

# Fitness trainers to offer free tai chi in Acton

Acton residents and fitness trainers Terri Robbins and Jason Fournier are sharing their experience with tai chi with their neighbours.

"We have this awesome park (Prospect Park) in the middle of town and the band shell allows us to put this on even if the weather gets wet," said Fournier.

"Tai chi seemed like a logical choice for a program to introduce to people who want to start moving but are afraid of hurting themselves or going too far," said Robbins. "Anyone can do tai chi. Unlike yoga, there is no bending over or lying down. It can even be done by people in wheelchairs."

Robbins added that tai chi has many similar benefits to the Indian art of yoga.

"Tai chi and yoga should be considered complementary. Both offer similar benefits with slightly different technique."

Robbins and Fournier are trained in both tai chi and yoga and know the benefits. Besides the physical ben-

efits tai chi offers mental benefits, said Fournier.

"Most people know that they need to stretch their muscles for proper fitness, but few people think to 'stretch' their minds. Tai chi allows people to relax—in essence 'stretch' their brains," he said.

Fournier also added that in the last generation society as a whole has taken a backwards step in improving their mental health by being overconnected.

"No athlete would ever work out every waking hour, but people with their Blackberries don't let their minds rest at all during the day."

Robbins added participants will be asked to turn their cellphones and Blackberries off during the 40-minute session.

Free tai chi in the Park will take place on Sundays, July 25 and August 8 and 22. Although free, registration is necessary ahead of time for insurance purposes. Registration begins at 9:30 a.m. and class begins at 10 a.m. at the band shell in Prospect Park.



Terri Robbins demonstrates a tai chi pose.

Photo by Jason Fournier

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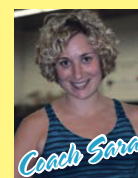
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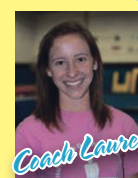
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