Tai Chi Core Program System

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Four progressive and adaptable program pathways share common movement and Tai Chi foundations, while serving different participant needs and learning goals.

Four Program Pathways

01 | Tai Chi 55+

For older adults and general beginners, with emphasis on mobility, balance, confidence, and well-being.

02 | Supportive Rehabilitation & Adapted Tai Chi

For participants who need greater movement adaptation or rehabilitation support, using gentle and adaptable Tai Chi practice.

03 | Systematic & Advanced Tai Chi

For participants seeking deeper, long-term Tai Chi study and higher-level mind-body and movement development.

04 | Shift Tai Chi

Practical Tai Chi methods for relieving physical fatigue, managing mental stress, and restoring balance in work and everyday life.

Shared Foundations

Body Awareness

Posture, alignment, and controlled movement.

Breathing & Relaxation

Natural breathing with reduced unnecessary tension.

Mobility & Flexibility

Appropriate stretching and usable joint mobility.

Weight Transfer & Balance

Stable support, stepping, turning, and directional change.

Hands, Body & Footwork

Fundamental Tai Chi movement skills.

Form Integration

Tai Chi form supports learning where appropriate; Shift Tai Chi focuses on practical modules.

TEACHING APPROACH

Build physical foundations first, then develop Tai Chi skills progressively. Teaching pace, range, and difficulty are adjusted to the participant or group. Progress is based on movement quality, understanding, and response to practice - not simply on the number of movements completed.

Purpose

A safe, progressive, and sustainable Tai Chi program for adults 55+ and general beginners, designed to develop mobility, balance, coordination, body control, and confidence at a manageable pace.

Expected Benefits

Supports everyday mobility, balance, coordination, body control, and confidence in movement. Slow, controlled weight transfer and stepping support movement control and fall-risk management, while breathing, relaxation, and continuous movement support emotional stability and overall physical and mental well-being.

Core Teaching Content

Preparation

Body awareness, natural breathing, relaxation, appropriate stretching, and major-joint mobility.

Tai Chi Foundations

Basic hand methods, body movement, and footwork; posture, alignment, and controlled range.

Weight Transfer & Balance

Controlled weight transfer, stable support, stepping, turning, and directional change.

Coordination

Upper- and lower-body coordination, movement continuity, and whole-body control.

Tai Chi Form

Progressive learning of Tai Chi movements according to group readiness.

Integration

Combining breathing, relaxation, alignment, weight transfer, balance, and coordination in continuous movement.

Progression

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATION | LEVEL 2 DEVELOPMENT | LEVEL 3 INTEGRATION | NEXT CYCLE

Level 1 - Foundation

Establish posture, breathing, relaxation, mobility, basic movement methods, footwork, and weight transfer.

Level 2 - Development

Develop footwork, turning, directional change, dynamic weight transfer, and coordination while continuing form practice.

Level 3 - Integration

Improve transitions, stability, continuity, and overall movement quality.

Recommended Setting

Stage Length

Each level typically runs 8-12 weeks, adjusted to group progress.

Frequency

Typically 1-2 classes per week.

Class Length

Typically 60 minutes.

Full Cycle

Levels 1-3 form one complete learning cycle.

Progression

No fixed form target; pace is adjusted to actual group ability and learning progress.

Format

Group or small-group classes in community centres, seniors' residences, and similar settings.

Typical Class Structure

5-10 min ARRIVAL & BREATHING	10-15 min MOBILITY	10-15 min FOUNDATIONS	20-25 min CORE TAI CHI	5-10 min COOL-DOWN

Timing is flexible. More time may be given to mobility, balance, review, or form practice according to group needs.

Review & Progression

Review focuses on movement quality, comfort, mobility, weight control, balance, coordination, confidence, and participant feedback. Progression is adjusted to actual readiness; each new cycle reinforces foundations while adding appropriate new material.

Purpose

An adaptable Tai Chi program for participants with reduced mobility, decreased physical capacity, or a need for gentler and more individualized practice, using appropriate movement to assist and support the rehabilitation process.

Expected Benefits

Uses adaptable, low-impact, controlled practice to assist and support the rehabilitation process. Helps participants maintain or gradually regain appropriate physical activity within their current abilities while supporting mobility, joint movement, balance, coordination, confidence in movement, emotional stability, and overall physical and mental well-being.

Program Scope & Professional Boundaries

This program provides supportive, adapted Tai Chi movement practice. It does not provide medical treatment and is not a substitute for professional healthcare or rehabilitation services.

Core Teaching Content

Comfortable Movement

Body awareness, relaxed breathing, and gentle movement within a comfortable range.

Movement Preparation

Appropriate stretching and controlled joint mobility based on participant needs.

Adapted Tai Chi

Suitable hand methods, body movement, weight transfer, and Tai Chi movements.

Balance & Control

Safe weight transfer, supported standing when needed, balance work, and simple stepping.

Coordination

Progressive linking of upper- and lower-body movements and short sequences.

Individual Progression

Standing time, range, stepping, continuity, and content increase only when appropriate.

Progression

ADAPT | **DEVELOP** | **PROGRESS** | **REASSESS**

Progress & Reassess

Establish a safe, comfortable, sustainable practice; progressively develop mobility, weight control, balance, and coordination. Based on response, participants may progress, consolidate, or reduce difficulty.

Recommended Setting

Review Period

A structured review is typically completed after 6-10 weeks.

Frequency

Typically 1-2 classes per week; adjusted as needed.

Class Length

Typically 45-60 minutes, depending on comfort, physical capacity, and setting.

Progression

No fixed level or form target.

Format

Private, small-group, or adapted group sessions.

Transition

Participants may continue adapted practice or transition to the Tai Chi 55+ pathway when appropriate.

Typical Class Structure

CHECK-IN	BREATHING & RELAXATION	MOBILITY	ADAPTED TAI CHI	RECOVERY

Standing time, seated practice, rest periods, movement range, and the number of continuous movements can all be adjusted.

Review & Progression

Review considers comfort, fatigue, movement control, mobility, weight transfer, balance, coordination, confidence, and participant experience. Intensity, movement selection, and next steps are adjusted from feedback. Medical or rehabilitation concerns should follow guidance from the participant's healthcare or rehabilitation professional.

Purpose

For participants with a sound physical foundation who want to study Tai Chi systematically and in greater depth, developing higher-level movement ability, mind-body coordination, and deeper understanding through long-term practice.

Expected Benefits

Confidence	Through effortless command of awareness and body, gain powerful self-confidence.
Balance	Building on greatly enhanced physical movement ability, achieve a high degree of coordination and balance between awareness and body.
Calm	Develop focused, clear, and stable awareness, supporting emotional stability and a calm, balanced state of mind.

Core Teaching Content

Core Principles

Relaxation, alignment, weight distribution, whole-body coordination, and controlled use of force.

Hands, Body & Footwork

Refine fundamental methods and maintain consistency across form and application.

Tai Chi Form

Use Tai Chi form as the primary framework for long-term learning and refinement.

Application

Explore direction, distance, structure, timing, weight transfer, and functional movement.

Partner Practice

Use controlled partner work to test structure, balance, direction, distance, following, and adaptation.

Focused Refinement

Target footwork, body method, form correction, application, push-hands foundations, or specific needs.

Progression

PRINCIPLES → FORM → APPLICATION → PARTNER WORK → REFINE & REINTEGRATE

Recommended Setting

Training Unit

Each focused training unit typically runs 8-12 weeks.

Frequency

Typically 1-2 classes per week.

Class Length

Typically 60-90 minutes.

Duration

Designed for long-term study with no fixed endpoint.

Form Progress

Form is learned and refined progressively, with no fixed completion deadline.

Format

Private lessons, small groups, focused study groups, and workshops.

Typical Class Structure

PREPARATION	FOUNDATIONS	CORE PRINCIPLES	FORM / APPLICATION	REVIEW & RECOVERY

Primary training content varies by focus and may include form integration, application, partner testing, footwork, push-hands foundations, or focused correction.

Review & Progression

Review considers movement quality, structural control, weight distribution, coordination, continuity, understanding of principles, form quality, and the ability to express these principles in application or partner work. Specific weaknesses become priorities for the next training unit.

Six “W” of Shift Tai Chi

1. What is Shift Tai Chi?

The demands of modern work are not limited to physical exertion. Prolonged sitting, standing and driving can lead to muscular tension and restricted movement. High-responsibility, high-pressure jobs require sustained alertness, quick judgment and timely responses, placing a considerable mental load on workers. Shift work, night shifts and irregular hours disrupt normal patterns of sleep, rest and daily life. Highly repetitive or monotonous work can also contribute to physical fatigue and mental exhaustion.

Over time, these conditions accumulate, bringing stiffness and discomfort as well as tension, anxiety and fatigue. To address these challenges, we have developed a new Tai Chi program grounded in Tai Chi's core principles and practice methods: Shift Tai Chi.

2. Why Shift Tai Chi?

There are many ways to exercise, relax and manage physical fatigue or mental stress. In real working and living environments, however, most options are limited by available time, location or a person's current physical condition.

Shift Tai Chi is designed for moments when the body and mind need relief during a short work break, or when a person is already tired after work and does not want further high-intensity exercise. It requires no special preparation and is not intended to add physical strain. Many practices take only three to five minutes, sometimes less, to make a simple adjustment in physical and mental state. This practical accessibility is why Shift Tai Chi is worth choosing.

3. Who is Shift Tai Chi for?

People facing physical and repetitive demands

The first group includes people who must sit or stand for long periods or perform mechanical, repetitive tasks.

People under sustained mental pressure

The second group includes people who work under sustained psychological pressure, carry significant professional responsibilities, and must remain highly focused and alert.

People with irregular schedules

The third group includes people whose shift work, night work or unpredictable schedules regularly disrupt their daily routines.

Examples of Occupations

These groups include office employees, professional drivers, healthcare workers, police officers, firefighters, teachers and others with similar demands.

4. When do you need Shift Tai Chi?

Your work may involve prolonged sitting or standing, long hours of driving, or repetitive tasks. It may also require sustained concentration and involve considerable responsibility and mental pressure. Under these conditions, you may feel tension in your neck and shoulders, aching and heaviness in your lower back, heaviness in your legs, and a reluctance to move. Mentally, you may experience difficulty concentrating, slower reactions, irritability, a sense of being emotionally weighed down, low mood, and exhaustion.

These states do not appear suddenly. They develop gradually and worsen under sustained workloads and mental pressure. When they accumulate beyond your capacity to regulate them naturally - or when fatigue, stress, and negative emotions have persisted so long that you have become less sensitive to them and do not clearly recognize your need for change - that is when you need to make a deliberate Shift.

5. Where do you practice Shift Tai Chi?

Shift Tai Chi is not tied to a particular space or venue and requires no special preparation.

At your desk, in a meeting room, staff kitchen, corridor, break area, restaurant, parked car, parking lot, highway rest stop, airport waiting area, living room or bedroom—it can fit into a wide range of everyday work and home settings.

Whenever you want to make a Shift, you can begin wherever it is safe and appropriate to practise.

6. Way — Shift Tai Chi

Program design

Shift Tai Chi is based on the core theory and practice methods of Tai Chi. Its main training elements include breathing regulation, conscious control, weight transfer, balance, stretching, and body control. These elements form a course structure consisting of foundational and functional modules.

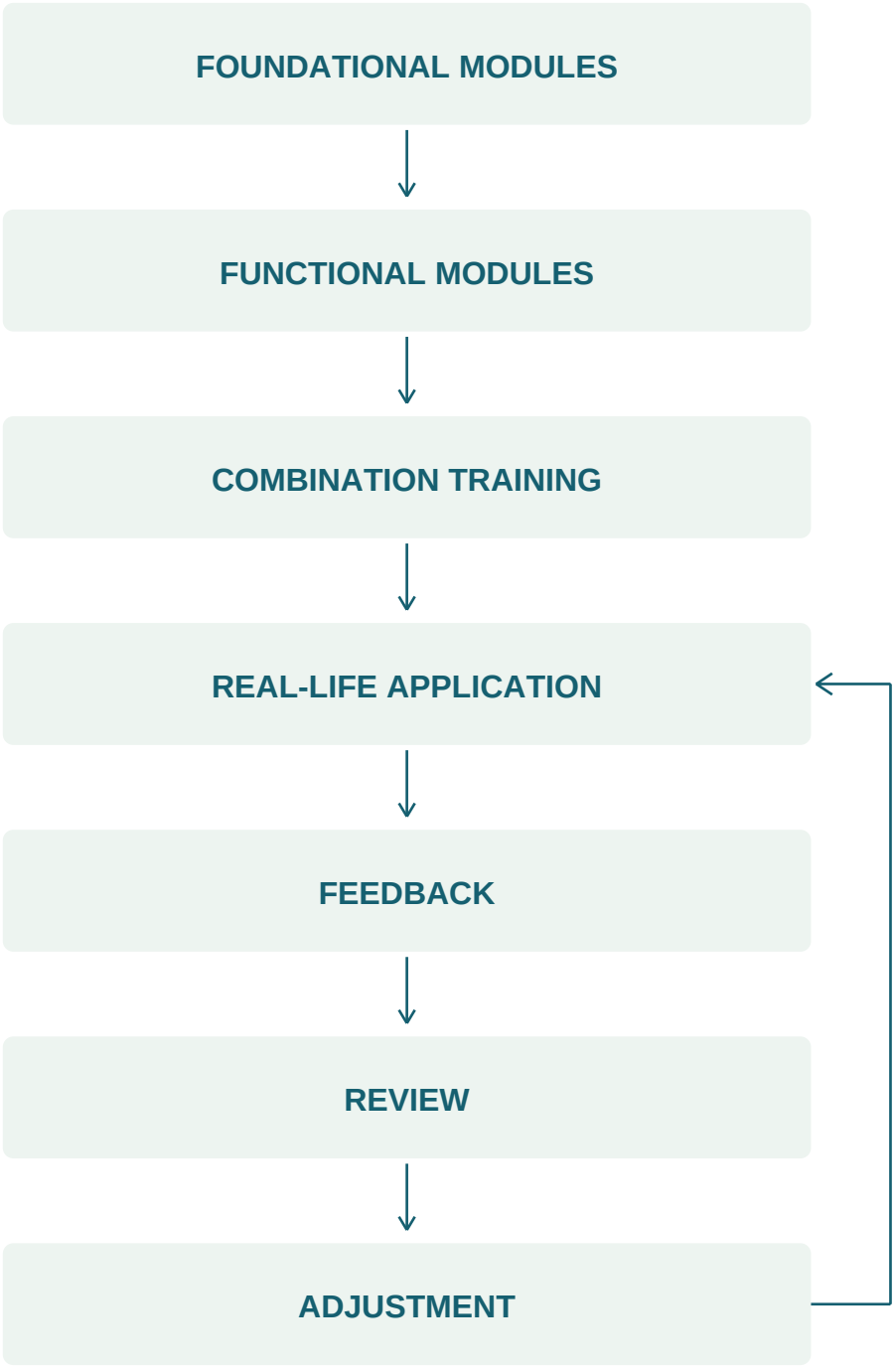
Foundational modules are the core units used throughout the course and support different module combinations.

Functional modules are specialized training units designed for different occupational settings, physical and mental states, and practical needs. They can be flexibly combined with foundational modules to achieve the intended adjustment goals.

Learning and application process

Learning progresses from foundational modules to functional modules, then to combining the two, applying them in real settings, reporting results, and reviewing and refining the approach. Participants first learn and become proficient in the principles and methods of foundational modules before moving on to functional modules. With an instructor's guidance, they learn to select and combine modules according to occupational settings, current physical and mental conditions, and the adjustment they want to achieve.

Participants then use what they have learned at work and in everyday life, independently selecting and combining modules they have already mastered according to the setting, their current physical and mental state, and their adjustment goals. After practice, they report physical sensations, changes in mental state, problems encountered and observed results to the instructor. The instructor evaluates the effectiveness of the Shift and guides adjustments to module selection and combinations. The revised combinations are applied again and continually refined through practice, helping the method fit individual needs and support long-term well-being.



Apply the adjusted combination again, using ongoing feedback, review and refinement to continually improve the combination and achieve the best possible Shift outcomes.

Distinctive features

Shift Tai Chi differs from traditional courses mainly in how its content is organized and applied in practice. Rather than focusing primarily on systematically learning a complete Tai Chi form, it purposefully selects and integrates Tai Chi theory and practice methods, using innovative design to create flexible, practical modules for different physical and mental states and adjustment needs. In real-life settings, a single Shift usually takes three to five minutes, or even less. When circumstances permit, participants can combine modules and vary the duration to suit their needs and the setting.

Occupations, work settings, sources of stress and physical and mental states differ from person to person. Even the same person may need different outcomes at different times, workloads, levels of fatigue and locations. Module combinations can therefore be adjusted for the individual, the moment and the setting, and improved through ongoing use.

Class schedule

To develop reliable skills and use Shift Tai Chi effectively in real life, sufficient class learning and guided practice are essential. The planned schedule is two classes per week, each lasting 45 to 60 minutes.

Progression to further study

Participants who develop a deeper interest in Tai Chi through sustained learning and use of Shift Tai Chi may move into systematic Tai Chi study, learning more complete theory, techniques and practice methods. This can deepen their understanding of core principles, improve their skills and further strengthen their practical application of Shift Tai Chi at work and in everyday life.

A consistent teaching framework supports all four programs while preserving each pathway's distinct goals, professional boundaries, and progression.

Common Teaching Standards

Participant-Centred

Teaching responds to participant ability, needs, comfort, and feedback.

Clear Instruction

Use simple, direct cues; demonstrate first, then add detail.

Safety & Appropriate Challenge

Increase difficulty progressively while maintaining control and comfort.

Adaptation

Adjust stance height, range, speed, footwork, and complexity as needed.

Progressive Learning

Build foundations first, then add form, coordination, and greater challenge.

Recovery

Finish with comfortable breathing and relaxed movement.

Continuous Improvement

OBSERVE	LISTEN	REVIEW	ADJUST	PROGRESS

Progress is not measured only by the number of movements remembered. Review also considers movement quality, control, understanding, comfort, confidence, participation, and meaningful progress toward program goals.

Program Selection

01 | Tai Chi 55+

Gentle movement, mobility, balance and everyday well-being.

02 | Supportive Rehabilitation & Adapted Tai Chi

Adapted movement and rehabilitation support; not medical treatment.

03 | Systematic & Advanced Tai Chi

Long-term study of Tai Chi principles, forms and coordination.

04 | Shift Tai Chi

Practical Tai Chi methods for relieving physical fatigue, managing mental stress, and restoring balance in work and everyday life.