ChiWalking (CW) and ChiRunning: Essentials.

This part is a bit more about ChiWalking, ChiRunning information will be added later here, however it can be very good to start with a good ChiWalking posture also for ChiRunning!

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Try to use 5 mindful steps in walking and maybe you can feel it; but you don’t need to know this. What you maybe need to know can be this:

1. Align your body. A t’ai chi teacher should focus on posture and alignment so start with a good posture. When your posture is in alignment, you will find out your core muscles work in a better way, because they are set to work and your arms and legs can relax. Now you will maybe walk from leg strength. As you practice your physical core you will begin to sense an ‘inner strength’ that you can also use in daily life.

2. Align your mind with your body. In chiwalking/running this is called ‘Body sensing’. Your mind is listening to your body then redirecting your body to make positive changes. You then make adjustments like a better arm swim f.i. You’ll establish a communication link between your mind and body. You’ll walk more relaxed and with less tension.

3. Getting physically fit: the walking program is an ongoing fitness program that will give you a cardio-aerobic conditioning to. There is a menu of different chi-walks (chapter 5) Through CW you can condition your body in 5 important ways for a lifelong health:
   a. Aerobic conditioning. (Muscles healthy/young; improves oxygen intake)
   b. Cardiovascular health (Stronger heart/protect heart disease/ increase blood flow)
   c. Muscle tone (Looking and feeling great)
   d. Flexibility (Allows ease of movement/ Increases agility)
   e. Bone density (Guards osteoporosis/ Strengthens bones, reduces risk of fracture)

4. Get aligned by making the best choices. CW is a choice you have to make. It does not happen by accident. You have to set goals for yourself and keep yourself on the track. (Wife lost weight by CW)

5. CW: Chi (life energy) can flow through your body and your life will move in an upward spiral (Like a hawk riding an updraft). Then you will be in a better position to make good choices. The more good choices, the more energy and so on.

It is not always easy to keep up with a program. Therefore the menu: be kind to yourself and do not over hurry things. You will engage your whole body.

Two: the 5 mindful steps.

Step 1: Get aligned  Step 2: Engage your core  Step 3: Create Balance
Step 4: Make a choice  Step 5: Move forward.

1. Get aligned.

CW: aligning is the greatest way to create balance and efficiency in our bodies. In TC all the movements come from the spine.

NEEDLE IN COTTON: GATHER TO YOUR CENTER AND LET GO OF ALL ELSE. (Comes from the TC principle of a needle resting in a ball of cotton. All movement comes from this centre line. The more energy you gather in your needle the more you can let go of it in your extremities and imagine them to be light as cotton. Why alignment is important; well you can have also “ugly” alignment, which can hurt your body!.

PHYSICAL ALIGNMENT.
Posture straight: whole structure is aligned your weight is carried by the sound structure of your bones, ligaments and tendons and not by your muscles. Some muscles we need to hold us but the best part is done by the structure like iron pillars of a skyscraper. For CW: have as many parts of your body moving in the same direction that you are.

In walking it is not poor muscle strength but muscle tightness that restricts healthy movement.

ENERGETIC ALIGNMENT

Your mind would be the director of your life. A good director is a both a visionary and a pragmatist. Energetic alignment means being clearly and deeply behind what you are doing: be truthful with yourself, realistic about your own goals and able to keep your vision in your mind when the going get tough. It means knowing what you want and going for it.

ALIGN YOURSELF PHYSICALLY AND ENERGETICALLY.

So physical alignment gives you body more power and energy and energetic alignment gives you more power and energy. When making good choices CW improves your technique and you become a more efficient person.

2: Engage your core.

The strongest part of the tree is where the roots meet the trunk. So the strongest part of your body is your core which support your trunk just like a tree. Strong means having power and stability. Core muscles are your abdominal muscles. (Hara/ Dantien.)

Relax your shoulders and hips so the movement can originate from your centre. Emotional strong does mean having strong willpower. Falling incidents accounts for half of the accidental death by the elderly. Your stability should be based on being flexible, not on being rigid. A strong core is connected with inner strength and willpower.

3: Create balance.

CW also creates balance. You can’t create balance without a centre.

BALANCE IN YOUR BODY.

The bulk of work is in your core muscles. Use your muscles to push you forward: weak. Lean forward, stride to the rear: strong! When you are balanced your body has less work. Your body should be completely symmetrical (no shoulder higher etc.) in balance and relaxed.

BALANCE IN YOUR MIND.

When you are mentally balanced you move more easily through life. Also in losing weight: do not create imbalance by dieting too much! Remain in balance through your work-outs. (Not all on one day etc.)

4: Make a choice

After the first three you have to do this. You choose movement in a new way. You lead with your upper body, not with your legs. Most people unfortunately lead with their legs. Choice is also: maybe a shorter because tired, or longer because good weather or letting you help yourself by ‘body sensing’. Align your body then and then chose; slow relaxing walk 15 minutes or 40 minutes cardio vascular etc. A lot of our choices are from an unbalanced mind. To often we listen to our mind and not to our body. Most of our bodies are underused and most of our minds are overused. Practice CW regularly and you will make good choices from a balanced mind and body.

5: Step forward.

Time for action and move forward. CW is also about pacing, stride length and rhythm. You can use the analogy of kicking the ball. Maybe start with 4 walks of 20 min. It is not so much the goal but more the journey that counts. When the going gets tough, regain your energy by returning to step 1: check your posture, engage your core again, check you balance and choose what to focus. With CW you have all the tools for the upward circle of Chi to flow.

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