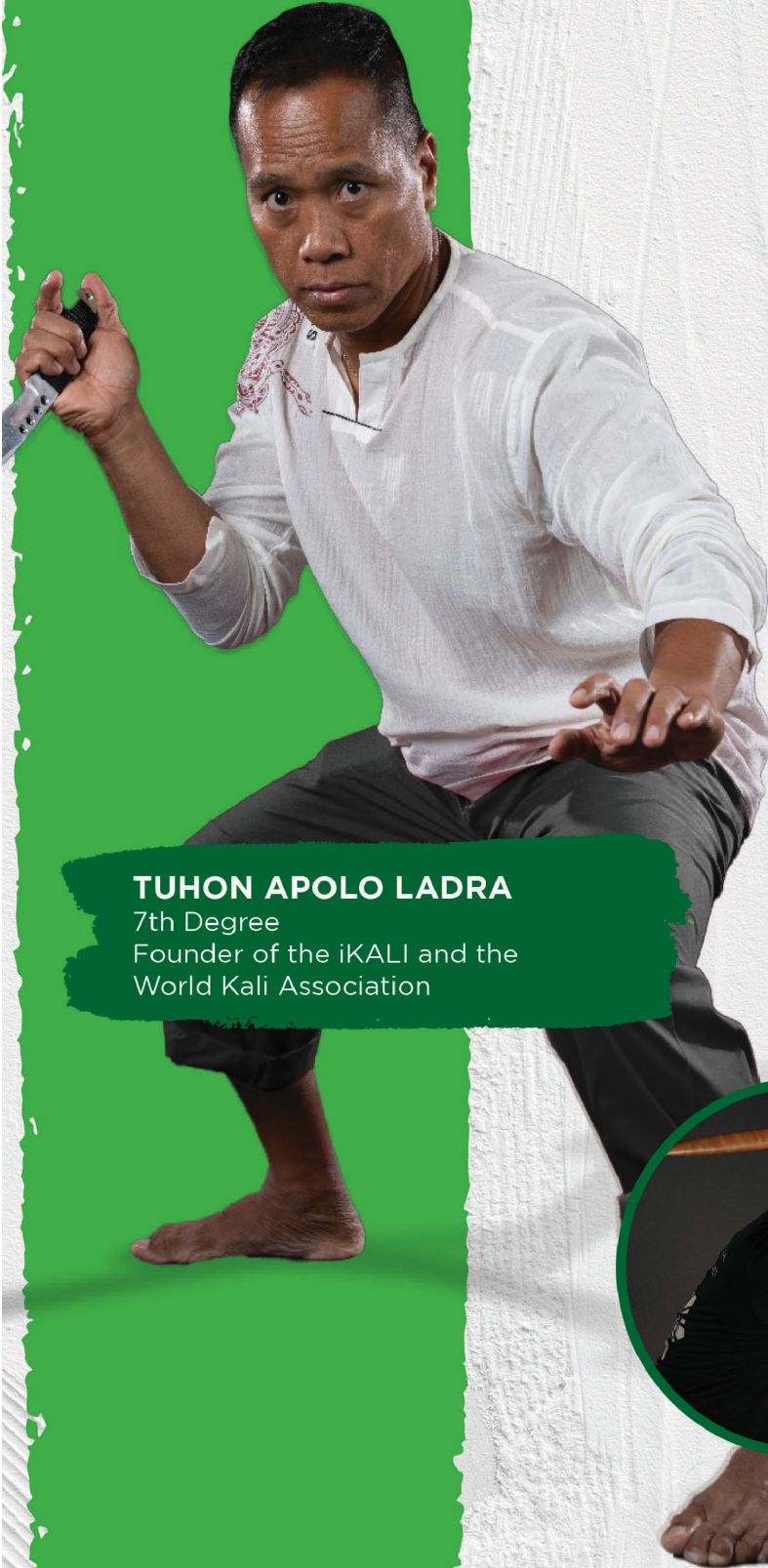


VOLUME TWO
ISSUE TWO

GO 2 KARATE



TUHON APOLO LADRA
7th Degree
Founder of the iKALI and the
World Kali Association

Lives in Action

Inspiring Journeys of Dedication
and Transformation

Master Your Skills

Effective Drills for Continuous
Improvement

Empower Your Dojo

Free Tools and Opportunities
for Growth

Spotlight

Exploring Key Issues and
Influential Voices



TRACY THOMAS,
Publisher

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Dear Martial Arts Enthusiasts and School Owners,

It is with great excitement and pride that I welcome you to this latest edition of Go2 Karate Magazine. As the martial arts community continues to grow and evolve, we are thrilled to be at the forefront of connecting individuals seeking martial arts training with the schools and instructors dedicated to fostering excellence in a variety of disciplines.

At Go2 Karate, our mission is to provide a comprehensive resource that bridges the gap between those who are passionate about martial arts and the schools that offer high-quality instruction. Whether you're a parent looking for the best karate program for your child, a teenager seeking to build confidence through martial arts, or an adult searching for a way to stay fit while learning self-defense, Go2 Karate is here to guide you every step of the way.

Our magazine is designed to serve both students and instructors. For students and parents, we offer a wealth of instructional content, from training tips and techniques to advice on choosing the right school. For martial arts school owners and instructors, we provide valuable insights into running successful programs, enhancing student engagement, and staying connected with the wider martial arts community.

I am particularly excited to announce that we are on the verge of launching our new and improved Go2Karate.com website. This platform will not only continue to connect students with schools but also offer a groundbreaking feature that aligns individuals and schools with larger associations, franchises, and groups of affiliated martial arts schools. Whether you are an independent school looking to join a larger network or a student seeking a school with specific affiliations, our new platform will make these connections easier than ever before.

As a martial artist with over four decades of experience and an 8th-degree black belt, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of martial arts. It is more than just physical training; it is a path to building character, discipline, and lifelong skills. My goal with Go2 Karate Magazine and Go2Karate.com is to ensure that every person who wishes to embark on this journey can do so with the support and guidance they need.

Thank you for being a part of our growing community. We are committed to continuing to provide the resources, connections, and support that both students and instructors need to thrive in the martial arts world.

Together, we can help shape the future of martial arts, one student and one school at a time.

Sincerely,

Tracy Lee Thomas

Founder | Go2 Karate
8th Degree Black Belt



EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear New Readers,

Welcome to **Go2 Karate Magazine!** As the editor, I'm thrilled you've joined our community and explored the incredible world of martial arts through our pages.

Our goal at **Go2 Karate Magazine** is to inspire, inform, and empower martial artists, and school owners of all levels. Whether you're just starting out or have years of experience, we aim to provide content that supports your journey—covering everything from technique tips and training strategies to inspiring stories from across the martial arts world.

I'm excited to hear from you! Your feedback is important to us. Let us know what you enjoy most about the magazine and what, if anything, you'd like to see added in future issues. We're here to serve you and make this magazine the best it can be.

Thank you for joining us, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts!

Best regards,

Denise Morin



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A Veteran's Story

By Robert Austin

One thing I feel isn't associated much in the modern day is martial arts and military service. There's been a distinction in the public eye that when they think about the military, it's guns, bombs, airplanes, and all of the other cool things you see in the movies. The only time you have a skilled hand-to-hand fighter is when it's an action star brought in for a movie. Chuck Norris in *The Delta Force* comes to mind. Once I joined the military, I learned that the overlap between the two worlds was much larger than expected.

I started wrestling in 2000 when I was a junior in high school. While some people don't consider wrestling a martial art, I am of the mindset that any sort of "combat sport" that has life skills behind it is absolutely a martial art. Our coach instilled honor, integrity, sportsmanship, and discipline through wrestling. While I wasn't very good at wrestling, I do remember a lot of the lessons that were taught while I was getting slammed into the mats. About halfway through my senior year, I started Taekwondo since I drove by the school every day after wrestling practice. In 2001, I started Taekwondo under Chief Master (then Mr.) Michael Wegmann. From there, I moved on to Brazilian JiuJitsu and Muay Thai and started with Brian Mingia and Neal Weaver. Eventually, I returned to Taekwondo and taught at the school until 2008.

2008 brought a lot of changes for me, but a lot of it pointed to me joining the Army, and in February 2009, I was shipped off to Ft Leonard Wood, MO. Basic training was pretty tough, yet I had a good time, and after my initial training was over, I found myself at Ft. Hood, TX (now known as Ft. Cavazos). When I arrived, they asked the privates of the unit if anyone would volunteer to take a Combatives class. When I asked what was involved in combatives, and they responded, "It's a lot like Brazilian JiuJitsu," I immediately raised my hand. That next week, I got to grapple during the day and earned a certificate at the end of it. It felt good to have a group of people that I got to train with and serve in the same unit.



VETERAN'S STORY



Eventually, when I was stationed at Ft. Belvoir, VA, the talks of getting promoted to a Non-Commissioned Officer started up from my leadership. Some of the senior NCOs, as well as some of the Warrant Officers, would pull me aside and talk to me about how to lead and how to treat my subordinates. What I found was that a lot of the lessons and guidance I was getting were very similar to the lessons that all of my martial arts teachers taught me. You treat others the way you want to be treated, you do the right thing even when no one is looking, and you don't make your people do anything you wouldn't do yourself. The lessons learned in martial arts carried over to my military career, and they made all of a difference.

When it was my time to depart the military in 2019, I found myself in a difficult situation where I was losing a strong support system I had known for the past decade. I left the military by my own choice, but I knew I was going to be away from my friends and my brothers and sisters in arms. After getting settled into my civilian life, I leaned very hard into the martial arts community around me. I found the comradery again that I was used to while I was in, and I got to train alongside some amazing individuals. I think that is one of the great things about being in martial arts: we get to experience a sense of togetherness in our training, and we form bonds that most other activities cannot forge. I'm eternally grateful for finding it and being involved in it to this day.



Rob started his martial arts training in 2001, training in Taekwondo under Chief Master Michael Wegmann. Rob graduated high school in 2002 and began teaching martial arts full time. In 2004 Rob started training in Muay Thai and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu in addition to his Taekwondo training. In 2009 Rob joined the US Army and served until 2019, where he returned home to North Carolina and became a defense contractor and supported various units. Rob is currently a 3rd degree black belt in Taekwondo, a black belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and has experience as a professional MMA fighter. In addition to practicing and teaching martial arts, Rob enjoys cooking, playing piano, woodworking and camping.

How Martial Arts Helped Me Face Life's Toughest Challenges

By Zachary Tucker

When I was four, all I wanted was to be the Blue Power Ranger. I watched every episode, and something about the courage, teamwork, and fighting bad guys with style really resonated with me. My imagination went wild, and I would spend whole afternoons pretending I was that ranger, defeating imaginary villains with my own special moves. My mom, always paying attention, noticed how fascinated I was. Around that time, she found out that Courthouse Montessori, where I went to

school, offered martial arts as an extracurricular activity. Without a second thought, she signed me up. Little did she know this decision would shape the next 20 years of my life.

Martial arts became more than just an after-school activity. It became part of who I was, helping me cope with things I didn't fully understand at the time. I had ADHD, and while other kids seemed to focus easily in school, I always struggled. Sitting still, paying attention, and staying organized were challenges that made me feel different. But martial arts gave me a way to channel all that energy. It offered me structure, something I hadn't experienced before, and taught me self-discipline in ways nothing else had.

It wasn't just about managing my ADHD, though. At the age of eight, I faced a new challenge: I underwent surgery to remove a cholesteatoma, and as a result, I was declared legally deaf in one ear. The hearing loss set me apart even more. I had to learn how to adapt, and martial arts helped me do just that. It gave me a sense of control in a world that felt increasingly out of my hands. Despite this obstacle, martial arts continued to be my outlet, teaching me how to balance the struggles of ADHD and now, living with partial hearing loss.

As a kid, I was really introverted—shy, avoiding eye contact, and finding it hard to approach people. Social situations felt overwhelming. But as I progressed in martial arts, something changed in



CHANGING LIVES STORY

me. I started to build confidence. Slowly, I became the kind of kid who could walk up to someone, shake their hand, and make eye contact. This was a huge change for me, and I know without martial arts, I wouldn't have come out of my shell the way I did.

Even though I loved martial arts, life wasn't always smooth. Middle school was tough. I wore a hearing aid, and that made me stand out. Kids can be cruel when someone's different, and I was no exception. I became the target of bullying because of my hearing aid. It was frustrating, and some days it felt like I couldn't escape the stares and whispers. There were days when the bullying felt like a weight I couldn't shake off. It hurt my self-esteem, but martial arts gave me resilience. I started to realize I didn't have to let other people's opinions define me. The confidence and self-discipline I learned in martial arts helped me get through those tough times.

When I was eight, something amazing happened. My instructors saw potential in me and asked if I wanted to become a student instructor. I was over the moon. It felt like I was finally stepping into that Power Ranger role I had always dreamed of, but instead of fighting imaginary villains, I was helping other kids learn how to stand up for themselves. Teaching martial arts gave me a sense of responsibility and purpose. I learned to be patient, lead by example, and most importantly, help others find the same self-confidence that had helped me face my own challenges.

From there, my role in martial arts grew. By the time I was sixteen, I was working as a program director at a martial arts school. I managed classes, helped organize events, and of course, continued teaching. While most of my friends were working part-time jobs in fast food, martial arts was my job and my passion. I loved every minute of it, especially seeing the transformation in students. Some kids came in shy, uncertain, or even scared, just like I had been. Watching them grow stronger, more confident, and more disciplined was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. It reminded me why I started in the first place.

Even though I was dedicated to martial arts, life has a funny way of taking you in unexpected directions. For a long time, I dreamed of becoming a Master and opening my own school. I wanted to pass on the same lessons that had shaped me—to show kids that being different wasn't a weakness, and that they could use their inner strength to overcome any obstacle. But as I got older, I realized life doesn't always follow the path you imagine. College, relationships, career opportunities—these things started pulling me in new directions.



One of my biggest challenges came in my early twenties. I hit financial difficulties and was on the verge of becoming homeless. Those were dark days when the future seemed uncertain, and it felt like the ground was crumbling beneath me. But once again, martial arts was my lifeline. The discipline and mental strength I had developed over the years helped me push through. Instead of giving up, I found the determination to work harder, stay focused, and do whatever it took to get back on my feet. Martial arts had prepared me

CHANGING LIVES STORY

for moments like this—not just by teaching me how to fight physically, but mentally too, when life was knocking me down.

Though I never became a Master or opened my own school, martial arts never left me. It remained a core part of who I was and continued to influence how I approached every challenge in life. I stayed involved in martial arts for fifteen years, as both a student and a teacher. Over that time, I saw so many kids walk through the dojo doors. Some stayed a few months, while others, like me, made it a lifelong journey. Each came with their own struggles and triumphs, and I was lucky to be part of their growth, just as my instructors had been part of mine. It was a privilege to give back to a community that had given me so much.

Looking back, I realize martial arts wasn't just about learning to kick, punch, or break boards. It was about learning how to handle life's toughest moments. It taught me how to focus my mind, push through hard times, and build confidence from within. Whether I was dealing with bullying, managing my ADHD, or making big life decisions, the lessons I learned in martial arts were always there to guide me.

Even though life took me down a different path, martial arts left an impact that will stay with me forever. The discipline, focus, and resilience I built in the dojo are qualities I carry with me in every part of my life. In a way, I did become my own version of the Blue Power Ranger—not by fighting villains, but by helping others and guiding them to become their best selves.

So, while I might not wear a black belt every day or teach in a dojo anymore, the lessons of martial arts still shape everything I do. Whether I'm navigating my career, building relationships, or just staying true to myself, martial arts gave me the tools to face life head-on, with confidence, discipline, and purpose. And for that, I'll always be grateful.



If you have a transformative martial arts story that deserves a spotlight, we want to feature it in an upcoming magazine issue! Whether martial arts helped you overcome obstacles, reach personal milestones, or change your life significantly, your story could inspire many. Share your journey with us by emailing us at denise@go2karate.com. We're eager to learn how martial arts have influenced your life and share your story with others.

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An Interview with Tuhon Apolo Ladra

By Go2 Karate

Go2 Karate:

Hi. This is Go2 Karate with Go2 Karate Magazine and I'm here with a legend in martial arts, Tuhon Apolo Ladra. We also have Master Ace, the global director of iKALI. Thank you both for being here, sir.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Thank you, sir, for having us.

Master Ace:

Thank you for having us, sir.

Go2 Karate:

You are really a legend, not just to us, but to all the other people that have trained with you. I'm eager to learn more about iKALI and what you're doing now, but can we start with your beginnings in martial arts and your background?

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

When we first moved here, when I was a kid, my two brothers and I started in Taekwondo. That was in Baltimore, Maryland.

Go2 Karate:

Who was your instructor then?

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

That was Grandmaster Jae Kim. We started with him when I was ten. By the time I was fourteen, he was only teaching adults and kids in the neighborhood that were really serious about training. My father signed up my two brothers and I for a one-year program. Then after a year, my father couldn't afford it. I ended up staying, and I cleaned the school. After achieving my black belt,

I suggested that instead of paying me a wage, my two brothers could back into the Taekwondo program.

Go2 Karate:

So, you basically supported your brothers through their martial arts career.



Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Yes, sir. We still all support each other, and both of them became black belts. We all became instructors for Jae Kim Institute of Taekwondo. I helped open fifty-seven of his locations—in Washington, Virginia, and Pennsylvania—the tri-state area. I trained the instructors, and I trained the sales with all the role-playing from beginning all the way to testing.

Go2 Karate:

I think that's a background that people don't know about you.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

That's how I started in the martial arts industry. During that time Grandmaster Jae Kim had a great formula on how to open up a school, how to make it successful. I was in charge of the teaching and the curriculum, and that's when I

“but I also competed in the open circuit. I became part of a demonstration team, West Coast Demo Team back in the day.”

started learning how to develop curriculum in Taekwondo and also how to do the business side of it. Because when you know the business side and you're teaching, your teaching methodology is different. You pretty much sell on the floor as opposed to trying to sell in the back. Once people take the class with you, your goal is when they go back, it's always like, “Where do I sign?” That was our thing back in the days.

Go2 Karate:

That's a great thing for everybody to understand—that you understand both sides of the business, and that if you do the teaching right, then the business becomes easier, because they're interrelated.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

That was one of the things that we worked on, trying to put together the right chemistry of who works in the school as a program director, as an instructor, an assistant, so that way we can make it work based on the demographics at that time.

Go2 Karate:

What happened after you were so successful in Taekwondo?

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

After I started in the Taekwondo industry, I travelled and competed in Taekwondo. Not just the Taekwondo, but I also competed in the open circuit. I became part of a demonstration team, West Coast Demo Team back in the day. And I was also part of Grandmaster Ernie Reyes' first mastery group with Tom Callos, Scott Coker, and Kwan Jang Nim Margie. That was back in 1990.



I became part of their group just from competing I became really good friends with Ernie Reyes Jr. who was my business partner in my very own Taekwondo studio in Maryland. Whenever Ernie is competing in the East Coast, he stays with me, and then whenever we go to West Coast, I stay with them. That's how it all started. Kwan Jang Nim Ernie actually made such a huge impact on me as far as inspiring people, when he's teaching, how he motivates and inspires people during his class, keeping a high energy class, and different ways on how to pull things out of people so they perform at their best. He's one of the great motivational instructors. He's one of the inspirations through my teaching.

Go2 Karate:

That's such a great connection and a great person to learn from. I admired him for a long time as well. I took a last-resort tactics training class, and Ernie Reyes was in it. Here's this guy that we've known for so many years, does the demo team, and he's a badass. He was there. He must've been

in his sixties then, and yeah, he's still fighting as hard as everybody else.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

That was one of the things that I love about him—the leading by example. When he'd say, "I want you to do this many kicks," he would demonstrate it first. He'd say walk the walk and talk the talk. That's basically what he does.

Go2 Karate:

This is perfect for our readers to hear because I think they've heard about all these guys, but your personal connection to it and how then you use it in your own teaching is what's interesting. What happened next?

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

I opened up fifty-seven schools for Grandmaster Jae Kim—I was the main person that knew his curriculum, and he didn't speak a lot of English, so I am always at his meetings. I hear a lot. I got introduced to the business in this way. To me, it came natural because of all the times I listened





to his business meetings. The biggest thing I saw when I started teaching to the kids was the

“the way you greet people, your first impression with people when they come in, cleanliness of the school, the way you present your school. It makes a big impact on people.”

communication issue between the top masters to the students. The instructor would demonstrate and then everybody just followed. There was no explanation, because it was hard. There was a gap in the communication. There's a language barrier. Then he said, “Well, when it comes to the kids, I want you to be in charge. You can relate to them.” I was a kid at that time working with the kids.

Go2 Karate:

You kind of had a trial by fire or thrown in the

deep end of the pool. This must've given you an amazing appreciation of the entirety of the business.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Yes, sir. After being around a lot of different organizations and martial arts conventions, I still think Grandmaster Jae Kim was way ahead. Like Bruce Lee was way ahead of his time. Grandmaster was way ahead as far as running a martial arts school. It's all about statistics. It's a numbers game. Once you learn a business, it's all the same; you just have a different product. That is the most important thing when you're running a business. Once we find out that there is a lack of, let's say, intro sales for the sake of conversation. That means when the people walk in, they have a problem either with phone presentation or how they address people when they first come in. First impression is the most important thing.

Go2 Karate:

I think that's important if it's one school or fifty-seven schools. I think the single school owners forget about that. They think their job is to teach, and their job is to do everything. They've got to do the other things too.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Yes, sir. As a martial artist, we fall into this thinking that because we're a great martial artist, or we're an awesome practitioner of martial arts, it means that people are going to start coming to the door. That's just half of it. If somebody's a world champion or sixth degree black belt or whatever, the average person doesn't know what that means. That's part of the reason why it's so important the way you greet people, your first impression with people when they come in, cleanliness of the school, the way you present your school. It makes a big impact on people.

Go2 Karate:

I think that's a great message for the people that maybe spend not too much time in their martial arts, but they only focus on that, and they don't focus on what they need to do for their students and for their business or for themselves.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

I think it's the mindset of always being a student, whether it's business or martial arts. I think that's what's making us successful in terms of how we get people in. It does not matter whether they're in your community, whether it's nationwide or worldwide. People get that sense when I give a presentation. Through my teaching, they sense the passion, passion for the art and the way we communicate to people.

Go2 Karate:

I know you're worldwide with iKALI, and a lot of these go along with the principles in iKALI. Master Ace, can you comment on that?

Master Ace:

Yes. Tuhon Apolo has a vast background in the martial side of it, but at the same time, the martial side of it means our tactics. Our tactics are not just on the mat. Tuhon Apolo always talks about what are the iKALI principles that extend outside of the martial arts academy? Those have to apply, whether that's business or whether that's relationships. There's so much partnering that goes on in his program—you have to treat that as not just your partner in fighting. That's how your teacher and student relationship is. That's how your speaking and communication is with your spouse or your sibling or anybody else. As part of the iKALI principles, you don't feed right away fast. You're not going to hurt them. There's a certain way that you introduce yourself. There's a certain way that you interact with each other. People learn through the program that all of this interaction is not for the warfare only. It's how you're going to treat everyone around you. And as he always says, slow is smooth, smooth is fast. This is the way that you would speak to someone over the phone, the way that you would introduce them into the academy, the way that you would gradually bring them up to become their teacher and leader in the "learn to teach, teach to learn" principle as well. Just to reinforce everything that he was saying, it has to go over onto that business side because that's part of the growth of the student to the instructor, and that instructor will get outside of that fight mode. This is just how he walks and talks as the martial artist.

*Tuhon Apolo Ladra:*

This is part of the reason why we preach martial art as a way of life. From the people that mentored me, it's basically a way of life. You got to walk the walk and talk the talk. And really, when you're preaching the art, if you are, they can sense. The people that you're preaching to, they will sense whether you're doing what you preach or not.

Go2 Karate:

You said something else just there about your mentors. Somebody at your level still has mentors and trains and works hard. Some martial artists think that they've arrived, and that's maybe a big mistake.

“You got to walk the walk and talk the talk. And really, when you're preaching the art, if you are, they can sense. The people that you're preaching to, they will sense whether you're doing what you preach or not.”



Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Yes, sir. Like I said, always a student. You can always learn from everyone. Just me teaching a beginner's class, I still work with beginner's class because I learn that if I don't improve techniques, I improve my communication skills. I improve different ways of teaching. The people that I taught from a year or two years ago, when I see them this year, my goal is always for them to see something different. To see that I've taken my teaching to a different level. Achieving as an instructor carries a title called "guru". When you're a guru, that means you're a teacher. That means you should be able to inspire, motivate, and help people achieve their goals. Coming from people like Grandmaster Clark and all the other mentors that we have, you do whatever is required. You do whatever it takes to make sure they get those goals so they can live the best version of themselves.

Go2 Karate:

That ties everything to life. And that's really what I think most of our readers and most martial arts practitioners or owners want as well. I think more people would do martial arts if they understood how much of an effect it has on the rest of their life. You got to walk the walk and talk the talk. And really, when you're preaching the art, if you are, they can sense. The people that you're preaching to, they will sense whether you're doing what you preach or not.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

As far as how we are with people, how we treat people, whatever they see on the floor, that's exactly who we are. It really is a ripple effect.

Go2 Karate:

You're not different inside the school versus outside the school or how you treat other people. One big question I have is how you got from there, where you're at, to Kali and in developing iKALI. Can you tell us about that transition?

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

After learning about the business of Taekwondo in the martial art industry, I started giving seminars. Because we have fifty-seven locations, the only time I teach is for an event. It's almost like a seminar basis. Or a clinic. I will go to the school and do a clinic just to make sure everybody is where they're at in terms of the curriculum. We call them progress checks. Just for quality control. After doing that I started doing it outside the company. I had been getting invited to do kicking seminars, working on developing, whether it's business kicking seminar, sparring seminar, and then later on with the Filipino martial arts seminar. During all this time that I was doing this, my secondary art is Filipino martial art, Kali. I met this Filipino martial art master who preaches a new way to train. Guru Dan Inosanto trained under him. Every time I search, it points me to his direction. To me, the way of his strategy and the way he preached the art was very unique. And I said, "Now this is the person I want to train under." I even spoke and gave a seminar at the Arnold Classic, and I think that was the one that made me realize when I started really focusing a lot on my Filipino martial art.

Go2 Karate:

When did it turn into iKALI?

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

It turned into iKALI when I turned forty years old. That was many years ago. I was here teaching when my dad moved to the Philippines from here. He said he wanted to be there when he got old. We moved him there, and then my dad passed on my fortieth birthday. After that, I really wasn't motivated to do much of anything at that time. And then a couple months later, six months later, or less than a year, my nephew passed also. Four years old. Our support system when it comes to the family, is part of our. After that, I really wasn't motivated to do much of anything at that time.

And then a couple months later, six months later, or less than a year, my nephew passed also. Four years old. Our support system when it comes to the family, is part of our culture. That's also how we culture our school. After that, I said, "You know what, I'm going to move." The schools that I have here, I gave it to all my top people. I didn't ask for anything. I gave it to them, made them a partner, and then I moved to Florida. Then I start all over again. I was like, I can go anywhere because of what I know. I can go anywhere and start all over again and make it work.

Go2 Karate:

So then you started teaching not just Taekwondo or only Kali at that point?

"When I originally learned Filipino martial arts, I learned it in the backyard. Kali is usually someone's second martial art or last martial art."

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

No, I was teaching both. I started teaching kickboxing over there, private and Taekwondo, and I also started doing Kali training at the beach.



Then I started an after-school martial art program. You're talking eighteen years ago. I'm almost sixty now. I did the after-school program, not through the public school, but through a charter school. I was teaching them Kali with padded sticks. The school was okay with it because we weren't teaching them weapons. We have cultural accessories. We were teaching them the culture also. A martial art cultural program.

Master Ace:

Not to go much about my background, but same thing. I started Taekwondo when I was ten years old. But what I really got known for was being a Muay Thai instructor. When I originally learned Filipino martial arts, I learned it in the backyard. Kali is usually someone's second martial art or last martial art.

It's usually not their first martial art. When people go into it, the first thing they notice is that as soon as they learn something, it's not about them practicing it, it's about sharing it with somebody else and what's the terminology to use to share it with somebody else so they're not fumbling over words. They might not be a guru in name, but they are a guru in practice, which is why so many people adopt this as a leadership program and then they wind up using that methodology in their base art. It had the information to share, it had the structure and the progression of ranks where curriculum can live, but it also had the future where I can see myself as a guru and produce another guru and have that continue as a lineage going back to honor the indigenous tribes from the back.

Go2 Karate:

So what people are learning when they work with you is how to teach the Kali material. They're learning how to teach and communicate in a better way so that it would apply if they want to be a traditional Taekwondo school or a karate school or jujitsu or something else.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Yes, sir. I believe if we communicate or teach, we use the methodology of learn to teach, teach to learn. Just like us as a parent, we learn so much about being a parent after having kids. Teachers

learn so much about teaching or about the art because it makes you search for what it would be a good instructor. If we use that concept, once I learn it or if I teach it to the kid, they will turn around and teach it to another. This is why we can take the art to a whole new level. This is how we can uplift the art as opposed to watering down the art. Because we are like the gap between the generation. We were raised by the old, grew up. We stayed in the martial art because we became an instructor, so why shouldn't we train everybody to become an instructor?

Go2 Karate:

Master Ace was letting me know that they get info about the upcoming world conference you're doing in Fort Lauderdale on December 5th to 8th.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Yes, sir. We have an event. It's our yearly gathering, and we're actually doing it with Grandmaster of the Warrior Martial Art. We're doing it in conjunction with that because their Warrior Kali program is also our program. And anybody can go to the World Conference if they get some information to register for it.

Master Ace:

It's in December. However, when you're opting in, what most people tend to do is they like to see some online material from Tuhon first. A lot of them can join the online academy, number one. They can go through there or get information on live events. But if you're doing something like getting the curriculum now, when you go in December and you've been training, you could actually rank promote at the event. Most people love the online academy because it's literally Tuhon teaching them what to do as if they were a student with him live. Anyone can go to the event. They'll be mixed in from the public, academy members from online, as well as instructors that are part of the instructor development program. Everyone will be able to commingle, meet, ask questions, things of that nature and not feel like I'm new at this. They're just part of our community already.

Go2 Karate:

They should go to artofblade.com and click the Request Info.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

I mean I'm looking forward to training anyone. Once you opt in, you can host a seminar or if you want to attend seminars, it will be available at our site. For an instructor, I really think that if we work on the why whenever we teach, number one, if we don't know the why, then it will make a search as an instructor. And if we do know the why, it will give that aha moment to a lot of our students that will make them want to come back all the time.

Go2 Karate:

I think that's a great thing to end on. Don't be a technique collector, be it technique connector.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Connector. Yes, sir.

Go2 Karate:

I think that's an awesome place to end today. Again, I could speak so much more with you two, and I love the time here. Thank you again Tuhon Apolo, and thanks Master Ace. We're looking forward to having you in Go2 Karate Magazine and sharing with our readers this interview.

Tuhon Apolo Ladra:

Thank you, sir. It's an honor and a pleasure to meet you.

Master Ace:

Thank you both.

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Conflict... The Basics

By Dr. Greg Moody, Go2 Karate

Conflict is all over - coworkers, delivery drivers, disgruntled little league parents, pretty much anybody on my last flight that was delayed... Whether you're reading this to improve how you parent your kids, how you interact with your spouse or friends or how you improve your business or organization, many of you are going to identify with conflict. Be open to how what's discussed here applies to everywhere in your life, because if you can use some of the tools that we talk about for your interpersonal relationships, it will help you expand your skill set as a parent and with your work or in business. Unfortunately, effective solutions to conflict are not simple. You may read about A-B-C or 1-2-3 rules. Or a simple catchy acronym for dealing with fighting. Often what's called conflict resolution. is merely de-escalation strategies (just stop the conflict!). In practice, people are more complex, and resolving conflict with an outcome that works is more complex. That's why those "catchy" systems don't work effectively or work but only in narrow situations.

In part one of this three-part series, we're going to start with understanding when conflict turns bad, and why conflict can be good, and the different types of conflict. This is step one to resolution! In future parts you're going to learn how to get great at resolution!

Effects Of Bad Conflict

Earlier I mentioned conflict creating developmental issues in kids, loss of work time, a drop in morale, and more. Conflict can also be a precursor to escalation into violence and even more. Did you know...

- Parent-child conflict can result in adult developmental difficulties. (Weaver, et.al., 2015)
- 67.5% of all marriages failed because of a breakdown of communication. (American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 2019)

And of course there are more negative effects of conflict, however...

For good ideas and true innovation, you need human interaction, conflict, argument, and debate.

- Margaret Heffernan



We Need Conflict...

It may seem like a good idea to state: “We want to get conflict down to zero.” or “We have a zero-tolerance policy!”. You can see this in parenting manuals or workplace training. However, it’s not necessarily (or ever) a good idea because it misses the point. No growth happens without conflict. Decisions often require conflict. People can feel closer after resolution of conflict. Conflict is even a requirement for appropriate development! (Sheehan and Wheeler. 2012) Think about a couple I knew who used only “positive affirmations” rather than correcting their kids. They’d say, “Oh, you should read those books rather than pulling them off the wall. You should sit on the couch rather than climbing the furniture.” Giving them an alternative didn’t solve the problem of a child who was tearing the house apart.

Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.

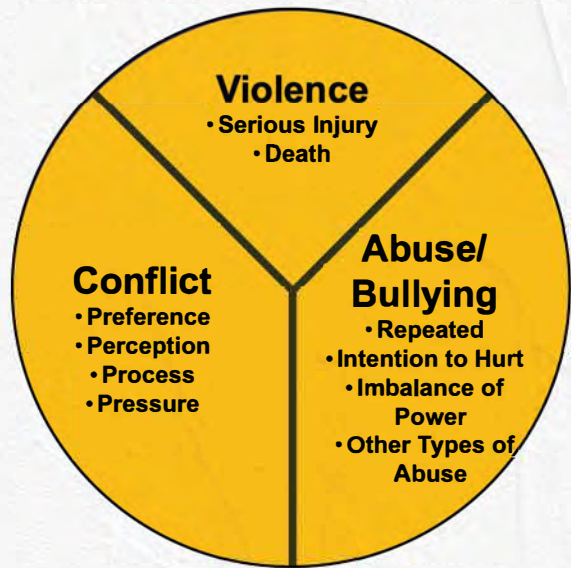
- Ronald Reagan

You can see how that kid wouldn’t grow up. They get older in years, but they wouldn’t gain the skills to be able to regulate their emotions and interact with other people. They wouldn’t learn how to manage problems.

Adults need conflict too. When we study successful marriages, we find that they don’t have any less conflict than relationships that fail. It’s just that the ones who are successful resolve their conflict better. They have the same amount of conflict, but they resolve it more frequently.

Situation Map

No Conflict



Using The Right Tools...

The best way to think of this is with the Situation Map above:

Outside the circle is when there is no conflict - which is most of the time. Inside the circle are three **conflict types**: violence, abuse, and ordinary conflict. All three are important but require different solutions.

Violence is when conflict is escalated to the point where there is danger of serious injury or death. Because of this, we always address violence first. If there is danger of permanent physical harm, the strategies in this case would include anything from running/evading the situation, to calling law enforcement or the appropriate authorities, to some sort of self-defense.



*The harder the conflict,
the more glorious
the triumph.*

- Thomas Paine

A situation is **abuse** when there is persistent aggressive behavior, it's intended to hurt, and there is an imbalance of power. This is a type of conflict that is much more difficult for the abused party to manage on their own. One of the specific types of abuse we work with a lot at KarateBuilt Martial Arts is bullying - but there are many kinds of abuse.

Ordinary **conflict** is the most common (thankfully), and it's when people are arguing, fighting, or disagreeing. This could be minor or even appear violent. There are four main categories of conflict: **preference, perception, pressure, and process problems**. We'll explore these in detail in Part II!

Conflict, Violence and Abuse Strategies are Different

These each require different "tool sets". If we try to use conflict resolution strategies (that we'll learn later) when someone is threatening us with serious injury that's likely going to get someone hurt. When someone is threatening you with a knife, it's better to run than to improve your communication. Likewise, if you are arguing with your boss over the best way to manage the budget, it's a really bad idea to punch them in the face (while that may work against the knife attack). Likewise, if a child is threatened with immediate violence, they wouldn't have time to run to a teacher and get help (a bullying/abuse tactic)!

On the other hand, if you're being abused in your relationship, and you kick them in the groin... well there is an imbalance of power so it's likely to get you more abuse. Similarly, can you imagine using skillful conflict resolution in this case? Most people don't understand these differences because they've never been taught to identify and handle all three. As you learn about resolving conflict, you can identify if it's not ordinary conflict and use your other "tools".

Next...

Because most conflict is ordinary conflict in [Effective Conflict Resolution – Part 2](#), we're going to delve into categories of ordinary conflict, how to resolve it and even use it in positive ways! You're going to go beyond de-escalation tactics and become an expert at resolution! See you next time!

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Dr. Greg Moody graduated from Arizona State University, with a degree in engineering, a Master's Degree in Counseling, and a Ph.D. in Special Education and Psychology. An 8th Degree Black Belt, a serial entrepreneur, and a licensed psychotherapist, he speaks and writes on education, curriculum development, business, marketing, and martial arts. Dr. Moody has been a part of the Go2 Karate team for many years and is passionate about helping school owners grow. Whether it's a marketing platform, online marketing, becoming an author, or creating a business roadmap, he is always there to assist those within the martial arts community.



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Book Review:

Amazing Retirement: The Retirement Professional's Guide to a Strong Financial Future

by Joel Russo

Navigating the complexities of retirement planning can be a daunting task for many. Joel Russo, a seasoned financial expert with over thirty-five years of experience, offers a comprehensive guide in his book "Amazing Retirement: The Retirement Professional's Guide to a Strong Financial Future." The book is designed to demystify the nuances of retirement planning and equip readers with the knowledge and tools necessary to secure a financially sound retirement.

The book starts with a crucial distinction between a Retirement Professional and a Financial Professional, underscoring the specialized knowledge required for effective retirement planning. Russo uses accessible language and real-world examples to bridge the gap between complex financial strategies and everyday understanding. He emphasizes the importance of transitioning from general financial management to specific retirement planning as one approach the later stages of their career.

One of the most compelling aspects of Russo's guide is its structure. The book is thoughtfully divided into focused chapters that cover critical areas of retirement planning:

1. **Income and Income-Generating Assets:** Russo explores the difference between active and passive income and provides detailed strategies on how to cultivate and manage assets that generate passive income. He presents a robust discussion on various investment vehicles, from real estate to dividend-paying stocks and bonds, ensuring readers have a broad spectrum of options to consider.

2. **Taxes and Inflation:** The book delves deep into understanding different types of taxes and strategies to mitigate them. Russo simplifies complex tax concepts and presents actionable advice on protecting one's assets from the eroding effects of inflation—critical considerations that often intimidate retirees.

3. **Risk and Volatility:** Russo addresses the often-misunderstood concepts of risk and volatility in investing. Through historical context and current market analysis, he illustrates how to manage and leverage volatility to one's advantage, rather than fear it.

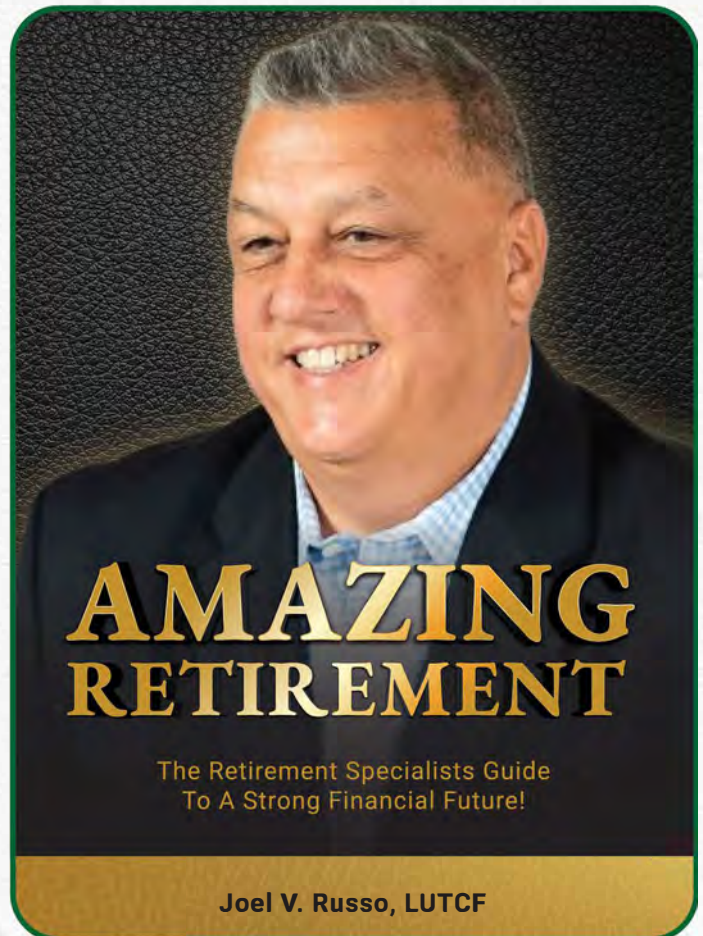
4. **Healthcare and Medical Costs:** Perhaps one of the most anxiety-inducing aspects of retirement planning, healthcare costs are

thoroughly examined. Russo provides strategies for forecasting these costs and planning for Medicare, which can alleviate much of the associated financial stress.

5. Estate Planning: In perhaps one of the most valuable sections, Russo tackles the sensitive topic of estate planning. He stresses the importance of a well-structured estate plan to avoid family disputes and ensure that one's legacy is handled according to their wishes.

The book concludes with a powerful analogy, comparing retirement planning to building a house. This metaphor resonates throughout the guide, reinforcing the need for a solid foundation, strong walls, and a secure roof in planning for retirement.

Joel Russo's personal anecdotes, combined with his professional insights, add a layer of authenticity and relatability to the text. His background, motivations, and the evolution of his career are candidly shared, which not only humanizes him but also reinforces the trustworthiness of his advice.



“Amazing Retirement” is more than just a financial guide—it is a roadmap to achieving a secure and fulfilling retirement. It's clear Russo has not only mastered the technical aspects of retirement planning but also understands the emotional and psychological components that are equally important. His book is an invaluable resource for anyone looking to navigate their retirement with confidence and clarity. Whether you are just starting to think about retirement or are in the midst of planning, Russo's guide offers a wealth of knowledge and practical advice to help you prepare for the golden years.

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the NJ Retirement Planning, LLC and do not necessarily reflect the views of CoreCap Investments, LLC or CoreCap Advisor, LLC, its affiliates, or its employees.

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Wax On Wax Off, It's A New Karate Kid Movie

By Go2 Karate

The upcoming “Karate Kid” movie, set to hit theaters on May 30, 2025, isn’t just a revival of a beloved franchise but a fusion of tradition and innovation, mirroring the very essence of martial arts training. Directed by Jonathan Entwistle and featuring the return of icons Jackie Chan and Ralph Macchio, the film promises to bridge generations with its fresh perspective and homage to the original values of the series.

In the new installment, Chan and Macchio mentor Ben Wang, a newcomer who embodies the next generation of martial artists. Set against the backdrop of China, the film delves deep into the mentor-mentee relationship—a core element of

martial arts itself. This narrative choice highlights the importance of guidance and personal development, traits that are pivotal when selecting a martial arts school.

For those inspired by the film to start their martial arts journey, it serves as a reminder of what to look for in a school. A good martial arts school is not just about learning to kick and punch; it’s about nurturing respect, discipline, and growth. The relationship between teacher and student can significantly impact one’s personal and physical development, much like the characters portrayed by Chan and Macchio.



INSIDE EDGE

The movie's commitment to authenticity and cultural respect also suggests that potential students should seek out schools that honor the true spirit of their martial art. Schools that emphasize tradition, respect the lineage of their teachings, and foster an environment of mutual respect are likely to offer the most enriching experiences.

Therefore, as "Karate Kid" continues to inspire viewers with its depiction of overcoming

challenges through martial arts, it also illuminates the path for choosing the right school. It's about finding a place where the lessons extend beyond the mat—where character is built, and life lessons are as integral as physical skills.

This film, by reflecting the timeless appeal of martial arts and the enduring impact of a great mentor, could be the perfect guide for anyone looking to embark on their own martial arts journey.



Go2 Karate is thrilled about the upcoming Karate Kid movie, and we can't wait to see the next chapter in this iconic martial arts story unfold! With its inspiring themes and action-packed scenes, it's sure to be a hit with martial arts fans of all ages. Check out the official trailer here to get a sneak peek: [Watch the Trailer](#).



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Traditional Program or Realistic Self-defense What is best for you?

By Master Michael Brown

“What martial arts style is best for women?”, “If I want to defend myself, should I take self-defense lessons or buy a gun?”, “What martial arts style is best for a street fight?”

These are common questions asked by people who are interested in self-defense. They are common because violent crime is a problem that many people feel ill-prepared for. These people might have had passing thoughts about enrolling in self-defense training, but it is not until they are actually confronted with violence that they find out their true needs. Or, maybe they did enroll in a martial arts program and found out that when violence was in their face, they felt the training they received was inadequate, that all of their time and funds had not prepared them for the brutality that some predators possess.

I don't want to get into a debate about what style is better from one another. You will never win in an argument like this. It is one similar to young children saying “My dad can beat up your dad!” People are partial and loyal to what they know and are familiar with. Judging a local martial arts studio just by the style they teach is not a good indicator that they can or cannot teach effective self-defense. For example, Don ‘The Dragon’ Wilson, a kung fu stylist, is considered by many to be the best kickboxer of all time. You would have been mistaken to assume that Don Wilson would be a pushover because he trained in a ‘soft style’ martial art such as kung fu. Badly mistaken!



“There can be a huge difference between what people call Martial Arts training and Realistic Self Defense.”

With that being said, some generalizations are relevant. In America, as well as in many countries, there are two main categories of martial arts: Competition-based and Reality-based. There is



nothing wrong with competition. Competition can be a valuable thing. It teaches perseverance and the attitude to rise above your circumstances.

It also develops character: The schools that do competitions are often involved in teaching what I call Life Skills: Courtesy, Respect, Discipline and Self Control. Valuable lessons for not only children but adults as well.

“If violent crime is to be curbed, it is only the intended victim who can do it. The felon does not fear the police, and he fears neither judge nor jury. Therefore, what he must be taught to fear is his victim.”

Reality-based martial arts don't do 'Life Skills'. They are more apt to be covering points of self-defense law.

They, as a rule, don't do competitions. You'll quickly run through your competitors when eye pokes, throat punches, and groin kicks are being utilized. These are a few of the tools that you will become familiar with in a Realistic self-defense course.

I benefit from both of these worlds. I own a studio that teaches both. I recognize the worth of a more traditional program and preparing young families for life and the absolute need for self-defense training. Working with children and seeing them training with their parents is rewarding. I teach the art of Taekwondo, which utilizes life skills. These skills help families grow in a healthy environment and prepare kids to be resilient, resilient from a world with counterproductive morals and values. Many other traditional styles teach these same principles. I employ a younger staff, from teenagers to adults in to their mid-40s. All of these employees I have been teaching for years. They include both my wife and my son. But I also teach Krav Maga.

Other styles can teach realistic self-defense, but the one I adhere to is Krav Maga. Krav Maga is an Israeli self-defense and fighting style that is the preferred martial art for law enforcement and militaries across the globe because of its effectiveness and its realism. The population of my class is comprised mainly of adults and a smaller number of teenagers. Teenagers in my classes are on what I call "probation". They have to prove to me they belong in class. It is a serious class in that there is zero downtime, and the younger people have to be good partners with the older students and each other. The adults range from special forces soldiers (my school is close to Fort Liberty, formerly known as Fort Bragg) to soccer moms.



The student's goals range from wanting to have better job performance, as in the case of my soldiers. Or a single mom wanting to walk with more confidence as she goes through life. One of my students is a father, and he has four daughters enrolled! He has the understandable desire to see his girls able to handle themselves as they get ready to launch out into the world.

My two types of classes are totally different in look and how they are ran. In fact, there has been confusion from prospective students that they were at the right studio. When a young adult steps into my business, and they see a room full of children, they sometimes have second thoughts. That is why all my presentations have videos of me teaching my curriculum. This allows the student to actually see the worth of our programs.

This introductory lesson covers the premises of my training:

The first one we call "DNA" or Defense and Attack. We want to turn the table on our attacker(s), so we train our operators to simultaneously attack back as we defend. We want an attacker to realize that he made a mistake in choosing one of our students and thinking of them as a victim. I love this quote from Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper, United States Marine Corps. "We have to recognize that the world is not a 'fair' place and that bad things happen to good people."

My goal for my students is for them to be the First Responder for themselves and their family.

Our training simulates the worst things that can happen so that you can prepare yourself mentally and physically to prevail under the worst of conditions. If you train with the assumption of “Worst-case Scenarios,” you are much more likely to be able to prevail in a fight. Worst-case scenarios include: your opponent being bigger, the possibility of injury, multiple opponents, someone under the influence, or the opponent being armed.

We reject the idea of defense and are taking the position that we are attacking the predator.

“Traditional martial art classes and Realistic Self-Defense both serve a valuable purpose.”

I then go over the seven drills we have in class and have videos of them being performed. They are:

Warm up - This will get the students sweating and out of breath, and then we will stretch.

Combatives - A ballistic assault designed to neutralize a threat. We want each of our students to become experts at basic fighting skills, expert in that they can perform basic moves seamlessly under stress. I like to use the acronym GEAR (Give ‘Em A Rupture!)

Defensive Techniques - Methods we use to intercept, deflect or evade an attack. We realize that even blocking an attack you can be injured, so we instruct students that, “The best block is not to be there”. Moving, blocking, and striking are integral parts of our training.

Fatigue Drills - Simulate the energy depletion you will feel during an actual confrontation. Getting used to operating under physical stress prepares you for the rigors of combat. It also simulates the physical response of adrenaline hitting your system.

Self-Defense - self-defense is when an attack has been initiated to you and has put you under some situation of disadvantage, such as a head lock, bear hug, or choke. We prepare our operators for these encounters and give them practical solutions that they can commit to muscle memory so these techniques become reflexive or automatic.

Awareness Drills - They work on our reflexes and adaption to different students. (We switch partners at least 50 times a class) These drills allow you to develop your motor skills and make them reflexive. A fight is a very dynamic thing, and you want to be able to adapt to situations as the fight develops. Your response should evolve to a nearly unconscious level.

Stress Drills - Acclimate us to the sudden shock of being attacked. Just learning a move is one thing, being able to perform it under stress is another. This sort of training is integral to Leadership Krav Maga and it is what sets us apart from so many other styles of martial arts. It involves surprise and disorientation.





This training does not have to be exclusive, one from another. I believe that a school can serve both objectives well. As a student or a school owner, we should all adhere to the principle of Constant And Never Ending Improvement (Acronym CANEI). This sometimes involves us getting out of our comfort zone or even a new paradigm of thinking. Try to reject closed-minded thinking and be open to new ideas. Consider ways you want to grow. I know

my studio has benefited greatly and serves more people because of embracing two ways to serve our clients. Realistic Self-Defense training might be a valuable addition to you or your school's program. I will leave you with the Chinese proverb, "Be not afraid of growing slowly; be afraid only of standing still."



Michael Brown is an author, an eighth-degree black belt, and a Master Instructor of Taekwondo. He is a certified instructor under Krav Maga Worldwide and Warrior Krav Maga. He has been serving his community in self-defense training for over 30 years. Michael enjoys working with the Military, law enforcement, and civilians. Michael is a two-time world champion in sparring and a former Captain in the United States Marine Corps. He is a firearm safety expert and trains teams and individuals in Advanced Concealed and Carry Techniques. He trains church Safety Teams in his spare time, and he enjoys teaching alongside his wife, Master Kimberly Brown, and son, Michael. More information can be found at PunchNKick.com and KravMagaTactics.com.

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Gun Defense:

My Teaching Of Gun Defense Has Evolved Over The Years

By Todd Droege

First of all, it starts with creating a good community of law-abiding second amendment people who respect firearms and the rights given by the Constitution. I firmly believe it begins in training with safety rules.

Some people might say, "Why safety rules if I'm disarming someone?" To which I would respond "What if I have utilized a disarming technique correctly, and the gun is now in my hands....all of the responsibility to do everything correctly by law is now on me."



Safety rules we teach and strive to use every day while being a good law-abiding citizens include

1. All guns are loaded and are to be treated as such. Know the condition of your weapon at all times.
2. Never cover anything you or someone else are not willing to destroy - says it all and gets the point across.
3. Keep your finger off the trigger unless you are fixed on the sights and there is a threat.
4. Beware of your target. What's in front, back, left and right of the target. Targets could move!! Especially after the first shot so that there is time to reassess before taking a second shot.
5. Make sure your firearm is clean and lubricated and in good working condition.

*it begins in training
with safety rules.*

The above rules are used in the beginning of all my training whether a live weapon or plastic training weapon. Providing this information consistently will put the class in the right frame of mind to train effectively and better understand the liability involved with their actions, The next part is making the techniques relative to the times we live in now. I consider myself blessed and very fortunate that some time ago a local SWAT team commander came to me and



asked if we could train together to get a different point of view on how defensive tactics looked from my perspective. I was quite honored. Now twelve years and many agencies later, we have taken all the information and data and used it to improve and up the percentages to survive on the streets.

We've found that striking sometimes before we get control doesn't always workout well.

However, most people do not train that often and can't hit hard enough to stop the threat. The evolution of front gun: redirect the line of fire, head defense, and then control weapon followed by counterattack. The problem we discovered with this technique was that the opposition was often sweaty and/or fell back and gained space from their attacker - when the person doing the disarming technique punched now, they realized they were in trouble and had given up the opportunity of surprise and strategies we'd developed over years of training.

The answer we came up with was to control then strike with knees and low kicks and not be

overly worried about the disarming part that seemed popular because it looked "cool." Instead, repeatedly strike them until the threat is down. Then pick up the firearm and use it or use your own to keep said weapon safe from others.

If you train consistently and have a "perfect" punch, the strike to the chin with the first two knuckles in an explosive manner, then going in for it works effectively.

The next evolution of our training was teaching Drill vs. Training. I found that many instructors spent a lot of time talking and drilling, which caused them to run out of time in class to afford adequate training on the technique itself. So, my explanation of teaching the drill....

HAND GUN DEFENSE

1. Demonstrate one part of the drill at a time.
2. Break the drill into parts because if you miss or go too fast on any particular part of the drill, it could cost your life when actually dealing with a firearm.
3. This is the part of the drill where we stand still and repeat the first part many times until the client feels comfortable, then add the next section,
4. Repeat the first two stages for about two weeks and make them earn the right to move onto the next stage.

My explanation of training with what was just taught

1. I like to call it “playing the game.”
2. How would the “bad guy” react to you and your movements?
3. Get sweaty, then try it.
4. Add movement - keep in mind that the bad guy might pull the firearm back at any time; or simply back away from you. Now you are too far away to do the technique
5. Add stress - music, people yelling, throwing pads at you while you are trying to execute the drill.

Many years later we found that we had many choices and many discussions that were to be made in a split second. This happens when your life depends on it.

We have three front gun disarming techniques.

1. Over an obstacle. Such as a desk or counter, somewhere you are unable to move.
2. Within arm's length.
3. When the firearm is outside an arm's length but within a reasonable distance,



Todd Droege is a Taekwondo Grand Master Instructor, the founder of Tactical Martial Arts in Marietta, Ga, a Personal security expert, and a former DOD contractor. He is second in the command structure of GTMA, one of the fastest-growing martial arts organizations in the world, under Grand Master G.K. Lee.

and we find that out with many training sessions changing the distance, one inch at a time. We found that this really increased confidence and the willingness to train. Keep in mind that mistakes will be made, which is great as it affords us to explain what was done incorrectly and correct it right then and there. Don't feel the need to fix everything as it happens. Allow them to train with drill between 20 to 30 times. Pick one thing to fix, keeping it positive and ensuring the student that with practice, things will get better.

In closing, I really enjoy teaching Gun Defense because your life might depend on it, and it's our goal here at Tactical Martial Arts to provide the most up to date and relevant information we can deliver. Whether it's a member of the police force or mom/dad, it is our goal to keep all safe and ideally never have to use any of this. However, if they find themselves in a situation that involves a firearm, they will have all the information needed to Survive and be successful.



What's so Special About Jiu-jitsu?

By Travis Tooke

Jiu-jitsu, Ju jitsu, Brazilian Jiu-jitsu, BJJ, Gracie Jiu-jitsu, Jitz (my least favorite one)...the artform that has taken the world by storm is known by many names. It seems like everyone and their grandmother have dabbled with or trained full-time in this wildly popular martial art. But what is it about Jiu-jitsu that makes it so special to millions of practitioners worldwide?

The rise in popularity of the UFC and superstars like Conor McGregor and Rhonda Rousey has certainly contributed. Celebrity grapplers like Joe Rogan, Tom Hardy, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and even Gisele Bundchen have brought a ton of attention to the art form. For the first time in history, the top athletes are making upward of a million dollars to compete in addition to royalties and fees to teach and put out instructional videos. Grappling champions such as Gordan

Ryan are rubbing elbows with the Hollywood elite, and today, Jiu-jitsu is officially a household name. I would be willing to bet that just about everyone you know also knows someone who is a BJJ student. But is Jiu-jitsu really so unique by comparison to the other martial art forms? Well, yes and no...and YES!

The most obvious difference between Jiu-jitsu and more traditional martial arts is the emphasis on grappling as opposed to striking. One look at two students sparring in Jiu-jitsu, and you will immediately notice just how different it appears. No flashy kicks or punches. The stance is more akin to wrestling than anything else, and when a competitor's arms extend away from their body, the intention is to grab, not punch. Half the time, one or both competitors will intentionally fall to their backs to attempt an attack from the guard



position. It seems bizarre to lie to your back to try to win a fight, but a skilled person will often achieve victory using this strategy. While Judo is the most similar and, historically speaking, is actually the same art, modern Jiu-jitsu has evolved in a very different direction. There is much debate and controversy surrounding Jiu-jitsu as a form of self-defense vs. competition-style Jiu-jitsu. People are equally divided between training in Gi vs. No-Gi. In more recent years, emphasis on leg locks has completely revolutionized the art. Once considered taboo and unsportsmanlike, leglocks have earned their place as technical and effective submissions that every Jiu-jitsu student must learn and respect. As for me, I love it all, and I encourage people to learn a new skill with an open mind and an empty cup, regardless of the particular style they may prefer. UFC legend George St. Pierre was famous for training gi and no-gi Jiu-jitsu, wrestling, karate, and boxing. He even did gymnastics and ballet!

As a skillset that provides realistic self-defense and practical fitness, Jiu-jitsu checks all the boxes. It is an activity that teaches kids and adults the value of discipline, effort, attitude, and teamwork. Like so many martial arts, jiu-jitsu provides the framework for becoming a person of high character and integrity.

This is something that all martial arts schools, regardless of style, should aim to provide their students. Two particular areas I do feel are unique to Jiu-jitsu are the proximity of the training partners during practice and the physical chess match that each training session provides. The simple fact is that Jiu-jitsu training is up close and personal...literally. You are squeezing or being squeezed nearly every moment of the match in a concentrated effort to gain a winning position and force your partner to tap. You are simultaneously working to avoid being caught in their submission. What is successful on one training partner may fail completely on another. You use your entire body during a Jiu-jitsu match, and it can be utterly exhausting. Sometimes, you are seconds



away from tapping out your opponent, so you give every ounce of effort only to have them escape. Now you're too exhausted to put up a fight, and they are motivated to tap you out, having survived your best attempt. And, despite what some believe, size, speed, and strength do make a difference...a rather big difference, especially when skillsets are evenly matched! But technique can always overcome a gap in physical qualities. The challenge is to constantly uncover the next level of technical mastery and find the solution to your problem. And that's what Jiu-jitsu teaches us: how to solve problems with technical, elegant, and often humbling solutions. You must develop the discipline to drill technique over and over again, even when you don't feel great progress. Yes, jiu-jitsu can be frustrating, but

eventually, you will experience a breakthrough in your comprehension.

You start hitting the techniques, and you feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment...at least until the higher belt shuts it all down and brings you back to Earth. Then it's back to the lab again. It's fun, frustrating, and enlightening. The trust required to train with someone who is trying to subdue you, manipulate your joints, and strangle you must be at level 10 in order to avoid injury and maintain respect among teammates. That is why Jiu-jitsu teammates are usually very close to one another and have tremendous mutual respect for their training partners and opponents. Students learn quickly that in order to improve, they must cultivate strong relationships with like-minded, goal-driven individuals like themselves. When you have the right environment where there is an emphasis on safety and trust, students can push themselves and their teammates, and injuries are very rare.

Indeed, there is no better way to be fully immersed in the present moment than training or competing in Jiu-jitsu. When you experience a high level of physical and mental challenge with a teammate whom you trust to not only keep you safe but also push you to improve, something magic happens. The problems in your life don't disappear, but you are able to view them through a different lens and identify solutions more easily. As the years pass, students become humbler yet more confident. They rely less on strength as they become physically stronger. Their fighting skills increase while their tempers decrease. Jiu-jitsu is so much more than the moves you learn; it's the relationships you build and the lessons you acquire that will ripple across your life and those you touch. Yes, I believe that Jiu-jitsu and all martial arts are unique in their ability to transform people into better versions of themselves. It is a vehicle to bring forth hidden potential and tap into a dimension of endless self-improvement.

Oh, and learning how to choke someone twice your size is just plain awesome!

For over 20 years Travis Tooke has dedicated himself to mastering and teaching the art of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. He is a passionate martial artist who is committed to serving his students and his community. He is the author of *Jiu Jitsu and Life: Lessons Learned On and Off the Mat*. As the head instructor and CEO of Team Tooke Mixed Martial Arts, Professor Tooke has created a program that molds students into athletic martial artists and confident leaders.

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Nutrition and Tournaments

By Lisa Agens

In previous editions, you read about Protein, Burning Energy, and Hydration and Electrolytes. Now we put it all together to aid in the sport you love so you can be the best athlete you can be. The results you get in training and at tournament time are based not only on your training effort, but the fuel you give your body to perform.

Tournament Time!

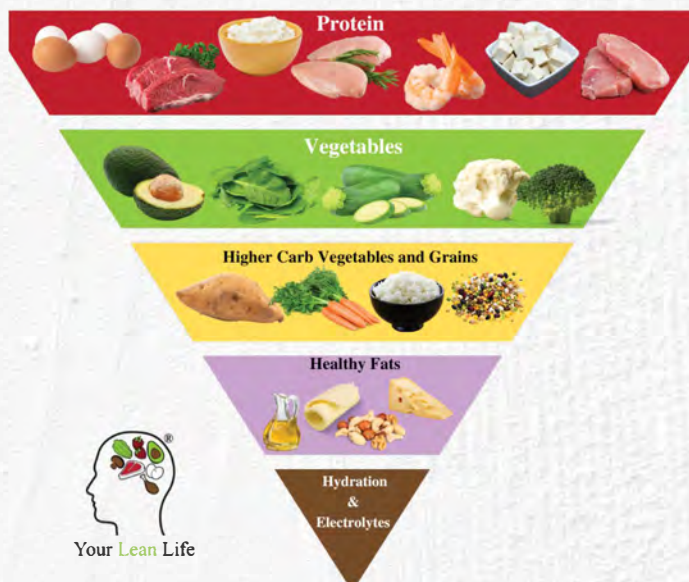
Even with regular training, your nutrition can greatly influence your performance in a sport. Your bodies are being asked to do extraordinary things, and we need to provide the fuel for those demands. Athletes need to plan their meals and hydration/electrolyte strategies to make sure they have the energy, focus, and endurance required for the physical and mental demands of the sport. Here are some tips to keep in mind when preparing for and competing in your sport!

Trial and Error:

Use the training time leading up to the tournament to experiment with different nutrition strategies. Right before a tournament is definitely not the time to make last minute adjustments. Pay attention to how your body responds to various foods and the timing of those foods. This will help you fine-tune your nutrition for optimal performance on tournament day.

Sleep and Recovery:

Adequate sleep is a critical component of overall performance, not just before the tournament, but also in your training. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep. Quality sleep contributes to physical recovery, mental sharpness, and overall well-being. Quality means not just the hours spent in



bed, but the actual completion of sleep cycles. Things that can improve your quality are ending electronics at least 30 minutes prior to bed, a quiet, cool, dark room and being consistent with your bed and wake times.

Avoid Heavy or Unfamiliar Foods:

Avoid heavy or unfamiliar foods that may cause digestive issues, not just the day of but days leading up to the tournament. Stick to familiar, well-tolerated meals to minimize the risk of digestive issues during the tournament.

Hydration and Electrolytes are Key:

Staying well hydrated is fundamental for your best performance. This is true in training as well as tournament time. Adequate hydration ensures optimal blood flow, temperature regulation, and cognitive function. Begin hydrating well in advance of the tournament. Along with hydration

goes electrolytes. Fluid without electrolytes, coupled with excessive sweating can lead to hyponatremia, abnormally low sodium in the blood, and lead to medical emergencies. Consider incorporating electrolyte-rich drinks to maintain the body's balance of fluids and minerals like sodium, potassium, and magnesium. Snack items that can also help with electrolytes are pickles and avocado.

Addressing Macronutrients (Protein, Carbohydrates, & Fats):

Carbohydrates, are the body's primary energy source, unless you are ketogenic, so focus on whole food carbohydrates like vegetables, whole grains and fruits. Protein aids in muscle repair and recovery, while healthy fats contribute to sustained energy. Strive for a distribution of these macronutrients in each meal. Ideally, getting these macronutrients from whole food will give your body the best opportunity to get a complete complement of micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) that are the most readily absorbable, as well.

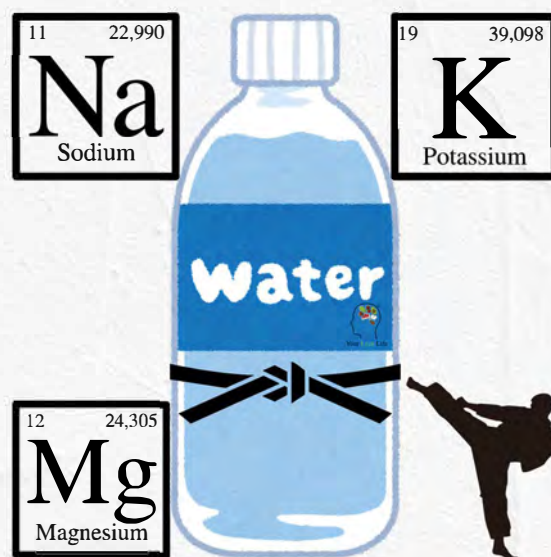
Meal Timing:

Plan your meals strategically based on the tournament schedule. Try not to eat a large meal too close to tournament time. If possible, 3-4 hours prior. Include lean proteins, vegetables and a higher carbohydrate item. For a smaller snack closer to the tournament, opt for easily digestible carbohydrates and protein about 30-60 minutes beforehand. Depending on the length of the tournament, you may need to pack protein and whole food carbohydrates to have through the day. Will you also need other supplementation through your tournament day?

Pre-Tournament and Intra-Tournament Supplements:

Some athletes may benefit from supplements to enhance performance. Depending on how often you will be performing in the tournament may mean you will need to strategically plan

your nutrients as well as supplements. Caffeine may enhance focus and alertness. Glucose or dextrose may increase energy, as it is a fast-digesting carbohydrate. It is important to test any supplements during training to understand their effects on your body and avoid any potential negative side effects on tournament day. If using caffeine as a performance enhancer, be mindful of the timing and dosage. Consuming too much caffeine too close to the tournament can lead to jitteriness and negatively influence focus. Experiment with caffeine intake during training



sessions to find the optimal dose and timing for your body. Glucose or dextrose can take as little as 30 minutes to be felt as energy, so strategically taking a small amount (depending on your diet, between 10g-60g) prior to your event can be beneficial. If you have any medical issues that contraindicates the use of caffeine or glucose/dextrose, do not use it as a supplement.

Prioritize nutrition that includes whole food carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats.

NUTRITION AND TOURNAMENTS

Stay Hydrated During the Tournament:

Have water bottles and electrolytes readily available and take small sips regularly during breaks to maintain fluid balance. The more you sweat, the more you need to replenish, both fluid and electrolytes.

Recovery Nutrition:

Do not overlook post-training or post-tournament nutrition. Consuming a combination of protein and carbohydrates after a tournament can aid in muscle recovery and replenish glycogen stores. Replenishing lost hydration and electrolytes is very important during this post-tournament time, too. Try to avoid the “celebratory overindulgences” that can also lead to digestive upsets. Bring your nutrition back to your normal day-to-day.

Individualized Nutrition Plan:

Recognize that each athlete is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to nutrition. Consider consulting with a nutritionist who can create an individualized plan based on your specific needs, training intensity, and tournament schedule. Effective nutrition and fueling is essential for martial artists seeking optimal performance

in a tournament cycle. A well-balanced diet, proper hydration, electrolyte management, sleep, recovery, and strategic meal timing can significantly influence energy levels, endurance, and mental focus. By incorporating these guidelines and personalizing them to your unique needs, you will be better prepared to excel in the demanding environment of a martial arts tournament.

Hydration is an ongoing process, not just something to focus on before the tournament.



After transitioning from a career in dance to dental hygiene, Lisa struggled with weight gain. After many diet failures, she educated herself on nutrition and built healthy habits. As the founder of Your Lean Life, LLC, she's helped hundreds lose weight through a whole-food, fat-loss approach. A passionate teacher and coach, Lisa holds multiple certifications in fitness and nutrition, including ISSA, Precision Nutrition, and NASM. Learn more at www.yourleanlife.com.

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Progressive Strength and Conditioning Programming for Adolescent M.M.A. Athletes

By David Mckenzie



Through the decades, if you look at the history of sports and its growth, there has always been a constant push for progress. Much like the cave dwellers went from rolling a wheel to driving a Ford Mustang, athletes' athletic capacity and performance have moved at the same speed.

Through exercise science and kinesiology, the dynamics of how to condition an athlete to move faster, push harder, and generate power go leaps and bounds with its applications. With proper programming and periodization, young athletes can benefit from these sciences and progress neuromuscularly at a much faster rate than merely ten years ago.

The always-growing sports strength and conditioning science is a major component of these capabilities.

Whether an adult or adolescent athlete, proper evaluation of the athlete's strength, power, stability, and movement patterns is crucial to



prescribing correct programming. The National Association of Sports Medicine Associations' optimum performance training module is a good example. This module breaks down the different training phases in a progressive way, where one must be mastered to get to the other.

The optimum performance training module breaks down progressing clients through three levels:

1. Stabilization
2. Strength
3. Power

With any athlete, the first step of stabilization is a high priority to master before moving forward. Especially in M.M.A., with weight being distributed onto the body with high force, having stability helps prevent dire injuries. This phase is crucial for younger athletes, with joints, tendons, bones, and organs that are still growing. For example, a young athlete being grappled by a jiu-jitsu-based opponent, with not only the neuromuscular connection to lock his trunk (torso) to prevent being rolled or given to an armbar, can not only

deter a loss but prevent an injury. Having the knowledge of your transverse abdominal and glute on the opposite side of your trunk that is being pulled can prevent momentum from being generated on a toss. Being taught good stability as a young athlete not only prevents injuries but helps with preventing and getting ahead of future muscle imbalances that are the repercussions of any sports-specific motions. A young M.M.A. athlete has an awareness of scapular health and shoulder stability at a young age, as well as battling the damage that comes to the A.C. joint from the shoulder, being in a constant state of protraction.

Another key training modality that can be applied to young athletes, and the next step in this module, would be strength endurance. This is the idea of being able to output strength while maintaining stabilization. A great training practice for this through weight and body weight training is super sets. This involves having two exercises, one following the other. Application of this can be seen in an example of having someone go from a

CONDITIONING AND STRENGTH

bench press, a compound movement for primary mover strength, straight into a stability ball push-up. For a coach in M.M.A. or their respective practice, the ability to push heavy dead weight up from a laying down position and immediately able to stabilize above the floor is a skill that would be beneficial to their student.

While it's not the practice with the highest reward to M.M.A., muscle development is another phase in strength and conditioning that can benefit a young M.M.A. athlete.

For an athlete looking to move up a weight class, classic isolation bodybuilding can be a great off-season program to add mass without elevating the body fat or putting the organs under assault through other forms of weight gain. Also, for athletes who have suffered injuries, a program with muscle development to combat atrophy from a long-term injury and to help the athlete build the mind-to-muscle connection back can be highly beneficial.

Maximal strength is the next step is the strength phase. Maximal strength is the primary movers moving heavy loads. Exercises that fall into this category:

- Barbell squats (back and front)
- Cleans (ranging from full, power, hang, etc.)
- Bench press

Muscle development is another phase in strength and conditioning that can benefit a young M.M.A. athlete.

Now, while striving for one-rep maxes or being the main focus of their training can be counterproductive, for improved strength and training within the fast-twitch muscle fibers, these



CONDITIONING AND STRENGTH

are the mecca for building explosive athletes. There isn't a professional sports or Division One college strength and conditioning program that would include these movements in some regard for their client's performance.

As they classify as power moves, there is no need for a barbell for an exercise to be considered a power movement. For example, in a power

exercise. Taking a Dynamax ball in hand from a standing position, with the ball in hand in front of the body, you will hoist the ball overhead, and in an explosive motion, with triple extension, slamming the ball straight in front, ending in a quarter squat position, would be considered a power move. Accelerating and decelerating power output through the hips could be the winning factor for a competitive M.M.A. fighter.



David is a personal trainer who has ten years in the fitness industry. He's worked with several Division One collegiate athletes and multiple competitive mixed martial artists. Certifications include NASM and FMS Level 1.

What to Look for in a Martial Arts School as an Adult

By Go2 Karate

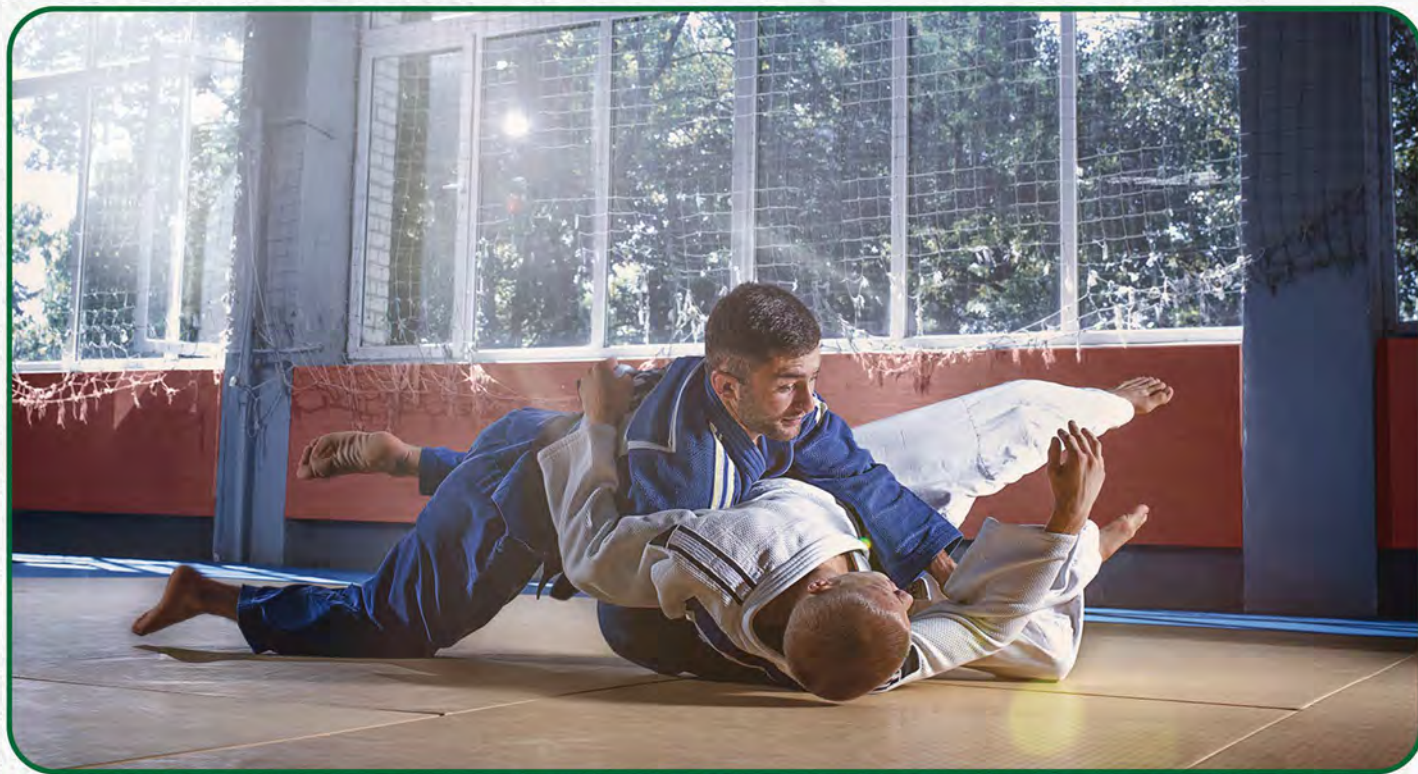
Choosing a martial arts school as an adult can be a life-changing experience, whether you're looking to get in shape, learn self-defense, or dive into a new passion. But with so many options out there, finding the right school can feel a bit overwhelming. To help you out, here's a guide to what you should look for when choosing a martial arts school as an adult.



First, it's essential to think about what you want to get out of your martial arts training. Are you aiming to improve your fitness, learn how to defend yourself, build confidence, or maybe find a way to unwind and focus? Each martial art offers something a little different. For example, Krav Maga is all about real-world self-defense, making it a great choice if your goal is personal safety. On the other hand, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) is more focused on grappling and ground fighting, giving you a full-body workout that sharpens both your body and mind. Taekwondo emphasizes kicks and flexibility, perfect for cardio enthusiasts, while arts like Aikido or Tai Chi lean toward mindfulness and balance, offering a more meditative experience. Once you've figured out your goals, you'll be better equipped to choose a school that aligns with what you're looking for.

When selecting a school, the quality of instruction is one of the most important factors. You'll want to look into the background of potential instructors to ensure they have legitimate experience and certifications. Many martial arts organizations have strict guidelines for instructors, so you can feel confident that they know their stuff.

You should also consider whether the instructor is good at working with adults. Teaching martial arts to adults is different than teaching kids;



there's often more focus on injury prevention, dealing with physical limitations, and creating a motivating atmosphere. Look for an instructor who is patient, encouraging, and genuinely invested in your growth.

Another key thing to look for is the overall vibe of the school. Take a class or two and pay attention to how things are run. Are the classes well-organized and balanced between group work and individual attention? How do the students interact with each other and the instructor? A supportive and respectful environment is crucial, especially if you're just starting out. You don't want to end up in a place where students are overly competitive or where the atmosphere feels tense or unfriendly. Many adults take up martial arts to reduce stress, not add to it.

For busy adults, class scheduling is often a big factor. Between work, family, and everything else, it's important to find a school that offers classes

at times that fit your schedule. Many schools offer early morning, evening, or weekend classes, so be sure to find one that works for you. Also, check to see if the school has a flexible attendance policy—sometimes life gets in the way, and you want to make sure missing a class now and then won't throw off your progress.

The facilities themselves can tell you a lot about a martial arts school. A clean, well-maintained space shows that the school takes pride in its environment and cares about its students. Make sure the mats, gear, and equipment are in good shape. Some schools provide everything you need, like gloves and pads, while others might require you to bring your own.

It's also worth checking whether the school has amenities like changing rooms or showers, which can make it easier to fit training into your routine, especially if you're squeezing in classes before or after work.

Most martial arts schools offer a free trial class or a short-term introductory program, which is a great opportunity to try out the school before committing. When you take the trial class, pay attention to how you feel—was it challenging, but still fun? Did you feel comfortable with the instructor and the other students? short-term introductory program, which is a great opportunity to try out the school.

Another practical consideration is cost. Martial arts classes can vary widely in price, and it's essential to find a school that fits your budget. Some schools offer discounts if you pay for a few months in advance, but you'll also want to check for hidden costs like uniforms, testing fees, or tournament costs. Make sure you know what you're getting into financially.

While you're checking things out, ask about the school's certifications and lineage. Some schools are part of larger organizations, which can help ensure a standardized curriculum and clear progression through the ranks. Knowing that a school is part of a recognized network can give you confidence that the training is legit and that your progress will be recognized if you continue your martial arts journey.

For some martial arts, lineage is especially important. This refers to the chain of instructors going back to the founder of the style. Schools with a strong lineage can offer a sense of authenticity and connection to the tradition of the martial art.

Finally, one of the most important factors is the culture of the school. A school that encourages a sense of community can make your martial arts journey more enjoyable and sustainable. Ask if they hold social events, if there's a support system among students, or if they're involved in any community or charity work. These little things can help you connect with others and stay motivated in your training.

A supportive community, as emphasized by Melody Johnson, CEO of the SKILLZ curriculum, can make a huge difference in your martial arts journey. She talks about how the right environment helps build self-confidence, discipline, and resilience—qualities that not only make you a better martial artist but also carry over into your daily life.

In the end, choosing the right martial arts school as an adult isn't just about convenience or price—it's about finding a place that aligns with your goals and values. By taking the time to research instructors, observe classes, consider the schedule and cost, and assess the school's culture, you can make an informed decision that sets you up for success in your martial arts journey.



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Ad Print Specifications



SIZE	BLEED	LIVE	TRIM
Spread	17.25" x 11.25"	16.5" x 10"	17" x 11"
Full-Page	8.75" x 11.25"	7.375" x 10"	8.5" x 11"
Half-Page	8.75" x 5.625"	7.375" x 5"	8.5" x 5.5"

GENERAL INFORMATION

- If your add is full Bleed all text and important elements must be kept within the "Safe Zone" - 0.5" from the edge
- The Magazine trims to 8.5" x 11"
- Please keep live matter 0.75" from all sides that bleed; 0.5" from trim

REQUIRED FORMAT

- If your add is full Bleed all text and important elements must be kept within the "Safe Zone" - 0.5" from the edge
- Image Resolution must be a minimum of 300 dpi at 100% in size
- Must be CMYK process color - spot colors must also be converted
- Press-Ready PDF: The PDF/X-1a must be made from a PostScript file with all fonts and high-resolution images embedded

AD DELIVERY

- Please submit files via email to denise@Go2Karate.com
- If file is over 25MB please submit via WeTransfer, YouSendIt, or Dropbox

DISCLAIMER

- Please follow the above specifications carefully to ensure your ad meets production standards. For any ads that require design adjustments you will be subject to a \$150/hr design rate billed in 15 min increments.

PRODUCTION CONTACT

Denise Morin,
 Ad Manager
 Email: Denise@Go2Karate.com
 Text: Go2 Karate to 757.550.0081

MAILING ADDRESS

Go2 Karate Magazine
 P.O. Box 1670
 Amherst, VA 24521

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