

Rongoā Kākāriki
GREEN
PRESCRIPTION

“Movement for Health Modified Tai chi

Success Story – Gary – ACC Movement for Health /Modified Tai Chi class and GRx

Three major back operations, numerous fused vertebrae and a retirement from farming at just 53 years of age, led to Gary spending too much time doing nothing at all.

His mobility deteriorated, his inflammatory arthritis increased and his walking declined to the point that he required the aid of a walking stick wherever he went.

Gary’s confidence was being undermined as his falls increased to a weekly occurrence. For this historically fit and active man, this was debilitating and humiliating.

Gary’s walking decreased to an unconfident shuffle, his posture was stooped and pain was rife in his body. What he loved doing was slowly being eroded away; he had even stopped the daily task of collecting the mail because of the fear of falling.

When he spotted an advertisement in the local paper referring to the ACC Modified Tai Chi classes and prevention of falls, he decided it was time to act – nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Gary made contact with Ann from the Sport Southland Green Prescription team and after some discussion Ann recommended the ACC-funded Movement for Health Modified Tai Chi programme as this programme was ideally suited to him.

Fronting up with trepidation to what seemed like a ‘female’ orientated programme initially felt like a

‘hit’ to this staunch Southland man – however two weeks into the course he realised that this wasn’t the case.

The programme was designed for both genders and he needed to swallow his pride and accept this. He also realised that most of the exercises were within his grasp and he was starting to notice his confidence improve. His instructor gently encouraged but at the same time ‘pushed’ him to try, and he was surprised at what he was actually achieving. Gary’s feet started to move more quickly and his response to overbalances were quicker which, in turn, averted falls. He was really starting to take heed of these improvements.

On the first day of the course Gary undertook a 15 second step test. This showed that his right was 8 and left 9 which is at the lowest end of the programme entry scale.

After 16 weeks and regular attendance and daily practice his step test had improved to right 17 and left 18 – an extremely impressive improvement.

There were days that Gary’s pain level almost stopped him from attending the classes but, with support from his wife and his personal determination to put his best effort forward, he kept up his attendance – and felt better for it.

Whilst he still uses his walking stick, he can now walk around his home unaided. What is amazing is that he hasn’t had a fall since starting the class and to this day 20 weeks on – it’s now the status quo.

Please call Sport Southland for more information on 0800 ACTIVE www.sportsouthland.co.nz



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The programme has not decreased the pain but Gary is adamant that the programme has taught him how to shift his feet to prevent falls, it has strengthened his muscles and his balance has improved immensely. He is more responsive and now has the confidence to attempt some of the activities that he had previously enjoyed.

Gary thanks ACC for funding this programme and Sport Southland for implementing it and he acknowledges that the onus is now on him to continue practising these skills taught. When he looks back he is adamant that the future is squarely in his hands. He totally recommends this programme to people in their senior years.

Prevention is the best medicine. Don't put it off – Call Sport Southland.

Movement for Health Modified Tai Chi is run by Sport Southland and funded by ACC and is suitable for people 65 (55 Maori) years plus with walking gait and balance issues. Improves muscle strength walking confidence and independence.

Most participants opt for a Green Prescription after completing the programme as this helps to provide follow-up encouragement and information on other suitable physical activity options.

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