

# Qigong For People With Disabilities



Qigong is highly recommended as a key part of any wellness programme. (Qigong is pronounced chee gung.) Qigong is very easy to do; it is separate stretching and bending exercises that can be adapted to any activity level and have been shown to significantly improve physical health. It includes deep breathing and inner focusing aspects that are not only powerful for physical health but have a profound impact on emotional health. Inner spirit growth is facilitated as well.

Programmes are offered for a variety of disability levels and ages:

- Classes are up to 1 hour. Classes can be offered weekly.
- Interested staff are trained so that they can continue to do the qigong exercises with clients *TRAIN THE TRAINER SESSIONS*
- A typical programme runs **8-12 sessions** two or three times a year and with consultation as needed for staff to continue the programme in-between sessions.



Currently providing classes to developmentally disabled adults, many staff said this is the most effective programme they offer (e.g. compared to music therapy, dance therapy, art therapy, etc.) Qigong has the same mind-body benefits of yoga and tai chi but is much easier to learn and do.

## Programme Specifics:

- Clients learn Qigong stretching & breathing exercises.
- Exercises are performed as a group of up to 15 participants with demonstration, direction, mirroring movements, and some individual work for guiding and correcting movements.
- Centering and grounding are emphasized to increase focus and relaxation.
- Deep Abdominal Breathing exercises are taught to stimulate the "relaxation response" and improve performance.
- Spontaneous qigong is taught which is excellent for release of emotions and tension, and well as developing inner self trust.
- Students develop a "qigong performance" for their family & peers.
- Videotaping to create a personal programme DVD is optional
- Over time perform guided meditations for up to 10-15 minutes, and can begin to do peer led short meditations.
- Sharing & discussion about individual's use of exercises to calm anxiety/anger or "wake up" after lunch.

### **Outcomes have been substantial.**

- Improved coping mechanisms and ability to calm themselves (de-escalate) using qigong exercises are significant.
- Staff say the whole day (often a Thursday or Friday) goes much easier on "qigong day" because clients are calmer, more focused, and happier. (Qigong research has documented a mood lifting effect for depression and sadness, as well as anger management.)
- Participation by typically reluctant/non-participatory clients is significantly improved.
- Improved balance, strength, and range of motion of constricted joints,
- General feelings of increased physical vitality.
- Ability to ambulate and distance able to ambulate has also improved. (Decreased falls is also a highly researched area of benefit for qigong.)
- Weight loss with frequent or daily qigong
- Personal interaction with praise for real individual improvement has a profound effect on self-image. The group celebrates each other's successes.

### **What people are saying about these classes:**

- The clients are much calmer and the day goes much better after Qigong.
- Our clients really look forward to Qigong. They are doing it in the halls and swimming pool on their own. It touches each person at his or her level.
- It really helped "Tom" to calm down. He was starting to lose control and I had him mirror a Qigong balancing exercise he had learned in class and he was able to regain control and the situation did not escalate into a serious problem.
- Kathy is great. She really connects with their spirits.

### **Severe Disability or Severe and Profound Disability Programme**

- Clients do the exercises with assistance in a small group of up to 10.
- Calming music with affirming messages is played to enhance the experience.
- Some clients can mirror movement and others led manually but over time they have increased their independence level. It is amazing what they are able to do.
- The exercises have a profound calming effect on anxiety levels and decrease compulsive behaviours.
- Outcomes similar to moderate disability programme have been achieved.
- Personal "high intensity" interaction with praise for real individual improvement has a profound effect on self-image as well.

### **Train the Trainer sessions**

- Designed for "Staff" and "Support Workers"
- Allows the staff to run the maintenance sessions
- Clients can benefit from individual assistance during classes

- Cost beneficial when budgets are tight and individual sessions not possible
- Minimum 1-day sessions for 2-8 people (no experience), 12+ (experienced)
- Phone and email support to trained staff

## Further information

- [www.chikung.org.uk](http://www.chikung.org.uk)
- [www.ukcks.org.uk](http://www.ukcks.org.uk)
- [www.chikung4kids.org.uk](http://www.chikung4kids.org.uk)

## Contact Information

- UKCKS Principal: **Andy Wright**
  - 23 years martial arts experience (5<sup>th</sup> Dan)
  - Over 18 years teaching experience
  - Child Protection training
  - Disability Training (various)
  - C&G FAETC 7307 Teaching Certificate
  - Member & Certified Teacher of the Tai Chi & Chi Kung Forum (TCCKF)
  - Associate Member of Tai Chi Union of Great Britain (TCUGB)
  - Stonebridge College diploma: Chi Kung
  - CRB checked & References Available
  - OCR NVQ Level 3 Advice & Guidance
  - Workplace Health and Safety
  - Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
  - First Aid at Work qualified

PHONE: 07811 910214

EMAIL: [enquiry@ukcks.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@ukcks.org.uk)