

Menopause

What is it? How can TAI CHI help?

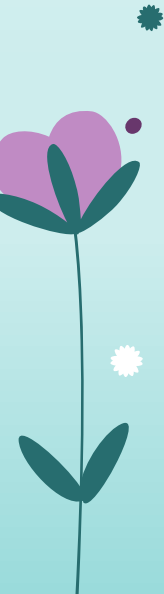
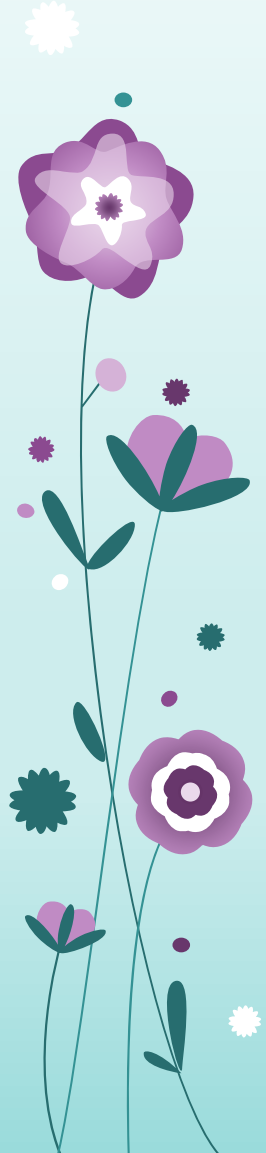
By Master Trainers Sylvia Das & Kartikey Shukla

With inputs from Dr Paul Lam, Founder, Tai Chi for Health Institute



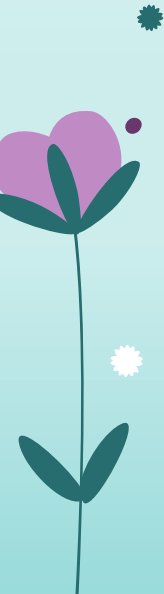
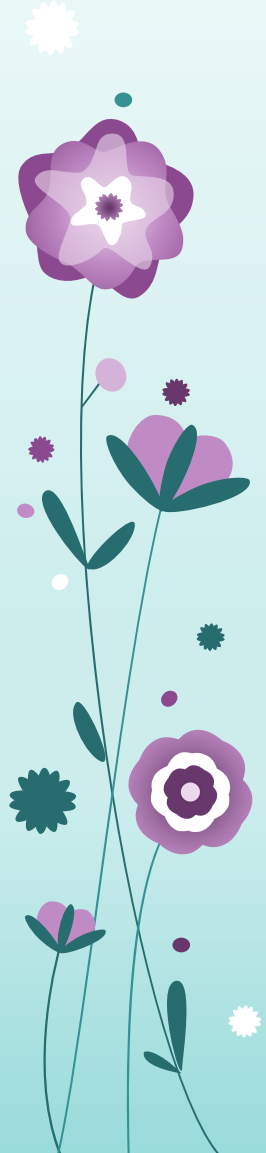
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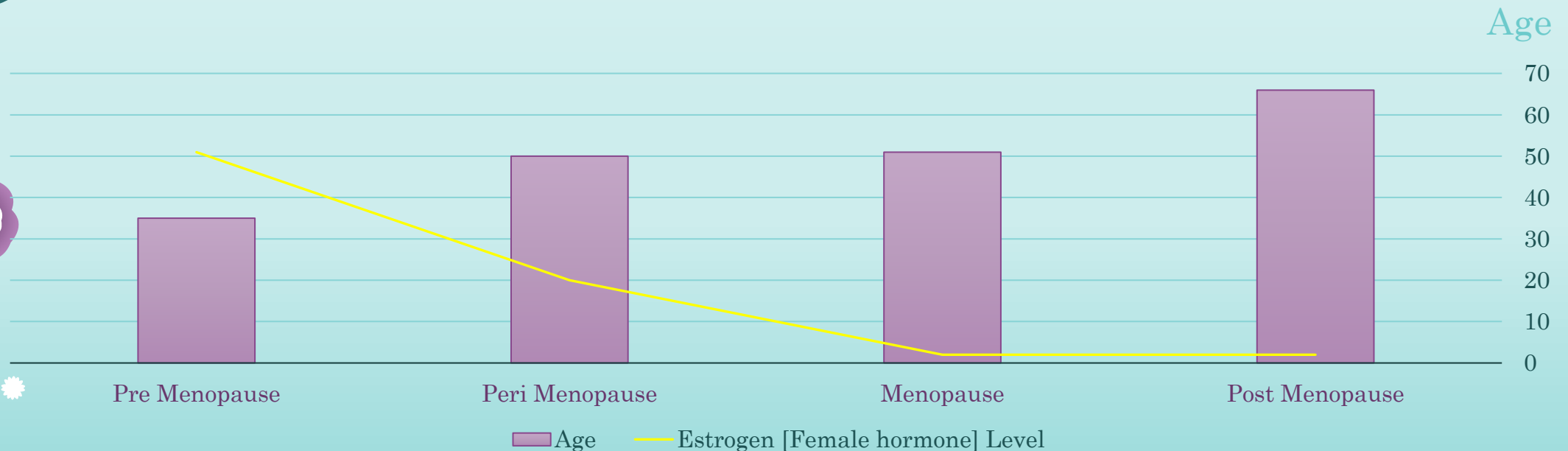
What is Menopause

- It is an inevitable natural phase in a woman's life that can bring both physical and emotional changes and affect Quality of Life.
- Menopause is not a disease – it is a natural part of human aging.
- It is mainly related to loss of the female hormones post 35 years of age.
- Understanding the stages of menopause and learning how to cope with its symptoms is crucial for a healthier wellbeing.



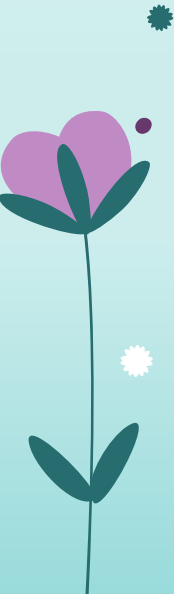
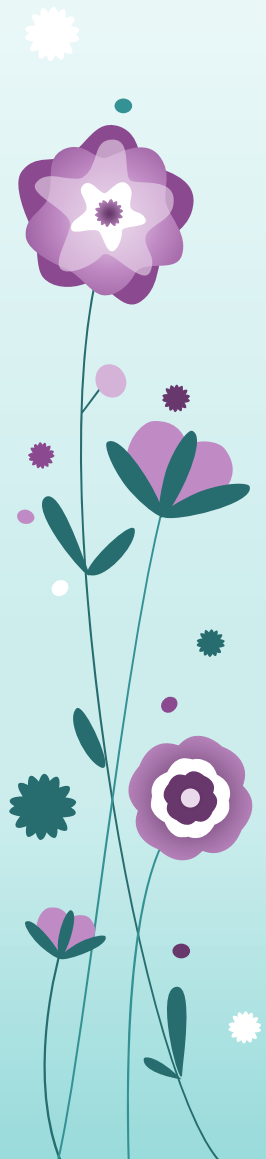
Stages of Menopause

Pre Menopause	Peri Menopause	Menopause	Post Menopause
Advent - From about age of 35, the body undergoes subtle changes in preparation for the transition into peri-menopause	Transition – This phase can last for several years between 40 to 50 before menopause begins. The body undergoes significant changes as it prepares for end of the reproductive years.	Embrace – It officially begins when 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period have passed. It typically occurs between 45 to 55, with average age being around 51.	Stability - It represents the latter part of a woman's life when she no longer experiences the hormonal fluctuations. However some symptoms still may exist.



Symptoms at different stages of Menopause

Pre Menopause	Peri Menopause	Menopause	Post Menopause
No Noticeable Menopausal Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Irregular periods▪ Gradual Fertility Decline▪ Loss of bone density or Osteoporosis due to decrease of Estrogen▪ Cardiovascular disease due to decrease of Estrogen▪ Mood changes, Sleep Problem, Weight gain etc due to hormonal changes▪ Urinary incontinence▪ Hot flashes & night sweats▪ Vaginal dryness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No period▪ Osteoporosis▪ Cardiovascular disease▪ Mood changes, sleep problem, weight gain▪ Urinary incontinence▪ Hot flashes & night sweats▪ Skin and hair changes▪ Decrease in sexual function	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lessening of some of the menopausal symptoms• Osteoporosis• Cardiovascular disease• Vaginal discomfort



How Tai Chi can help

Tai Chi can help in several of the symptoms of Peri Menopause, Menopause or Post Menopause.

Symptom / Condition		How Tai Chi can help
Cardiovascular Diseases	Decrease of Estrogen hormone increases the risk of cardiovascular or heart diseases	Tai Chi can reduce blood pressure and cholesterol which in turn help to lower risk of heart diseases
Osteoporosis	Decrease of Estrogen hormone decreases the bone density and make the bones brittle and more susceptible to bone fractures. This condition is called Osteoporosis.	Tai Chi can slow down the rate of bone density decrease. Also, Tai Chi improves balance which reduce risk of fall, which in turn can help in risk of fractures due to falls in people having the condition
Urinary Incontinence	As the tissues of vagina and urethra lose elasticity, one may experience frequent, sudden, strong urges to urinate, followed by an involuntary loss of urine (urge incontinence), or loss of urine with coughing, laughing or lifting (stress incontinence).	Tai Chi strengthen the back stabilizer muscles or the core muscles. Also Tai Chi breathing can strengthen the pelvic floor muscles which help in the condition
Sexual Function	Vaginal dryness from decreased moisture production & loss of elasticity can cause discomfort & slight bleeding during sexual intercourse. Also, decreased sensation may reduce one's desire for sexual activity (libido).	Tai Chi makes people healthier and less stressed, both of which improve sexual function. According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, Qi improve sexual function and tai chi is all about improving Qi
Weight Gain	Many women gain weight during menopausal transition & after menopause because metabolism slows down. One may need to eat less and exercise more, just to maintain current weight.	Tai Chi can help in hormonal balance and thus improve metabolism and maintain weight.
Insomnia	Due to hormonal changes, the body undergoes stress and results in disturbed sleep or less sleep	Tai Chi relaxes the mind and body and thus helps to have good sleep
Mood Changes	Due to hormonal changes and imbalance one can undergo mood changes and behavior changes	Tai Chi can help in hormonal balance & boosts the happy hormones. Thus it can bring a good mood.

Medical Studies

Many studies support various benefits of Tai Chi for Pre and Post Menopausal women.

Link to the Study	Name of the Study	Conclusion of the Study
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36276631/	Effectiveness of Tai Chi Exercise Program on Sleep, Quality of Life, and Physical Performance in Postmenopausal Working Women	Tai Chi was a safe and effective mode of treatment in postmenopausal working women.
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28742289/	Tai Chi Exercise for the Quality of Life in a Perimenopausal Women Organization: A Systematic Review	This systematic review found significant evidence for Tai Chi improving bodily pain, general health, vitality, mental health of SF-36, and the spine dimension of BMD in patients with perimenopausal syndrome. Findings suggest that Tai Chi might be recommended as effective and safe adjuvant treatment for patients with perimenopausal syndrome.
https://www.hindawi.com/journals/jar/2011/234696/	Effects of Tai Chi Training on Antioxidant Capacity in Pre- and Postmenopausal Women	Tai Chi training is beneficial on functional balance, flexibility and muscular strength , not only for premenopausal women, but also for postmenopausal women. The main finding of this pilot study was that rotational movements of Tai Chi postures with slow and deep breathing increased erythrocyte GPx activity and reduced tHcy concentrations, in both pre- and postmenopausal women. Tai Chi would be a good physical activity design for aged women in order to increase their antioxidant protection and to prevent oxidative stress-related metabolic diseases .

Recommended Tai Chi for Health programs

Following Tai Chi for Health programs, with its unique features can help in relieving many of the symptoms of Peri Menopause, Menopause or Post Menopause

1. Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention: TCAFP

- The USA Center for Disease Control concludes that fear of falling is a major contributor because we stiffen up. Therefore a program like TCAFP that has been shown to improve balance and decrease falls should bolster confidence and lessen the risk of falling. This is specially beneficial for people with Osteoporosis, who has higher risk of injuries or fractures from falls.
- Stress relieving breathing, mindful weight transfer, awareness & enhanced confidence reduce fear of fall
- Upright Posture vitalize internal organs like heart & lungs
- Includes stepping in all directions increasing environmental awareness and improving balance

2. Tai Chi for Osteoporosis: TCO

- Studies show that tai chi slows down loss of bone density in people with osteoporosis by up to three times.
- Stepping side, forward and backward to improve sense of direction and balance
- Improve the life energy or Qi which in term enhance all aspects of health.
- Gentle movements strengthen entire body, all muscles, ligaments and joints. Strong muscles protect the joints and bones.

3. Tai Chi for Heart Conditions: TCHC

- It is a safe and gentle exercise that can improve Cardiovascular fitness and will cause better circulation of blood to the heart.
- Stress or anxiety can damage and increase risk of heart diseases. Tai chi is a mind body exercise and has dan tian breathing that relieves stress and calm the mind, thus supporting the heart.
- The program & included acupressure massages improve the Qi, which in turn enhance heart health.