

**SWELL NTTER**  
**November 2023 Volume 3, Issue 11**  
**Tension Imagery Healing the Body and Mind**  
**Release Tension Method**

Many tai chi or qi gong masters mention Dantain. Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners believe that Dantain is the seat of life force energy in the body. Many cultures of ancient India believe in the three treasures of the body, Jing, Qi, and Shen. In both Hinduism and Buddhism, the third eye is a mystical invisible eye. It symbolizes the power of knowledge and leads to inner realms and spaces of higher consciousness and a state of enlightenment.

Are these forces real? I have found that healing forces of the body do exist and are backed by the top two clinic hospitals in the world. Mayo and Cleveland clinic and hospitals help us understand how our mind and body can work together to heal us.



**Patients Practicing Body Scan Healing at Cleveland Clinic and Hospitals**

**Dr. Young (2023)** at the Cleveland Clinics discuss the immediate and long-term health benefits of body scan tension and relaxed breathing. The Cleveland Clinic is ranked as the No. 2 hospital worldwide by Newsweek's Best Hospitals 2023 list. Other sources, such as the No.1 ranked Mayo Clinic, use body scan meditation and tai chi with their patients. **Dr. Walker (2017)**, a Professor at UC Berkeley, the world's leader in sleep therapy, talks about the importance of deep sleep. **Dr. Orlick (2016)**, a Professor at the University of Ottawa, the world leader in mental imagery, uses the body scan relaxing breathing methods. Dr. Orlick passed away in 2021.

When tensing muscles, the cells constrict, strengthening and toning the muscles as an isometric exercise. When tension is released through deep breathing, the muscles dilate, increasing circulation and bringing nutrients and oxygen to muscles and joints. These findings explain how healing powers of the mind and body can strengthen and heal muscles and joints. Dantain translates from Chinese to mean “field of elixir.” Focusing on the area below your navel or lower abdomen with deep breathing and gentle movements to release energy.

**James Roland (2019)** Health Journalists Healthline writes that muscle flexing can be especially helpful when recovering from an injury, especially to a joint like the shoulder or knee. Holding muscles in one position does not put extra stress on the joint or injured area. When having a joint injury or arthritis, isometric is ideal and less painful than other strength training exercises.

Many top clinics have found that tensing and relaxing muscles with breathing can help speed up recovery from injury and overtraining. Body scan tension and relaxed breathing help to reduce pain, increase circulation, and relieve stress and anxiety.

I have used this body scan tension release with students for the past three years at the University of Dubuque. The meditation students have enjoyed and have benefited from body scan tension release. There is a group of students that could benefit from this technique. They are called SWELL. It is a safe and easy way to heal and strengthen stiff, sore, or damaged muscles and joints. **Dr. Roizen (2023)** points out that isometric exercises lower blood pressure. There are five steps of the body scan method. Let us call it Tension Zen Imagery.

Close your eyes and take deep "belly" breaths to slow down your sympathetic nervous system. Follow these steps for each muscle group, beginning with the toes:

1. Inhale and contract (squeeze) each muscle group hard. Hold for five seconds.
2. Focus on how the tension feels and visualize tight muscles.
3. Exhale and relax that muscle group for 10 seconds.
4. Visualize relaxed muscles and notice how they feel.
5. Repeat with the next muscle group.

After you scan the entire body, you focus on stiff, sore, or painful areas. You repeat the five steps emphasizing these sore muscle and joint areas.

After Tension Zen Imagery, we focus on mental stress, relaxing our brain and thoughts. Besides healing the body, **Dr. Kempert (2023)** at the Cleveland Clinics talks about immediate and long-term health benefits of the body scan tension and relaxed breathing. Research headaches and benefits to control anxiety, help you sleep, relieve stress, and tension headaches, and enhance movement performance.

In conclusion ancient cultures were indeed experiencing healing through focus, deep breathing, and meditation. Now the top research clinics and hospitals have adopted isometric positions, deep breathing, slow movement, and meditation to heal the mind and body.

--Gary Wittman

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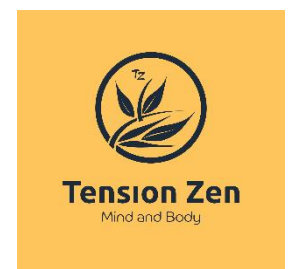
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**How does Tension Zen heal and strengthen your body? Try it out with a 7-day free trial at the link below.**

**Direct link to Tension Zen Patreon Page: <https://www.patreon.com/TensionZen>**

## Dale Errthum



I started SWELL in August of 2023, joining with my wife Joanne, because she spoke so highly of the program. I felt I needed an exercise program to help improve my balance and flexibility. I especially enjoy the ease of getting to know the other participants and their friendliness. It is a great senior exercise program and I get my exercise for the day completed early in the day. And the discounted tickets to the Heritage Center for plays, is an added bonus!

I volunteer 4 mornings a week at St Vincent de Paul's Radford Store. I accept donations at the door and sift through the items, so they go to the correct area for pricing. I enjoy that and have been doing it for approx. 4 years. I worked as a handyman, completing home repair and maintenance for my customers. I am semi-retired. We want to do more traveling and exploring other parts of the United States and the world. We hope to take a Mediterranean

cruise in the upcoming year. We go to Sarasota, FL every year from mid-February until mid-March. It is our happy place. We enjoy visiting friends and family.

I have 3 daughters, Laura and her family in Cedar Falls, IA, Tina in Greeley, CO and Diana and her family in Asbury, IA. We have 5 grandsons; with 2 sets of twins; one set identical and the other fraternal. They always keep us busy. I have 4 sisters and 5 brothers and my Mother lives in Lancaster, WI where I grew up on a farm. My wife did a very fine job writing this for me! She is a wonderful individual!

## Kay Averkamp



I joined SWELL in September of this year. I have been married to my husband, Brad, for 50 years. We have a daughter who works and lives in Brooklyn, NY. Our two sons live and work in Dubuque.

We have 3 grand dogs who are the sweetest.

I have been retired for 11 years after working 19 years at Loras College. The last two positions I held were Executive Assistant to the President for 9 years and Assistant to the Dean of Spiritual Life the last two years before I retired.

My husband and I have enjoyed e-biking with friends and relatives for the last 5 years. We always try to find a new trail every year. This past fall we spent 3 days in Lanesboro, MN. The Root River Trail is one of our favorites.

I enjoy traveling where most recently we spent 11 days on an Alaskan Cruise in July. Last year I went on a Viking Cruise to Germany with 5 other women from our church. Wonderful! Highly recommended! I also enjoy sewing, crafting, and quilting.

I enjoy the SWELL exercise program because of being able to go at your own pace.

## Patrica Ellenz Wilkinson



I started the SWELL program in early September.

I have 4 children, 3 girls, one living in Potosi, WI., Deforrest WI., Milwaukee, Wi. One son lives in Winnemucca, Nevada. Blessed with 10 beautiful grandchildren.

I am a retired ABO Certified Optician with over 40 years.

I got my start in Optical in 1980 with Pearle Vision in Dubuque. In 1988 I took a General Manager position and moved to Peoria IL. I lived in Peoria until I moved back home in 2003. My last job as Optician was with Vision to Learn. I drove the mobile van to schools throughout Iowa. Upon set up of van, I would conduct the pretesting so the Eye Doctor could proceed with the exam. In addition to the free exam the students would receive 2 free pair of glasses. I really loved this job. Then Covid-19 hit. I have worked part-time jobs in the last 2 years.

I enjoy riding bikes, just got a new E bike this summer. Water walking. I like doing anything outdoors. My grandchildren are active in sports so that keeps me busy as well.

It took me 1 year to get into SWELL.

For me Swell is my purpose to get up and start my day. Begin with exercise and meeting new friends. 2-fold program, 1st. my purpose to get up in morning, and second no better way to start the day off with exercise and meeting new friends





**Thanks, Eileen, for this beautiful photo of the University of Dubuque Campus. We are very lucky to attend SWELL here.**



## Julie Burgmeier, Deb Anderson, and Friends in Italy

Julie and I had an awesome 18-day trip to Italy in September. We flew into Milan, visited the northern region of Como, Venice, Florence, Tuscany, Sorrento, Capri and ended with time to explore Rome. The history of Pompeii was amazing, and we were surprised at the amount yet to be excavated. The beauty of Tuscany was our favorite! And we definitely decided we're not renting vespas!! Interesting facts, the Italians don't strain their pasta because it is not starchy, and tomatoes and palm trees were not naturally grown there. The pasta was amazing.





## People Who Care About and Help Others

### Mike Larkin

Local farmer Mike Larkin supplies the SWELL class with a variety of fresh vegetables from his garden. Actually, Mike lives in town but has a huge garden he likes to share with us. He says that he likes to plant large gardens to share with people. What a great outlook on life. Thanks Mike.



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### Ann Mulligan

Has been selling and bringing mixed nuts and trail mixes to SWELL for a number of years to help 4<sup>th</sup> grade girls afford to go to camp. Ann chose a career in elementary education to help our young children and continues to impact their lives. She taught my daughter Tonya who remembers Mrs. Mulligan as a favorite teacher. Thanks Ann.

### The benefits of volunteering can enhance your life and that of others.

1. Volunteering can help you feel better about yourself by improving your self-esteem and confidence.
2. Help you share your talents,
3. Learn new skills and create a better work-life balance.
4. Help combat stress, loneliness, social isolation, and depression.
5. Help you meet new people, which can help you feel more connected and valued.

**Healthdirect.gov.au**



## Chen Family Tai Chi



**Chen Family Tai Chi is the oldest and original form established in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.**

Chen Family Tai Chi is the oldest and original form of tai chi, established in the 16th century. It is traditionally practiced as a martial art but has also been adapted for health and performance purposes.

Some argue that Chen-style tai chi has preserved and emphasized its martial art efficacy to a greater extent than other styles. This may be due to the fact that the Chen family village was known for its martial arts prowess for generations.

In the 19th century, four new styles of tai chi were developed: Yang, Sun, Wu, and Wu (Hao). These styles were all influenced by Chen Family Tai Chi, but they adapted the form for different purposes. For example, Yang-style tai chi is known for its slower, more graceful movements, while Sun-style tai chi is known for its more explosive power.

Today, Chen Family Tai Chi is still practiced as a martial art, but it is also popular for its health benefits. Tai chi has been shown to improve balance, flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular health. It is also a popular form of exercise for older adults.

I thought that you may be interested to know some history of Chen Family Tai Chi at SWELL. We are a unique group because we have learned LAFF Old Form and two lessons of Yang Family to keep things interesting. I believe that it is a valuable martial art and fitness practice for people of all ages and abilities.

The new Chen forms that we are going to learn are (**Garden Pose, Push Wave, Holding the Moon Stance Isometric, Two Arms Circle, Martial Arts Strike Pose, Horse Stance Isometric, Cross Snake, Kung Fu Defense Walk, Circle Hook Snake**). These names are not exact, but I am using them to help us visualize what we are doing. This lesson is also modified for large groups of seniors and is taught from the top down.

--Gary Wittman

## Healthy Recipes



By Sue Olson

### ROASTED VEGGIES

#### Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp Balsamic Vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon Mustard
- 1/2 Cup Avocado Oil
- 3 Garlic Cloves, pressed
- 2 tsp Fresh Thyme, finely chopped (= 1/2 tsp dried Thyme)
- 1 tsp Fresh Basil, finely chopped (= 1/4 tsp dried Basil)
- 2 large, Red Onions, thinly sliced
- 3 Bell Peppers, organic, sliced
- 2 Zucchini, cut in rounds
- 4 or 5 large carrots, cut into chunks
- 15 Brussels Sprouts, if large cut in half
- Sea Salt
- Fresh Ground Black Pepper

#### Instructions:

- Whisk vinegar and mustard in medium bowl
- Gradually whisk in oil.
- Stir in garlic, thyme, basil.
- Season to preference with sea salt and pepper.
- Preheat oven to 450 F.
- Toss veggies with the dressing, coat well.
- Divide between 2 large, rimmed baking sheets.
- Roast about 35 minutes, until tender and slightly brown on edges.
- Note: also can use fall root veggies like beets or turnips.

**The CRWC or indoor track is closed.**

**There may be more dates that come up throughout the year. The University of Dubuque policy is students first, so we need to be flexible and appreciate what we have.**

#### 2023 Dates

- Wednesday November 22, 2023, **No Class**
- Friday November 24, 2023, **No Class**
- Friday December 22, 2023, **No Class**
- Monday December 25, 2023, **No Class**
- Friday December 29, 2023, **No Class**
- Monday September 4<sup>th</sup>, **Labor Day No Class**

#### 2024 Dates

- Monday January 1, 2024, **No Class**
- Monday February 19, 2024, **No Class**
- Friday March 29, 2024, **Flora Park**
- Monday May 27, 2024, **Flora Park**

**Wednesday December 13 Going for the SWELL attendance record. Wear your Holiday hat.**

## THE STAFF

- Editor..... Gary Wittman**
- New Autobiographies..... Dale Errthum**
- New Autobiographies..... Kay Averkamp**
- New Autobiographies..... Patrica Ellenz Wilkinson**
- Healthy Recipes.....Sue Olson**
- Feature Writer..... Julie Burgmeier and Deb Anderson,**
- Feature Writer..... Gary Wittman**

**We are looking for feature writers each month, try your hand at it.**  
**Suggestions (Vacation or travels, sports, important milestones like anniversaries, and hobbies).**  
**Email articles to: [garydonaldwittman@gmail.com](mailto:garydonaldwittman@gmail.com)**