Yoga, Tai Chi, and Pilates: What are they?

You’ve probably heard about these alternatives forms of exercise. They all help strengthen your core and build endurance, but each has its own benefits. Here’s how to tell them apart!

**Yoga**

**What it is:** Yoga involves a series of physical postures that stretch, strengthen, and relax different parts of the body. Some forms of yoga are much more vigorous than others, but most emphasize breathing, stretching, body awareness, and balance.

**Benefits:** Develops body awareness, flexibility, balance, and muscular strength.

**Tai Chi**

**What it is:** A Chinese martial art consisting of a series of slow, fluid, elegant movements that mimic dancing. There is also a spiritual component to Tai Chi, rooted in Taoist beliefs about chi energy forces.

**Benefits:** Promotes relaxation, concentration, balance, muscular strength and endurance.

**Pilates**

**What it is:** A session of exercises designed to increase muscular strength. Often extra resistance equipment is used, but some classes are just floor work. Emphasized is on concentration, control, movement flow, and breathing.

**Benefits:** Strengthens core muscles in the back, abdomen, and buttocks.


Top Image: http://www.recreation.ubc.ca/2012/10/31/stress-relief-tip-1-get-physical/

Middle Image: http://yogagen.ca/activities/pilates-yoga/


To get started, it’s best to take a class led by a qualified instructor!