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## My Experience with Tai Chi

I became interested in taking Tai Chi as a very basic introduction toward martial arts, which I had no experience in. I decided on Tai Chi over Karate or Kung Fu because I had heard that it provided a basic level of bodily knowledge, which could be used in the others. I also have some experience in different forms of yoga, but am glad that I took Tai Chi because it is much more applicable for my everyday life.

The ten step form of Tai Chi has been most useful for me because I can do it anytime. Other forms of meditation and martial arts need more time and space, but I am able to do the ten step form in a very small space in under five minutes. I can't say that I have done it religiously, but I have done it when I feel that I am losing focus with a task or am nervous about something coming up.

The two times that I would do Tai Chi the most were either the first thing I would do upon waking up, or as a calming ritual during a baseball game. In the mornings, the process would allow me time to relax and focus my energies before starting the day. I found that after doing Tai Chi Chuan I was in a better place from which to take on the day. I was much less tired in my morning classes, and less stressed about things due.

The most Tai Chi that I did was on the baseball field. Baseball is a very peculiar sport because while it is full of contact, it is not a non-stop sport. Each play begins with the pitcher throwing the ball, so instead of valuing speed, agility, strength, and stamina, it is more important to be as focused and tuned in as possible. I would sometimes do Tai Chi before I would go to hit, and I was at my best when I could carry that focus into the batter's box and continue to focus on my exhaling throughout my at-bat.

I also did the routine at times when I was falling asleep or losing focus while trying to do homework or write papers. Taking just a few minutes off from looking at your screen and thinking about what you will write next is a great idea when working long hours. I wrote a few 10 or more page papers throughout the semester, and stopped to do a five-minute Tai Chi routine during each. Before this semester I would do jumping jacks or pushups or just jump up and down in order to get my blood flowing, but I think that Tai Chi is better than those because while they do help to get your blood flowing which helps to renew focus and start refreshed, when I do Tai Chi instead of pushups or jumping up and down I feel that not only am I alert and awake, but I am also more relaxed than I would be from the others.