

# Tai chi in Hawick

**H**aving returned from Orkney where he established Orkney Tai Chi, Mike Henderson is chief instructor at the newly formed Borders Tai Chi Chuan.

Mike has studied tai chi chuan for over 25 years, is a senior instructor of Wutan tai chi chuan, and holds a qualification from the British Council for Chinese Martial Arts. He is qualified to teach all aspects of the art including hand forms, weapon forms – spear, sabre and sword – as well as self defence. He has been a judge and referee at the British Open Internal Martial Arts Championships held in Newcastle and his students have won two gold medals at this event. He now lives and teaches in Hawick.

**How long have you been practicing tai chi?**

Over 30 years.

**What stimulated your interest?**

I was looking for a suitable martial art that was practical but also health based. I was a pub manager at the time and came across a lot of aggression that had to be dealt with. A friend recommended tai chi and I saw a demonstration by Ian Cameron at the Do-Su Festival Of Martial Arts in Edinburgh. I was hooked. I later left pub management and went into school teaching but tai chi has always been a part of my life since. I fully believe that tai chi is a complete art in itself. You never stop learning.

**What does tai chi mean to you?**

I suppose tai chi is a touchstone in my life. It's always been there to help and support me and, most importantly, for me to enjoy.

**Who or what inspired you, both in the beginning and now?**

Ian Cameron, James Connachan and Dan Docherty have all had a great influence on me. I was also privileged to attend the seminars and workshops of Cheng Tin Hung when he visited Edinburgh. My students have always been a constant source of inspiration to me.

**What is the most important aspect to you?**

I used to think that it was the martial side but over the years the health side of training has become more important. In other words, I've come to see that they go hand in hand.

**Do you have any personal goals?**

To keep on discovering and learning. I am extremely proud of the way the Orkney club has developed and thrived and continues to grow even though I now live in the Borders. I hope I can continue to help the growth and development of the art in this part of the world.

**What do you make of tai chi's current popularity?**

People recognise that tai chi is the real deal. It is based on a solid tradition. In these troubled times it is getting

easier for people to see the benefits of this practice. A good standard of instruction is fundamental.

**What are your views on competition?**

Although I have been a judge and referee at the United Kingdom Internal Martial Art Competitions (where one of my students won a gold medal) I have never personally been that interested in competing. I fully support students who want to do so. They can be a good motivation factor and the intensity of the training is good for students and teachers alike!

**What direction would you like to see tai chi taking in the future?**

I would like to see standards continue to rise. It's still too easy for someone with a genuine interest but superficial knowledge of the art to set themselves up as a teacher and this can have a damaging effect on students and tai chi as a whole. I would like to see tai chi become a major factor in helping to improve the overall health of the population. I would also like to see more young people taking up the art seriously in classes that reflect their enthusiasms and motivations. Styles and approaches within tai chi may differ yet they should all have the same common goal. There is so much more that unites us than separates us.

**What are your interests outside tai chi?**

When I'm not practising or teaching tai chi...  
I play the guitar and am a keen photographer.



[www.facebook.com/Borders-Tai-Chi-111557881185334](https://www.facebook.com/Borders-Tai-Chi-111557881185334)

email: [mjkhenderson@gmail.com](mailto:mjkhenderson@gmail.com)

phone: 07366 605596