Tai Chi for Fall Prevention: A New Approach to an Ancient Art

Paul Lam, MD
Director, Tai Chi for Health Institute and Canyon Ranch Institute Visiting Scholar
Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2015
12 - 12:50 p.m.
University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health
Drachman Hall, Room A114

50 light box lunches will be available on a first come, first served basis.

Tai Chi Master Paul Lam, MD, of Sydney, Australia, will speak about the value of Tai Chi for fall prevention at the University of Arizona Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health on Wednesday, Oct. 7 from 12-12:50 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public.

A Canyon Ranch Institute Visiting Scholar, Dr. Lam is a family physician and director of the non-profit Tai Chi for Health Institute. He is an internationally recognized tai chi expert who has developed Tai Chi for Health programs designed to prevent falls and provide safe physical activity for people with chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, and other medical conditions.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for people over age 65 is falling. The CDC predicts that one-third of seniors will fall each year, leading to a direct annual cost of $34 billion. Falls can also lead to a fear of falling that may result in inactivity and decreased health that exacerbate chronic diseases and decrease quality of life. In answer to the question “How can older adults prevent falls?,” the CDC notes, “It is important that exercises focus on increasing leg strength and improving balance, and that they get more challenging over time. Tai Chi programs are especially good.”

Born of Chinese parents living in Vietnam, Dr. Lam went to China as a small child to live with his grandmother. He suffered severe physical and emotional abuse under the Mao Zedong-led Communist party. In his late teens, he escaped to Hong Kong and eventually to Australia where he struggled to learn a new language, adapt to an entirely different culture, and restart his education. While earning his medical degree, Dr. Lam began to search for ways to reduce the effects of arthritis and other health problems caused by the abuses and starvation that he experienced. He found relief through the practice of tai chi, which led to his life’s work as a family physician and tai chi master.

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