

Tai Chi is Key to Longer Life, Survey Finds

The Chinese exercise of Tai Chi can help elderly people stay healthy for longer by preventing bone loss and strengthening muscles, a survey published recently found. A one-year study of 180 people aged 65 to 74 found those who practiced Tai Chi suffered no bone deterioration while their muscle strength improved 40 percent.

Those who did other light exercises such as stretching suffered one percent bone loss and 10 percent improvement in muscle strength, while those who did no exercise suffered two percent bone loss and no improvement in muscle strength.

The survey by Hong Kong's Chinese University is the first of its kind into the slow-motion exercise of Tai Chi, which is hugely popular across China, Hong Kong and other parts of Asia.

Practitioners, mostly elderly people, can be seen doing the exercises in groups or by themselves every morning in Hong Kong's parks and public spaces. They usually spend about 20 minutes on their exercises.

Further clinical studies on the effects of Tai Chi on the health of the heart and lungs are to be carried out by the Chinese University next year.