

June 16th 2026

Tai Chi at the Folkestone Nepalese Community Centre.

Weekly classes on Monday mornings continue into their fourth year at the Centre and are still very popular with seniors. Attendees are of both sexes, but mostly it's the ladies. The age range is from 58 to 83, with most in their mid to late 70s and four in their 80's

The health benefits of this practice in the regular attendees is clearly demonstrated by their excellent attendance record, with the weekly register showing 85-100% attending each week. Details below.

It was noted that many of the older gentlemen either find the level of exercise in the class a little too demanding or struggle to attend on a Monday morning. Many have engaged in very strenuous physical exercise as part of their military career and their bodies carry the consequences of this. In order to address their particular needs, a short video of more gentle seated exercises was made in the Autumn. This was played during the winter months, twice weekly, at the Community Warm Hub sessions, where there are many attendees.

The exercises were carefully selected and adapted to seated practice, in order to address the limitations of many in this group. Focussed on gentle stretching and strengthening, and ease of breathing, each exercise was demonstrated in detail in the video, with a voiceover of the instructions, translated into Nepali by (Ret) Captain Bishnu Bahadur Singh.

Reports back from Kanchan, who played the video at these sessions was positive, with approximately 70-80% of those present talking part.

We hope to continue and extend this inclusive practice going forward.

The Monday morning class runs for 50 mins. There are usually between 10 and 16 in attendance. The regulars include those listed below:

Lalumaya Thapa
Jaikala Pun
Indramaya Rai
Padmaya Limbu
Narmaya Limbu
Dilmaya Sunuwar
Chaturman Rai
Josduda
Narmaya Tamang
Hom Kumari Rai
Dhan Kumari Rai
Bharna Rai
Phulmaya
Padamaya Rai

Regular checks are carried out to monitor health issues with the group so that the exercises can be constantly adapted to address the needs of those attending.

As is to be expected with a group of this age, the main physical issues are with knees, lower back and shoulder stiffness/pain. Many also have blood pressure issues, as is common in this section of the community.

The group as a whole have hugely improved their posture over the time they have been attending, and report they now have far less lower back pain and greater mobility.

Individually there have been improvements in specific areas of pain and tightness, especially in the case of those who had previously struggled with hip stiffness and pain in the shoulders and neck, mostly due to mobility.

Over the last 6 months we have been particularly focussed on cardiovascular health, balance and stability, with a section of aerobic exercise at the start of each class and specific balance exercises, which are tied to everyday activities to encourage practice outside of the class.

The improvements in both of these areas are clearly visible across the group.

Almost all participants have demonstrated big improvements in balance, stability, strength and flexibility. The over 80's have maintained their existing level of fitness and individuals have improved in specific areas.

In addition to the maintenance and improvement of physical health, a key benefit of the class is in mental health.

A key aspect of the class involves remembering detailed and complex movements and being able to do these in a calm and controlled manner.

The class has worked hard on this and can now perform a sequence of 20+ moves from a traditional Qigong set, as well as the first 10 moves of the Form with minimal guidance from the teacher.

This helps keep their minds active and stimulated as well as being a wonderfully relaxing and invigorating practice.

The benefits of the class, as mentioned, are most clearly visible in the attendance at classes and the huge enthusiasm with which they participate in it.

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