

## **Tai Chi & X-Men**

Do you dream to possess superhuman senses, enhanced physical capabilities, and a healing factor that allows you to recover from virtually any wound, disease, or toxin at an accelerated rate. The healing factor that slows down your aging process, enabling you to live beyond a normal human lifespan?

Perhaps this elusive dream dwells privately in every baby-boomer as they painfully realise that their body was not the spring chicken it once was. The “spare parts” are getting worn out, getting clunky.

Reality is so cruel. We have to wake up from dreams.

Wake up !!!!

Welcome back to the real world.

I regret to have to inform you that your dreaming will be an exercise in futility because I was only describing the fictitious comic mutant superhero Wolverine of the X-men.

But do not despair. There is hope yet.

Since I cannot be X-men, the next best thing to do in the real world to attain that dream is to do Tai Chi !

Tai Chi enhances your physical capabilities, allows you to recover better from wound, disease, or toxin, slows down your aging process, enabling you to live better and longer.

Thus began my Tai Chi Journey.

The journey began years ago when my wife Jesilyn joined a Tai Chi class with her sisters at the Hougang Community Club. She became quite good at it. She enthusiastically tried to teach me what she learned. But alas, her attempt was like playing the lute to a cow 对牛弹琴, more like to a stubborn bull with flippancy indifference and cognitive dissonance to Tai Chi.

Some years later, Jesilyn and myself joined the Tai Chi group at the Siglap South Community Club, a stone throw from our home then. The tranquillity of the internal courtyard environment was very soothing and we returned home from the class each evening feeling relaxed and rejuvenated.

When we moved to Marine Parade, Jesilyn and myself joined the Tai Chi group at the Marine Parade Community Club, a block from our new home. How convenient. But unfortunately the open roof of the Community Club amplified the deafening traffic noise of the busy crossroad junction onto the rooftop basketball court where the Tai Chi sessions were held. Tai Chi is synonymous with tranquilly. Tai Chi and traffic

noise is incompatible. I found myself stressed after each session. The purpose of practicing Tai Chi was defeated.

I am very much convinced by my personal encounters of empirical evidence of the beneficial effects of Tai Chi.

A good friend and colleague of mine eliminated his migraine and fertility problem practicing Tai Chi. A most unforgettable incident was when he demonstrated his Qi force on my other colleague by making him bend backwards involuntarily right before my very eyes. And amazingly I was standing between them !

My peers who practice Tai Chi are almost without exception evidently in superior health status compared to my peers who do not, not just better than the coach potatoes but also better than those who are physically active in activities like running.

A neighbour in his 70s shared his wisdom with me when he commented that my regular brisk walk along East Coast Park is a health investment that will make reap dividend when I am at his age. I have been keenly observing that many of my elderly neighbours who practice Tai Chi are in remarkably superior health status compared to their peers who do not, many sadly dependent on walking aid others wheelchair bound.

It is not my place to condone or condemn, but the Tai Chi masters I encountered before were to me, talking like a runaway train, and I the student was pacing like a caged lion. After months and months of Tai Chi classes, all that I could retain were fragment of memories of the Tai Chi strokes, like faded photographs, fading into oblivion as time went by. When the student is ready, the teacher appears, so the wise saying goes. So perhaps this student was just not ready yet. Learning this beneficial ancient art form was indeed elusive for me, Tai Chi and me were like passing ships in the night.

Then this year, I received a U-Live email blast invitation to join Community Drums, U-Live Theatre and Tai Chi. I greedily enrolled in all 3.

Thus the earthshaking discovery of Tai Chi for Health by Dr Paul Lam. The Goldilocks of Tai Chi. Not too vigorous, not too slack. With a perspective from a medical practitioner. What with informative websites, instructional videos, and especially instruction in English, and our wonderful Tai Chi Masters Jennifer and Simon.

It is a fundamentally different approach to teaching Tai Chi. It suits my learning style. Since I do not possess photographic memory, I can replay each step to my heart's content until it gets planted in my brain. I cannot imagine asking any Tai Chi master to do that, either I will be booted out of the class or the master will be driven into insanity. The systematic teaching of each form was very helpful.

Having found Tai Chi for Health gave me great encouragement that I can finally learn Tai Chi without frustration. Without giving up halfway. I have been faithfully doing Tai Chi every morning and evening, and on weekends by the seaside after our brisk walk.

A few months ago, I tripped while walking at a car park but I landed on my hands. It was a minor fall, but I suffered a bad back sprain and was immobilised for days. That was worrying.

More recently, I tripped over my luggage at Genting, fell on the ground and rolled over. Other than my dignity of falling in front of a crowd, I was not hurt at all. Only a few month of consistent practice of Tai Chi have apparently did wonders, confirmation bias notwithstanding.

Jennifer and Simon of Tai Chi for Health are the harbinger of our good health. They are the Superhero X-Men in the real world.