

Tai Chi Moving Mindfulness Meditation and Resilience Training (TCMMMRT)

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Introduction

Mindfulness training is now growing as an accepted practice for treating trauma and post-traumatic stress. Tai Chi is an ancient form of moving mindfulness meditation, with a history dating back thousands of years. The movements of Tai Chi are performed in a slow, relaxed manner and have a healing effect when combined with deep, relaxed, coordinated breathing. Tai Chi calms the mind, relaxes the body, and helps to relieve and manage built-up tension and stress.

What makes the TCMMMRT program unique is the moving mindfulness meditation aspect. Through my decades of teaching experience, I have learned that traditional Tai Chi instruction was only mildly effective when dealing with extreme anxiety and PTSD. This prompted me to develop what I call gross motor Tai Chi movements and patterns.

I personally utilized this program prior to, during and after critical and dangerous situations and encounters during my entire 24-year law enforcement career, with tremendous success. This applied, practical *Moving Mindfulness Meditation and Resilience Training* allowed me to safely and effectively navigate my way through and recover from the daily mental, physical and emotional traumas experienced while on duty. Two and a half decades as a first responder, combined with over 40 years of training, teaching, and applying the benefits and attributes of Tai Chi to every aspect of my working and personal life, gave birth to TCMMMRT!

During fight or flight we are only able to perform gross motor skills. Practicing Tai Chi gross motor movements and patterns proves to be very effective at minimizing and controlling the physiological symptoms of fight or flight that are experienced in times of extreme stress and danger. These skills are part of Tai Chi Therapy and are easier to learn and remember than traditional Tai Chi forms. This type of training encourages quicker access to the calming benefits of Tai Chi prior to, during and after a stressful, critical situation or encounter.

**Tai Chi Moving Mindfulness Meditation
and Resilience Training (TCMMMRT) consists of
non-judgmental, moment-to-moment awareness of your
physical connection and response to the totality of the changing
moment, while maintaining a constant real-time awareness of your
thoughts, emotions, perceptions and experiences.**

Benefits: How the Program Works

Every movement and pattern in TCMMMRT incorporates mind, body, and breath in motion. The mind leads the body. Mindful abdominal breathing helps calm the mental chatter which quiets the mind. Fear, worry, confusion, anger, judgement (stress responses) are mentally quieted. A calm mind is crucial for the body to truly relax.

Russell Shilling, chief scientific officer for the American Psychology Association and former Naval Aerospace Experimental Psychologist (Captain, Retired) US Navy, referenced why we respond the way we do to danger:

- Comes down to preparation and training
- How we're wired
- Learned past experiences
- Exposure to stress
- Preconceived notions of what constitutes danger
- Impact of negative news exposure "traumatizes us based on our panic response"

A quiet mind and relaxed body prepares one to achieve and maintain a level of "active calm" - an unruffled mind and relaxed body in action - during direct involvement in critical or dangerous situations and encounters. It also helps to release the stress, allowing one to mentally, physically and emotionally recover (relaxation response).

Harvard Medical School has completed studies on how Tai Chi elicits the relaxation response. Johns Hopkins Medical Center is currently conducting an online Tai Chi research study using my TCMMMRT program where I teach weekly to first responders.

The Tai Chi gross motor movements and patterns along with coordinated breathing are designed to help participants stay grounded in the present moment during practice. With continued, correct practice, over time, the conscious mind programs the subconscious mind to evoke the relaxation response over the stress response. This is done while leading the body to achieve and maintain a state of active calm automatically. The moving mindfulness meditation aspect helps one to take this state of active calm into their changing environment. This program can provide one with tools that can be instantly accessed at anytime, to effectively help manage, reduce, prevent and recover from episodes of PTSD.

Outcomes

This program teaches one to incorporate moving mindfulness meditation protocols into their every day lifestyle prior to, during and after work. This will greatly enhance their resiliency to recover from and help heal PTSD.

Stress, left unchecked, clouds perception and judgment, affects motor skills, drains energy, weakens the immune system and can lead to or aggravate chronic conditions, illness, poor work performance, injuries and absenteeism. TCMMMRT can effectively address such situations that threaten mental, physical and emotional health.

Audience

This sustainable program was designed to meet the specific needs of first responders, military personnel, and veterans. The program can be modified to fit the needs of a wide variety of anxiety and PTSD conditions. The concepts and training protocols of this program are safe, effective and utilize the underlying principles of Tai Chi.

Training Formats

- Weekly training sessions
- Workshops
- Customized
- On-site, online, or a combination

Objectives

Three levels of improvement

Cognitively

- Clarity of thought
- Reduced mental chatter (calm mind)
- Quick, accurate and decisive decision-making
- Expanded and heightened awareness
- Better adaptability to changing circumstances
- Improved listening ability
- Unclouded judgement

Physically

- Relaxed body, including better sleep
- Quicker reflexes
- Enhanced mind-body connection and coordination
- Enhanced awareness of what the body is doing and it's environmental positioning
- Improved regulation of blood pressure, enhanced immune system, pain management, balance, muscle strength, flexibility and cardio-respiratory fitness, to name but a few

Emotionally

- Positive, relaxed attitude
- Patience
- Slow to anger
- Enhanced resiliency and emotional self-care

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