



Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention (TCA/FP) – Instructor Support

Zero Session & Co-leading

1. Why lead a zero session?

- A “zero session” for TCA/FP is sometimes needed as a way to provide those not 100% committed to the program a chance to sample tai chi. A “zero session” is also a great way to introduce tai chi to those who may not know what it is or how they may benefit. This may be needed if the initial class enrollment exceeds or is close to exceeding the 1 to 25 instructor/student ratio or physical space limitations and the offering of a second class is not an option.
- Sometimes people may begin the program after your official zero session and only attend one time. If this occurs it may not be necessary to include them in the class information cover sheet, attendance log, and first session survey. Basically, their one time attendance would be considered a “zero session” too.

2. How to lead a TCA/FP zero session:

- A “zero session” for TCA/FP does not need to be much different than a normal first session. What tends to work well is simply taking extra time for introductions, provide the class with information [about tai chi](#), [why tai chi is effective for falls prevention](#), and teach some of the [basic principles](#) through teaching and practicing the warm-up exercises. If there is time at the end of the class, lead the group through the Commencement form. Most learners are going to need to review both the warm-ups and Commencement again anyway.
- If you want to or have the capacity to add additional balance screenings to a “zero session,” please see this resource developed by Dartmouth. It was developed for a different type of Tai Chi, but the Balance Day info can be easily modified. Click [HERE](#). Note the STEADI algorithm has since been updated. It can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/steady/materials.html>

3. Tips for co-leading a TCA/FP class:

- Establish a plan and evaluate as the class progresses: Be sure to establish a class structure and timeline that seems reasonable to both instructors so that the classes maintain a similar feel. Establish and review a class structure that both instructors agree to adhere to and create a plan for your weekly communication before class begins.
- Communicate regularly: Instructors should be communicating between each class sessions to ensure cohesion among each class session.
- Recognize and appreciate differences between you and your co-instructor: No instructor is going to teach exactly as another. Likewise, all students are going to have different learning needs and abilities. Treat different teaching styles as an asset in appealing to the different learning styles of your students.
- Be willing to provide and accept constructive feedback and be supportive.
- There are several models that might work well for co-leading. If feasible, it is a good idea to teach the first 1-2 sessions and the last session together so that participants see and experience that you are co-leaders. Sharing that you have created the class structure together can help with any questions that could arise later.
- Feedback from instructors who have co-led a workshop have indicated that the following models can work well:
 - Both instructors teach the first 1-2 sessions together, then alternate teaching classes.
 - Both instructors attend every class when possible, and alternate teaching the warm-up, forms, and cool-down in a pre-determined way before class, switching roles for the next class.
 - Depending on the layout of the facility, one team has shared that it is helpful to have both instructors there, with one in the front of the room and one in the back, so that when participants turn, they can still reference an instructor as needed.