

## Review Article

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# Regular Physical Exercise of the Asian Variety may be Kinder to the Joints

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## Abstract

The many joints in the human body are the sites where arthritis and rheumatism manifest themselves. Knee problems which require knee joint replacements could happen to anyone. It does seem to occur in persons who use their joints repetitively for more times a day than others. Occupations that require this repetitive use include landscape architects, small-scale traditional farmers who use minimal machinery, etc. Intense exercise which includes miles of running daily also can be included in this category of exercising the joints excessively. It is proposed that meditative motions yoga and tai chi be practiced regularly instead for physical health. There is evidence in the published literature that these Asian forms of exercises do in fact improve mental health also.

**Keywords:** Arthritis; Rheumatism; Yoga; Tai chi; Knee; Hip

## Introduction

In the September 2016 issue of Men's Health magazine, on page 72, is an engaging question by a reader, 'Why does my penis shrink when I exercise?' The answer provided was that the blood goes to the muscles being exercised. Blood flow to the sexual organ is thus limited. It probably is limited to most parts of the brain as well since western style exercise is fast, intensive and mostly physical. It is common experience that many occupations lead their practitioners to joint pain, like knee pain in garden architects. Life-time runners may also get knee replacements because of worn-out joints, ankle-joint problems, etc. In modern western style exercise, humans have employed the help of machines in gymnasiums. The repetitive exercises on these machines do not really require too much mental engagement. In comparison, yoga exercises (which originated in India) are as much a physical exertion as it is a mental one [1-3]. Yoga includes meditation which is a control of one's mind to relax and not to think of anything in particular.

This trained state is contrasted to a pre-occupied mind that is muddled with random thoughts about all different kinds of topics, which is not a mind in a controlled meditative state that is a yogi's objective. Because yoga exercises involve the muscles and the brain of the body, it is deduced that these exercises are better balanced than western-style exercises done with

machines. Tai Chi [4-6] exercises are typically performed at a slower, measured rate that contrasts sharply with the fast-speed, intensive western-style exercises. In addition, there are multiple moves or patterns which tai chi practitioners need to remember and put into action, keeping one's brain deeply involved when exercising. It is construed that both the muscular parts and the neural parts of the human body are engaged in tai chi exercises.

## Literature Survey

Yoga is an all-inclusive organization of multiple mind body practices for mental and physical health that include physical postures and exercises, breathing techniques, meditation, profound relaxation techniques and promotion of mindfulness [2]. Yoga and meditation practices have been demonstrated to cut down on apparent stress [7,8] and better one's mood [9]. In [2], the researchers in the United States of America (USA) concluded that yoga practice was better for mental and physical health than regular physical exercises. The adolescents in secondary schools who practiced yoga were deemed to have acquired more resilience to the stresses of their young lives, than those who had not. Apparently, tai chi and yoga share common roots [4]. They are both classified as meditative movement [10]. The classification name itself speaks of the differences between them and the western-style repetitive exercises. The operative

word is 'meditative' and identifies the involvement of the brain and the exercising of the brain in addition to the muscles. Tai chi is the newer version (often times simplified) of the ancient Chinese martial arts of qigong [6,11].

Reference [12] is a rather comprehensive review on hip and knee replacements. In [12], part of the summary findings was that the reduction of total production and release of small particles into the biological environment of the joint would be a good and healthful thing for the joint. It is clear that in gout, for instance, the sharp needle-like crystals of uric acid crystallizes from the blood when its level is abnormally high, deposits in selected joints and hence increases (rather than reduces) the small particles in the biological environment. The therapy for gout is well known. It consists of taking a daily prescribed pill to prevent the formation of uric acid in the blood, in the metabolism of purine protein consumed via food and drink. Purines are found in high amounts in meat and meat products, particularly the inner organs such as kidney and liver. It is best for gout sufferers to avoid these organ meats. Gout cases, a type of arthritis, caused by nutritional sources are divorced from the amount and regularity of stress put on the joints.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Most people experience knee pain at some time in their lives. Sports, exercise and other activities can cause muscle strains, tendinitis, and more serious injuries to cartilage and ligaments. All the aforementioned conditions come with pain, sometimes intense pain. Causes of osteoarthritis (constitutes many more cases than rheumatoid arthritis) include age, weight, genetics, infections, previous injuries, and illness (such as a tumor or gout). Osteoarthritis can also be the result of sports injuries and wear and tear resulting from physical work in careers, such as construction, traditional farming and manufacturing. Occupational burdens may be unavoidable. Sports and exercise options are more open to choices. Hence, the current work strives to recommend the practice of yoga and tai chi for everybody. The younger generation who tend to visit gymnasiums with exercise machines, are also advised to 'discover' these Asian forms of

meditative motion for the betterment of their physical and mental health.

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