

MEDIA RELEASE

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Tai Chi boosts fitness levels for older folk

Sedentary older adults who take up Tai Chi may gain strength and confidence benefits similar to those of vigorously active older adults, a UTAS honours student has found.

Sharon Hetherington is one of the Centre for Human Movement's nine outstanding honours students who will present their research findings at the Launceston campus today (Thursday).

Ms Hetherington said Tai Chi was a form of exercise preferable to many older adults who did not enjoy or were unable to do vigorous physical activity.

"My research suggests that active people aged 65 and older have significantly lower fall risk factors, better balance confidence and better perceptions of their quality of life than sedentary older adults who do not exercise," she said.

"But these differences between the two groups were no longer evident after the sedentary group had completed a 12-week Tai Chi course."

Other research by the honours students include subjects such as:

- The effect of green school grounds on childhood physical activity.
- The effect of two different ergometer training programs on performance;
- Social and emotional learning of students in one Tasmanian primary school.

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