



Six Questions About Dr. Yang's Evidence-Based Taiji (EBT™) and Qigong Program

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Hello and thank you for your interest in the Center for Taiji and Qigong Studies. This document is intended as a brief introduction to Dr. Yang Yang's Evidence-Based Taiji and Qigong program. For those wishing to read more, we include links throughout to additional, more in-depth documentation on our web site – www.centerfortaiji.com.

If you have any questions, please contact us at info@centerfortaiji.com, or phone us at 217.351.9388.

1. What is Dr. Yang's Evidence-Based Taiji (EBT™) and Qigong Program?

EBT is a traditional Taiji (aka, "Tai Chi") and Qigong program that can be learned and practiced by persons of all ages and physical abilities. We prefer to use the pinyin spelling of "Taiji," instead of the older spelling as "T'ai Chi," simply because pinyin is the world standard for Romanizing Chinese characters and the spelling as "Taiji" affords a more intuitive correct pronunciation of the original Chinese. (The "Ch" in "Tai Chi" was intended to be sounded as a "J," but almost nobody knows that.)

2. What is Qigong?

"Qi" can be translated as "vital energy," and "gong" means to exercise or work. Qigong is the art of nurturing one's body and spirit, through the accumulation/exercise of the Qi that is the energetic intermediary of the two. There are many different Qigong exercises—in fact, Taiji form is one kind of Qigong. The unifying principle of all Qigong exercises are that they are nurturing/refreshing/replenishing—the polar opposite of the "no pain, no gain" exercise mentality. If practiced correctly, one always feels a heightened sense of calmness, awareness, peacefulness, and increased energy after practicing Qigong.

3. How is the EBT program different from other "Tai Chi" classes?

Glad you asked ☺. The EBT program is the product of Dr. Yang's traditional training with several of the 18th generation grandmasters of the Chen family style of Taiji, and his work as a researcher studying the mechanisms and benefits of Taiji and Qigong practice. When devising this program, Dr. Yang asked himself the simple question: "*what are the most important aspects of traditional training that will yield the greatest measured benefit in the shortest amount of time?*" The EBT program is the product of that question, and has been refined with the experience of several university trials. It contains static and dynamic qigong exercises, which are critically essential for efficient practice, and a seven-movement introductory form that is purposely challenging yet adaptable to suit persons of all ages and physical abilities.

The deeper the practice, the more the benefit. Many, if not most, commercial forms of Tai Chi offer only choreographed form practice. Slow form practice, however, is only one component of traditional Taiji training. An overemphasis on memorizing lengthy choreography will discourage participation and will not yield the complete benefits of Taiji practice. Masters of the art know

that different components of traditional curriculum are interrelated and interdependent—all must be practiced to maximize the benefits of practice. As compared and contrasted with choreography-only instruction, the EBT program is designed to allow the practitioner to realize a deeper understanding of Taiji and Qigong, and to achieve greater skill and the maximum potential benefits of practice, in a much shorter amount of time.

Further Reading: The essential components of traditional Taiji training, and the interdependent nature of these different components, are thoroughly detailed by Dr. Yang in his award winning book *Taijiquan: The Art of Nurturing, The Science of Power* (Zhenwu Publications;Champaign, IL) (www.centerfortaiji.com/books/books.html). Dr. Yang has also written a document titled *Best Taiji Practices* (www.centerfortaiji.com/articles/Best_Taiji_Practices_Aug_08.pdf), which is largely abridged from his book and summarizes the essential components of traditional Taiji and Qigong training. A brief, three page outline of the EBT program is also available at www.centerfortaiji.com/articles/EBT_Methods_and_Purpose_Outline.pdf.

4. What is meant by the term “Evidence-Based”?

The term “evidence-based” means that the program has been evaluated and found effective in controlled university studies, and the results of those studies have been published in peer-reviewed scientific publications. Five papers have been published in the scientific peer reviewed literature that have used Dr. Yang Yang's EBT program. All of the papers are of controlled, longitudinal studies, and two were fully randomized controlled trials (RCTs). A sixth paper concerning qualitative methods of analysis of holistic mind/body/spirit benefits is currently under final review before publication. The studies conclude that the EBT program is effective for healthy older adults for:

- lower body strength;
- force control (a neurological function);
- improved functional balance;
- improved vestibular function (a mechanism of improved balance);
- improved immune function (response to flu vaccine); and
- complex, holistic benefits combining five dimensions of experience: physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual.

Abstract summaries of the publications, with additional comments by Dr. Yang on the significance of the findings, are available at www.centerfortaiji.com/articles/CTSEBTstudies.pdf.

The Center for Taiji Studies is committed to continued research on Taiji and Qigong, and several more studies are planned to evaluate the mechanisms and benefits of practice. Planned studies include evaluation of the EBT program for cardiovascular rehabilitation, pain relief, sleep quality, and the effect of Taiji and Qigong on autonomic function.

5. How is quality control ensured for the EBT Program?

Quality control is achieved through (1) teacher certification and (2) the use of standardized instructional materials.

There is no way around it—who your teacher(s) is (are) is critical for what you learn and for realizing the maximum potential benefits of Taiji and Qigong practice. Quality of instruction and practice is Dr. Yang's passion, and he has established a teacher certification program to ensure

competent and standardized instruction of the EBT program. While teacher certification in some commercial Taiji programs is automatic after attendance at a weekend seminar, Dr. Yang steadfastly refuses to trade quality for numbers. Potential EBT instructors must first apply to become Instructors in Training (IITs), and are selected into the program based on their responses to application questions. EBT teacher certification is also performance-based, meaning that EBT instructors must pass a written and performance based exam administered by Dr. Yang before being certified to teach others. Standards are high and attendance at teacher certification training events does not guarantee a passing grade. Indeed, to date a minority of persons who have attended teacher training classes with Dr. Yang have actually passed the EBT instructor certification evaluation.

The EBT program is also supported with an approximate 4-hour instructional video, which thoroughly documents the EBT Taiji and Qigong curriculum. You may preview a video trailer of the DVD on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Jr_spGKGhk.

6. Who is Dr. Yang Yang?

Yang Yang, Ph.D., is a traditionally trained Taiji (T'ai Chi) and Qigong master instructor and adjunct faculty member of the Department of Kinesiology and Community Health at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His research has focused on the efficacy of Taiji practice for older adults. He is one of the few individuals who is recognized within the traditional Taiji and Qigong community as a master practitioner and is also an academic researcher interested in applying the highest standards of the Western scientific process to explore and promote evidence-based Eastern philosophy and wellness programs. Dr. Yang is the founder of the Center for Taiji and Qigong Studies, with offices in New York, NY and Champaign, IL.

Here is Dr. Yang's Curriculum Vitae: www.centerfortaiji.com/articles/Dr_Yang_CV.pdf. As is evident from this CV, since obtaining his doctorate Dr. Yang has been in high demand as a lecturer at leading medical research institutions and trade conferences throughout the U.S.