

AT YOUR SERVICE

Medication in Motion

As far-fetched as it may seem, the answer to extended life and exceptional health may be in the way you move.

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Photography WARREN RASMUSSEN

TO DR MICHAEL LAN, a Chinese medical doctor and tai chi master, health is an authentic combination of ancient forms of Chinese medicine and healing offered through treatments like acupuncture and massage, a focus on nutrition and diet, life coaching as well as the physical martial art practices of tai chi and qi gong (or chi kung).

He believes that while tai chi is an 'exceptional tool and movement to bring balance and leadership to one's life, for physical ailments, transformational acupuncture treatments can shift things quickly'. A good acupuncturist uses the knowledge of meridians, energy and chi in the practise of tai chi, he says.

Tai chi also teaches the art of patience and grace, and provides a sense of joy and accomplishment, he says. In addition, 'the fresh oxygen we're able to bring into the body brings new light and strength to the unused parts of body and mind where depression hides'. For the past 14 years, Dr Lan has worked from his Cape Town studio, Jing-An (which means 'Source of Serenity') to help people transform their world. The conscientious teaching of tai chi is the one string in his bow, described by environmental news resource Mother Nature Network as 'the graceful slow dance you do alone, revving up your body's illness-fighting defences by as much as 47 percent and even tripling the protection you get from a flu shot'.

He, himself, has an unwavering conviction in the ability of his treatments to heal as well as achieve and maintain balance in life. All he asks in return is your commitment to follow his plan. No excuses. His approach is to block every negative with a positive thought pattern or action for a healthy outcome.

While author Eckhart Tolle has noted that tai chi and qi gong will be an important part of the global awakening, research supports

its ability to heal insomnia (Reuters), mental health (Ottawa Citizen), help prevent dementia, heart attacks, strokes, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers (The American College of Sports Medicine, quoted in *The Washington Post*) and beat stress (*British Journal of Sports Medicine*). In addition, neuroscientists are linking mind-body practices such as tai chi to the brain's ability to diminish chronic pain (*The Australian*, as quoted by the *Wall Street Journal*). The secret? Slow movements and controlled breathing.

Enlightened executives book one-on-one sessions with Dr Lan to learn how to better deal with stress, live healthier lives and develop a renewed sense of purpose in their work while companies tap into his knowledge and training through teambuilding workshops. The result is increased productivity and wellness.

While tai chi's effectiveness in rewiring the brain becomes evident fairly quickly with dedicated practice, it can also come to the rescue when your emotions get the better of you. 'You just have to deal with your situation through tai chi', says Dr Lan. 'If we desire health, in addition to nutrition, medicine, hygiene and exercise, we must emphasise peace of mind. Beset by worries, tension, restrictions and demands on all sides, the cerebrum is forced to work the entire day. Even in sleep we dream, so there's never a moment's rest.'

He says that if we can temporarily forget the source of our stress, thus enabling the body and mind to relax and allow the nerves an opportunity to rest, this not only improves overall health, but can contribute to longevity and reverse the ageing process. □

For more information, go to www.jing-an.co.za.



Dr Lan proposes that tai chi is a refreshing alternative to anti-depressants and may be the first port of call if you're keen on healing yourself naturally