

Tai Chi Increases Brain Size, Improves Memory, Combats Alzheimer's

Researchers have shown that regular practice of Tai Chi increases brain volume, augments memory and thinking skills, and may combat dementia.

In a randomized controlled trial, researchers have shown that regular practice of Tai Chi in seniors increases brain volume and augments memory and thinking scores. Scientists collaborating from University of South Florida and Fudan University in China showed that Tai Chi that appears to actually



increase brain volume. In this study, some participants practiced the ancient Chinese martial art three times weekly over an 8-month period while the control group received no intervention. Previous studies have demonstrated that aerobic exercise can increase brain volume but this is the first to study Tai Chi specifically. In fact, the researchers' experiment even showed improvements on memory and thinking skills tests. These types of results show the treatment, Tai Chi, to be highly efficacious in combating dementia illnesses like Alzheimer's. According to lead author Dr. James Mortimer, professor of epidemiology at the University of South Florida College of Public Health, "epidemiologic studies have shown repeatedly that individuals who engage in more physical exercise or are more socially active have a lower risk of Alzheimer's disease."

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References

1. James A. Mortimer, Ding Ding, Amy R. Borenstein, Charles DeCarli, Qihao Guo, Yougui Wu, et al. "Changes in Brain Volume and Cognition in a Randomized Trial of Exercise and Social Interaction in a Community-Based Sample of Non-Demented Chinese Elders." *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, Vol. 30 Number 4, Pages 757-766, June 2012.