

Preventing Falls or Enhancing Well Being?



“The Impact of Tai Chi on a group of Older People in the Wellington Region”

Fall Facts

- ✧ 396 people died after falls and another 34,000 were injured in New Zealand between July 2006 and June 2007, with more going unreported.
- ✧ Falls are a big burden on the health system, making up 40% of all hospital stays for injuries New Zealand wide.
- ✧ Most falls happen at home.

More

- ✎ Risk of falls is one in three, for those aged 65 years.
- ✎ Risk increases to 50% for 80 year olds.



Financially



- ✎ Cost of falls is extremely high.
- ✎ The social cost is far more significant.

Why they fall

- ✧ Inactivity
- ✧ Poor Balance
- ✧ Low Blood Pressure
- ✧ Muscle Weakness
- ✧ Poor Vision
- ✧ And conditions like Parkinson's Disease



Keeping safe



- ✓ Have regular check-ups
- ✓ Have a balance and muscle strength test
- ✓ Review medications frequently
- ✓ Regular exercise
- ✓ Have eyes checked

What is Tai Chi?



- ☞ Gentle, flowing exercise.
- ☞ Simple movements.
- ☞ Includes breathing.
- ☞ Not physically challenging.

Health Benefits

- ✧ Arthritis
- ✧ Heart Disease
- ✧ Diabetes
- ✧ Depression
- ✧ Respiratory Disease
- ✧ Chronic Diseases.



What Tai Chi does

- ✧ Improves posture,
- ✧ Improves Balance,
- ✧ Improves Coordination,
- ✧ Improves lower body strength,



Allows the older adult to

- ✧ Stay on their feet,
- ✧ Stay active,
- ✧ Stay at home
- ✧ Independent
- ✧ In Control



ACC and Tai Chi



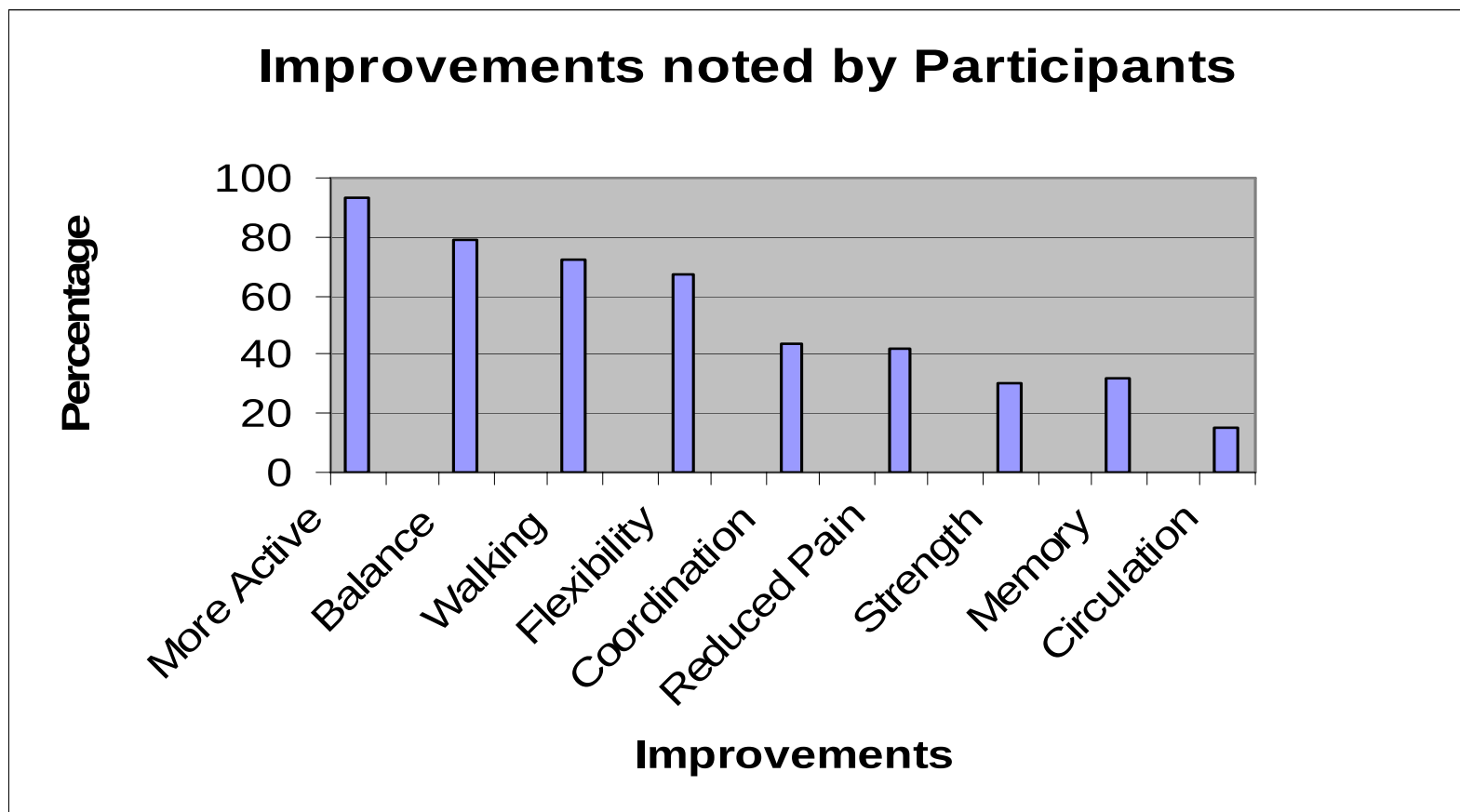
- ✓ ACC endorsed and funded.
- ✓ 65 years and 55 years for Maori and Pacific Islanders.
- ✓ Twice a week for twenty weeks.

Why fund Tai Chi?

- ✧ Proved to reduce falls by 47%
- ✧ Modified so is safe for older adults.
- ✧ For every dollar spend on Tai Chi, saves three dollars in after care.



At year end

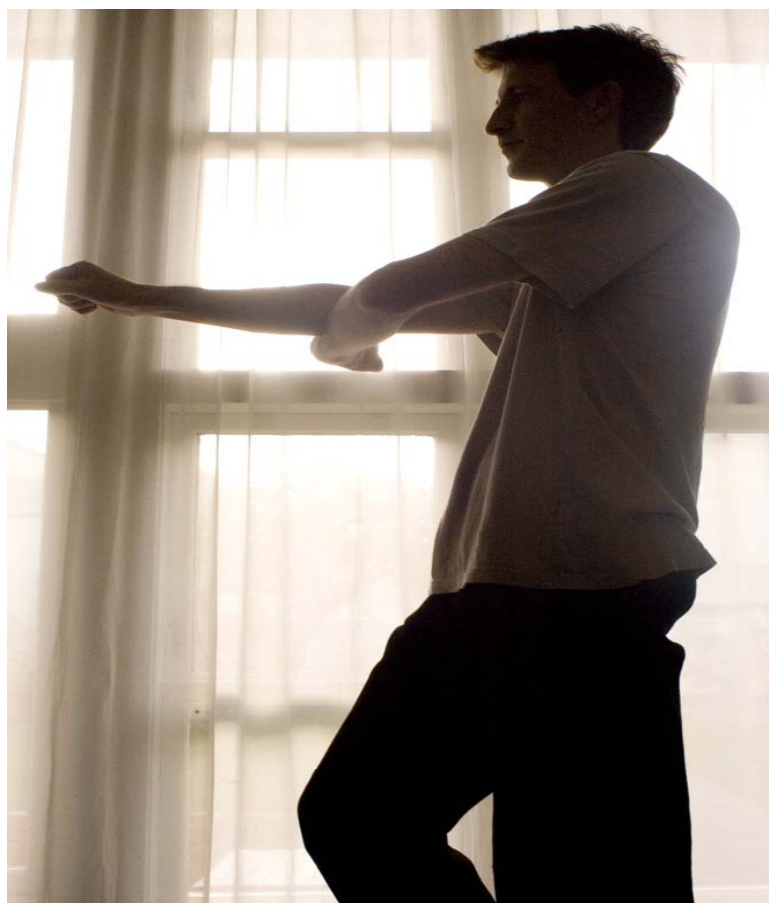


Tokelauan Group



- ☞ 20 Participants from the community
- ☞ Spoken to both Samoan and English
- ☞ “We felt it was really good”
- ☞ “It’s quite useful in our community”
- ☞ “We all enjoyed it so much”

Participants Comments



- ~ "Everything as improved since starting Tai Chi"
- ~ "My balance and posture has improved"
- ~ "Climbing my steps is easier now"
- ~ "I am more confident walking along footpaths now"
- ~ "I found Tai Chi calms me down"

It is never too late to start

