

# Lake Norman Tai Chi Times

For A Healthy Body, Focused Mind and Positive Spirit

"Build up virtue and you master all."

~ Lao Tzu

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LakeNormanTaiChi.com

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## Message From Sifu

### 4 Reasons To Learn Tai Chi Weapons

It is inevitable that a Tai Chi student asks "Why do we need to learn weapons? It's not like we can use them!" Since there is no practical reason to train with weapons, it is a valid question. The following is a list of 4 reasons to train with Tai Chi Weapons.

#### Reason 1: The weapon as a tool for self defense

You may not carry a sword or staff with you, but you can easily use a stick you find on the ground to defend yourself with. Training with a stick, staff or sword allows you to develop muscle memory with a weapon in your hand. As you learn a weapons form, you are learning how to use the weapon for offensive and defensive capabilities.

We've all seen action stars like Jet Li, Jackie Chan or Bruce Lee use whatever implement that was at hand for offensive or defensive purposes. Although we're watching Hong Kong or Hollywood magic, it doesn't detract from the fact that ANYTHING can be used as a weapon. When Great Grandmaster Ch'ang Tung Sheng would go for walks, he would always find a good stick to carry with him to defend himself from human or canine attacks.

#### Reason 2: The weapon as a tool for meditation

But you're saying, "I don't practice Tai Chi as a self-defense art. Why should I use weapons in my Tai Chi practice?"

Although I feel you're doing yourself a disservice by not practicing the self-defense aspects of Tai Chi, I'll leave that for another article, there is still a very good reason to use weapons in your Tai Chi practice. Whether you are practicing Tai Chi as a health art, a self-defense art or both, you are no doubt practicing your form as a moving meditation.

As a moving meditation, you're focusing your mind on certain aspects of your form: the lightness of your step, your breath or the imaginary opponent that is front of you as you execute each technique. Having a weapon in your hand adds an additional dimension to your practice. Can you step lightly, breathe softly and deeply and execute your techniques with a weapon in your hand?

#### Reason 3: The weapon as a tool for success

Practicing Tai Chi, or any martial art, is done in steps. As we accomplish each step, we achieve a level of success in our martial arts. We start with some stance training, add some stepping patterns, then arm movement in the form of punches, strikes and blocks and maybe some kicks. Finally we put it all together as an open-hand form. As we start each stage, we're a tad clunky and uncoordinated but we persevere and finally get comfortable and achieve a level of success before we get to the next stage and do it all over again. Once we get comfortable with our open-hand forms we can

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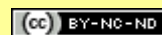
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#### Mailing Address

P.O. Box 2582  
Huntersville, NC 28070

Phone: (704) 900-3005

Web: LakeNormanTaiChi.com

Email: [contact@lakenormantaichi.com](mailto:contact@lakenormantaichi.com)





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spend the rest of our lives improving it and discovering the gems the masters weaved into the forms.

Taking our forms practice one step further, we put a weapon in our hand and learn a whole new form. Again, we start off clunky and uncoordinated, but we persevere and finally get comfortable and then spend the rest of our lives improving it and discovering the gems in the forms. As we accomplish each stage of our training, we achieve a level of success.

These successes give us confidence. We can take that confidence and apply it to every area of our life. Who couldn't use more confidence at school, at work, with friends, standing up in front of a crowd, meeting new people, or in practically every situation we might have in our life.

## **Reason 4: The weapon as a tool for fun**

Let's face it: Walking around with a sword or staff in our hands is just plain cool and fun. Forget all the practical reasons, this is the real reason why any martial artist learns to use a weapon. I still remember the excitement I felt when my teacher told us we were going to learn the Tai Chi Dao. I still get excited when Master Sbarge or a visiting Master teaches a new weapon or a new weapons form in their workshops. This excitement is natural and helps keep our interest in the art.

Tai Chi Chuan has an array of weapons to learn: Dao (Broadsword), Jien (Straight Sword), Staff, Fan, Spear and many others. Each brings their own element to your training. Don't be afraid of learning a Tai Chi weapon form or two. You'll gain valuable insight into Tai Chi and yourself. And you'll have lots of fun!



## 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***

Kathy Eldridge

## Upcoming Events

### ***Mountain Tai Chi and Pakua Retreat with Master Eric Sbarge***

**Friday – Sunday, Oct 17-19**

Relax and rejuvenate yourself while enjoying intensive instruction and practice in the Chinese arts of tai chi and pakua, complemented with sessions of qigong, Zen meditation and yoga.

Led by Master Eric Sbarge, director and head instructor of The Peaceful Dragon in Charlotte, NC, the retreat will be held at the beautiful YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC, just 10 minutes from Asheville.

Suited for beginners or advanced practitioners, from teens to senior citizens, the retreat includes comfortable lodging, meals, plus free time on Saturday evening to explore downtown Asheville or simply relax on your own in the wooded mountains.

<http://www.thepeacefuldragon.com/specialevents.shtml#mountain>



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## Celebrations

### September Holidays and Observances

All American Breakfast Month	Tolkien Week: 21-27
International Self-Awareness Month	Mid-Autumn Festival (China): 8
International Strategic Thinking Month	Teacher's Day (China): 10
Library Card Sign-up Month	Odd Day: 11
National Fruit and Veggies Month	Banana Day: 12
National Home Furnishings Month	International Chocolate Day: 13
National Honey Month	National Guacamole Day: 16
National Mushroom Month	National Respect Day: 18
National Organic Harvest Month	International Eat An Apple Day: 20
National Rice Month	Family Day - Be Involved. Stay Involved :22
Pleasure Your Mate Month	Hobbit Day: 22
Self Improvement Month	Ice Cream Cone Day: 22
September Is Healthy Aging Month	Hug A Vegetarian Day: 26
Superior Relationships Month	Love Note Day: 26
National Waffle Week: 1-6	National Museum Day: 27
Play Days: 2-6	R.E.A.D. in America Day: 27
Balance Awareness Week: 15-21	National Drink Beer Day: 28
National Indoor Plant Week: 21-27	International Coffee Day: 29
National Keep Kids Creative Week: 21-27	Ask A Stupid Question Day: 30

## Tai Chi in the News

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

### The Baduanjin Qigong Promotes Physical Fitness and Health

**August 15, 2014** - A recent Chinese study published by Evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine assessed the efficacy of a 16-week Baduanjin Qigong training intervention in promoting physical fitness and health for adults. An experimental design was adopted, and subjects were assigned randomly into an experimental group and a control group, with 55 participants in each group.

In the intervention group comprised of adults, there were no significant variations in blood glucose, blood lipid, blood pressure, heart rate variability, and vital capacity indices. The body weight and body mass index (BMI) dropped in the intervention group. Compared with the control group, the skinfold thickness decreased at lower corner of scapula, triceps brachii, and abdomen, with a statistical significance.

By comparing the physical fitness indices, it was found that the increase of the results of sit-and-reach test in the intervention group had statistical significance. In conclusion, it was found by our trial that Baduanjin exercise could significantly improve the physical flexibility and subcutaneous adipose accumulation in the healthy adults.



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## Training Tip

### Step Lightly

Whether you are working on a Tai Chi form, working on a stepping pattern, or just walking to the car, always step lightly. You should step as if walking on rice paper. Step too heavy, and you'll rip the paper. Your intent (mind), pace (speed), and how you shift your weight all play an important part. A key indicator on whether or not you are stepping lightly enough is to listen. Do you hear your footsteps? If so, you need to step lighter.

## Ask Sifu

### Q: When do you start teaching Tai Chi weapons forms?

A: Tai Chi weapons forms are taught after a student has shown a proficiency in Tai Chi movement. This usually occurs in the later stages of Part 2. At this point, most students are in the High C block. Basic weapons fundamentals are taught as early as Block B. No use in learning a Weapons form if you can't handle the weapon.



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## 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@Hilburnpartner.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](mailto:contact@lakenormantaichi.com) and put **Newsletter Ad** in the subject.

*"Someone once told me not to bite off more than I can chew. I said 'I'd rather choke on greatness than nibble on mediocrity!'"*

*~ Unknown*

