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## **Tai Chi: Healing Exercise, Medicine in Motion**

### Tai Chi Master Tommy Kirchhoff shares how this gentle martial art can benefit seniors, including those recovering from COVID-19.

For 17 years, Tai Chi Master Tommy Kirchhoff has been refining [Healing Exercise](https://healingexercise.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a therapeutic/medicinal movement program based on the Chinese martial art that’s clinically proven to relieve a long list of illnesses. Then the pandemic struck.

As 29 million Americans got sick and many struggled with “[long-haul” COVID-19 symptoms](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-tragedy-of-the-post-covid-long-haulers-2020101521173%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), Kirchhoff felt a growing sense of urgency. He spoke with a researcher who found Tai Chi [boosts immunity to shingles virus in older adults](https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/tai-chi-boosts-immunity-shingles-virus-older-adults-nih-sponsored-study-reports%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). The doctor told him Tai Chi would likely have similar benefits for COVID patients. Kirchhoff’s sense of urgency grew.

“When you can get someone to relax, all these magical things start to happen — with the [relaxation response](https://www.apa.org/monitor/2008/10/relaxation%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), the body starts to heal itself more like when you were younger,” Kirchhoff says. “We have all these clinical studies showing that it helps with breathing, energy level, and pain relief. That is COVID long-haul in a nutshell.”

**Story Ideas**

**Healing Exercise: Medicine Through Motion —**

The ancient Chinese martial art Tai Chi is often described as “meditation in motion,” but might also be called “medication in motion,” Harvard Medical School [notes](https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-health-benefits-of-tai-chi). Tai Chi Master Tommy Kirchhoff, creator of [Healing Exercise](https://healingexercise.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a therapeutic/medicinal movement program based Tai Chi, explains why slow simple movements that anyone can do provide benefits for more than 110 conditions, including arthritis, back and neck pain, digestive problems, heart disease, stroke, cancer, and COVID-19.

**Forget “Fitness” — Why Mobility Matters More**

Unlike other forms of exercise, Tai Chi does not require strength or emphasize weight loss, maintaining a youthful appearance, or other factors associated with the idea of “fitness.” Instead, the emphasis of Tai Chi and Healing Exercise is helping people maintain joint health so they can stay mobile as they age. Tommy explains why “mobility is the first indicator of health” — and joint health is the key to mobility.

**The Difference Between Tai Chi and Everything Else —** Every other kind of exercise is based on muscular tension. Tai Chi is uniquely based on relaxation instead of tension. Tommy explains why Tai Chi is “enjoyable exercise” anyone can practice to improve health, mobility, and quality of life.

**Tai Chi, Immunity, & COVID-19 —** Clinical research from the National Institutes of Health has demonstrated that Tai Chi [boosts immunity to shingles virus in older adults](https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/tai-chi-boosts-immunity-shingles-virus-older-adults-nih-sponsored-study-reports). One of the co-authors of the study has stated “it's a good bet” that Tai Chi would also boost immunity against COVID-19. Tommy explains how Tai Chi improves immune response, and has [outstanding advantages for seniors recovering from COVID-19](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7837887/#:~:text=Tai%20Chi%20exercise%20can%20enhance,the%20face%20of%20COVID%2D19.).

**The Power to Heal Yourself**

Tommy spent three decades refining [Healing Exercise](https://healingexercise.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a therapeutic/medicinal movement program based on Tai Chi. He discusses and demonstrates exercises that feel good, are easy to practice and motivational — simple movements that allow anyone to improve their health.

**How Walking (Wrong) Can Kill You**

As we get older, many of us unwittingly adopt problems with our gait — the way we step and walk — that can compound damage to our joints. Asymmetry in how we walk wears out the joints and can lead to seniors becoming immobile due to pain or falls. Tommy explains how to spot these problems and demonstrates simple movements from his Balance Boost & Better Stepping videos that can help restore symmetry, relieve pain and improve joint health.

**You Better Sit Down for This**

The Sitting Tai Chi exercises that Tommy teaches as part of Healing Exercise are easy to practice and provide health benefits for older adults with the risk of falling. Tommy demonstrates some of these exercises and explains how they provide health benefits for conditions including anxiety, allergies, aches and pain, cancer, digestion, heart disease, Parkinson's disease and others.

The pandemic has intensified Kirchhoff’s mission to educate seniors, doctors, and everyone about the health benefits of Tai Chi. He believes the crisis presents an opportunity to get Americans, particularly seniors, to change how they view taking care of their health.

The list of ailments Tai Chi can relieve includes[arthritis](https://www.health.harvard.edu/alternative-and-complementary-medicine/tai-chi-for-osteoarthritis%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank),[back and neck pain](https://www.consumerreports.org/back-pain/tai-chi-for-back-pain/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), chronic pain, high blood pressure,[COPD](https://www.webmd.com/lung/copd/news/20120809/tai-chi-benefits-people-with-copd%22%20%5Cl%20%221%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), dementia,[fibromyalgia](https://www.nccih.nih.gov/research/research-results/tai-chi-has-similar-or-greater-benefits-than-aerobic-exercise-for-fibromyalgia-study-shows%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), neuropathy, and[Parkinson’s Disease](https://www.webmd.com/parkinsons-disease/news/20120208/tai-chi-improves-symptoms-parkinsons-disease%22%20%5Cl%20%221%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). Tai Chi improves posture and balance while[preventing falls](https://www.medpagetoday.com/geriatrics/generalgeriatrics/75035%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). It can help people suffering from heart disease,[multiple sclerosis](https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0170212" \t "_blank), stroke, and immune system disorders regain health, and has[outstanding advantages for seniors recovering from COVID-19](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7837887/%22%20%5Cl%20%22%3A~%3Atext%3DTai%20Chi%20exercise%20can%20enhance%2Cthe%20face%20of%20COVID-19.%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

**About:** Tai Chi Master and Wellness Expert Tommy Kirchhoff spent three decades refining [Healing Exercise](https://healingexercise.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a therapeutic, medicinal movement program based on Tai Chi. He is on a mission to educate seniors, doctors, and everyone about the proven health benefits of this gentle martial art

**Online Press Kit**: [healingexercise.onlinepresskit247.com](https://healingexercise.onlinepresskit247.com/)

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