

ONLINE CLASSES

Case study 4

Tai Chi

Phil and Helen and Kate Elliott



Kate lost her leg to cancer three and a half years ago. Prior to her amputation she had done tai chi and she thoroughly enjoyed it but life got in the way, so she stopped. Kate heard about the reVAMP programme through word of mouth and she jumped at the chance to get involved. She had really been struggling with her balance so was seeking support.

Tai chi focuses on 3D movement and the use of the arms, legs, head and torso all at the same time, so it really does test one's balance.

Initially she found it very tough to exercise with a prosthetic, specifically as her amputation is very high. She started the reVAMP programme without her prosthetic but has now progressed to wearing it.

"I love my weekly tai chi classes. Everyone can see it on my calendar. My practise has given me so much more than the improved balance I was after. I've also gained in confidence, self-esteem and formed close friendships with like-minded people across the country. Knowing that Phil, our teacher, is also an amputee gives me much comfort as there is a real sense of 'he just gets it'."

For Kate her tai chi has been a genuine pleasure to be a part of weekly. She didn't see it as a form of rehab but her time for herself to disconnect from the world and reconnect with her body and mind.

Kate continued, "Tai chi is very much part of my world now and not just because I am an amputee. I feel so lucky to have it in my life. My sphere of movement has improved, and this is something I have been able to translate into my everyday life. We learn sequences in class and I often talk them through to myself when doing every day tasks at home and in the office to help me retain my balance safely and move with ease. It feels calm. It feels beautiful, most of all it gives me control."

Tai chi is also very much spiritual and



about slowing down from the everyday stresses and strains of life. You learn to manage your mind, body, temperament and this all means you're more in control when working.

Yorkshire-based Phil Sheridan and Helen Parsons have been running the classes for us online which they started during the pandemic. Phil explained that it has been a complete blessing in disguise as the team were able to reach out to more amputees who usually wouldn't have had access to impairment specific live tai chi class in their local area.

Phil, who also lives with limb loss, has been aware of us at LimbPower for years. "Being an amputee myself I have really enjoyed the services on offer. I have found them to be such an incredible resource, particularly for me to access sport and leisure, and LimbPower have been such a large part of my life."

"I feel blessed that I was able to offer these classes to the amputee community and support them as needed. Of course, it came with its challenges as all poses had to be adapted to be accessible and inclusive for all, whatever limb loss they had. Hearing the wonderful stories from participants such as Kate just makes me so happy as I can truly see how much of

a difference the class has made to her lifestyle and wellbeing as a whole."

Kate added full of gratitude, "Often many amputees want to lose weight due to their new sedentary lives but we also need to ensure that we work holistically. You can't always measure impact by the pain you feel post a workout. We must also measure impact through the healing we feel too."



Nurture and healing are so explicit alongside the strength training; they go hand in hand."

"I cannot thank LimbPower enough. By offering us these classes and non-judgemental forums to not only exercise but feel included and talk to those dealing with similar lives as our own they are turning what should be a complete challenge for amputees into opportunities for us all."

Email rebecca@limbpower.com to find out more about LimbPower's tai chi classes.



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LimbPower exists to engage amputees and individuals with limb impairments in regular and sustained participation in physical activity, sport and the arts to improve quality of life and to aid physical, social and psychological rehabilitation. To find out more about how we can help you, visit our website. LimbPower is a Limited Company No. 09513024 Charity No 1132829

