



Tai Chi Classes Offered In NYC's Bryant Park

Kate Sullivan

WCBS-TV

June 15, 2009 1:05 pm US/Eastern

Amid the morning rush hour on the corner of 42nd Street and 6th Avenue, and in the middle of one of the most stressful years in recent memory, many are finding true peace of mind in the most unlikely of places.

It's not the most Zen place in the world, but inside Bryant Park, there's a group that's a world away from furloughs, layoffs and more. Every Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 7:30 to 8:30, Master C.K. Chu leads everyone in practicing the ancient art of Tai Chi.

Tai Chi is a form of meditation developed in China more than 2,000 years ago, similar to kung fu, but in slow motion. Master Chu calls it meditation and exercise all rolled into one.

"You get to relax and [learn] how to align the back and how to breathe," Chu tells CBS 2's Kate Sullivan. By breathing and moving slowly, the body isolates each muscle.

"It makes you feel good," says one participant. "It really is a great way to start your day and get ride of stress."

Rob Huffman says after an hour you feel energized, alive and awakened.

John Lloyd always leaves with feeling awake and optimistic.

"Coming here first thing in the morning gets you feeling like anything is possible for the rest of the day," Lloyd says.

Tai Chi is the fastest growing exercise among seniors in the country and doesn't require any special clothing or equipment. The art even burns 250 calories in just one hour.

In addition to the calories burnt, Master Chu believes that it "definitely" leads to a longer life.

The health benefits are enormous. Researchers have found Tai Chi can greatly reduce high blood pressure and the risk of heart attacks, ease the symptoms of Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, and even help teenagers with attention deficit disorder.

"I work across the street and as soon as I get back to the office I'm full of energy and really relaxed," a participant tells Sullivan.

Another benefit of this Tai Chi class is that it's free. For more information on the class, [click here](#).