

Alcune avvertenze

Prima di approcciarsi agli esercizi pratici è opportuno seguire alcune indicazioni preliminari. Ad esempio nello *yoga* vengono insegnate le cose da evitare, le cattive abitudini di cui spogliarsi (*yama* in giapponese *kin kai*).

I precetti delle discipline tradizionali debbono essere adattate alle differenti condizioni di tempo e spazio, a seconda dei diversi contesti culturali. Il *Katsura system* ovviamente non ha alcun carattere normativo, ognuno è padrone della propria vita! Tuttavia sarebbe utile seguire alcune indicazioni di base, ad esempio non praticare in stato di ebrezza; non fumare almeno nei venti minuti prima e nei venti minuti dopo la pratica; per alcuni esercizi non avere lo stomaco troppo pieno.

Per quanto concerne la dieta esistono molteplici possibilità per trovare quella più adatta a sé. In appendice un esempio è offerto dalle indicazioni della dott.ssa Jessica Inserra, biologa nutrizionista.

Appendice 1

Dieta sana: una proposta

Come nutrizionista sono sempre stata affascinata al mondo dell'alimentazione e di come, tramite essa, possiamo migliorare la nostra salute e arricchire il nostro spirito. Cosa intendiamo esattamente per "sana alimentazione"? In un mondo in cui il cibo industriale e confezionato è così diffuso, è fondamentale comprendere il potere del cibo reale e naturale.

Il cibo rappresenta molto più di un semplice nutrimento per il nostro corpo. È il carburante che ci permette di affrontare la vita con vitalità, forza e resilienza. Tuttavia, la nostra società moderna ci ha allontanato sempre di più dal cibo vero, sostituendolo con prodotti altamente processati, ricchi di conservanti, additivi e ingredienti artificiali. Questi alimenti possono sembrare convenienti e attraenti, ma a lungo termine, non ci permettono di raggiungere la vera salute e il benessere.

La sana alimentazione riguarda il ritorno alle origini, alla semplicità e all'autenticità del cibo. Significa fare scelte consapevoli che privilegiano ingredienti freschi, non raffinati e naturali. Questo tipo di alimentazione ci fornisce i nutrienti essenziali di cui il nostro corpo ha bisogno per funzionare al meglio e per sostenere il nostro impegno nelle arti marziali e nell'olismo.

Nel corso di questo articolo, esploreremo i benefici di una sana alimentazione e come essa possa influire positivamente sulla nostra salute e il nostro benessere. Scopriremo perché è così importante evitare il cibo industriale e confezionato e come possiamo incorporare abitudini alimentari più naturali nella nostra vita quotidiana.

Per fare questo mi sono ispirata all'alimentazione dei samurai.

I samurai, leggendari guerrieri del Giappone feudale, non solo si distinguevano per le loro abilità marziali, ma anche per la loro profonda connessione tra mente, corpo e spirito. L'arte della guerra e la pratica delle arti marziali richiedevano non solo una grande forza fisica e agilità, ma anche una mente lucida e un equilibrio interiore. In questa prospettiva olistica, l'alimentazione svolgeva un ruolo fondamentale nel nutrire sia il corpo che lo spirito dei samurai.

Esisteva infatti particolare attenzione verso l'alimentazione, poiché si riconosceva che ciò che mangiavano influenzava direttamente le loro prestazioni marziali e il loro benessere complessivo. La loro alimentazione era basata su principi di equilibrio, qualità e consapevolezza, riflettendo l'importanza della nutrizione per sostenere un corpo sano e una mente chiara.

Un elemento chiave dell'alimentazione dei samurai era la scelta di cibi freschi, naturali e di alta qualità. Preferivano alimenti provenienti da fonti locali e stagionali, come riso, pesce, verdure, frutta e tè verde. Questa scelta rifletteva la loro attenzione verso l'equilibrio e la connessione con la natura, valori che si riflettevano anche nelle loro pratiche olistiche.

I samurai erano consapevoli dell'importanza di una corretta idratazione, soprattutto durante gli allenamenti e le battaglie. Mantenere un'adeguata idratazione aiutava a mantenere l'energia, la concentrazione e la resistenza fisica necessarie per affrontare le sfide marziali. Per questo motivo, i samurai bevevano acqua pulita e tè verde, che oltre a idratare forniva anche antiossidanti benefici per il corpo e la mente.

Oltre alla scelta degli alimenti, si prestava molta attenzione alla qualità e alla preparazione dei pasti. Cucinavano i cibi con cura e rispetto, riconoscendo che il processo di preparazione influenzava l'energia e le proprietà nutritive degli alimenti stessi. Man-

giare con consapevolezza e gratitudine era parte integrante dell'esperienza alimentare dei samurai, che riconoscevano il cibo come nutrimento non solo per il corpo, ma anche per lo spirito.

Mantenere un corpo sano e una mente chiara era essenziale per affrontare le sfide fisiche e mentali che le arti marziali richiedevano. L'alimentazione dei samurai si basava su principi di equilibrio, fornendo una combinazione di carboidrati, proteine e grassi sani per sostenere le loro esigenze energetiche e promuovere la forza muscolare.

La scelta di cibi freschi, locali e stagionali permetteva ai samurai di trarre il massimo beneficio nutrizionale dagli alimenti. Il consumo di pesce, in particolare, forniva proteine di alta qualità, acidi grassi omega-3 benefici per la salute del cuore e dei vasi sanguigni e altri nutrienti essenziali. Il riso, invece, rappresentava una fonte di carboidrati ad alta energia, fornendo il combustibile necessario per gli allenamenti intensi e le battaglie.

Oltre alla scelta degli alimenti, i samurai prestavano attenzione anche alla loro dieta complessiva. Seguivano un regime alimentare bilanciato, evitando gli eccessi e i pasti abbondanti. La moderazione a tavola era parte integrante del loro stile di vita, permettendo loro di evitare il sovrac consumo e di mantenere un peso corporeo ideale per le prestazioni marziali.

Questa alimentazione però andava ben oltre la conoscenza fisica. Era una pratica che coinvolgeva l'intera persona, compresi gli aspetti spirituali. Il cibo veniva infatti considerato come una fonte di energia vitale, nutrendo non solo il corpo, ma anche lo spirito. Mangiare con consapevolezza e gratitudine, apprezzando ogni boccone, era parte integrante del loro approccio olistico all'alimentazione.

Ma come possiamo collegare questi concetti nella nostra epoca attuale? Come possiamo incrementare la nostra salute in quest'epoca sempre più industrializzata che ci porta lontano dalla purezza del cibo vero?

Ho pensato, attraverso questo articolo, di valutare insieme a voi degli aspetti fondamentali:

1. Favorire alimenti a km 0

Quando si tratta di scegliere il cibo che mettiamo nel nostro piatto, optare per il cibo a km 0 significa prendere una decisione consapevole e sostenibile. Questo approccio implica la scelta di alimenti che provengono dalla nostra comunità locale o regionale. Ciò può includere prodotti agricoli freschi, carne, latticini e altri prodotti alimentari locali. Scegliere il cibo a km 0 offre numerosi vantaggi sia per noi che per l'ambiente. In primo luogo, sosteniamo gli agricoltori locali e la nostra economia locale, aiutando a mantenere vive le tradizioni agricole e culinarie della nostra regione. Inoltre, il cibo a km 0 spesso è più fresco e ricco di nutrienti, poiché non ha bisogno di lunghe distanze di trasporto.

Ma cosa significa effettivamente il termine "km 0"? Si riferisce alla distanza percorsa dal cibo dalla sua origine fino a raggiungere il consumatore finale. Scegliendo il cibo a km 0, riduciamo l'impronta di carbonio associata al trasporto alimentare, contribuendo a una maggiore sostenibilità ambientale.

Possiamo trovare il cibo a km 0 nei mercati locali, nelle aziende agricole, nei negozi di prodotti biologici e tramite sistemi di distribuzione locale come le CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) o i gruppi di acquisto solidale. Oltre a godere di cibo fresco e di qualità, ci connettiamo con la nostra comunità e sosteniamo pratiche agricole sostenibili.

2. L'importanza della stagionalità nell'alimentazione

Seguire la stagionalità nell'alimentazione significa adattare la nostra dieta ai prodotti alimentari che sono naturalmente disponibili durante determinati periodi dell'anno. Invece di acquistare prodotti fuori stagione che vengono importati da altre regioni o addirittura da altri Paesi, concentriamoci su ciò che la natura ci offre localmente in ogni stagione.

La stagionalità nell'alimentazione offre numerosi vantaggi sia per la nostra salute che per l'ambiente. Quando consumiamo frutta e verdura di stagione, otteniamo il massimo valore nutritivo dai prodotti alimentari, poiché sono raccolti al momento giusto della loro maturazione. Questo significa che contengono più vitamine, minerali e antiossidanti che contribuiscono alla nostra salute e al benessere generale.

Inoltre, i prodotti di stagione spesso hanno un sapore migliore rispetto ai loro equivalenti fuori stagione. I prodotti di stagione sono coltivati localmente e raccolti in momenti in cui le condizioni ambientali sono ottimali per la loro crescita. Ciò significa che sono in grado di sviluppare il loro pieno potenziale di sapore, texture e profumi distintivi. Ad esempio, le fragole estive dolci e succose o le mele croccanti dell'autunno hanno un gusto unico che difficilmente si può trovare nelle loro controparti fuori stagione.

Seguire la stagionalità nell'alimentazione ci permette di variare la nostra dieta e sperimentare una vasta gamma di sapori e ingredienti. Ogni stagione ci offre un nuovo insieme di frutta e verdura da esplorare e apprezzare. Questo ci aiuta a evitare la monotonia alimentare e a mantenere un'alimentazione equilibrata e stimolante.

Una delle migliori fonti per identificare i prodotti di stagione è il mercato locale o l'azienda agricola della nostra zona. Qui possiamo trovare frutta e verdura fresca, coltivata localmente e raccolta al momento giusto. Le informazioni sulle stagioni dei prodotti alimentari possono essere facilmente reperite online o attraverso guide stagionali.

3. La scelta biologica per la nostra salute

Il cibo biologico sta guadagnando sempre più popolarità poiché sempre più persone si rendono conto dei benefici che può offrire alla salute e all'ambiente. Ma cosa significa esattamente che un alimento è biologico e perché dovremmo sceglierlo?

Gli alimenti biologici sono prodotti senza l'uso di pesticidi sintetici, fertilizzanti chimici e organismi geneticamente modificati. Invece, gli agricoltori biologici utilizzano metodi naturali come la rotazione delle colture, il compostaggio e il controllo biologico delle infestazioni per proteggere le piante e favorire la salute del suolo.

La scelta di alimenti biologici riduce la nostra esposizione a residui chimici dannosi che possono essere presenti nei cibi convenzionali. Gli studi hanno dimostrato che i pesticidi sintetici utilizzati nell'agricoltura convenzionale possono accumularsi nel nostro corpo e potenzialmente causare effetti negativi sulla salute a lungo termine.

Inoltre, l'agricoltura biologica promuove la sostenibilità ambientale. Riducendo l'uso di sostanze chimiche nocive, l'agricoltura biologica aiuta a preservare la qualità del suolo, a proteggere l'acqua e a mantenere l'equilibrio degli ecosistemi.

Quando scegliamo alimenti biologici, sosteniamo gli agricoltori che si dedicano a pratiche agricole sostenibili e rispettose dell'ambiente. Inoltre, i prodotti biologici spesso presentano un maggiore contenuto di nutrienti, in particolare di antiossidanti, che possono contribuire alla nostra salute e al nostro sistema immunitario.

Un altro argomento molto importante che vorrei affrontare è come scegliere le proteine nella nostra alimentazione quotidiana.

Quando si tratta di nutrire il nostro corpo con proteine di alta qualità, infatti, le scelte che facciamo possono avere un impatto significativo sulla nostra salute e sul benessere generale. Due opzioni che meritano particolare attenzione sono il pesce pescato e la carne proveniente da animali allevati a terra, preferibilmente con un'alimentazione a base di erba.

Esploriamo l'importanza di queste scelte alimentari e come possono contribuire alla nostra salute.

4. Favorire il pesce pescato rispetto al pesce di allevamenti

Il pesce pescato è una delle migliori fonti di proteine che possiamo includere nella nostra alimentazione. Oltre a fornire proteine di alta qualità, il pesce è ricco di acidi grassi omega-3, vitamine e minerali essenziali. Gli omega-3 sono grassi polinsaturi noti per i loro benefici per la salute cardiaca, il cervello e la funzione immunitaria.

La scelta del pesce pescato invece che del pesce di allevamento è importante perché il pesce selvatico tende ad avere una composizione nutrizionale superiore. I pesci selvatici si nutrono di una dieta varia e naturale, che contribuisce alla loro concentrazione di nutrienti. Inoltre, il pesce di allevamento può contenere sostanze chimiche nocive, come antibiotici, pesticidi e metalli pesanti, che possono accumularsi nei tessuti del pesce.

Quando scegliamo il pesce pescato, è importante fare riferimento alle fonti sostenibili e all'etichettatura corretta. Il Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) fornisce un sistema di certificazione per il pesce proveniente da fonti sostenibili. L'etichetta MSC garantisce che il pesce sia stato pescato in modo sostenibile e che le popolazioni ittiche non siano state sovrasfruttate.

5. Favorire carne "Grass Fed" ovvero di animali allevati a terra

La carne proveniente da animali "grass fed" si riferisce ad animali che sono stati nutriti principalmente con un'alimentazione a base di erba durante la loro vita. Questo tipo di carne ha guadagnato popolarità per i suoi potenziali benefici per la salute rispetto alla carne proveniente dagli allevamenti intensivi, in cui gli animali sono alimentati con mangimi a base di cereali e additivi.

La carne "grass fed" è più ricca di nutrienti come acidi grassi omega-3, vitamina E e antiossidanti rispetto alla carne proveniente dagli allevamenti intensivi. Questo è dovuto alla dieta naturale degli animali, che contribuisce alla loro salute e al contenuto nutrizionale della carne. Gli omega-3 presenti nella carne "grass fed" possono favorire la salute cardiaca, ridurre l'infiammazione e supportare il benessere generale. Inoltre, gli animali allevati a terra possono avere un minor rischio di esposizione ad antibiotici, ormoni e altri additivi utilizzati negli allevamenti intensivi. Questo è un aspetto importante da considerare. Inoltre, vale la pena sottolineare che, mentre il pesce e la carne da animali alimentati con erba possono fornire nutrienti preziosi, è importante considerare l'equilibrio complessivo delle nostre fonti proteiche. La varietà è fondamentale in una dieta sana, poiché diverse fonti proteiche offrono diversi nutrienti e benefici.

Oltre ai benefici per la salute, la scelta di consumare carne "grass fed" promuove anche la sostenibilità ambientale. Gli animali allevati a terra si nutrono di erba, che richiede meno risorse idriche e terrestri rispetto ai cereali utilizzati negli allevamenti intensivi. Questo riduce l'impronta ambientale complessiva dell'industria della carne e contribuisce alla preservazione delle risorse naturali.

La differenza principale tra animali allevati a terra e animali negli allevamenti intensivi riguarda le pratiche di allevamento e nutrizione, nonché le condizioni di vita degli animali stessi. Gli animali allevati a terra, o anche chiamati animali da pascolo o animali ruspanti, sono liberi di pascolare all'aperto e di nutrirsi principalmente di erba e altri vegetali presenti nell'ambiente. Questo tipo di allevamento permette agli animali di esprimere comportamenti naturali, come il pascolo, il movimento e l'esplorazione dell'ambiente circostante. L'alimentazione a base di erba contribuisce a una dieta più naturale per gli animali e può influenzare la composizione nutrizionale della carne, aumentando il contenuto di acidi grassi omega-3 e altri nutrienti benefici.

D'altra parte, negli allevamenti intensivi, gli animali sono spesso confinati in spazi ristretti, come stalle o gabbie, e la loro alimentazione è basata principalmente su mangimi commerciali a base di cereali e additivi. Questi animali non hanno l'opportunità

di pascolare all'aperto o di esprimere comportamenti naturali. L'alimentazione ricca di cereali può portare a un profilo nutrizionale diverso nella carne rispetto a quella degli animali alimentati con erba. Inoltre, negli allevamenti intensivi, vengono spesso utilizzati antibiotici e ormoni per promuovere la crescita e prevenire malattie causate dalle condizioni di allevamento.

6. Mangiare il giusto

Una volta approfondita l'importanza di scegliere la nostra alimentazione e farlo al meglio, vorrei discutere di un ultimo punto che è la chiave per trovare l'equilibrio del nostro corpo: mangiare il giusto. Siamo ciò che mangiamo, e la scelta di un'alimentazione equilibrata e consapevole può fare la differenza nella nostra salute e nel nostro benessere generale. Mangiare il giusto non riguarda solo la quantità di cibo che consumiamo, ma anche la qualità e la composizione nutrizionale delle nostre scelte alimentari. Quando facciamo scelte alimentari consapevoli, forniamo al nostro corpo i nutrienti essenziali di cui ha bisogno per funzionare al meglio e promuovere una salute duratura.

Una delle principali ricompense di una sana alimentazione è la nutrizione ottimale che fornisce al nostro corpo. Una dieta equilibrata e variegata ci assicura un apporto adeguato di vitamine, minerali, fibre e antiossidanti, elementi chiave per il corretto funzionamento del nostro organismo. Consumare una varietà di alimenti come frutta, verdura, cereali integrali, proteine magre e grassi sani ci aiuta a mantenere un equilibrio nutrizionale ottimale, fornendo i mattoni necessari per la salute generale.

La moderazione a tavola è un altro elemento fondamentale di una sana alimentazione. Imparare a riconoscere e rispettare le porzioni adeguate e ad ascoltare i segnali di sazietà del nostro corpo ci aiuta a evitare l'eccesso di calorie e a mantenere un peso sano. La consapevolezza delle dimensioni delle porzioni e il controllo dell'assunzione calorica possono prevenire l'aumento di peso indesiderato e favorire una composizione corporea equilibrata.

Una sana alimentazione contribuisce anche a una migliore salute digestiva e al benessere intestinale. Consumare pasti più piccoli e distribuire l'assunzione di cibo in più pasti durante il giorno favorisce una corretta digestione e previene problemi come bruciore di stomaco, sensazione di pesantezza e dispepsia. Includere alimenti ricchi di fibre come frutta, verdura e cereali integrali aiuta a mantenere un sistema digestivo sano e regolare, promuovendo un equilibrio intestinale ottimale.

Inoltre, mangiare il giusto ci invita a essere consapevoli di ciò che mettiamo nel nostro piatto. Prendersi il tempo per gustare il cibo, masticare lentamente e apprezzare i sapori è un aspetto importante di una sana alimentazione. Essere consapevoli del cibo che mangiamo ci permette di sviluppare una relazione più sana con il cibo e di ascoltare i segnali di fame e sazietà del nostro corpo. Questo ci aiuta a evitare gli eccessi e a mantenere un rapporto equilibrato con il cibo, evitando comportamenti alimentari disfunzionali e favorendo un approccio più intuitivo all'alimentazione.

La sana alimentazione non riguarda solo il singolo pasto, ma anche le abitudini alimentari a lungo termine. Seguire un'alimentazione bilanciata e moderata nel tempo può avere numerosi benefici per la salute, tra cui una riduzione del rischio di malattie croniche come l'obesità, il diabete di tipo 2, le malattie cardiovascolari e alcuni tipi di cancro. Una dieta equilibrata può anche contribuire a migliorare l'umore, aumentare i livelli di energia e favorire una migliore qualità della vita complessiva.

Riavvicinarci a questi semplici concetti, ritrovare la purezza e la semplicità nell'alimentazione naturale può contribuire in maniera potente a migliorare il nostro stato di salute.

Appendice 2

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES ON AIKIDO

Physiological and psychological benefits of aikido training: a systematic review

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Abstract

Background & Study Aim: The aikido is a philosophy and a Japanese art of self-defence, which is proposed to have several beneficial effects on mind and body. It is limited, but growing research on this topic. A summary of the empirical works could shed light on the anecdotally postulated benefits of aikido. This systematic literature review aims to summarise the current knowledge about the physiological and psychological benefits of aikido training.

Material & Methods:

Databases including SPORTDiscuss, PsycINFO, PubMed, MEDLINE, and ScienceDirect were searched by following the PRISMA guidelines for systematic reviews. A total of 20 articles met the final inclusion criteria.

Results:

The authors of the half of selected articles examined the physiological benefits (flexibility, wrist strength, functional efficiency, balance stability, scoliosis, and injuries) while the other half looked at psychological benefits of aikido training (mindfulness, self-control, self-esteem, health-related behaviour, mood profile, and goal orientation) but also on Type A behaviour, as aggressiveness and anger. In line with the analysed reports, the gist of these studies suggests that aikido training has positive benefits on both physiological and psychological measures, including flexibility, scoliosis, balance stability, mindfulness, anger control, and/or ego-orientation indeed. However, certain methodological concerns weaken the strength of the evidence.

Conclusions:

The key message of this review is that the theoretically postulated benefits of aikido have started to emerge from both physiologically and psychologically oriented empirical research, which provide infrastructure, as well as the incentive, for future work in this currently underexplored field of study

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SCIENTIFIC STUDIES ON “KI”

Philosophy, Psychology, Physics and Practice of Ki

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Abstract:

Ki (in Japanese) or Qi (in Chinese) is the key concept in Eastern medicine, Eastern philosophy, as well as in martial arts. We explain the philosophical and psychological background of Ki. We emphasize that the unique aspects of Eastern philosophy are ‘non-linearity’ and ‘holistic’ approach. We then present physics aspect of Ki. Our experiments demonstrated that a ‘Ki-beam’ carries ‘entropy’ (or information), which is different from ‘energy’. We introduce our experience of having taught Ki to 37 beginners in the United States through the Nishino Breathing Method. If beginners had martial arts training or a strong background in music or dance, about half of them could sense Ki within 10 weeks (1 h class per week) of practice

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SCIENTIFIC STUDY ON KATSUKO NISHI

Limb's Vibrations Exercise Monitoring with MEMS Accelerometer to Identify Influence of Cardiovascular System

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Abstract.

Katsuzo Nishi in 1927 proposed the capillarity exercise based on limbs vibrations to compensate obstruction of blood circulation. Research was made to identify influence of vibrations to human's physiological parameters. There were made an exercise regarding to Nishi methodology and imitation of exercise with one arm on vibration stand while monitoring physiological parameters and accelerations. Detected parameters' changes were significantly smaller when vibrating only one hand. Future plans are to imitate exercise while vibrating all limbs and make a stand to imitate cardiovascular system to identify vibrations influence in blood flow rate.

1. Introduction

Human's vibration therapy date back to ancient Greece. It is becoming more frequently used nowadays to improve muscle strength, power and flexibility as well as coordination or even cardiovascular system. It is known that vibrations exercises has effect of preventing parasites and other germs from invading the body and at the same time helping to activate a suitable degree the various organs of the body [1]. There were made many researches of vibration effect to human's biological processes. It was determined that whole body vibrations affect increase of artery blood flow, heart rate and other parameters [2, 3]. Katsuzo Nishi [4] introduced his Nishi system in 1927. It was based on his own studies and practice of what would amount to some 360 types of folk cures and health methods, both ancient and contemporary Oriental and Occidental. He included his own theories of dynamics of the human body based on the mechanical science. His theories are characterized by the idea that humans' internal organs are basically the same as those evolved for the mammalian and human two-legged life style causes certain structural strains on the human bone structure. These cause obstruction problems of the food flow through intestines. Furthermore Nishi refuted the heart-driven blood circulation theory of William Harvey. Nishi stated that the capillaries provide the true driving force of the circulatory system. To compensate obstruction of circulation in human's limbs because of two-legged life he proposed the capillarity exercise. In paper [5] new models of the micro dosing elements are presented. Hybrid experimental-numerical analysis techniques are used for investigation of micro spray systems. Experimental analysis of the investigated systems is based on laser holographic interferometry which is used for the identification and optimization of working regimes of the system. The aim of this study was to identify vibration's influence to cardiovascular system with future vision to develop a device for heart stimulation via limbs vibrations.

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MEIXING GAO, Experimental Study on the Effect of Taijiquan on the Physical Function and Mental Health of College Students Published online 2022 Sep 21. Posted in : <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9519284/>

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Abstract

With the continuous development of education and economy, people pay more and more attention to the improvement of comprehensive quality. College students are a special social group. Now they are not only under enormous pressure of study and employment but also pay more attention to physical function and mental health. Maintaining healthy physical fitness is one of the goals pursued by more and more college students. This paper studies the effects of Tai Chi on the physical and mental health of college students. Taijiquan is a physical education class, divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group was trained three times a week, and the control group was trained once a week. Through the evaluation of college students who practice Tai Chi three times a week and college students who practice Tai Chi once a week, the conclusions are: first, there are significant differences in lung capacity, one-minute skipping rope, and sitting forward bending; second, in self-esteem on assessment, significant differences were found in visual perception threshold ability, somatization, and anxiety factors. The final results are as follows: after 8 weeks of Taijiquan practice, the effect of the experimental group and the control group on the spirometry test ($P > 0.05$) and the difference in sitting flexion index between male and female students were statistically significant ($P < 0.05$); Taijiquan was practiced with different frequencies for 8 weeks. After that, the number of skipping ropes did not increase significantly ($P < 0.05$). That is, different frequencies of Taijiquan practice have an impact on the physique of college students. Taijiquan exercise also has a significant impact on the visual perception threshold ability, which can effectively reduce the somatization, paranoia, anxiety, depression, and other psychological states of college students.

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Tai Ji Quan: An overview of its history, health benefits, and cultural value

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Abstract

Tai Ji Quan is considered to be a part of traditional Chinese Wushu (a martial art) and comprises various styles that have evolved historically from the Chen, Yang, Wǔ, Wú, and Sun families (schools). Recent simplification of the original classic styles has made Tai Ji Quan easier to adopt in practice. Thus, the traditional legacy of using Tai Ji Quan for self-defense, mindful nurturing of well-being, and fitness enhancement has been expanded to more contemporary applications that focus on promoting physical and mental health, enhancing general well-being, preventing chronic diseases, and being an effective clinical intervention for diverse medical conditions. As the impact of Tai Ji Quan on physical performance and health continues to grow, there is a need to better understand its historical impact and current status. This paper provides an overview of the evolution of Tai Ji Quan in China, its functional utility, and the scientific evidence of its health benefits, as well as how it has been a vehicle for enhancing cultural understanding and exchanging between East and West.

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Effectiveness of Tai Chi on quality of life, depressive symptoms and physical function among community-dwelling older adults with chronic disease: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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Abstract

Background

With a rapid increase in aging population and prevalence of chronic diseases worldwide, older adults are seen facing more physical and psychological burdens, affecting their quality of life (QoL). Tai Chi, a traditional Chinese mind-body physical activity, appeals to many older adults and has been extensively studied. However, the effectiveness of Tai Chi on QoL, depressive symptoms and physical function on community-dwelling older adults remains vague.

Objectives

To synthesise and evaluate effectiveness of Tai Chi on QoL, depressive symptoms and physical function among community-dwelling older adults with chronic disease.

Donald D. Davis, *Meditation, Taijiquan and Qigong: Evidence for Their Impact on Health and Longevity*

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Abstract:

This paper examines the effects of meditation, mindfulness, taijiquan, and qigong. I review the most recent and rigorous scientific research to document the impact of these practices on outcomes commonly sought by Daoist practitioners: health and longevity. I discuss the apparent pathways through which these practices achieve their effects, and conclude with recommendations for practice to enhance the likelihood that the potential benefits of these practices are successfully achieved.

Efficacy of Rajayoga Meditation on Positive Thinking: An Index for Self-Satisfaction and Happiness in Life

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Abstract

Objectives: Psychological studies have shown that brief period of mindfulness meditation significantly improves critical cognitive skills. But, there are no studies which have assessed the effects of Brahma Kumaris Rajayoga Meditation (BKRM) practice on positive thinking and happiness in life. The present study was designed to test the hypothesis is BKRM enhances positive thinking and that essential to attain higher levels of self-satisfaction and happiness in life.

Material and Methods: This study is a cross sectional comparative study which was done between Rajayoga meditators and non-meditators. This study was conducted at BKRM Centres at Manipal and Udupi in Karnataka, India. Fifty subjects were selected for this study, which included those practising BKRM in their normal routine life (n=25) and non-meditators (n=25) who were aged 42.95±/15.29 years. Self-reported Oxford happiness questionnaire (OHQ) was administered to all subjects and their happiness scores and status were assessed and compared. Items related to self-satisfaction in life were selected from the OHQ and compared between meditators and non-meditators. Participants completed self-reported OHQ, from which data of happiness status and self-satisfaction in relation to meditation duration and frequency were analyzed by descriptive statistics and test of hypothesis.

Results: Mean happiness scores of BKRM were significantly higher (p<0.001) in meditators as compared to those in non-meditators. The number of meditators experiencing happiness status were significantly higher (p<0.05) in comparison with non-meditators. Additionally, meditators scored significantly higher on self-satisfaction items (p<0.001) as compared to non-meditators. There was no correlation between age and years of meditation practice with happiness score and self-satisfaction score.

Conclusion: BKRM helps in significantly increasing self-satisfaction and happiness in life by enhancing positive thinking. Irrespective of age and years of short-term or long-term meditation practice, enhanced positive thinking increases self-satisfaction and happiness in life.

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Rajyoga Meditation Experience Induces Enhanced Positive Thoughts and Alters Gray Matter Volume of Brain Regions: A Cross-sectional Study

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Abstract

Objectives

Many studies on various meditation types have reported regional gray matter volume changes using voxel-based morphometric analysis of structural MRI, but there are no studies done on structural MRI of Rajyoga meditators. The objective of the present study is to analyze and compare gray matter volume changes of brain regions in meditators and non-meditators and further study the effects of meditation experience on alterations in various brain regions. These regions were then correlated and compared to positive thought scores of participants.

Methods

Forty participants in each group (closely matched for age, gender, and handedness) were selected after obtaining their informed consent, and voxel-based morphometric analysis was carried out using their structural MRI scans.

Results

On voxel-wise comparison of the brain scans, meditators were observed to have significantly higher global gray matter volume and significant regional gray matter volume increases in the right superior frontal gyrus, left inferior orbitofrontal cortex, left inferior parietal gyrus, left posterior cerebellum, left middle temporal gyrus, bilateral precuneus, and cuneus. Additionally, long-term meditators particularly had significantly higher positive thinking scores compared to non-meditators. On multiple regression analysis, gray matter volume of the left superior parietal gyrus and left inferior parietal gyrus had a positive association, whereas the left posterior cerebellum had a negative association with hours of meditation experience. With the positive thoughts score, a significant relationship was found in the right superior temporal gyrus in meditators.

Conclusions

These findings indicate that Rajyoga meditation experience/practice enhances gray matter volume of specific brain regions and positive thoughts.

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