shananaquet R.N., & Marlene Gasco

Arlene Naganashe writes that Tai Ji has refreshed her training as an orthopedic and mental health nurse. As an elder participant, it has helped her strengthen her upper thighs and reduce her risk of falling when standing. As the Elders Director of the Falls Prevention Program, she promotes the Tai Ji Quan program because of the congruence in the oriental teachings with some of the movements and the Anishinabae connection to the Mother Earth.

LTBB Tai Ji Quan Teacher

Tamela Okuly-Shananaquet, R.N.
Elders Outreach Coordinator

When I began Tai Ji Quan: Moving For Better Balance in 2014, it was a new, exciting, yet somewhat overwhelming as I implemented an exercise program that was quite foreign to me. However as I was further instructed by Expert Trainers and become skilled at the FORMS, I watched my students week after week returning and becoming increasingly adept at the FORMS themselves. It was delightful to see them progressing in their strength, balance, and mental awareness of their surroundings. Especially rewarding were those students challenged by medical conditions who reported positive feedback not only personally but through their physicians and physical therapist! The Elders that have participated in these classes have requested to be included in future classes being offered. We are eager to continue to motivate out tribal elders and young ones on a pathway to a healthier life. The LTBB Elders Department and Partners; Healthy Heart at the Tribal Clinic are so excited to continue with an Exercise Program that has proven to contribute to the **Health and Wellbeing of our Tribal Community**!!!

LTBB Tai Ji Quan Teacher

Marlene Gasco
Healthy Heart Admin Assistant

I have really enjoyed becoming a teacher of the Tai Ji Quan practice. My Elders are important to me and I want to do what I can to help them stay healthy and strong. Teaching these classes has helped me find my purpose and passion in life, which is to assist people of all ages to find their paths to health and well being. Since I have started teaching Tai Ji Quan, I have furthered my journey in the fitness realm as well. I have continued my own training and was successful in receiving multiple trainer certifications through the Native American Fitness Council.

Places where Tai Ji Quan was demonstrated at:

- 2016/2017 Odawa Health & Wellness Fair
- 2016 LTBB Elders Christmas Luncheon
- 2016 LTBB Community Meeting
- LTBB Elders Luncheons

82 years-old Elder, E.A., says that she really enjoyed the Tai Ji classes. They were well organized and so helpful in maintaining her strength. She has had less problems with balance since the class and would enjoy continuing to attend.

While 72 year-old Elder, M.G., says that Tai Ji has helped her a lot with balance and also with improving her mobility during regular exercise. She also has enjoyed the companionship with other Elders, who have participated in the program.

Walking Stick Presentation & Recognition to those Elders who completed the first half of the Tai Ji Quan Program.

75 year-old Elder, J.N., said that Tai Ji had helped him with better balance, which was the biggest help. It also strengthened his ankles aiding him with better balance.

62 year-old Elder, R.S., said that Tai Ji was good and wanted to continue taking the classes.

Contact Information

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Gegwa Mgishinke!
Tai Ji Ngikendaan!

Don’t Fall!
I know Tai Ji!