

Tai Chi



Action Schools! BC

 classroom

 Gymnasium

 outdoors

4 to 7

Healthy Minds

Tai chi is an ancient martial art, now practised worldwide for its health benefits. Many people practise the art of tai chi as a way of developing good posture and promoting skeletal and muscular health, as well as focusing and calming the mind.

**HEALTH
COMPONENTS
OF FITNESS**

ENDURANCE
FLEXIBILITY
STRENGTH

BALANCING

**FUNDAMENTAL
MOVEMENT
SKILLS**

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS



BIG IDEAS

- Daily participation in physical activity at moderate to vigorous intensity levels benefits all aspects of our well-being (4).
- Daily physical activity enables us to practise skillful movement and helps us develop personal fitness (5-6).
- Physical literacy and fitness contribute to our success in and enjoyment of physical activity (6-7).
- Daily participation in different types of physical activity influences our physical literacy and personal health and fitness goals (7).

CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES:

- Develop and apply a variety of fundamental movement skills in a variety of physical activities and environments (4-5).
- Develop, refine, and apply fundamental movement skills in a variety of physical activities and environments (6-7).
- Participate daily in physical activity designed to enhance and maintain health components of fitness (5-7).
- Identify and describe opportunities for and potential challenges to participation in preferred types of physical activity at school, at home, and in the community (4-5).
- Describe how students' participation in physical activities at school, at home, and in the community can influence their health and fitness (6-7).
- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being.

CONTENT

- Proper technique for fundamental movement skills, including non-locomotor, locomotor, and manipulative skills.
- How to participate in different types of physical activities, including individual and dual activities, rhythmic activities, and games.
- Benefits of physical activity and exercise (4-5).
- Effects of different types of physical activity on the body (7).
- Practices that promote health and well-being.

FIRST PEOPLE'S PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING FOR ALL STUDENTS



- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH CONNECTIONS



RELATIONSHIPS AND ENVIRONMENTS

- Use an outdoor area such as a field or park with trees to contribute to a sense of calm or as a learning station for individual practise inside the classroom.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Tai chi is a great way for students to engage in physical activity that will also allow them to calm the mind, re-focus their thoughts, and develop movement skills.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Invite a community specialist to teach tai chi to your students.

OUR SCHOOL POLICIES

- Fill out field trip forms or waivers for students to leave the school grounds and/or work with a community specialist.

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES



- DVD and music player
- Bean bags, large soft balls
- *Tai Chi for Kids: Move with the Animals* by Stuart Alve Olson
- Journal
- Music: calm music
- Tai chi resources, DVDs or YouTube videos (e.g. Top 10 Tai Chi Moves for Beginners)

IMPLEMENTATION



- Introduce the protocol of using a talking stick; only the person holding the talking stick may speak, Elders speak first, no time restriction for any speaker. Have students discuss what inventions they believe came from ancient China. Concepts may include the invention of paper, silk, tea, the compass, fireworks, and umbrellas. Introduce (if the students have not come up with this on their own) that another “invention” that came from the Chinese is the practice of tai chi, a Chinese martial art that is practised worldwide today.
- Explain to the students that they will be learning to perform the same exercises that many children in China perform every morning and that the goals of these exercises are focus, relaxation, awareness of breath, positive imagery (happy thoughts), or positive self talk (good words).
- Stories are not only entertaining, they help us learn. Stories were the primary teaching aid of many First People, and storytelling is still very important today. For every event, natural feature or animal, there was a story.
- Read Stuart Alve Olson's *Tai Chi for Kids: Move With the Animals* to introduce eight tai chi movements. Repeat. This time invite the students to begin to learn the movements.
- Review/watch DVDs that demonstrate tai chi sequences.
- Learn and perform the same sequence (see *8-Step Standing Sequence*, following pages) so it improves over time.
- Use student leaders to create and lead a sequence with younger students or in class with peers.
- Use calm relaxing music (a Yoga CD); set volume low.
- Breathe out on the push, and in on the pull (yin and yang).
- The flow of energy in a person's body is called qi (pronounced jee).
- Invite students to think back to the book, *Tai Chi for Kids: Move With the Animals* or create their own imagery to help with the movements.
- Ask students to write in their journals their thoughts about the relationship between tai chi movements and animal movements, the health benefits of tai chi.
- Have students explain how tai chi could influence their health and that of their peers and/or family members. Pose this open ended sentence to the students: Learning tai chi will help me _____ (e.g., It could help promote flexibility to reduce injuries, it can help lower stress levels, it can allow people to participate together in physical activity, etc.).

ACTION TIPS

- Perform tai chi on a regular basis integrating into your class schedule, in the gymnasium or outdoors.
- Perform tai chi before intense periods of concentration or stressful times for students.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure surfaces being used are free from clutter or objects that might cause students to trip or slip on.
- Ensure students have enough space to move in without hitting another student or wall.

EXTENSION OF LEARNING

- Introduce students to the Wii interactive tai chi game. Point out that they should pay close attention to not only the instructor on the screen but also their statistics along the right side of the screen and the sounds they hear in the background.

Action Schools! BC

Tai Chi

8-Step Standing Sequence

Flow through the steps slowly with emphasis on precise movement, proper alignment, calm breathing in and out, keeping head up and eyes focused and soft. Use imagery to help to flow like water through the poses. Repeat on each side.



Stand upright, hands on waist, feet hip-width apart, knees slightly bent

IMAGINE: still and sturdy like a tree



Shift weight onto left foot, touch right toe on floor out in front

IMAGINE: silent and soft like a cat



Raise right knee up to waist height, balance on left leg, stretch head upwards

IMAGINE: balanced and tall like a stork



Keep feet together, circle arms out to sides and down beside the body, palms down

IMAGINE: slow and steady like the setting sun

Keep weight on left, place right heel back down on the floor in front of right shoulder

IMAGINE: firm and sure like a gymnast



Bring right foot to meet left foot, raise arms out to sides and up to the sky, palms up

IMAGINE: smooth and flowing like the rising sun

Pivot both feet to the right, reach both hands, palms up, to right, flow through centre and repeat other side

IMAGINE: graceful and soft like ribbons in the wind

Move right foot to side, bend knees in a wide crouch (sumo), weight on both feet

IMAGINE: strong and centred like a bear

