News You Can Use

EMORY PAIN CENTER

WINTER - SPRING 2019

BENEFITS OF EXERCISE/TAI CHI

The Influence of Exercise on Perceived Pain and Disability in Patients with Lumbar Spinal Stenosis: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials

Key Points:

- A variety of exercises (aerobic activity, e.g. cycling or treadmill exercise, flexibility and mobility training, and muscle strengthening) have shown promise for improving quality of life in patients with lumbar spinal stenosis (LSS).
- Lumbar spinal stenosis comes from narrowing of spaces in the spinal canal lessening blood flow to the spinal nerve roots.
- Non-operative treatment involving exercise has less cost, no recovery time, fewer complications.
- 5 randomized exercise studies were included in this systematic review. These studies were small and lasted for short periods. Disability was improved but not statistically significant.

What This Means For You:

- Among patients with lumbar spinal stenosis, exercise appears to be effective for pain reduction, disability, pain medication use, and improving mood by decreasing anger and depression.

The American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine, Vol 10, No 2 (March/April), 2015: pp 136-147.

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Health benefits of tai chi: What is the evidence?

Key Points:

- Tai chi is a meditative martial art with gentle movements that are designed to strengthen and relax the body and mind. Increasingly, its benefits are being studied.
- Systematic reviews suggest tai chi preventing falls, osteoarthritis, Parkinson disease, rehabilitation for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and improves cognitive capacity in older adults.
- It also improves depression, cardiac and stroke rehabilitation and dementia.
- Systematic reviews of general health and fitness benefits show excellent evidence of benefit for improving balance and aerobic capacity in those with poor fitness.

What This Means For You:

- There is abundant evidence on the health and fitness benefits of Tai Chi. Based on this, physicians can now provide evidence-based recommendations to their patients, noting that this is an active area of research. As with any exercise program, please consult your physician before starting.

Canadian Family Physician, Vol 62, No 11 (November), 2016: pp881-890.

EMORY PAIN CENTER

550 Peachtree Street, NE
Medical Office Tower, 7th floor
404-686-2410
emoryhealthcare.org/pain