

Lake Norman Tai Chi Times

For A Healthy Body, Focused Mind and Positive Spirit

“The most wasted of all days is one without laughter. “

~ e.e. cummings

July, 2014

LakeNormanTaiChi.com

Vol 5 Number 7

Message From Sifu

The Importance of Being Centered

The Arts that we practice are a great tonic to the stresses of our modern day world. It is through the natural, relaxed movements executed at a slower than usual pace that act as a counterbalance to our topsy turvy, always connected, fast paced world.

The pinnacle of our practice is the act of centering. Centering is both internal and external. Internal centering has to do with the single pointed focus that we get from meditation. Whether that is through a sitting practice or through form practice, we are focused on a single item, not ignoring what is going on around us, just not attaching or focusing on it. This eases the emotional or spiritual stress that can affect us.

External centering is all about balance. Balance while we stand, sit, walk, run, play, work, shop, by ourselves, or with friends and family. Being balanced is integral to our Tai Chi and Qigong practice. Balance is also a necessity to our sitting meditation. Being unbalanced puts a stress on us physically, resulting in back aches, knee pain, headaches, and other ailments.

It's easy to be balanced while standing still, or at least it ought to be! Stand with feet shoulder width, toes pointed straight ahead, tailbone tucked under the spine, chest empty, shoulders relaxed, and the crown of your head lifted as if by a string. This puts the body in perfect alignment. When gravity pulls the body, it will pull the body straight down. If the alignment is off, even by a hair, gravity will want to pull the body in that direction which will engage the muscles in that area to keep the body from falling over.

If, after standing meditation, you feel stiff in one particular part of the body, especially in the upper body or legs, it's possible that there is a misalignment there that needs to be corrected. Addressing it through stretching, active relaxation, or manual manipulation of the area should get things back in alignment.

Being balanced while in motion can be a bit trickier. It takes a bit more focus and observation, but the more attention you give in this area will pay you back in spades years from now.

While moving, think of balancing the body in two sections, the lower body and upper body. The upper body is balanced from the crown of the head to the tailbone, with the spine and neck remaining plumb (or vertical) at all times. In our Tai Chi forms, the body never leans in any direction. It is always perpendicular to the floor.

Our lower body is a little more complicated. Some general guidelines include:

- Keep the knee directly over the foot with the knee in the same direction as your toes.
- In a forward bow posture, the front knee should never extend beyond the toes and the back knee should be bent.
- You should never have equal weight in both legs except during a transition from one leg to the other.

In This Issue

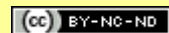
[Message From Sifu](#)

[Celebrations](#)

[Tai Chi in the News](#)

[Training Tip](#)

[Ask Sifu](#)



Lake Norman Tai Chi Times is a publication of Lake Norman Tai Chi Center, LLC and is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 2582
Huntersville, NC 28070

Phone: (704) 900-3005

Web: [LakeNormanTaiChi.com](#)

Email: contact@lakenormantaichi.com





Lake Norman Tai Chi Times

For A Healthy Body, Focused Mind and Positive Spirit

- If you feel wobbly while moving, it's probably because you have not totally shifted your weight to the supporting leg.
- If balancing on one leg, either in a transition (Tai Chi stepping), or static posture (Crane stance), balancing the body is easier when the Dan Tien is over the supporting leg.

I recently read an article from a Tai Chi instructor explaining that two of her students experienced stress fractures in their feet, and even though Tai Chi may not have been the direct cause, it is possible that incorrect stances and body alignment may have exaggerated the problem. Having incorrect alignment can put a lot of stress on the feet. And with 26 bones, 33 joints, and over 100 muscles, tendons, and ligaments in each foot, I cannot, ahem, stress the importance of a properly centered body, both internally and externally.



Major Birthday News

Well, it happens every year, and this year is no different. **Master Eric Sbargo's birthday is on July 14.** We will have a birthday card for everybody to sign and the customary Red Envelope as a financial gift to Master Sbargo. No offering is too large, or too small, or even required. Give from the heart.

Welcome New Students

It's always a pleasure to welcome new students into our family. Please welcome these new students who joined recently. If you haven't already, say hello.

Tai Chi Qigong Program

Gary Ray

Student Promotions



Congratulations to **Kazumi Day** for successfully completing her Block A testing. She has been promoted to **Block B**, Novice level. Way to go Kazumi, keep up the hard work!



Lake Norman Tai Chi Times

For A Healthy Body, Focused Mind and Positive Spirit

Upcoming Events

Tan Tui (Spring Legs) Two-Person Form

Saturday, August 16 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM at The Peaceful Dragon

This workshop is one in a series of four fundraising workshops for The Peaceful Dragon to help provide funds for qualified Leadership and Mastery students in need of scholarship assistance.

Led by Master Eric Sbarge, in this workshop you'll learn the popular two-person application form of the "12 Roads of Tan Tui." This foundational Northern Shaolin form has been passed on for centuries and provides strength, flexibility and coordination for stylists of all Chinese martial arts, and can be especially valuable for Tai Chi and Pakua students. This set shows many of the striking and kicking applications that complement the throwing applications common to Tan Tui.

The suggested donation for this fundraiser event is just \$29, but you can pay more or less as you wish based on your personal budget.

Celebrations



July Birthdays

Master Eric Sbarge

14th

July Holidays and Observances

Cell Phone Courtesy Month
Freedom From Fear of Speaking Month
National Blueberries Month
National Grilling Month
National Ice Cream Month
National Horseradish Month
National Recreation & Parks Month
National Share A Sunset With Your Lover Month
Nectarine and Garlic Month
Sandwich Generation Month

Everybody Deserves A Massage Week: 20-26
National Parenting Gifted Children Week: 20-26
World Lumberjack Championships: 24-26
Garlic Days: 25-27

CPC Founding Day (China): 1
International Kissing Day or World Kiss Day: 6
Take Your Webmaster to Lunch Day: 6
Chocolate Day: 7

Father-Daughter Take A Walk Together Day: 7
Teddy Bears' Picnic Day: 10
National Rainier Cherries Day: 11
Bald Is In: 12
Embrace Your Geekness Day: 13
Gruntled Workers Day: 13
National French Fries Day: 13
Be A Dork Day: 15
Toss Away the "Could Haves"/"Should Haves" Day: 19
Space Exploration Day: 20
National Lollipop Day: 20
National Ice Cream Day: 20
World Jump Day: 20
Global Hug Your Kid Day: 21
Casual Pi Day: 22
System Administrator Appreciation Day: 25
National Milk Chocolate Day: 28
Cheesecake Day: 30
Friendship Day: 30
Paperback Book Day: 30



Lake Norman Tai Chi Times

For A Healthy Body, Focused Mind and Positive Spirit

Refer-A-Friend Program



Refer A Friend. Get Prizes. A Bribe? Maybe!

Introduce your friends, family, and co-workers to the benefits of Tai Chi and Qigong! For every friend that attends one class and their consultation, you will be entered in a raffle. There is no limit to the number of entries you can have. We will also have prizes when your friends enroll. Visit our Refer-A-Friend website at LakeNormanTaiChi.com/raf.php for a complete set of rules and prizes. That's all there is.

Spread The Word



Health, Wellness, and Fitness Fares a Perfect Fit

Tai Chi and Qigong rejuvenate the mind, body, and spirit. What better place to tell people about the benefits of these arts than at a Wellness Fair or Expo. It's a great combination of people interested in health, and us interested in getting people healthy! Is your company, church, community center, or favorite business having a Health, Wellness, or Fitness event? Let Sifu know about. The more that we can get the word out about us and what we can do, the more good we can do for people in our community.

Tai Chi in the News

From *Supreme Chi Living* the newsletter of the American Tai Chi and Qigong Association

Tai Chi Optimizes the Organization of the Brain Architecture

June 15, 2014 - Whether Tai Chi can influence the intrinsic functional architecture of the human brain remains unclear. Researchers from Chinese Academy of Sciences examined Tai Chi-associated changes in functional connectome and published their study in this subject in the April 2014 issue of *Frontiers in aging neuroscience*.

Resting-state functional magnetic resonance images were acquired from 40 older individuals including 22 experienced TCC practitioners (experts) and 18 demographically matched TCC-naive healthy controls, and their local functional homogeneities across the cortical mantle were compared.

Compared to the controls, the TCC experts had significantly greater and more experience-dependent functional homogeneity in the right post-central gyrus (PosCG) and less functional homogeneity in the left anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and the right dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex. Increased functional homogeneity in the PosCG was correlated with TCC experience. Intriguingly, decreases in functional homogeneity (improved functional specialization) in the left ACC and increases in functional homogeneity (improved functional integration) in the right PosCG both predicted performance gains on attention network behavior tests.

These findings provide evidence for the functional plasticity of the brain's intrinsic architecture toward optimizing locally functional organization, with great implications for understanding the effects of TCC on cognition, behavior and health in aging population.



Lake Norman Tai Chi Times

For A Healthy Body, Focused Mind and Positive Spirit

Training Tip

Laugh a Little ... Will Ya!

Tai Chi is a fantastic stress reliever without a doubt. But, a good laugh can do wonders for the spirit. Take a moment and watch a funny movie, TV show, or some of those funny internet memes (i.e., [inex haha lele](#)).

Ask Sifu

Q: In class, when we do Push The Mountain, Move The Sea as a group, we're usually instructed to stay together. I've noticed that some students end sooner than others. How can we perform the form together?

A: Practicing our forms in a group adds another level to our training. Not only do we need to be aware of what's going on internally (mind, body, spirit), we also need to be aware of the group pacing of the form. The general rule is to follow the pace of the person directly in front of you. In most forms, the individual will change as the form changes direction. If you are the person in the front, do your best to keep the same pace and hope that everyone is following you.

Classifieds



Need an extra class t-shirt?

How about a pair of Tai Chi pants?

No problem! Shirts, pants and sashes are always available.

T-Shirt \$15

Pants \$35

Sash \$10

20% discount for Tai Chi Chuan students - 10% discount for Tai Chi Qigong students

custom luxury menswear without breaking the bank

J. HILBURN

704.400.8179

B. Dale Saufley
Independent Style Consultant
Dale.Saufley@JHilburnpartner.com

Have something to sell or trade? Have a service you'd like everyone to know about? Advertise it here! Lake Norman Tai Chi Center members get an incredible discount. Send your ad to contact@lakenormantaichi.com and put **Newsletter Ad** in the subject.

"Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress; working hard for something we love is called passion."

~ Simon Sinek

