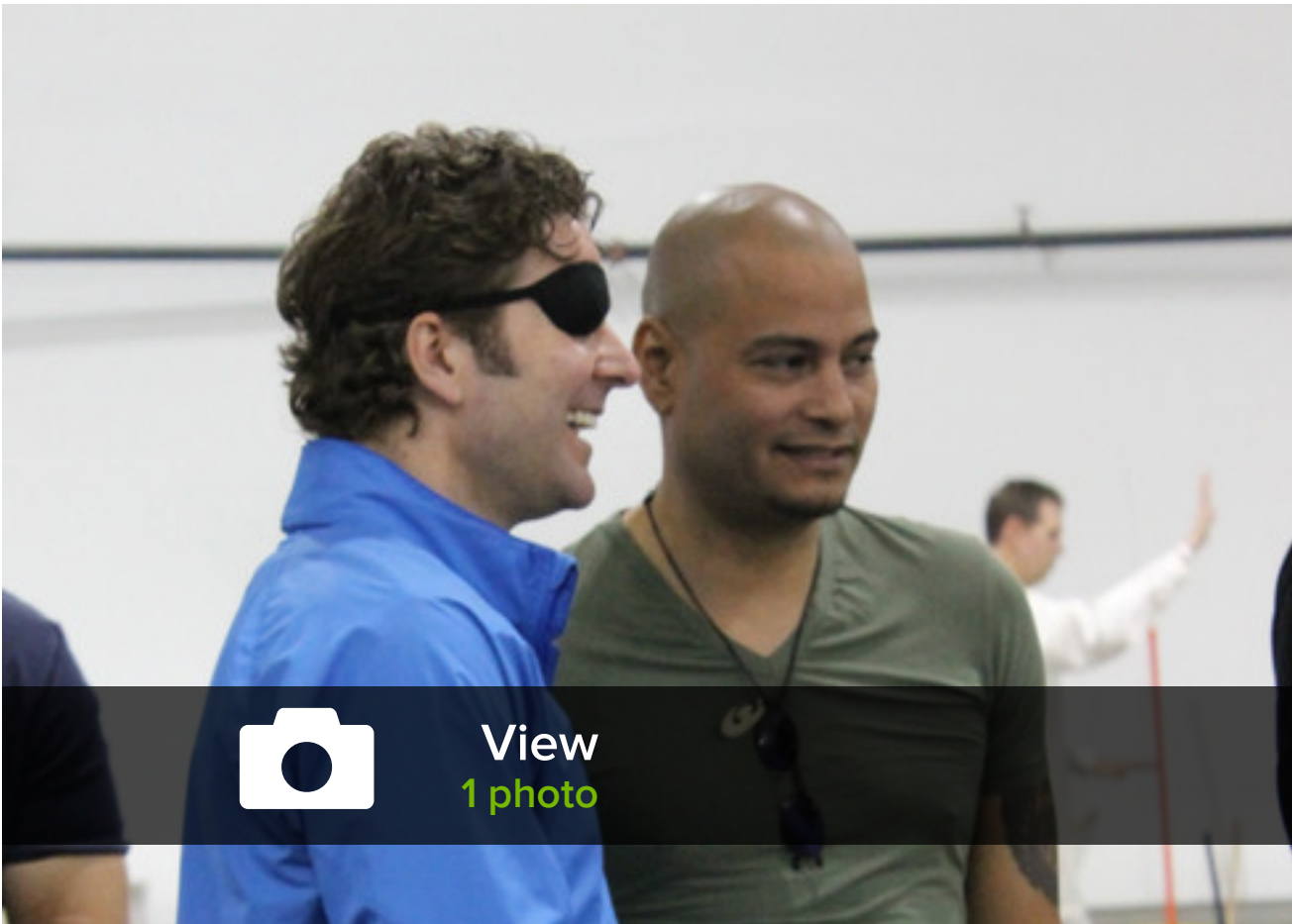


Is Chen Tai Chi bad for the knees?

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1 photo

Dr. Patrick Morris (left) with Master Jose Figueroa

Violet Li

Chen Style [Tai Chi](#) is the origin of modern Tai Chi. It contains more martial art features in its forms than other Tai Chi Styles. Unlike most other Tai Chi styles, Chen is not evenly paced in slow motions. It mixes fast movements with slow ones. It does not maintain at a fixed stance during a particular form. Most practitioners practice it at a combination of high and medium stances and advanced practitioners perform it at medium and low stances. There are movements that require a floor-level stance like “Nimble Dragon Descending to the Ground” or “Crouching Tiger.” Its signature movement “Warrior Pounding the Mortar” drops the right foot on the ground. Additionally there are jumps and kicks. They are exciting to watch. Some worry these are [bad for the knees](#).



Violet Li

Dr. Patrick Morris is an assistant professor at University of Minnesota Physicians Primary Care Center and his specialty is Orthopedics and [Sports Medicine](#). He sees patients who are either athletes or people with orthopedic needs. He also teaches Russian Kettlebell, a power regimen that combines cardiovascular, strength and flexibility trainings together.

Patrick said where he grew up Tai Chi was not heard of and people just play balls, i.e. basketball, baseball, football, and tennis for sports and fitness. A few years ago, at a special event in Minnesota, Patrick saw a 4th grader perform Tai Chi. He was fascinated by it and decided to learn it from the boy's teacher **Master Jose Figueroa**.

Jose Figueroa has studied Chinese [martial arts](#) for over 20 years (mostly in Tai Chi) and is a disciple of **Grandmaster Ren Guangyi**. Jose has probably won the most titles in the Americas with over 40 gold metals from local, regional, national and international tournaments, as well as the Grand Champion title at various international tournaments for multiple years. He was inducted into the International Kung Fu Federation / Hall of Fame and World Karate Union /Hall of Fame in 1997 and the USAWKF Kung Fu Federation / Hall of Fame in 1999.

Patrick thinks that Tai Chi embodies both beauty and athleticism. Patrick does not see there is a problem of doing low stances, kicking or punching as long as the movements and body alignments are done properly. As a sports medicine doctor, he considers Tai Chi good for strengthening the knees. It is important to know how to relax the hips, keep body upright and keep the knees from surpassing the toes, and keep the knees the same direction as the toes and shift the body weight correctly. He said that Master Figueroa is very keen as far as correcting the form and making sure practitioners are doing

it in a safe way. He said that there is no difference than swinging a Russian Kettlebell if people don't have appropriate training, they can hurt themselves. Nowadays with Youtube containing so many Tai Chi video clips, many people think that they can learn from them. There are certainly risks involved. Dr. Morris advised that you need a good teacher to teach and correct you regardless what style of Tai Chi you are practicing.

Dr. Morris said that Chen Style Silk Reeling teaches practitioners how to develop and use the right muscles. "Once you groove your movements, Tai Chi changes your daily movements," added Patrick. You will naturally hold your body posture correctly. Patrick said that many old Tai Chi masters in their 70's and 80's still practice the form is because they have been doing it accurately.

Patrick thinks that Chen Style Tai Chi consists of very subtle movements creating momentum with control. It is a good exercise for overall fitness and he enjoys practicing it.

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