

Of being a Martial Artist

The Benefits of Consistent Training

To study the Martial Arts (MA) is to study the self. It is a process of finding, testing and expanding one's limits. It requires continued focus over the course of years. Yet this dedication reaps great rewards, including, but not limited to, self-confidence and self-esteem. One develops a genuine self-confidence based on one's objective achievements, not some well-meaning person telling you how to feel. One forges an unshakable self-esteem deep within one's core self. It is based on what the student has accomplished *by themselves*, regardless of what another might say or think.

Ideally, a student should train consistently, every week, at class and at home, for a functional understanding, esp. if one seeks a black belt, aka, "dan". (1st 'dan' is a first degree black belt, 2nd 'dan' is a second degree black belt, etc.) On a schedule of two classes a week, plus time at home, it will likely take about four to five years to get one's black belt, 1st dan. So, when a student halts their MA training for a season(s) of a sport, this extends this estimate. And, even if a student isn't interested in a black belt, when a student takes a season off, the details that are invariably lost, must be recovered.

For a youth to achieve a "Junior Black Belt", the training is more akin to studying for Eagle Scout, than training for a season of baseball or football. To be clear, I am not referring to the occasional night off due to health reasons. I am referring to the "either/or" mentality of training for seasonal sports.

At Fist and Foot Martial Arts, while the belts are in Tae Kwon Do (TKD), we undertake our training using Bruce Lee's philosophy of "Jeet Kune Do"; in English, "The Way of the Intercepting Fist". This is the "four ranges of fighting" approach. This means we study and train far more than just TKD. We also train in boxing, ground fighting, weapons, joint locks and escapes so that we are prepared and can adapt.

Thus, beyond the proper techniques of "kicking and punching", our training requires an understanding of body mechanics, structural anatomy, vital points (both one's own and the assailant's) and proper body conditioning. By these means we develop a functional understanding of how to "Protect Ourselves at all Times". We also develop ourselves ethically, always striving to improve ourselves in accordance with the five tenets of Tae Kwon Do, and, we develop an understanding about the "when" of fighting, not just the "how".

In summation, I hope I have conveyed both the benefits *and* the expectations of being a Martial Artist.