

## TAI CHI AND LOW BACK PAIN

The first pragmatic randomised controlled trial of tai chi for people with low back pain has shown that it can improve pain and disability outcomes in this population.

Australian researchers randomised 160 volunteers with persistent non-specific low back pain to either tai chi or a wait-list control group, who continued with their usual health care. The tai chi intervention consisted of 18 forty-minute group sessions over a 10-week period, delivered by a qualified instructor. Tai chi was found to reduce the bothersomeness of back symptoms by 1.7 points, and pain intensity by 1.3 points, on a 10-point scale.

It was also found to improve self-reported disability by 2.6 points on a 24-point scale. These results were considered a worthwhile treatment effect by researchers and participants. (Tai chi exercise for treatment of pain and disability in people with persistent low back pain: a randomized controlled trial. *Arthritis Care Res (Hoboken)*. 2011 Nov;63(11):1576-83).