

The Caregiver Guide

*A Companion for Adult Children, Spouses, and Helpers Supporting a Senior
Through This Program*

Companion to Morning Chair Tai Chi for Seniors Over 60

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This Guide Is For You

You bought this book for someone you love. Maybe a parent who has slowed down. Maybe a spouse whose mornings have become harder. Maybe a grandparent who needs gentle movement but has nowhere safe to start.

This guide is written for you. It is the small companion document inside this book that nobody else gets. The senior in your life has their own book. Their book is the practice. This is yours. It is the support manual that makes their practice actually happen.

Caring for an aging loved one is hard work that often goes unnoticed. You worry about them falling. You wish they were more active. You suggest things and they push back. You feel guilty when you cannot be there. You feel guilty

when you are there but feel exhausted. This is normal and it is more common than anyone talks about.

This guide will not solve all of that. But it will give you a clear, practical way to support the senior in your life through their 28-day practice in a way that respects their dignity, keeps them safe, and does not exhaust you in the process.

Read through it once before they begin. Refer back to it during the program whenever you need a refresher. And keep it nearby for the bigger conversations that may come up.

Part One: Before They Begin

1. Have the Conversation First

Do not surprise them with the book. Sit down with your senior and tell them why you want them to have it. Be honest. Say something like, "I bought this for you because I love you and I worry about your mobility. This is a gentle program done from a chair. I would love it if you tried it." Give them space to decide on their own. People over 60 do not respond well to being told what to do, especially by their adult children. The decision to start needs to feel like theirs, not yours.

2. Check With Their Doctor

Before they begin, ask the senior to mention this program at their next doctor's visit. The program is safe for almost everyone, but if your senior

has a recent heart condition, severe arthritis, recent surgery, or uncontrolled blood pressure, their doctor may recommend specific modifications. This takes five minutes at their appointment and protects both them and you from any unexpected complications.

3. Help Set Up the Practice Space

Pick a chair together. It needs to be sturdy with a flat seat and no wheels. A dining chair often works best. Place it in a quiet, well-lit room with enough space around it that the senior can extend their arms in all directions without hitting furniture. If you can, place the chair near a wall on one side. That gives them something to touch for balance support if they ever feel unsteady.

4. Show Them the Video QR Codes

Many seniors have never used a QR code. Sit with them once and show them how. Open their phone camera, point it at one QR code in the book, tap the link when it appears, and watch the video together. This single ten-minute lesson removes a significant barrier and is one of the most valuable things you can do as a caregiver. After they have done it once with you, they will do it on their own from then on.

Part Two: During the 28 Days

5. Check In, Do Not Check Up

There is a meaningful difference between checking in and checking up. Checking in sounds like "Hi mum, just wanted to hear how your morning practice went today." Checking up sounds like "Did you do your exercises today? You said you would." Checking in honours their autonomy. Checking up makes them feel watched and judged. Even when you mean well, the second approach often produces resentment. Default to checking in every two or three days, not every day. Less can be more.

6. Notice and Acknowledge Effort

When your senior mentions doing their practice, acknowledge it specifically. Not with general praise like "That's great!" but with specific recognition like "Twenty days in a row. That takes real discipline." Specific praise lands deeper than generic encouragement because it shows you are actually paying attention. If they miss days, do not comment on the missed days. Bring it up only if they bring it up first. Missing days is part of the journey and your job is not to enforce attendance.

7. Be Present for the Hard Days

There will be mornings when your senior wakes up unusually stiff, sad, tired, or unmotivated. Some days they will skip. Some days they will use the 5-Minute Bad Day Routine instead of the full session. Do not see these as failures. They are part of how the practice integrates into a real life with

real bodies. If your senior shares a hard day with you, respond with empathy not problem-solving. "That sounds difficult. I'm sorry you are struggling today." is almost always more helpful than "Have you tried..."

8. Practise Together If You Can

If you live with or near your senior, occasionally doing the routine alongside them is one of the most meaningful things you can do. You do not need to know anything about Tai Chi. Just sit beside them, follow along, and share the ten minutes. For a senior whose social world has shrunk with age, doing a quiet movement practice with someone they love is genuinely emotional. It also lets you check their form without it feeling like supervision.

Part Three: Safety Awareness

As a caregiver you are well-placed to notice things your senior might miss or under-report. These are the things to gently watch for during the program.

Encourage them to stop if they experience:

- *Sharp or shooting pain during any movement (mild aching is normal, sharp pain is not)*
- *Dizziness, light-headedness, or blurred vision*
- *Sudden shortness of breath that does not settle within a minute*
- *Chest pain, pressure, or tightness*
- *Worsening of any pre-existing condition (severe arthritis flare, swelling, numbness)*
- *Falling sensation or sudden balance loss*

Reassure them that these are normal and fine:

- *Mild muscle soreness for the first three or four days*
- *Feeling warm or slightly tired after a session*
- *Some movements feeling awkward at first before they smooth out*
- *Occasional joint cracking or popping with movement*
- *Needing to modify or skip a pose on any given day*

If any of the concerning symptoms appear, encourage them to stop the session, rest, and contact their doctor if symptoms persist. Stay calm when

you respond. Seniors look to caregivers for emotional signals as much as practical ones.

Part Four: When They Push Back

Many seniors initially resist starting a new program. They may say it is too late, they are too old, it will not work for them, or they do not have time. This is rarely about the program itself. It is usually about deeper feelings -- fear of failing, fear of looking weak, grief about aging, frustration about losing independence.

Do not argue with these feelings or try to talk them out of them. Acknowledge them. Then gently propose a small first step.

Try saying: "I hear you. You don't have to commit to 28 days. Would you be willing to try it for one week? If you don't like it after seven days, we never have to talk about it again."

A seven-day commitment feels achievable. And once they experience the first noticeable improvement (usually around Day 4 or 5), they will often continue without you having to encourage them at all.

Caregiver tip: *Never frame it as exercise. Frame it as a morning ritual, a gentle routine, or a few minutes of self-care. The word exercise carries baggage for older adults. Tai Chi carries the right kind of dignity and calm.*

Part Five: Take Care of Yourself Too

Caregiving is often invisible work. You may feel guilty about being tired or about wanting time away. These feelings are normal and they do not make you a bad caregiver. They make you a human one.

Some practical things that help:

Set realistic expectations. You cannot make your senior do their practice. You can only support them. If they do it most days, that is success. If they skip a week, it is not your failure.

Find your own ten minutes. Many caregivers find that practising the routine themselves -- even occasionally -- helps them stay grounded. The movements are gentle enough for anyone and the calming effect helps you too.

Ask for help when you need it. If you are the sole caregiver, consider whether siblings, family friends, or local services could share even small parts of the support work.

Acknowledge what you are doing. You bought a book to try to make your loved one's life better. You are reading a caregiver guide to do this thoughtfully. That care matters. You matter too.

This program is gentle. Your senior is more capable than they think. And the support of someone who loves them is worth more than any single bonus or video tutorial. You are doing something meaningful here. Thank you.