

## Exercising with Radio Taiso

### Background Notes

#### About

Radio Taiso (ラジオ体操 *Rajio Taiso*) is a short exercise routine that has been practised for nearly 100 years in Japan. They are so called because *Taiso* means 'exercise' in Japanese and they were broadcast on the radio. The original routine guides participants through thirteen movements in 3 minutes, with a piano accompaniment and a narrator calling out the exercises.



The purpose of Radio Taiso is to improve general health and fitness and the routine is therefore designed to be simple and accessible to all; it requires no equipment, can be done in a small space, and can be modified for those with mobility issues.

The Radio Taiso Routine was first broadcast in Japan in 1928 and was an idea imported from the US where a life insurance company sponsored radio exercises in US cities. It is now broadcast in the daily on NHK radio (the Japanese National Broadcaster).

#### Effects



Radio Taiso was created to help abate physical problems caused by ageing, to help build strength and general fitness in children and adults, and as a general warm up prior to physical activity to reduce injury. It is also sometimes used as a break to refresh workers or students in between classes.

Some may practice Radio Taiso alone or at home, but Radio Taiso is most often performed in groups, either as part of regular routine or before a particular event. As such, it is common for the routine to be carried out in schools, workplaces and within other community groups and is familiar to all Japanese people. Radio Taiso is always performed by the whole school at the beginning of Sports Day (*undokai*) in Japan, for example. Radio Taiso therefore brings people together and is seen as a way to build community spirit; in addition to the physical benefits, it can have a positive impact on wellbeing and mental health.