



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tai chi: balance for life

April 9, 2014 (Boise, ID) – Pivot right, arms come down, chin is up ... this is just a small segment of movements that sound simple enough. Yet combined with 23 others, these slow-moving rhythms comprise a form. In total, there are 108 movements, split into three sections that each take 20 minutes to achieve. Welcome to tai chi, a “moving meditation,” as described by Boise instructor Jeff Vik, who has been teaching the discipline for 33 years.

Tai chi improves agility and mobility, along with offering a meditative and relaxation experience, states a study in the January 2014 publication of the *Journal of American Geriatrics Society*. The abstract, titled “Effect of Tai Chi on Cognitive Performance in Older Adults: Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” researched the effects of tai chi on older adults.

The research states that, “Physical activity promotes increased vasculature and production of neurotrophic factors, social engagement and stress reduction through meditation and relaxation.”

Vik says tai chi is a whole-body exercise with disciplined breathing that comes from the belly rather than the chest. “Most importantly, it’s about finding balance. It’s different for every person, yet tai chi offers the opportunity to find balance in eating, sleeping, stress, strength and energy.”

He adds, “When older folks see their friends fall and get hurt, their own bodies become defensive and rigid. My job is to not only teach the rhythm of the movement but also to be a cheerleader in helping them find ways to get their bodies more relaxed and balanced to move freely.”

May is Older Americans Month

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one-third of Americans aged 65-plus fall each year. Every 15 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall, and every 29 minutes, an older adult dies following a fall.

The reality that older adults are at a much higher risk of unintentional injury and death than the rest of the population is reflected in the theme for Older Americans Month: “Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow.” Increasingly, research has shown that tai chi can help older adults improve their balance and reduce the risk of falling.

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“Tai chi is truly about relaxing and the process of movement,” says Vik. “This can be difficult, particularly for seniors, whose bodies have a memory bank of stress and energy.

“The more relaxed the body becomes, the better blood flows, and breathing settles down. Ultimately, the whole body adopts a better energy balance.”

Vik offers ongoing intermediate and advanced tai chi classes at Touchmark at Meadow Lake Village in Meridian on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The advanced class starts at 2:15 p.m., and the intermediate class begins at 3:15 p.m. A previous introduction to tai chi is required.

His beginning classes are also held Tuesdays and Thursdays – at 4:15 p.m. Sessions run in six- to eight-week cycles; the next one will start after May 15.

Cost for all classes is \$33 per month (or \$5 each session). To register, call 208-888-2277.

To read the research abstract from the *Journal of American Geriatrics Society*, visit:
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jgs.12611/abstract>

About Touchmark at Meadow Lake Village:

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