

The Benefits of learning Tai Chi for Rider & Horse

by Tony Stewart of Tai Chi 4 You:

- Makes it easier to ride in a calm and relaxed manner.
- Promotes suppleness and flexibility in your body.
- Improves posture.
- Improves balance.
- Corrects one sidedness or leaning.
- Helps to develop security and stability in the saddle.
- Helps you to feel energy moving in your body which in turn leads to more awareness of movements in the horses body.
- Helps you to be soft and go with the motion of the horse.
- Helps you to be ready for and to have anticipated the movements of the horse.
- Helps develop feel.
- Builds intimacy and trust between you and your horse.
- Helps with lack of confidence, fear and anxiety.
- Eases the pain in muscles that ache after hard yard work.
- Helps relieve pain from old injuries.
- Heightened Awareness
- Balance
- Rhythm
- Sensitivity
- Independent seat
- Effortless connected power
- Confidence, Calmness & harmony with your Horse
- Ride from your three centers: upper, middle & lower Dan Tian,
- Healing

Here is a list of performance criteria we will be (step by step) giving attention to as you learn Tai Chi & Qigong. The criterion below will help you with a wide range of issues.:

Theory and Principles of the following:

- Appreciation of Chi Energy
- Balance
- Grounding of energy.
- New Biomechanics skills
- Feel & sensitivity
- Awareness
- Connection
- Rhythm
- Breathing
- Free movement
- Strength vs power
- Yielding to pressure
- Relax
- Receive/ redirect

RIDER'S MIND

No matter the cause, or if your state of mind has been effected by external events or your own experiences your state of mind plays a key role in your ability to ride well and enjoy your horse and yourself in an optimal way. Here are some matters of mind to be aware of:

- Lack of concentration / focus
- Negative emotional state.
- Scared of losing control/don't feel in control
- Nervous and/or fear of going forward
- Over care = excessive worrying
- Fear of falling and fear of failure.
- Feeling disconnected or having difficulty being in your present moment your now.
- Fear of injury
- Frustration with your progress and your horses progress.

RIDER'S BODY

What we think and feel we become and this is expressed and acts itself out in our own body. Here are a few common problems riders may experience:

- Tension
- Poor body posture and alignment. Including holding a curved O back, sticking your chin out and having a over curved neck posture
- Stressed
- Lack of awareness and connection
- Collapse to the left or right = leaning. causing lack of seat = Hips and legs tension causing the body to over press on one side of the saddle.
- Holding breath. Known as forcing the breath
- General fitness level including heart beat.
- Being out of timing with your horse = Using energy which not only uses unnecessary energy it can also takes effects your horse. One example can be seen when Bouncing at sitting trot or Bouncing at rising trot
- Difficulty halting! Well I have noticed horses do not have a hand brake or brakes! One thing for sure tensing up and being stressed during this stop your horse challenge, is better done from relaxation, calmness and sense of movement.
- Stiffness: We say in Tai Chi "hardness is the friend of death and softness the friend of life" Suffering from stiff joints and muscles is sadly a common way of life nowadays.
- Neck pain, Back pain' Knee Pain, Wrist pain
- Coping with an old Injury
- Can't keep legs still
- Unable to keep heel down
- Head nodding
- Raised shoulders and elbows sticking out
- Can't keep hands still
- Too Strong (too Yang) or too weak (too yin).

RIDERS SPIRIT:

A relaxed, calm, balanced and centered harmonious body and mind can heal ones inner & outer chi body (our spirit) It is this that the horse will unconsciously see feel and benefit from.

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