

Tai Chi May Help Control Asthma

Study Shows Chinese Exercise System May Help Breathing of Asthma Patients

By [Bill Hendrick](#)

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Reviewed by [Louise Chang, MD](#)

Oct. 29, 2008 -- [Asthma](#) sufferers may be able to better control their breathing and improve their [exercise](#) performance with some training in [tai chi](#), new research indicates.

Tai chi is a method of traditional Chinese exercise involving coordinated breathing and body movements.

Scientists in Thailand enrolled 17 adult patients (average age 57) with persistent asthma in a six-week tai chi training program.

After the training period patients showed significant improvements in [peak flow](#) variability, asthma control, and quality-of-life measures, the researchers say.

Patients were more comfortable on a six-minute walk and increased their maximum work rate and maximum oxygen consumption after taking part in the exercises, the researchers say in a news release.

The researchers conclude that tai chi can help people control asthma and prove to be an effective, non-pharmacologic adjunctive therapy for people with persistent asthma.

The authors are on staff in the department of medicine at Ramathibodi Hospital in Thailand.

The 17 patients attended supervised exercise once per week, followed by daily home-based exercise assignments using an audio-visual guide. This routine lasted six weeks.

The researchers measured such things as oxygen consumption and exercise endurance, concluding that tai chi improved both maximum and functional exercise capacities and improved exercise performance.

The research was presented at CHEST 2008, the annual meeting of the American College of Chest Physicians, in Philadelphia.