

# Tai Chi shown to improve COPD exercise capacity

August 8 2012

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Tai Chi can be used as an effective form of exercise therapy for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to new findings.

The research, which was published online today (XX August 2012) ahead of print in the [European Respiratory Journal](#), suggests that this form of exercise can improve exercise capacity and quality of life in people with COPD and may be as beneficial as [pulmonary rehabilitation](#).

It is well known that moderate forms of exercise can help COPD patients to improve their exercise tolerance, symptoms of [breathlessness](#) and their overall quality of life. This new study aimed to investigate whether Sun-style Tai chi could be used as an effective form of [exercise therapy](#).

This form of Tai Chi (Sun-style) has been shown to help people with chronic conditions such as arthritis and involves less difficult movements enabling people of all ages to perform this martial art.

Researchers from the Concord Repatriation General Hospital and the University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia, worked with 42 people with COPD. Half the group attended Tai Chi lessons twice a week, as well as performing Tai Chi at home, whereas the other half followed their usual medical management which did not include exercise.

Researchers tested the [exercise capacity](#) of all participants via a walking

test and also asked all participants to complete the Chronic Respiratory Disease Questionnaire, which gives an indication of how the disease affects their quality of life. The exercise intensity of Tai Chi was measured in those participants who completed the Tai Chi training to assess whether it met the training requirements suggested for COPD patients.

Compared to the group completing the usual [medical management](#), participants completing the Tai Chi [exercise training](#) could walk significantly longer in the walking test. They also had an increased score on the questionnaire, indicating a better quality of life.

The results also showed that the intensity of the Tai Chi was moderate, which met the recommendations for exercise training for people with COPD.

Lead author, Regina Wai Man Leung from the Concord Repatriation General Hospital, said: "With increasing numbers of people being diagnosed with COPD, it is important to provide different options for exercise that can be tailored to suit each individual. The results from this small sample provide compelling evidence that Tai Chi is an effective training programme for patients with COPD, and could be considered as an alternative to the usual exercise training programmes that are available in pulmonary rehabilitation."

**More information:** Short-form Sun-style Tai Chi as an exercise training modality in people with COPD Authors: Regina Leung, Zoe McKeough, Matthew Peters and Jennifer Alison [DOI: 10.1183/09031936.00036912](#)

Provided by European Lung Foundation

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