



Tai Bo

There is no question at all that physical exercise, no matter how minimally strenuous, at least five times a week for those who medically fit, helps ward off diseases, from metabolic, cardiovascular, and even from many forms of cancer.

For individuals already with essential hypertension (high blood pressure) and/or diabetes, hypercholesterolemia (elevated cholesterol in the blood) and heart disease, exercise also offers great benefits, making their treatment easier to manage and reducing the risk of these diseases.

The morbidity and mortality of these illnesses are also lower among those who do regular exercises compared to those who are sedentary and not on any form of exercise regimen.

The Pacman inspiration

Manny Pacquiao's impressive victories as a pugilist highlights how exercise could heighten one's health, strength, speed and stamina, which enable him and other athletes to withstand the severe corporal punishment they receives during training and competition.

Topics: Tai Bo; The Pacman inspiration; the health benefits

Written by PHILIP S. CHUA, M.D., FACS, FPCS

Friday, 11 March 2011 18:19

Indeed, our body can be healthfully conditioned to maximize the integrity of our physical and mental state, our physiology and our immune system, and arm us with the necessary protection against daily stress and bodily insults from our environment and from diseases.

We have a lot of excuses and alibis why we do not exercise.

They range from lack of time, exercise equipment for home or sports club membership being expensive, and a host of other reasons.

The fact of the matter is most of us do not exercise because of plain laziness or lack of motivation.

But all this could change when we consider an exercise regimen that is very simple to do, anywhere you are, requiring no equipment except your mind and body, one that takes only 10-15 minutes of your time, and one that is free of any expense, except for perseverance and sweat.

I am referring to the cardio-fitness exercise called Tai Bo, which is surging in its popularity, especially among busy businessmen, Hollywood celebrities, and young people in general.

The health benefits

Many of the choreographed kicks and punches in Tai Bo are similar to those in Karate, basically intended as an aerobic exercise to provide cardiovascular fitness, bone health, muscular strength, flexibility, agility, balance and endurance.

The same moves, or variations thereof, have been practiced for centuries in the East for total body fitness.

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Exercise has been also shown to prevent or lessen anxiety and depression, and improve self-esteem.

Any form of physical exercise induces our body to secrete beneficial hormones and substances within our system, which help provide us mental-soothing serenity, lubricate our joints, firm-up our muscles, and boost our immune system.

The exercise itself lowers bad cholesterol, increases good cholesterol, and lowers the risk of the development of high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and even cancer, as we have stated above.

While going through the dancing-martial arts motion of Tai Bo, one's mind is allowed to peacefully concentrate on good and happy thoughts.

I find this refreshing, relaxing, and at the same time energizing.

The dance moves in Tai Bo confers upon the entire body, joints and all, a high-energy work-out at your own pace.

It also provides improved mental coordination, self-confidence and self-awareness.

But the most attractive attribute of Tai Bo is its simplicity and practicality, which allows practically anyone, at any age, who is up to it, to practice it.

You can do Tai Bo anywhere in the house, in the backyard, even at work, without much hustle.

You can even do it while lying down or in a chair.

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You can even invent your own moves and routine, with or without music.

With Tai Bo, you are the choreographer and the practitioner in one.

And all the equipment you need is your mind and body.

Of course, you have to pull in your resolve too.

Start slow and customize

Before doing Tai Bo or any exercise regimen, it is best to consult with your physician.

As with any exercise, the best strategy is to do Tai Bo slowly, gradually increasing its intensity, not abruptly, until you modulate it to your own comfortable level and speed.

Practiced five times or more a week, this aerobic exercise, which is better than jogging or the treadmill, can yield great dividends in terms of cardiovascular fitness and mental health for a minimum of investment.

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