



HARMONY WITHIN: TAI CHI FOR EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

Project Evaluation

2023 BTG-Pittsburgh



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Harmony Within: Tai Chi for Employee Well-being

Project Description:

The "Harmony Within" project aims to enhance the mental and emotional well-being of employees at Voices Against Violence (VAV) through the implementation of Tai Chi classes. Tai Chi, an ancient Chinese martial art, promotes relaxation, mindfulness, and physical health through slow, flowing movements and focused breathing techniques.¹ By incorporating Tai Chi into their routine, VAV employees will have the opportunity to reduce stress, improve mental clarity, and foster a sense of inner peace.

Project Objectives:

Enhance Employee Well-being: Provide VAV employees with a regular outlet for stress relief, mental relaxation, and emotional balance.

Promote Mindfulness: Cultivate a sense of present-moment awareness and focus through Tai Chi practice.

Build Resilience: Strengthen the ability to cope with challenging situations and maintain a positive mindset.

Foster Team Bonding: Create a supportive and collaborative environment through group Tai Chi sessions.

Project Implementation Steps:

Needs Assessment:

a. Conduct a survey or hold focus group discussions to gauge employee interest in participating in Tai Chi classes.

b. Identify the preferred frequency, duration, and timing of the sessions.

Instructor introduces:

Master Wang Mengjun is a dedicated practitioner of traditional Chinese martial arts, particularly Tai Chi. She began her training at a young age and has achieved remarkable success in competitive martial arts, earning numerous provincial and national championships. With a strong background in sports education and a passion for cultural exchange, she has also conducted workshops and performances internationally. Currently pursuing a Master's degree in Sports Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh, Wang Mengjun aims to further promote and elevate the status of Tai Chi as a cultural treasure. Her journey reflects a blend of tradition and innovation, inspiring others through her expertise and commitment to martial arts.

Curriculum Development:

- a. Collaborate with the selected Tai Chi instructor to design a curriculum that aligns with the goals of the project.
- b. Ensure the curriculum covers foundational Tai Chi movements, breathing exercises, and mindfulness techniques.

Scheduling and Logistics:

- a. Determine the frequency and duration of Tai Chi sessions (e.g., every day or bi-weekly, 20 minutes per session).
- b. Reserve a suitable space within VAV premises for the classes.

c. Arrange for any necessary equipment, such as muscle or comfortable clothing recommendations.

Launch and Promotion:

a. Inform VAV employees about the upcoming Tai Chi classes through internal communications (e.g., email, bulletin boards).

b. Highlight the benefits of Tai Chi for mental and emotional well-being.

c. Encourage employees to participate voluntarily and create a supportive atmosphere.

Implementation and Evaluation:

a. Conduct regular Tai Chi sessions led by the selected instructor, focusing on relaxation, mindfulness, and physical movements.

b. Gather feedback from employees regarding their experiences and perceived benefits.

c. Monitor employee engagement and attendance to assess the program's success.

d. Make adjustments to the program as needed based on feedback and evaluation results.

Long-term Sustainability:

a. Assess the long-term viability and impact of the Tai Chi program.

b. Explore options for integrating Tai Chi into the regular employee wellness initiatives at VAV.

c. Consider offering refresher courses or advanced training to employees who express continued interest.

By implementing the "Harmony Within" project, VAV can provide its employees with a valuable tool for improving their mental and emotional well-being. Through regular practice, employees can experience reduced stress levels, increased focus, and a greater sense of harmony in both their personal and professional lives

13 Postures (十三式)

<https://youtu.be/1F652a5Yc-8>

Shi San Shi (十三式) or Thirteen Postures does not mean thirteen different postures or movements steps but actually means thirteen basic skills. The 13 postures are also known as Bafa Wubu (八法五步) and Bamen Wubu (八门五步).

The hand skills of Taijiquan follow the principle of Bagua trigram. Bafa (八法) or Eight Method are eight hand skill methods of Jin force. All hand skills and techniques are generated from the Eight Method.

Eight Methods	Trigram Name	Direction	Attribute	Key Acupoint	Map to Five Element
Peng, 棚	Kuan	North	Water	Mingmen	Water
Lu, 履	Li	South	Fire	Xuanguan	Fire
Ji, 挤	Zhen	East	Thunder	Jiaji	Wood
An, 按	Dui	West	Marsh	Tanzhong	Metal
Cai, 采	Qian	Northwest	Sky	Xinggong	Metal
Lieh, 列	Kun	Southwest	Earth	Dantian	Earth
Zhou, 肘	Gen	Northeast	Mountain	Jianjing	Earth
Kou, 靠	Xun	Southeast	Wind	Yuzhen	Wood

The footwork of Taijiquan follows the philosophical concept of Wuxing (五行) or Five Elements. Wubu (五步) or Five Footwork are the five footwork skills. It is more about Shenfa or body movement skills because footwork and body movement have a very tight relationship.

Five Footwork	Attribute	Direction	Element	Acupoint
Jinbu, 进步	Step forward	North	Water	Huiyin
Tuibu, 退步	Step backward	South	Fire	Zuqiao
Zuogu, 右盼	Sideway step forward	East	Wood	Jiaji
Youpan, 左顾	Sideway step backward	West	Metal	Tanzhong
Zhongding, 中定	Central equilibrium	Center	Earth	Dantian

These 13 basic skills are the foundation of all Taijiquan skills. All other skills come from the different variation and combination of these basic skills.

The meaning of those 13 skills are as below:

1. Peng - ward off
2. Lu - roll back
3. Ji - press
4. An - push
5. Cai - pull down
6. Lieh - split
7. Zhou - elbow
8. Kou - shoulder
9. Jinpu - step forward
10. Tuipu - step backward
11. Zhougu - step to the left side
12. Youpan - step to the right side

13.Zhongding - central equilibrium²

<https://youtu.be/1F652a5Yc-8>³



Eight Methods and Five Steps (Mirror Demo) 八法五步拳 (镜面示范)

Note: Based on the provided link, Mengjun's mirror demonstration videos can be found on YouTube.

DaWu

<https://youtu.be/wsBTLpNQ3Po>⁴



Search



Health Qigong - Da Wu (大舞) Mirror Demo by Master Kate

Note: Based on the provided link, Mengjun's demonstration videos can be found on YouTube.

Da Wu, originating from the time of Emperor Yao in the Tang Dynasty (approximately 4000 years ago), is a fitness method that promotes joint mobility through dance.

Health Qigong: Da Wu is based on historical records and utilizes ascending, descending, opening, and closing movements of the limbs, combined with breathing and mindfulness. It regulates the internal organs, promotes the flow of Qi and blood, nurtures the vitality, and ultimately aims to achieve health and rehabilitation.

The main characteristic of Health Qigong: Da Wu is its focus on promoting joint mobility through dance. It utilizes movements such as flexion, extension, rotation, and circulation of the hips, knees, ankles, toes, shoulders, elbows, wrists, palms, and fingers to invigorate and smooth the joints, harmonize and clear the meridians and Qi and blood circulation of the body. At the same time, through stretching, pulling, rotating, vibrating, and kneading techniques, the trunk is mobilized to facilitate the smooth flow of joints, tendons, meridians, Qi, and blood. The practice emphasizes guiding the dance posture with the mind, nourishing the dance posture with joy, and harmonizing the inner self with a harmonious dance posture. The variations in dance postures guide the movement of the whole body, stimulating the activity of joints and muscles, and playing a role in shaping the body. Therefore, the guidance of the mind and the harmony of the dance posture with the inner self are also key characteristics of Health Qigong: Da Wu. The expression of body rhythm in Da Wu mainly embodies the opening and closing changes of yin and yang in harmony with the mind and Qi. Breath regulation refers to the natural modulation of breath during the dance. In other words, during the movements of stretching, pulling, rotating, and other dance movements, the chest and abdomen naturally expand, contract, rise, and fall, and the breath naturally follows, creating a natural modulation of breath and achieving the effect of massaging and stimulating the internal organs.

When practicing the techniques, practitioners should strive for mental relaxation, natural breathing, a balance between firmness and gentleness, and smooth and rounded movements. They should move in accordance with the rhythm while maintaining harmony with the spirit. Long-term practice can improve upper body strength, flexibility, balance, and cardiovascular function. It also has positive effects on negative emotions such as anger and depression, leading to an increased sense of happiness.

Health Qigong: Da Wu consists of eight movements, including preparatory and concluding postures, which are as follows:



第一式 昂首势

Step 1 Hold Head High and Chin Up (Ang Shou Shi)



第二式 开胯势

Step 2 Open Hips (Kai Kua Shi)



第三式 伸腰势

Step 3 Extend Waist (Chen Yao Shi)



第四式 震体势

Step 4 Shake Body (Zhen Ti Shi)



第五式 揉脊势

Step 5 Rub Backbone (Rou Ji Shi)



第六式 摆臀势

Step 6 Swing Hips (Bai Tun Shi)



第七式 摩肋势

Step 7 Massage Ribs (Mo Lei Shi)



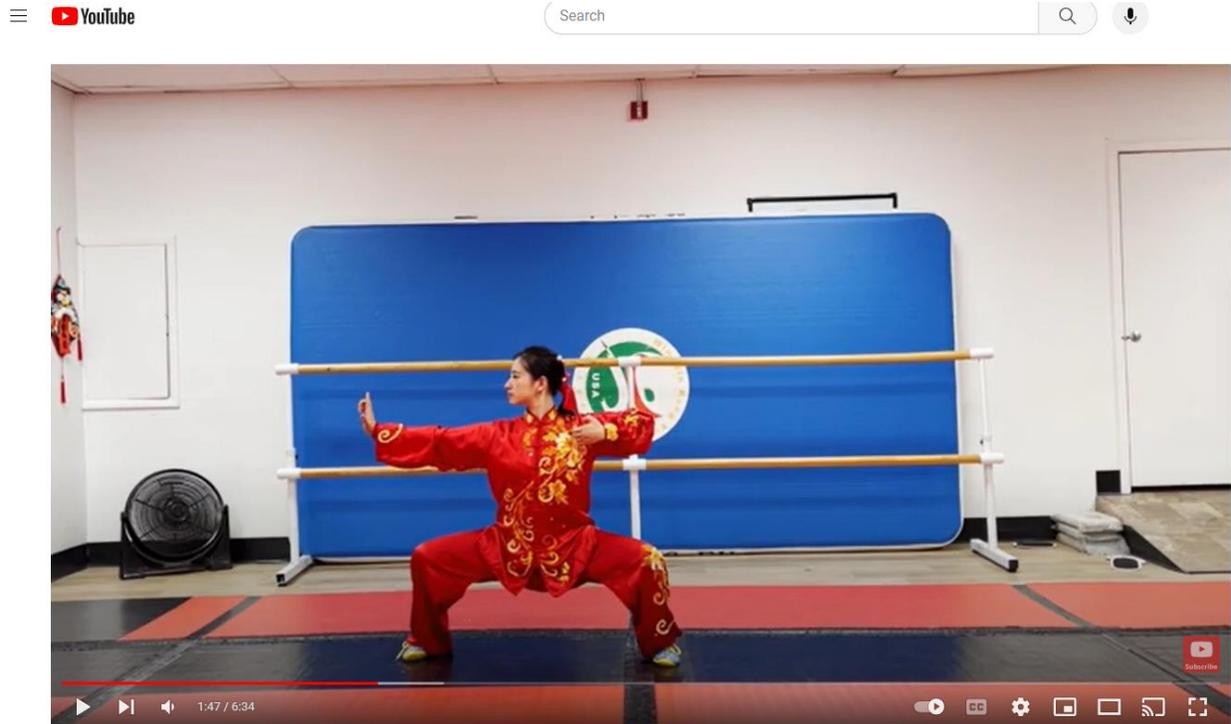


第八式 飞身势⁵

Step 8 Flying Stance (Fei Shen Shi)

BanDuanJin

<https://youtu.be/su3xk2Jnyis>⁶



8 Pieces of Brocades: Ba Duan Jin (八段锦) Mirrored Demo

Note: Based on the provided link, Mengjun's demonstration videos can be found on YouTube.

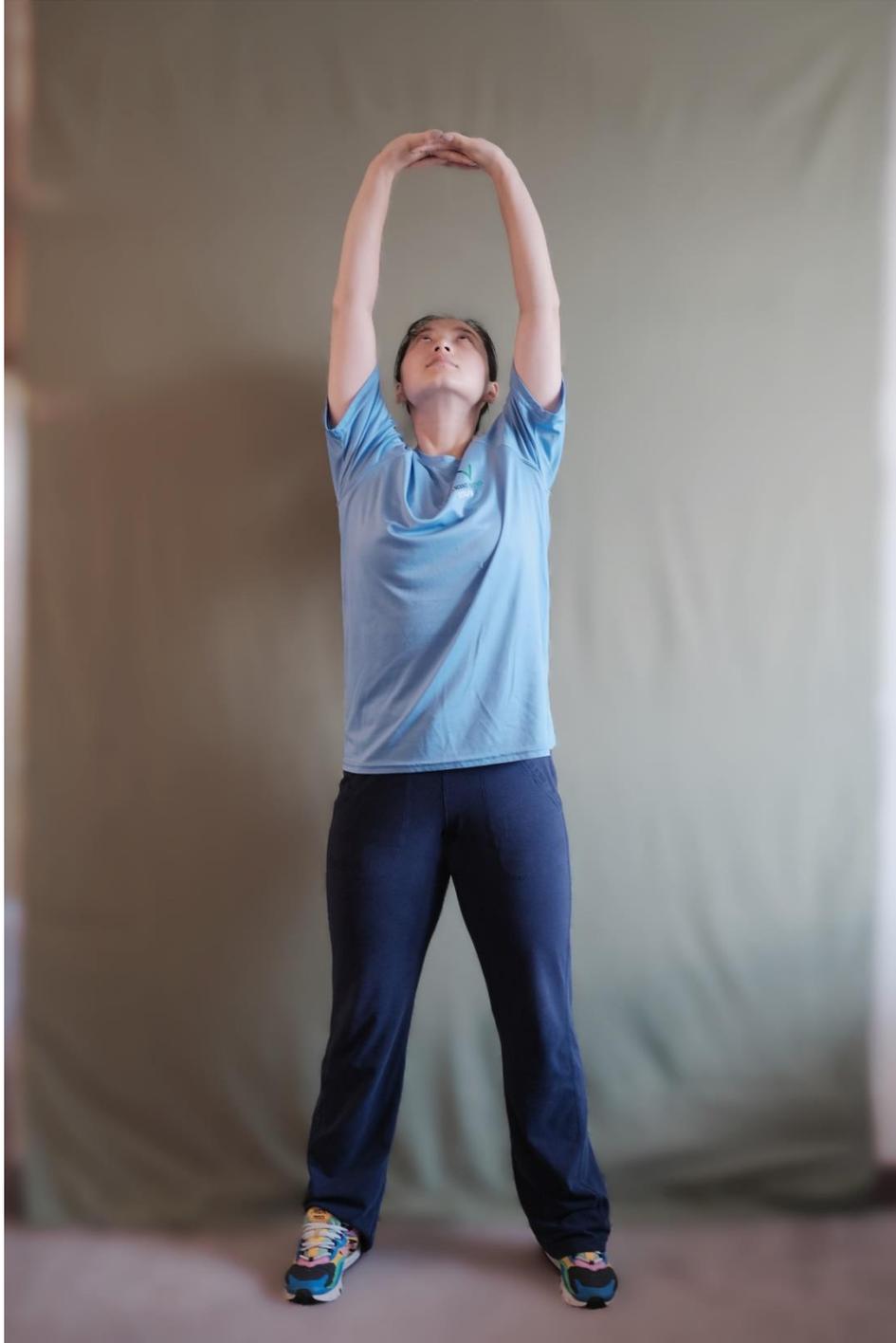
The Eight Section Brocade (Ba Duan Jin) is first mentioned in the book "Yi Jian Zhi" by Hong Mai during the Southern Song Dynasty. It states, "In the seventh year of Zhenghe, Li Siju served as a personal attendant... Often, at midnight, he would sit up, exhale and inhale, and perform what is called the Eight Section Brocade." This indicates that the Eight Section Brocade had already been popular during the Northern Song Dynasty and had both seated and standing variations. However, the standing version became more widely practiced among the masses due to its convenience. "Health Qigong: Eight Section Brocade" is based on the standing version and incorporates elements of traditional Eight Section Brocade techniques. It adjusts the sequence of movements and intensity

according to modern kinematics and physiology, aiming to achieve the benefits of strengthening the body and promoting health through coordinated movements, mindfulness, and breathing.

For beginners, "Health Qigong: Eight Section Brocade" poses certain learning difficulties and physical demands. During the initial stages, practitioners need to overcome discomfort caused by the exercises, such as muscle and joint soreness, stiffness, tension, and difficulties coordinating their movements. It takes time and practice for their posture to become more refined, methods more accurate, movements more fluid, and control improved. Their understanding of the key points deepens, and they become more attentive to the details of the movements. In the beginning, the practice requires natural breathing. As the movements become familiar, gradually introducing specific breathing techniques, practitioners can adopt the commonly used abdominal breathing method. After mastering the breathing techniques, they can start coordinating them with the movements. This process involves adaptation and training, and rushing to achieve immediate results should be avoided. Finally, practitioners gradually achieve a harmonious integration of movements, breathing, and mindfulness. Due to individual differences in physical condition and mastery of the technique, the effects of practice vary. A good training effect is gradually achieved over time and with the accumulation of practice sessions, under the guidance of scientific training methods. Therefore, practitioners should persevere and progress gradually, while reasonably managing their exercise intensity, rather than practicing sporadically.

Health Qigong: Eight Section Brocade combines static and dynamic elements, characterized by relaxation, naturalness, gentleness, slowness, roundness, agility, and continuity. It is suitable for fitness training for different populations. Long-term practice helps improve the function of the respiratory, nervous, and circulatory systems, enhances cellular immune function and anti-aging

capabilities, and improves mental health. Apart from the preparatory and concluding postures, Health Qigong: Eight Section Brocade consists of eight movements, which are as follows:



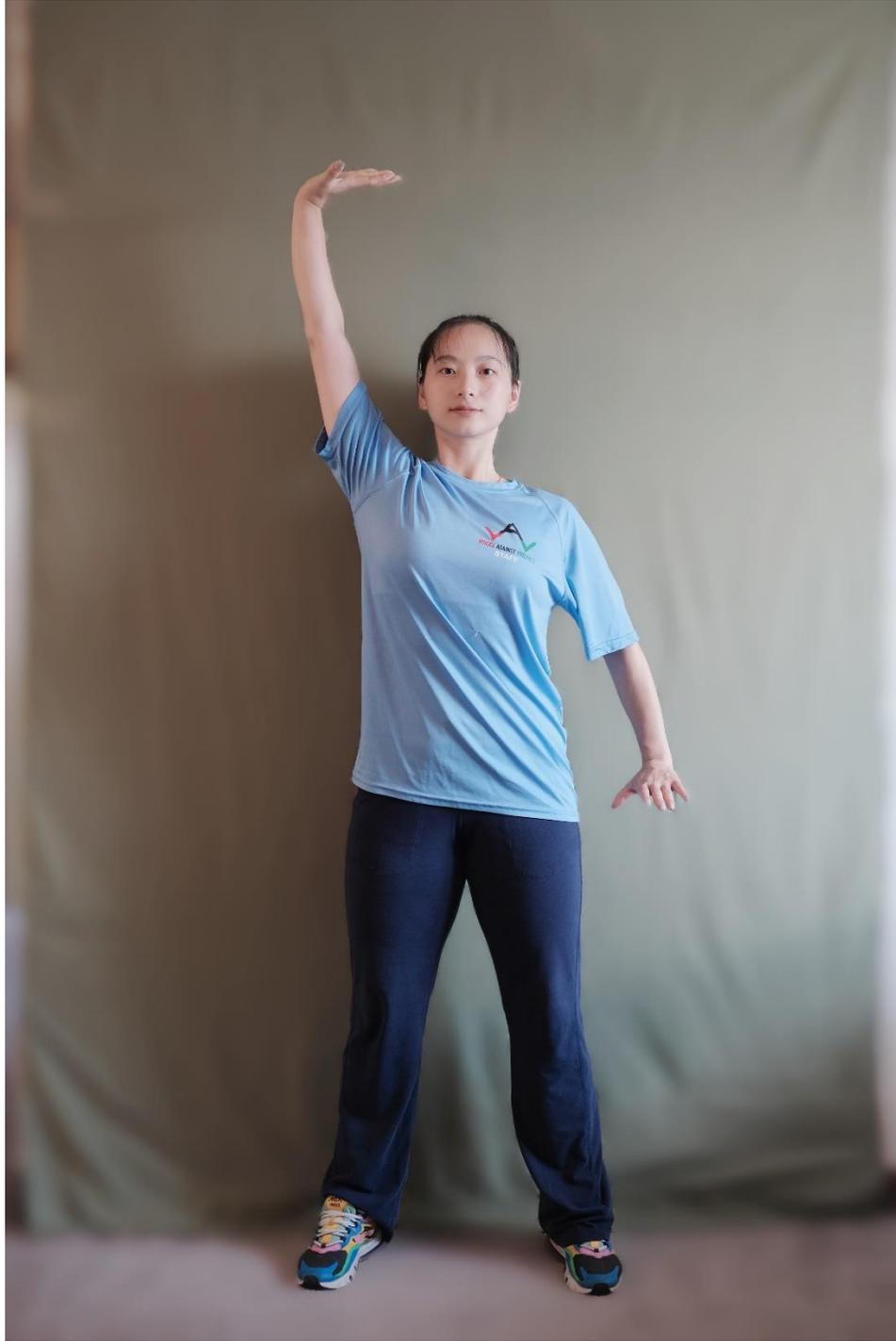
第一式 两手托天理三焦

Routine 1 Holding the Hands High with Palms Up to Regulate the Internal Organs



第二式 左右弯弓似射雕

Routine 2 Posing as an Archer Shooting Both Left- and Right-Handed



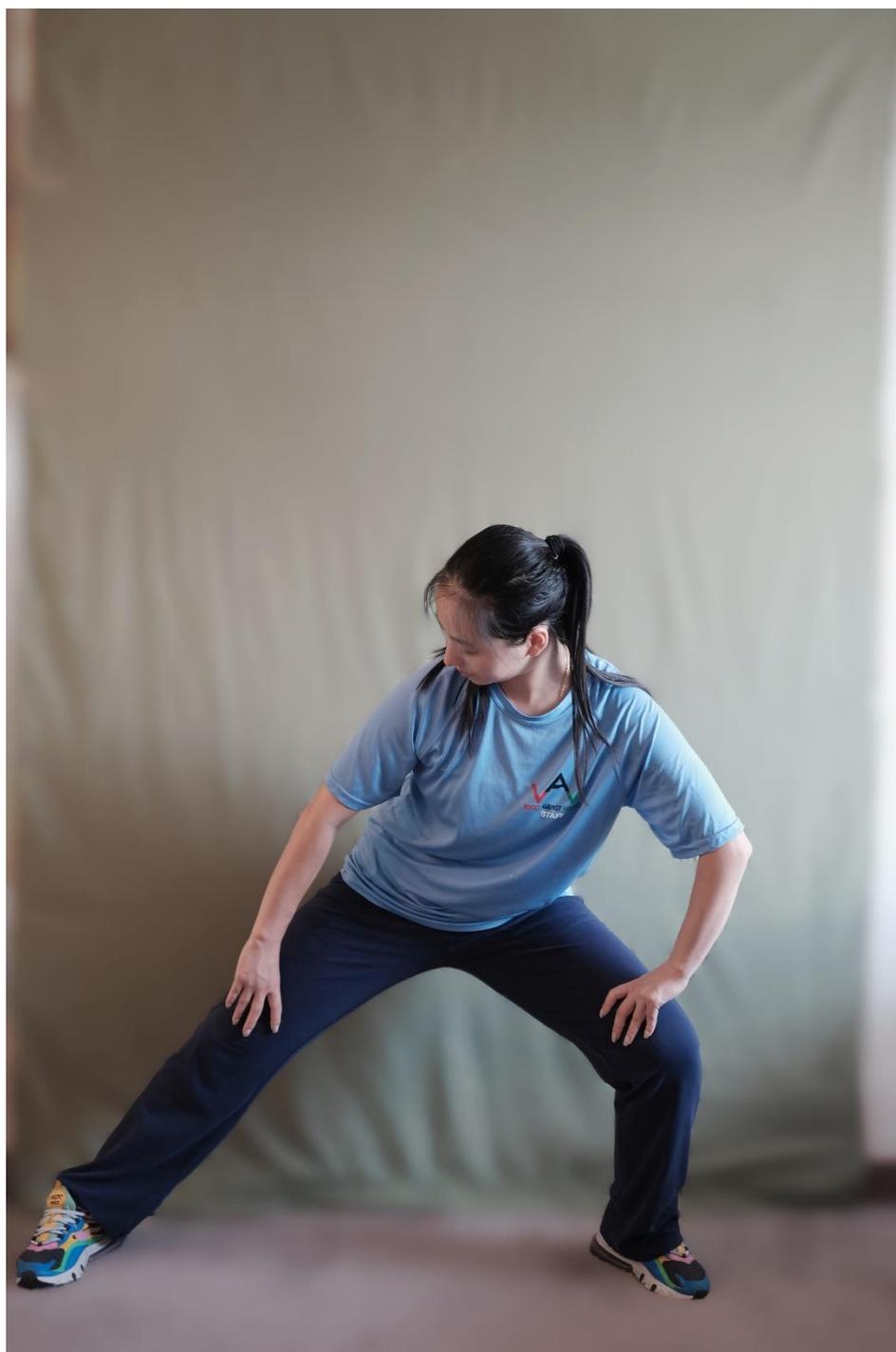
第三式 调理脾胃须单举

Routine 3 Holding One Arm Aloft to Regulate the Functions of the Spleen and Stomach



第四式 五劳七伤往后瞧

Routine 4 Looking Backwards to Prevent Sickness and Strain



第五式 摇头摆尾去心火

Routine 5 Swinging the Head and Lowering the Body to Relieve Stress



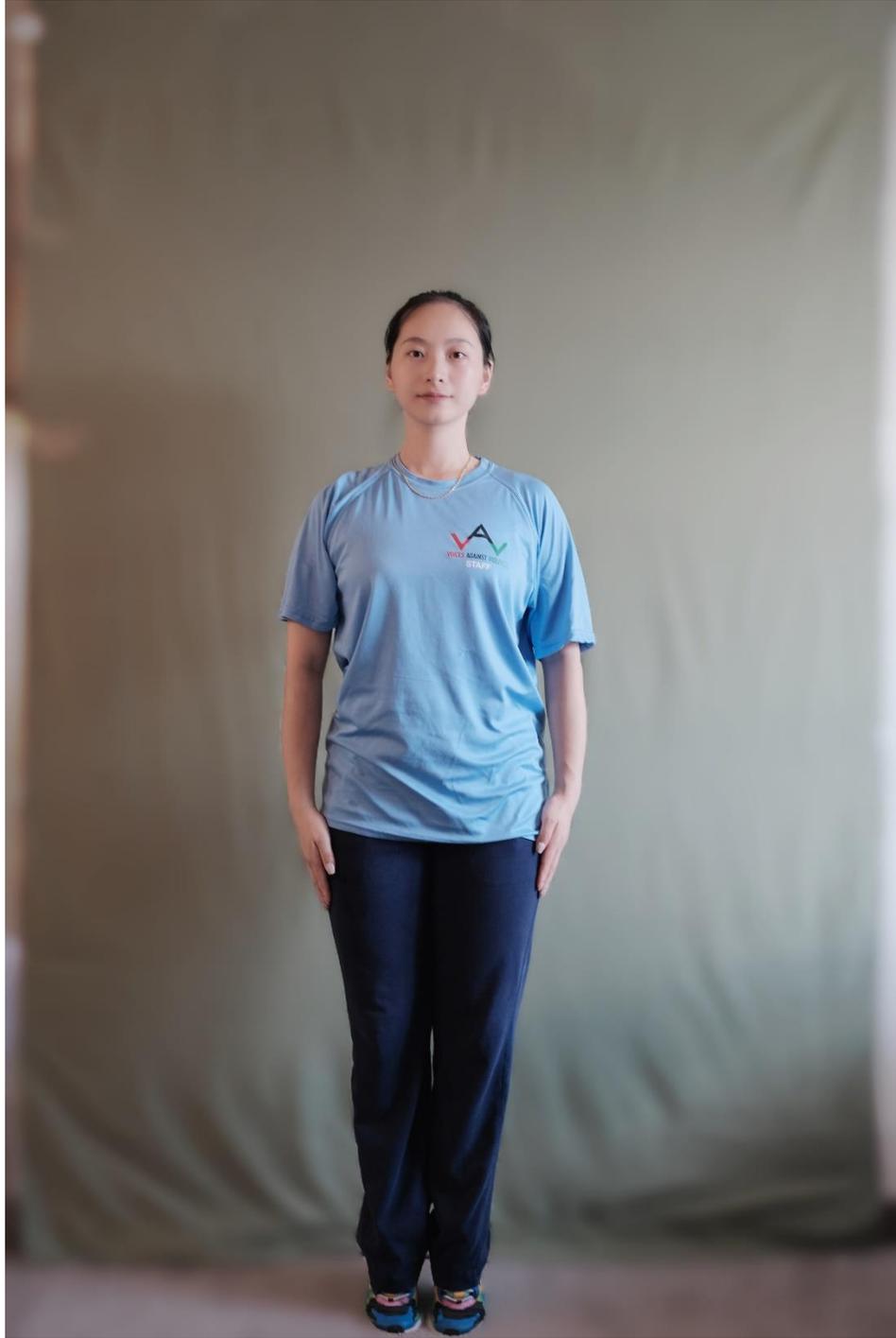
第六式 两手攀足固肾腰

Routine 6 Moving the Hands down the Back and Legs, and Touching the Feet to Strengthen the Kidneys



第七式 攥拳怒目增气力

**Routine 7 Thrusting the Fists and Making the Eyes Glare to Enhance
Strength**



第八式 背后七颠百病消⁷

Routine 8 Raising and Lowering the Heels to Cure Diseases

Introduction to Tai Chi Training Program for VAV Employees: Enhancing Physical and Mental Well-being at VAV

Join our Tai Chi training course designed specifically for VAV employees, aimed at improving your overall health, reducing stress, fostering inner peace, and enhancing resilience through the practice of Tai Chi.

Based on a thorough understanding and assessment of the participant population in the initial month, we have developed a comprehensive course focusing on the Eight-Step Five-Step Tai Chi, complemented by Health Qigong Dawu and Baduanjin exercises.

Classes will be held every Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 am, accompanied by soothing music on the open lawn in front of the building. Each class will last for 15 minutes, providing a refreshing start to your day.

To gain insights into the effectiveness of the program, we will distribute the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale 10 (CD-RISC-10) questionnaire before, during, and after the classes. This will allow us to track your progress and collect valuable feedback regarding your mental well-being.

We highly encourage your active participation and daily communication to share your experiences and provide instant feedback. Your input will help us tailor the course to better meet your needs and ensure a fulfilling learning experience.

By incorporating Tai Chi into your routine, you can expect various benefits, including improved physical strength, mental clarity, reduced stress levels, and a heightened sense of inner harmony.

We look forward to embarking on this transformative journey together and creating a healthier and more resilient VAV community. Should you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to reach out to us. Let's embrace the power of Tai Chi and cultivate a positive and balanced lifestyle for all VAV employees!

Survey:

Below is a test form for VAV staff members to assess their resilience levels before, during, and after practicing Tai Chi.

Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-10): Resilience Assessment

Instructions:

Please read each statement carefully and choose the response that best reflects your feelings and experiences. Select one response option per statement. Your responses will help us evaluate your level of resilience.

Note: The CD-RISC-10 scale provides a total score ranging from 0 to 40. The higher the score, the greater the perceived resilience.

The CD-RISC-10 scale, developed by Drs. Campbell-Sills and Stein at the University of California, San Diego, is based on factor analysis. It focuses on the ability to bounce back from various life challenges, including factors such as tenacity, competence, trust in one's instincts, tolerance of negative affect, acceptance of change, secure relationships, control, and spirituality.

Thank you for your participation in this resilience assessment. Your responses will contribute to our research on the impact of Tai Chi on mental health.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Best regards,

Mengjun (Kate) Wang

Sports Medicine Graduate Student

University of Pittsburgh

Mary Ross

School of Public Health Graduate Student

University of Pittsburgh

References:

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