

TMW Online Class Feedback: Survey Results

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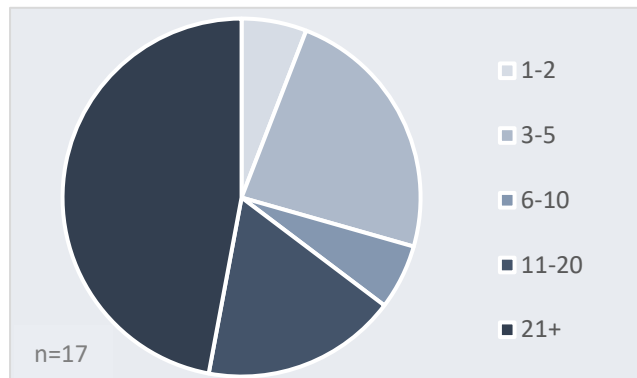
Tai Chi Movements for Wellbeing is a simple sequence of movements which draws on the essence of Tai Chi and Qi Gong. Andrea has been teaching TMW since completing her training in 2015.

In October 2021, students who had attended at least one of Andrea's TMW classes since they had been migrated online, in response to COVID-19, were asked to complete a short survey. The survey asked primarily for feedback on people's experiences of online classes and classes in 'lockdown' specifically. Other questions captured what students had hoped to get out of TMW classes generally and what they had got out of TMW since coming.

Headline findings

- Responses were received from 17 students, compared with a typical attendance of around eight students per week.
- Just under a half of respondents recalled attending 21 or more classes since they had moved online. About a quarter had attended five or fewer online classes.
- From a pre-defined list of potential physical and mental benefits from TMW, people identified just under three benefits on average that they had hoped to get out of TMW, and just over three that they had experienced since coming to TMW.
 - 'Relaxation and reduced tension' and 'peace, calm and time out from everyday life' were identified most often, both before and since joining classes.
 - Improved general physical or mental wellbeing were each cited by about a half of respondents.
 - A minority had joined simply to find out more about Tai Chi.
- There is an inherent diversity of need and experience among students joining TMW classes. Not everyone got the specific benefits they had hoped for, while others had experienced benefits that they had not expected.
 - The most often unanticipated benefits related to 'peace, calm and time out from everyday life', 'improved balance' and 'improved confidence'.
- There is also a diversity of experience of the online nature of the current classes, and how these compare to face-to-face classes.
 - Three-quarters of respondents rated their experience of online classes as 'very good' and, apart from a small minority, felt they were about the same as or better than face-to-face classes. About four in five people regarded the online classes as important or very important during lockdown.
 - Some went on to explain that they simply prefer face-to-face classes, while others saw distinct advantages of the online classes over face to face. Others accepted that online classes were a compromise, but a more than adequate and often necessary one.
 - The specific advantages respondents identified included convenience, the ability to join in from anywhere, being able to see the trainer more clearly than in face-to-face classes, and connection with others from outside the home (particularly when other responsibilities made getting out difficult).
 - Some specifically noted the trainer's teaching variety and shared personal reflections.
- While the classes continue to be delivered online, the trainer will be taking into account the 'balance' to teaching that respondents' constructive comments, when taken as a whole, suggest. This includes improving the capacity of the classes to re-energise while also being relaxing.

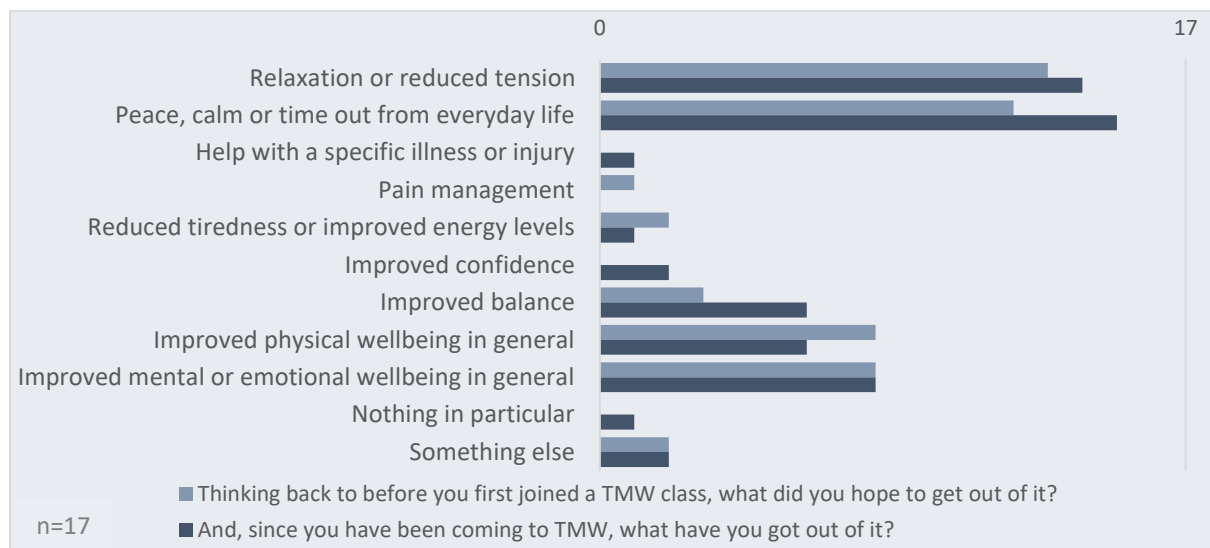
Number of online classes joined



Compared with a typical attendance of eight students per week, 17 responses were received.

Just under a half of responding students said they had attended 21 or more classes since they had moved online. About a quarter had attended for between 6 and 20 online classes and another quarter had attended for fewer than 6 online classes.¹

What people hoped to get and got out of the classes



When asked what they had hoped to get out of TMW classes before they first joined, it was very common for respondents to cite 'relaxation and reduced tension' or 'peace, calm and time out from everyday life' from a list of options. These levels increased further when asked about the benefits they had experienced since coming to classes, to the extent that the vast majority reported benefitting in these ways. Improved general physical or mental wellbeing were each cited by about a half of respondents. In contrast, only a small number cited 'improved balance' as a reason to join the classes although the number citing this doubled when asked about what they had got out of it. In addition, 'improved confidence' was not cited at all as a reason for joining but some people did go on to say that the classes had benefited them in this way.

Where the classes appeared to be delivering less well on individuals' expectations, this related to improving energy levels and pain management. This affected a small minority of students. Despite this, when asked what was the one thing that kept them coming back, some students cited energising and re-energising as we explore below.

¹ Precise numbers are not always reported to prevent disclosure. This is particularly relevant where only 1 or 2 respondents gave a particular response, making them potentially identifiable.

It was most common for respondents to cite three benefits from the prompted list that they had experienced, ranging from none to seven benefits. Overall, students identified slightly more benefits since they had been coming compared with what they hoped for (a mean of 3.1 from 2.8). Even so, it was not always the case that everyone got the specific benefits they had hoped for, while others had experienced benefits that they had not expected. Some said specifically that they had hoped simply to learn a bit more about Tai Chi.

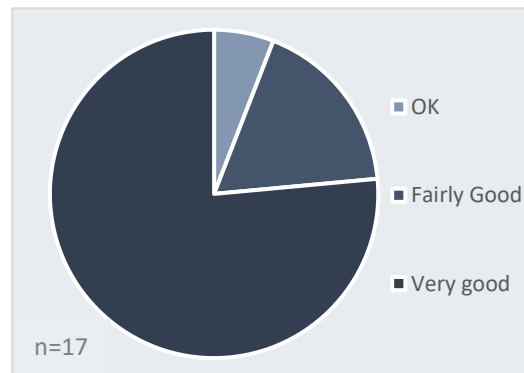
There is no doubt that there is a diversity of need and experience among students joining the online classes. When asked what was the one thing that kept them coming back, responses included the following:

- Dedicated time out, to draw a line under what's happening in life
- Understanding that it is okay to be in your own rhythm, that getting it 'right' doesn't matter
- Peace, relaxation, calm and emotional wellbeing
- The knowledge, authenticity and inclusivity of the teaching
- Varied teaching and shared reflections of the instructor
- Simply enjoying it, feeling good or different after a session

Experiences of TMW classes online

Respondents were asked to rate their experience of online TMW classes, from 'very poor' to 'very good'. All said that it was OK or good, including a large majority who said it was 'very good'.

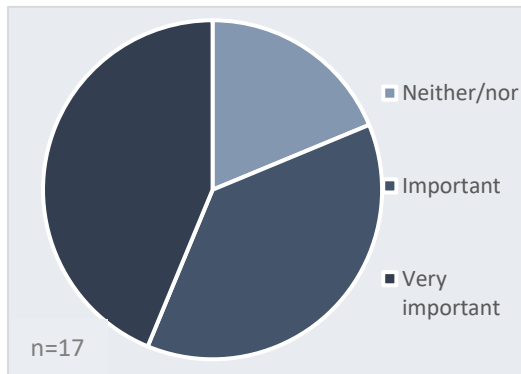
Of those who had previously attended face to face, a large minority said they found online classes better, and a small minority said they were a bit worse. The rest, about a half, said they were 'about the same', and all of these had rated their online experience as good.



When asked why they felt their experience was the same or better, responses ranged from convenience, including the ability to join in from wherever you are, to enjoying how the online classes are put together and the benefit of being able to see the trainer clearly at all times. Personal circumstances, particularly caring responsibilities, mean that not everyone is always able to attend in person and an online class offered some people an important connection to others from outside the home.

Those who were a little less positive about online classes when compared with face to face cited a simple preference for face-to-face classes, although for some there was a sense that online classes were a good compromise on face-to-face classes.

The importance of online TMW classes during lockdown



Nearly all respondents had attended one or more classes in lockdown. Among these, the general consensus was that online TMW classes had been important, if not very important, during this time.

The reasons given typically related to time out from the daily routine and to give a welcome focus to the week and escape their worries. A sense of normality, familiarity and continuity in lockdown and the opportunity to connect with oneself were also noted.

The rest felt they had been neither important nor unimportant. All of these respondents had, perhaps coincidentally, attended 3 to 5 classes. The reasons they gave related to the difficulty of getting to many classes during lockdown, perhaps due to other responsibilities.

None said that the TMW classes had been unimportant during lockdown. This could reflect that the sample may have been comparatively self-selecting, when classes were first offered online in response to COVID-19.

Improving online TMW classes

When asked if there was any way that the TMW classes might be improved as they continue to be offered online, more than a half of respondents gave no response or said instead they thought the classes were just about right. Among those offering constructive criticism, the comments were captured quite well by the following themes:

- More classes which working through the whole sequence with a *moderate* number of repetitions
- More classes which deconstruct one or two moves
- More classes with a meditative theme
- Changing the speed of the movements more often
- Rotating the trainer's position more often

These points are already being fed into class plans by the trainer. To a great extent they reflect the different 'balance' of teaching that different students need or desire and she will consider these alongside the points noted above about how some students would like classes that are more re-energising alongside the relaxing.

In practical terms, there were also examples of people wanting shorter classes, a morning class and this appeared to tie in with work of home-life responsibilities. Alternative payment mechanisms were also mentioned. These more practical changes might not be possible straight away, but they are noted and will always be fed into my future plans for the classes.

Some respondents offered additional, wide-ranging thoughts in response to this question. This included appreciating the opportunity to chat before or after a session and an important connection which some students felt to others in the groups, as well as the particular benefit online classes have in removing the pressure people can sometimes feel to do more than they should when practising in a group. Others talked about how they 'really value' the online classes, that the classes 'work well' and 'as well as face to face', and they were 'very content' with them.