

Martial Arts for Your Mind and Body

Course Guidebook

David-Dorian Ross
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David-Dorian Ross is the founder and CEO of TaijiFit and the creator of the TaijiFit program, a revolution in mind-body exercise. He has a B.A. in Human Movement Studies from San Francisco State University, completed graduate course work in physical education and Chinese, and participated in a program to study healthy aging at the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Ross has successfully sought to modernize and mainstream the teaching methods used to transmit the ancient mind-body disciplines to contemporary students without losing the essence of those arts. Since 2012, he has collaborated with international action film star Jet Li on a mission to introduce tai chi to 100 million new people worldwide by the year 2020.

Mr. Ross has been a fitness industry leader for more than 30 years. He was the founder and chief instructor of the Honolulu T'ai Chi Academy and a certified continuing educator for the American Council on Exercise. He is recognized as an expert on mind-body fitness in particular but also on fitness in general. He has been a presenter at virtually every major fitness conference in the United States, Canada, and China and has served as a committee member for several organizations, including the National Association of Health and Fitness.

Mr. Ross's competitive performances have won him seven U.S. gold medals, two world bronze medals, and a world silver medal—the highest awards ever given to an American for international tai chi performance. His tai chi training includes studying in China with the coach of the women's world tai chi champion and with Wu Bin, the former head coach of the Chinese national martial arts team. In the United States, Mr. Ross's teachers include Grandmaster Doc-Fai Wong and Master Wen-Mei Yu, and for the past 10 years, he has been the student of Master Wei Jingling.

Mr. Ross is the creator of a dozen award-winning DVDs, including *T'ai Chi Beginning Practice* (the number-one selling tai chi video in America), produced by Gaiam. He also hosted the PBS television special *T'ai Chi: Health and Happiness*. His first show on PBS was *T'ai Chi in Paradise*. He is the author of five books on health and wellness, including *Exercising the Soul*, an Amazon number-one best seller in the meditation category.

Mr. Ross's company, TaijiFit, aims to combine the best of traditional tai chi with modern Western fitness for health and happiness. His list of clients includes UnitedHealthcare (on the corporate fitness side). In 2011, when LA Fitness bought Bally Total Fitness, Mr. Ross was hired to recertify more than 1,000 LA Fitness personal trainers.

Mr. Ross is a pioneer in the use of social media and the Internet to teach tai chi, qigong, and meditation. He created the first online full-service mind-body training studio at daviddorianross.com, with all classes at the studio held in real time via two-way video. The curriculum's centerpiece is the TaijiFit program, but it also includes yoga as well as Nia (neuromuscular integrative action) and classical tai chi (taijiquan).

Mr. Ross's other Great Courses are *Essentials of Tai Chi and Qigong* and *Mastering Tai Chi*. ■

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A note from David-Dorian Ross:

The martial arts have been a part of my life for 40 years. They have been much more than a health and fitness pursuit, and much more than a vocation. They have shaped the course of my life and made me the person I am. They have also introduced me to some of the best friends a person could ever hope to know: people of great character, loyalty, honesty, and accomplishments.

No one person could ever be an expert in every martial arts style, so when I began this project, I knew we would need to bring in guest instructors of high caliber. These are people I am proud to call friends and to whom I extend my greatest thanks. It was an honor—and a sheer delight—to work with them on this course.

This course's guest instructors include the following people, who lent their expertise in particular styles of martial arts:

Helana Cauliffe, representing jeet kune do.
Johnny Chang, representing white crane kung fu.
Akira Fukuda, representing karate, judo, and jujitsu.
Joshua Grant, representing praying mantis kung fu.
Kathy Long, representing Muay Thai.
Tammy McCracken, representing Krav Maga.
Dave Wheaton, representing tae kwon do. ■

SCOPE

MARTIAL ARTS FOR YOUR MIND AND BODY

The phrase *martial arts* suggests skills of combat raised to the level of an art. But throughout history, martial arts have been much more than systems and styles of fighting. They have also been systems and styles of personal growth, developing the mind and character along with the body. They are systems of philosophy that are active rather than academic and demonstrable rather than rhetorical.

For the masters of the martial arts, there is a clear distinction between being a fighter and being a martial artist. Even if you're undefeated by any opponent, if you do not defeat your own ego and tame your baser impulses, you are merely a brawler. As this course shows, almost every martial art is as much about discipline for the mind as it is for the body.

A true history of the martial arts may extend to the beginning of civilization itself, when warriors trained for battle for the conquest of kingdoms or for the survival of a tribe. But this course focuses on the brief histories of the martial arts styles well known and available in the 21st century. The course begins with the Chinese martial art known as Shaolin Kung-fu, which traces its origins to the 5th century AD. It comes full circle to cover a kind of martial arts so new that it has not yet formalized itself as style: Krav Maga. ■

LESSON 1

STRENGTHEN YOUR MIND, BALANCE YOUR BODY



Every martial arts style is different. But certain features are somewhat common to all martial arts style. After all, a punch is basically a punch no matter the style. And a kick is a kick—although in this course, we will see the nuances, details, and slight differences between different styles. This lesson introduces a few basic ideas and techniques that will be useful for the lessons to come.

Note: Even if you are in good health and have been a regular exerciser, you should practice caution when learning a martial art. It is advisable to consult with your physician about your readiness to try a martial art.

STANCES

This section recaps two positions from the video lesson: the lunge and the horse riding stance.

Lunge Stance

One of the most basic positions in many martial arts styles is the lunge stance. The left foot comes in front, with the front knee bent. The back leg should be fairly straight. Note: Some martial arts styles require more extension and straightness in the back leg. Other martial arts styles will go the opposite direction and ask you for some softness in the back leg and knee. This lesson focuses on a generic approach in between.

Your weight should be distributed about 60 percent over the front foot and 40 percent over the back foot. Be careful, because you might find yourself with your back heel off of the ground, or you might find your knee coming far forward. In this particular lunge, you want both feet firmly on the ground. The front toe should be pointing forward and the back toe should be turned out about 45 degrees.



After you've completed the lunge with the left foot in front, switch legs.

Horse Riding Stance

The horse riding stance is a wide straddle position that requires you to sit down as though riding a horse. Stand with your feet together and the toes pointing forward.

Next, use this method to get your feet double shoulder-width apart: With the weight on your heels, pivot your toes outward 45 degrees. Then, pivoting on your toes, turn the heels out 45 degrees. Switching to pivot on the heels once more, turn the toes out 45 degrees again. Finally, pivoting on the toes, turn the heels straight. That should leave the feet approximately double shoulder-width apart.

Now, sit down like you're sitting in a chair; the back should end up straight. A common mistake at this point is feeling like your back is straight when you're actually leaning backward slightly. Check

for that, and if it's happening, pull your hips in. This will make your rear go out slightly more, straightening your back in the process.

You should feel stable at this point. If you sit down and feel like your feet want to turn out slightly, don't fight it, especially when you're first learning this. This stance puts a bit of torsion on the knee, and all training should be done with safety as the first priority.



EXERCISES

This section recaps three moves: the heel front kick, the roundhouse kick, and the basic punch.

Heel Front Kick

To begin the heel front kick, face a target that you can kick over—a small stool, for example. Lift one knee and point it at the stool to aim your kick. Slowly extend the leg over the top of your stool, with the toes pulled back so that the heel is extended. As you extend the leg, also push your hips forward. Finish by slowly

bending the knee again, straightening up your hips, and placing your foot on the floor again. Repeat 5–10 times, then switch to the other side.

Roundhouse Kick

To begin the roundhouse kick, stand next to a table that is about hip high to you. Pivot on the outside foot until it faces 135 degrees away from where you are facing. Lift your knee and place the full length of your shin and lower leg on the table. Notice that you will have turned your leg 90 degrees. Now slide your leg out and in to mimic the kicking motion.

Basic Punch

Start the basic punch by making a proper fist. Extend all the fingers and thumb, and then tightly curl the fingers into the palm of your hand. Roll them down until the knuckles fold over, and then lock them against the palm by folding the thumb across the lower part of the knuckles and squeezing into the hand.



Now, extend the whole arm into the final punch position. In this position, be sure to focus the impact area on the first two knuckles (belonging to the index and middle fingers). Make sure that the wrist is bent at a slight downward angle.

Practice punching in air, slowly at first and progressing to three-quarters speed. Avoid full-speed punching, as that makes it easy to hyperextend the elbow joint. Punch in increments of 10, increasing as your stamina improves.

Suggested Reading

Cochran, *Complete Conditioning for Martial Arts*.

Delp, *Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters*.

Lawler, *Martial Arts for Dummies*.

LESSONS 2–4

KARATE



Karate focuses on punching, kicking, attacks with the knees and elbows, chops and spears with the open palm, joint locks, grappling, and throwing. Each technique is powerful and direct.

BACKGROUND ON KARATE

Karate is originally from the Ryukyu Islands of southern Japan, in particular the island of Okinawa. Although they are now considered to be part of Japan, for centuries the Ryukyu Islands were a separate country. During this time it carried on extensive maritime trade with both China and Japan.

To protect the king, a secret cadre of bureaucrats and advisers were trained in martial arts. Certain individuals studied an art that originally was simply called *te*, meaning “hand.” Because it was heavily influenced by Chinese martial arts, it was called *kara* (meaning “Chinese”) *te*, or “Chinese hand” in full.

In 1922, Gichin Funakoshi—modern karate’s most ardent promoter—changed the character used for the sound /kara/. Now instead of “Chinese hand,” the Japanese version reads “empty hand.” Many martial art historians believe that the basis of this martial art was a form of Shaolin kung fu from Fujian province.

STANCES

This segment recaps two stances: the natural stance and the front stance.

Natural Stance

In the natural stance, your feet should be about shoulder-width apart. They should be at a comfortable width, so if you need to go



slightly wider than shoulder-width, then do so. Make two fists and tuck the elbows into the body.

Front Stance

To enter the front stance, step forward with one leg. The front leg should be bent and the back leg should be straight. Refer to the



video for a demonstration of how to find the proper dimensions of the stance.

EXERCISES

This section covers three karate-related exercises: *mokuso*, a recap on making fists properly, and fist pushups.

Mokuso

In traditional karate classes, the sessions end with *mokuso*, which means “meditation.” This is usually a simple seated meditation that focuses on breathing. This meditation is meant to help with calm and clarity of mind. Take 10 minutes and sit, either cross-legged or kneeling. Focus on slowing the breath and tuning out everything else.

Making Fists

It’s important to practice making fists. Do this one hand at a time: Fully extend all the fingers of your hand and then tightly draw your fingertips to the top of your palm. The higher up on your palm you can touch, the better. From there, roll your knuckles over and fold the thumb over the space between the first and second finger joint, then squeeze hard like a vice. Do this five times in a row and then switch to the other hand.

Fist Pushups

An effective punch has the weight of the body behind it; otherwise, it lands like a feather rather than a hammer. But if you’re not prepared for what that feels like, you may wind up hurting your hand more than you hurt your target.

Some people train to improve their punches by doing pushups on their fists. To level up to this, start with both knees down and one palm open. In this way, you are only putting pressure on one fist at a time.

Note: Remember that the point of impact is supposed to be the first two knuckles.

Suggested Reading

Funakoshi, *Karate-Do*.

Funakoshi and Teramoto, *The Twenty Guiding Principles of Karate*.

Grant, *Walking in the Footsteps of the Master*.

Jennings, *Pragmatic Karate*.

Nagamine, *The Essence of Okinawan Karate-Do*.

Questions to Consider

1. One of the most important principles in karate is that there is no first strike. This is a principle of non-aggression and of restraint. Restraint is a skill that must be practiced. How would you go about practicing restraint?
2. Karate, which was originally from Okinawa, has evolved to incorporate a Japanese concept known as the code of Bushido, or the code of the samurai. This code contains seven important virtues: benevolence, courage, honesty, honor, loyalty, respect, and rectitude. Which of these do you resonate with the most? Which do you feel you lack?

LESSONS 5 AND 14

TAI CHI



This course introduces many martial art styles that are fast, strong, and intense. However, not all martial arts are like that. Tai chi, in fact, is known for its softness and slowness. But how does tai chi function as a martial art when the movements are done so slowly? To answer that question, you will need to understand a fundamental principle in tai chi: softness overcomes hardness.

HISTORY OF TAI CHI

Although tai chi has roots that go back millennia, tai chi as we know it today began in the 17th century in the Chinese village of Chen. There, in the years around 1645–1660, a man named Chen Wangting instituted a number of sweeping changes to his family's martial art style.

He instituted theories of leading and guiding energy flow through the body by means of specific motions and breathing pattern. He reorganized and consolidated the many practice routines into seven sets: five shorter exercises, a 108-movement long form, and an explosive routine called cannon fist. He also introduced a new method of training for sensitivity and fighting awareness called tai shou, or “pushing the hands.”

UNDERLYING PRECEPTS

China has a long history of violence, invasion, and civil war. Consequently, of the records of many historical periods have been lost. However, one theory about Chen Wangting says that he was influenced by his journeys to a local temple that blended the three main philosophies of China: Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Each of these different philosophies has a core belief.

For example, in Taoism the core belief is known as *ziran*, which means to follow the way of nature. More specifically, it means to follow your own personal nature. In English the best word to describe this would be “authenticity.” The core belief of Confucianism is benevolence. According to this belief, the responsibility of those in power (like emperors) is to take care of their subjects the way a parent takes care of their children. And the core belief of Buddhism is compassion for all living things. The philosophy of tai chi can be encapsulated as the blending of these three essential philosophies: authenticity, benevolence, and compassion.

Tai chi is known as an internal martial art; the meaning of this is twofold. On the one hand, *internal* means attention to the inner energy known as qi. The movements of tai chi must be done in such a way so that the qi can circulate in a free and harmonious manner. *Internal* also means that your inner self, or character, is constantly improved as you learn more and more about tai chi. This is known as the cultivation of energy.

TRAINING TIPS

Tai chi operates on a set of principles. Principles are articulated in the traditional writings about tai chi known as the tai chi classics. There are more than 20 different principles, which are supposed to guide the proper method of tai chi practice. But for the beginner, following all these principles can be overwhelming. Therefore, it's advisable to focus on only one principle at a time.

The most important principle for learning tai chi is the principle of flow. Flow is the characteristic that distinguishes tai chi apart from any other form of martial arts or exercise. Flow is movement that is harmonious, synergistic, and continuous. Flow is external, meaning how the physical body moves. Flow is also internal, meaning how the qi energy is moving.

Flow is disrupted wherever there is tension, either physical or mental. Therefore, when you're beginning to practice flow, allow yourself to be terrible. In other words, don't worry about whether you're doing it correctly or incorrectly. Just focus on obtaining a pleasant feeling. There will be plenty of time later to refine your movements, but you will always practice more consistently if you enjoy the activity.

STANCE: STANDING LIKE A TREE

The practice of standing meditation is important in tai chi. It involves a certain kind of posture so that the internal energy (qi) can move freely and harmoniously throughout the body. In turn, this gives the body strength and power for martial techniques. A good place to start learning about standing meditation is with a posture called standing like a tree.

To enter this stance, stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart and your knees and hips slightly relaxed. Also relax the neck



and waist. Then, raise your hands up and around in front of you, as if you're hugging a tree. The toes should be pointed straight forward, though it's OK to turn them slightly if that's more comfortable.

The upper body should also be relaxed. The circle you're making with your hands will draw your chest into a bit of a hollow. The head floats up; think of yourself looking down your nose at some point in the distance. If you keep your neck straight and then look down your nose, it will straighten out the back of your head.

The tip of the tongue should come to the roof of the mouth, lightly touching the upper palate just behind the teeth. It will stay there during the course of your standing meditation.

EXERCISES

1. Try going through your day holding your head in the tai chi alignment. Do you notice new things you hadn't noticed before? Do you notice that familiar things look new?
2. Instead of a coffee break, try a break where you sink the qi. (Refer to the Lesson 5 video for a demonstration.)
3. Walk across the room using the basic tai chi stepping method. Wait to move the back foot until there is absolutely no weight left on it. When you step out in front, gently place the heel down with no weight as well.

Suggested Reading

Barrett, *Taijiquan Through the Western Gate*.

Davis, *Taijiquan Classics*.

Huang, *Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain*.

Olson, tr., *The Intrinsic Energies of T'ai Chi Ch'uan*.

Read, *The Manual of Bean Curd Boxing*.

Question to Consider

1. The Chinese word *yi* usually translates to English as “intention,” but it means much more than the typical English meaning. *Yi* is a highly focused desire for a specific outcome, brought about by the influence of qi energy. If you could use your qi to create any outcome, what would it be?

LESSONS 6–8

TAE KWON DO



Tae kwon do—the world's most popular and commercially successful combat sport—is barely 60 years old, although its roots go back hundreds of years. It is known for its lightning-fast, head-high kicking style, but there is much more to it than that. In the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, tae kwon do was added as a demonstration sport. It became an official event at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, making it only the second martial art to gain Olympic event status.

ABOUT TAE KWON DO

Tae kwon do's primary stances are the horse stance and front lunges. Hand techniques include straight punches, chops, knife-edge palms, inward and outward blocks, and upper and lower blocks.

Tae kwon do uniforms bear a striking similarity to those of karate. The standard uniform of tae kwon do is known as a *dobok*, which is tied around the waist with a belt known as a *dhee*. As in judo and karate, different color belts designate the different levels of achievement. Generally, darker colors denote higher ranks, culminating in black. Once a student has attained the black belt, they proceed through a series of dans, or levels, from 1st to 10th.

The curriculum of most tae kwon do schools includes the practice of forms, called *Poomsae*; sparring, called *Gyeonggi*; and breaking, meaning using the hands and feet to break boards or bricks to demonstrate focus, speed, and power.

HISTORY OF TAE KWON DO

During the Japanese invasion and occupation of Korea from 1910–1945, Korean martial arts were forbidden. But after World War II and the liberation of Korea in 1945, traditional Korean martial arts were once again allowed.

In 1952, the president of South Korea asked the five main martial arts schools to come up with a plan to combine and consolidate what they had all been teaching into a unified system. Initially, this system was called *tae soo do*, or the “way of the hand and foot.” But one of the leaders of this unification project, General Choi Hong Hi, advocated that the name be changed to tae kwon do, because while *soo* means “open hand,” *kwon* means “fist.” Thus, tae kwon do means the “way of the foot or fist” or possibly the “way of the kick and punch.”

In ancient times, the rulers of Korea were protected by an elite group of warriors known as the Hwarang. When General Choi was formulating the system that became tae kwon do, he chose the code of the Hwarang as the credo for this new martial art. It is based on five tenets: courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit.

KICKS

Tae kwon do emphasizes several types of kicks. Among them are the front, side, and roundhouse kicks. The front kick is a good kick



for the beginning of a training session. It's relatively simple and warms up the leg muscles.

The side kick involves bending the knee, chambering the kick, opening the hip, and then pushing the kick out. (Chambering means to bring the limb into a preparatory position.)



The roundhouse kick is more difficult and relies on the coordination of hip and foot movement to generate power. The oblique muscle is the primary stabilizer for this kick. Roundhouse kicks strike with the instep.

Refer to the Lesson 11 video for demonstrations of these kicks.

EXERCISES

A beginner should practice these three techniques consistently: basic kicks, bouncing on your toes, and the *kihap* (yelling). This may sound like an odd list, but these are the three things that most beginners have little experience with.



Bouncing

Part of the style of tae kwon do is a rhythm of bouncing on the toes. However, as soon as a new white belt begins to practice bouncing, they quickly discover how tiring it can be. It's not all that different from skipping rope.

Set a timer to bounce on the toes in 30-second intervals. Also try bouncing in a large circle entirely to your left and then in the reverse direction. When you feel comfortable with the time increment that you're using, add another 30 seconds.

Yelling

The *kihap* is a loud cry that expels the breath forcefully and gives emotional intensity to your kicks and punches. The *kihap* is a very personal sound; in other words, everyone's *kihap* is a little different. Nevertheless, it is an integral part of tae kwon do training, so it's a good idea to get used to it and develop your own personal sound.

Watch a few videos of black belts demonstrating tae kwon do technique to hear what their *kihap* sounds like. Then, play around with making a similar sound until you find one that feels natural to you. Practice making your *kihap* sound with a series of punches.

Kicking

Standing on one foot and holding onto a chair or the wall, lift one knee up and point it at a particular point in space. This will be your imaginary target. Begin by slowly simply straightening out the lower leg, then bending it again 10 times a row. Then, switch feet and repeat. After a while, you can begin to increase the number of repetitions from 10 to 20 and so on.

Suggested Reading

Chun, *Taekwondo Spirit and Practice*.

Cook, *Taekwondo*.

Kim, *Complete Taekwondo Poomsae*.

Park, *Tae Kwon Do*.

Savoie, *Taekwondo*.

Questions to Consider

1. There are five different tenets of the tae kwon do creed (adapted from the ancient Hwarang code): courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit. Among those, indomitable spirit is considered to be the most important. Why do think that is?
2. According to the Kukkiwon—the central authority for tae kwon do in Seoul, South Korea—tae kwon do is classified as a combat sport. What do you think is the difference between a combat sport and a martial art?

LESSON 9

QIGONG



Qi is the Chinese word for the energy of life, and the ability to manipulate qi is at the heart of a great many Asian martial arts. The science of understanding the flow of qi and what it does is called qigong, which can be translated “working the qi” or even “meritorious energy.” Qigong is a category of systems and styles of energy work, rather than a distinct style. It’s an umbrella term, and under it you will find scores of other distinct styles and routines. There are many different qigong routines, all for the basic purpose of purifying and harnessing the power of the inner life force.

BACKGROUND ON QIGONG

One of the oldest forms of qigong that is still practiced today is called dance of the five animals. It was designed and taught by the famous Chinese physician Hua Tuo, who lived during the Warring States period. It is a noteworthy form of qigong because instead of following all the rules of posture and breath supposedly essential for human circulation, it teaches you how to shape your body like the animal: breathing as they breathe and moving as they move.

Since all life is based on the harmonious flow of qi energy, then the benefits of qigong can be said to affect all of one’s life. But here are some particular benefits of qigong practice recognized by tradition:

- ◆ It helps to develop the skill of intention.
- ◆ It strengthens the physical body.
- ◆ It teaches you to connect to your opponent on an energetic level.
- ◆ It helps you cultivate *wu de*, or martial virtue.
- ◆ It opens the door to connecting with the Tao (the natural universe).

UNDERLYING PRECEPTS

Qigong can be divided into three broad categories: medical qigong, martial qigong, and spiritual qigong. Note: They often overlap.

Medical qigong is likely the oldest category. For centuries, Chinese healers have developed a system of medicine based on the theory of qi as a life force. All illnesses—including mental illnesses—are considered to be some kind of problem with the circulation of qi in the body or the quality of qi in the environment. But in the traditional approach to health, the best method was to be proactive and prevent disease rather than trying to cure it. In fact, in ancient times, the village healer only received payment as long as his patients stayed healthy. They forfeited their fees if the patient became sick. To that end, there has developed a whole category of gentle exercises that are done to promote optimal cultivation and circulation of the qi. These are typically referred to as meditations, and they include routines like the five animal frolic and the eight sections of silk.

Spiritual qigong is practiced for the purpose of achieving enlightenment and, in some cases, immortality. Much like the medieval European alchemists who searched for the Philosopher's Stone, Chinese philosophers also pursued the so-called pearl of immortality. Although some of these alchemists took the concept of immortality literally, for most others it was seen as a metaphor for attaining a state of consciousness in harmony with the universe.

Martial qigong is made up of special breathing and visualization exercises for the purpose of increasing martial prowess. For example, according to qigong theory, qi can protect the body from damage when struck by punches and kicks. By the same token, channeling qi into kicks and punches will make them much more devastating.

MEDITATION

According to qigong theory, each time the qi completes a circuit through the body while under meditative conditions, it refines its essence. As the qi refines itself, it transforms into a new kind of energy known as *shen*, which translates to “spirit.” An example of spiritual qigong meditation would be the microcosmic orbit meditation. But it’s also a case where the three categories of qigong practice overlap: The microcosmic orbit would also be



taught to students of both medical and martial qigong because it teaches the main pathways of qi flow.

Essentially, the microcosmic orbit is the circulation of the qi up and down the spine. According to this theory, there are two major channels, or meridians, through which the qi flows in the microcosmic orbit.

The first one is called the Ren channel, which guides the qi down the front of the spine. This meridian starts under the lower lip and continues all the way to the perineum. At the perineum, the Ren finishes and the Du channel begins. It proceeds up the spine, over the top of the head, continues down across the forehead, and ends just above the upper lip.

Along both channels, major acupoints serve as gates or valves that regulate the flow of qi through the orbit. These points correspond to the chakras in yogic meditation.

TRAINING TIP

There are four ideas to keep in mind during qigong practice: alignment, breath, relaxation, and visualization. These four components are thought to impact the ability of the qi to flow harmoniously and synergistically in the body, and create health and longevity.

A fundamental principle to improving in martial training is this: We get better at what we practice most, and we get worse at what we practice least. The trick is to begin accumulating as much practice time as you can around those four components, but let yourself do it a little at a time, even if it is just 5 or 10 minutes at a stretch.

Suggested Reading

Janke, *The Healing Promise of Qi*.

Li, *Kung Fu Scholar Methods*.

Liang and Wu, *Qigong Empowerment*.

Yang, *Qigong, The Secret of Youth*.

LESSONS 10–13

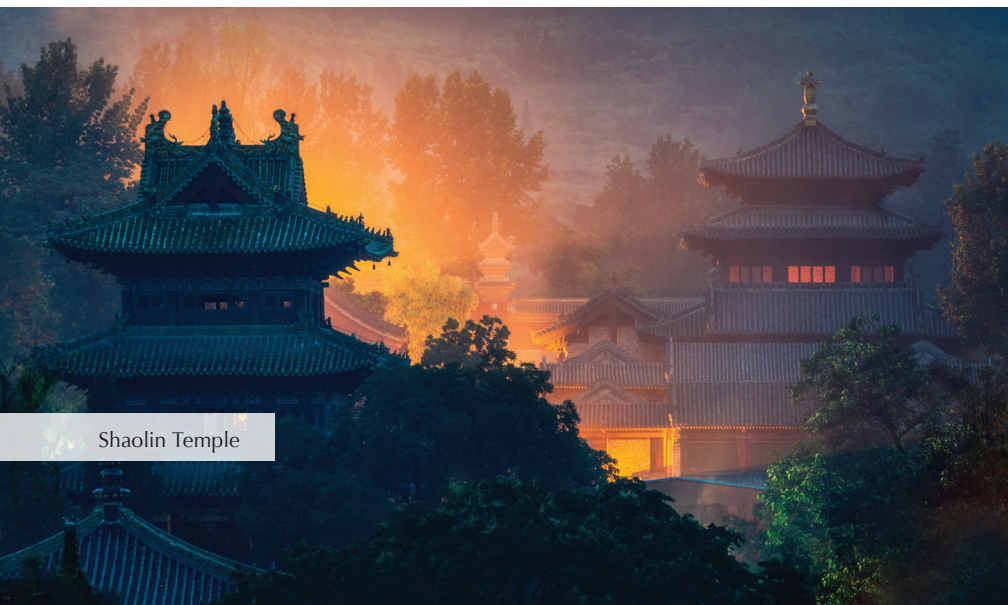
KUNG FU



This section of the course introduces kung fu, a martial art that either directly or indirectly influenced almost all the martial arts of China. Chinese martial arts, in turn, traveled abroad and formed the foundation of the martial arts found throughout Asia. In both style and technique, we see echoes of kung fu in almost every martial art covered in this course. Kung fu establishes a spiritual connection to the practice of martial arts. This shows up in the other martial arts as codes of honor, mental disciplines, and martial stoicism.

THE SHAOLIN TEMPLE

The history of the Shaolin Temple—vital to the development of kung fu—is part of the story of the migration of Buddhism from India and Tibet into China, and from there to the rest of the world. In about 465 AD, a monk named Buddhahadra came to China on a mission to teach Buddhist philosophy and especially Buddhist meditation. Buddhahadra developed favor with the emperor and was granted land in southern China. There, Buddhahadra built a temple called Shaolin.



Shaolin Temple

Thirty years later, another Indian monk arrived in China. His name was Bodhidharma. Eventually he made his way to the Shaolin Temple and brought a new angle on the Buddhism studied there.

This new approach placed little emphasis on studying the sutras (the sacred writings) or on the wordy explanations of the nature of the universe to achieve enlightenment. Instead, enlightenment is sought through direct experience of the body, the mind, and the emotions.

In particular, the Shaolin method was to achieve these direct experiences through the practice of martial arts. But along the way to mastering fighting skill, it is equally important to develop one's character.

This is done through the devotion to *wu de*, or martial virtue, which in turn is learned through *wu gong*, or martial merit. That's a code of moral precepts appropriate for the martial artist. They include (among others) humility, respect, righteousness, trust, and loyalty. These are known as the obligations of the mind. Accompanying those are obligations of deed: will, endurance, perseverance, patience, and courage.

This is the key to understanding true Shaolin kung fu: Great fighting skill without martial virtue only makes one a brawler and a bully. But those who wish to find the strength to persevere to enlightenment will develop that strength through martial training.

WHITE CRANE KUNG FU

Perhaps no other country in the world has a martial history as diverse as China does. There are hundreds of styles of martial arts in China, influenced by animals, elements of nature, and mythical heroes and warriors. Many of these martial arts made their way

into the Shaolin Temple as ex-soldiers and fighters joined the temple and brought their martial arts specialties with them.

From time to time, these martial styles left the temple and then became schools that grew up in local areas within China. One such example is white crane kung fu. White crane is characterized by these traits:

1. A special kind of hand formation known as the crane fist.
2. Defensive postures that mimic the way the crane stands and moves.
3. A theory that the crane style conserves and develops something called *jing*—a special type of life essence that contributes to both health and longevity.

White crane kung fu is not always performed fast or powerfully. It can be done slow or fast. In fact, the ancient writings about this martial art say that sometimes it should be soft and sometimes it should be powerful. Depending upon the situation, the practitioner gets to choose whether it's slow or fast, soft or powerful.

TRAINING TIPS

Flexibility training is extremely important for kung fu. There are two types of flexibility important for Chinese martial arts: static and dynamic.

For static stretches, yoga is the best method. Yoga has stretches for just about every part of the body in every range of motion. However, you don't need to spend hours and hours in yoga practice. You can develop your own short yoga sequences to meet your needs for martial arts.

Dynamic stretches are light kicks and punches. It's important to let your body practice moving in the same way that it will when kicking or punching at full speed. However, these dynamic stretches should be done at very slow speeds without putting too much power behind them.

EXERCISES

This section introduces three exercises: a dynamic front stretch, the crescent kick, and straight punches.

Dynamic Front Stretch

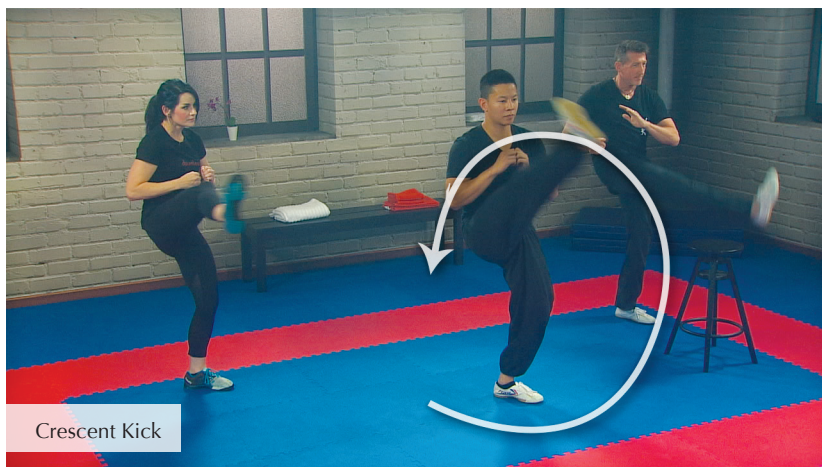
Stand with your feet together and your arms stretched out to either side. Flex both wrists so that your fingers are pointing straight up, and then tuck the thumbs into the palm. Starting with the right leg, lightly kick forward as if your toes would eventually touch your forehead. Be careful: Don't kick too fast or hard. Keep this a light stretch.

As you practice this kick, keep your arms extended to either side without letting them drop, and keep your back straight without hunching forward. Perform five kicks in a row and then switch to the left foot.

Crescent Kick

Stand in front of a low chair or footstool with your feet together and your arms stretched out to either side. Flex both wrists so that your fingers are pointing straight up, and tuck the thumbs into the palm.

Starting with the right foot, kick over the top of the chair or footstool. This means you will reach the foot across the midline of the body and kick over the top of the chair from left to right,



Crescent Kick

ending with both feet together. Keep this kick light, easy, and low. In the above image, David-Dorian Ross demonstrates the use of a stool while the arrow demonstrates a kicking arc.

Like with the front stretch, as you practice this kick, keep your arms extended to either side without letting them drop and keep your back straight without hunching forward. Perform five kicks in a row and then switch to the left foot.

Straight Punches

With your feet about shoulder-width apart, draw both hands in tight fists to your hips. Slowly extend the right fist out so that when the arm is straight, the fist will line up with your own chin. Keep in mind that part of the punch is the turn of the waist, hips, and shoulders.

Punch again, this time with the left fist. Continue until you have punched 20 times on both sides.

STANCES

This section recaps two stances used in the white crane choreography from the video lessons. The first is crane horse and the second is seven star.

Crane Horse

An important stance from this lesson is the crane horse stance. To enter it, place your feet about shoulder-width apart. Bring your toes in slightly and bend the knees.



Seven Star

The seven star stance involves turning your body. Turn on the heels; the feet should be at a 45-degree angle, both facing the same direction. Your weight should be balanced in the center 50/50. Bend and then to switch the other side, pivoting on your heels.

Start with the front heel and then switch to the back heel. Make sure your back is up straight, and then switch again. Keep your knees close to each other—only about a fist's width apart.



Suggested Reading

Ashrafian, *Warrior Origins*.

Olson, *The Eighteen Lohan Skills*.

Wong, *The Complete Book of Shaolin*.

Yan, *The Shaolin Workout*.

Yang and Bolt, *Shaolin Long Fist Kung Fu*.

Question for Consideration

1. In Chinese medical theory, there is a substance in the body known as *jing*, which translates roughly as “sexual essence.” Jing is primal vitality. It goes into the conception of new life, and it contributes to longevity. According to white crane lore, the practice helps to build up and preserve *jing*. Would learning that white crane kung fu might help you live longer encourage you to take up the practice?

LESSONS 15–16

JUDO



Judo is a Japanese martial art best known for its grappling, flipping, and throwing techniques. Students of this art, known as judoka, wear a thick heavy uniform known called a *gi*, tied around the waist by a belt. The colors of the belt indicate one's rank among other students, implying a hierarchy of respect and obedience. For many judoka, the entire martial art can be summed up in the Japanese phrase *Seiryoku-Zenyo*, which translates to English as “maximum efficiency, minimum effort.”

HISTORY OF JUDO

The founder of judo was a man named Jigoro Kano. He organized and standardized a curriculum for teaching and set a standard for performance of skills at different levels. He began working with jujitsu, a traditional fighting style, and transformed it into judo: a way of living instead of just a way of fighting.

Kano established a central school in Tokyo known as the Kodokan. There, he installed the belt system that was later adopted by Gichin Funakoshi for karate and then by other martial arts. Originally, the belt system was supposed to indicate the level of curriculum a student had studied, so that traveling judoka would be able to match levels for partner work or lessons.

Judo was one of the first Asian martial arts to come to the West. A form of judo was taught to special forces servicemen during WWII. Hollywood used judo as an exotic character trait for both villains and heroes. Judo was also the first martial art to be added as an Olympic event.

UNDERLYING PRECEPTS

In English, the Japanese word *ju* means “gentle” or “pliable.” There are different layers of meaning to this word. For example,



Judoka uniform

one meaning of gentleness is that this art does not use weapons like swords or knives. It even avoids the weapons of kicking and punching. Instead, the art focuses on responses to attacks using grappling and throws.

Another layer of meaning to the concept of gentleness is the idea of humility. Kano made it clear in both his writings and teaching methods that a constant attitude of humility and respect was essential to mastering judo.

Finally, gentleness means non-forcing or non-resistance. Meeting force with force is regarded as a losing strategy. The risk of injury or defeat is too high. Moreover, force against force is inefficient: It requires too much effort to achieve results. Instead, judo teaches to always seek solutions based on melting away in the face of an attack. This is a lesson for life's struggles outside the dojo as well. On the martial art, Kano stated:

Judo is the way to the most effective use of both physical and spiritual strength. By training you in attacks and defenses it refines your body and your soul and helps you make the spiritual essence of judo a part of your very being. In this way you are able to perfect yourself and contribute something of value to the world. This is final goal of judo discipline.

TRAINING TIPS

The most fundamental techniques in judo are rolls and falls. These are practiced in drills so that in the event you are tripped or thrown, you can land without injury and get right back up. The basic rolls are known as *ukemi*. Here are some basic tips for falling and rolling:

1. Start very slowly and lightly when first learning *ukemi*. Begin on your knees: The closer you are to the ground, the less likely you are to impact your neck, shoulder, or back.
2. Remember to turn your head away from the roll, almost like you're looking over your shoulder behind you. Tuck the chin to the chest.

3. Start with only a few rolls at a time, slowly adding more as you get more practice. Use ice if your shoulder gets sore.

EXERCISES

The most important exercises in judo are the *ukemi* (rolls) and break falls. In addition to the training tips above for *ukemi*, here are some break-fall exercises.

Slapping the Ground

Make sure you do this on a mat or soft surface. Lie on your back with both knees bent. Lift both hands off the ground above your belly and then lightly slap the floor with open palms. Make sure that the angle of your arms is downward at 45 degrees rather than straight out to the sides.

Beginning Back Break Fall

For this exercise, start out in a squat position with your bottom very near the floor. Sit down on the floor and roll onto your back, and as you do so slap the floor with both palms.

Break Fall from Standing

Begin in a standing position. Bend your knees to a squat, sit down on the floor, roll onto your back, and slap the floor with both palms.

Note: Whenever you're executing a break fall, try to keep your eyes looking at your belt.



Suggested Reading

Daigo, White, and Kōdōkan, *Kodokan Judo*.

Ohlenkamp, *Black Belt Judo*.

Takagaki and Sharp, *The Techniques of Judo*.

Takahashi, *Mastering Judo*.

Yoffie and Kwak, *Judo Strategy*.

Question to Consider

1. Judo was based on the older traditional fighting art of jujitsu. *Ju* is the Japanese word for “gentleness.” *Jitsu* means “method” or “system,” whereas *do* means “the way of.” What do you think was the reason for this change from a practical/tactical focus to a focus on philosophy?

LESSON 17

JUJITSU



Jujitsu translates from Japanese as “the gentle fighting art” or perhaps “the pliable fighting art,” as practitioners use their bodies like pliable reeds for fighting. The martial art does not rely on raw power. As one martial arts master put it, “All you need is patience and understanding.”

MAEDA, THE GRACIES, AND JUJITSU

An important early figure in the spread of jujitsu was a man named Mitsuyo Maeda. He was an undefeated Japanese martial artist, having gone head-to-head with boxers, wrestlers, and other martial arts masters. He originally was with judo founder Jigoro Kano’s cohort; however, Kano kicked Maeda out for being too aggressive in matches.

At this point, Maeda has no backing from Japan, so he traveled around the world as a exhibition fighter. One of his travels brought him to Brazil to put on some demonstrations. There he met and made friends with a local businessman name Gastao Gracie. After they had been friends for some time, Gracie made a special request of Maeda: to teach his eldest son jujitsu.

Maeda agreed, on the condition that whatever he taught would not be shared with non-Japanese. But the Gracie boys could not keep their martial art training a secret and began teaching each other; they eventually opened their own school.

The youngest of Gastao’s sons was named Helio Gracie. He was the smallest of all the family, often described as a frail child. But when he began learning jujitsu, he found his stamina and overall health improved. Emphasizing leverage and timing, he discovered he could even the odds when it came to fighting much bigger opponents. Helio’s own son, Royce, would go on to be an extremely successful competitive fighter using this style.

EXERCISES

This section contains two exercises: the basic hip escape and the basic hip switch.

Basic Hip Escape

Lie on your back with one leg extended and the other bent at the knee so that the foot is flat on the floor. Bend both elbows and tuck them into your chest. Using the foot that's flat on the floor, push and slide your hips back along the floor. Simultaneously roll onto your side.

Straighten out your elbows and reach for your feet as you slide. You should wind up in a folded-over jackknife position. Roll back onto your back and repeat on the opposite side.

Basic Hip Switch

Lie on your back. Take your right foot and step it across the left leg. Reach as far to the left as you can. Next, slide the left leg out from under the right leg, and step the left foot across the right leg as far to the right as you can. This is called a hip switch. Repeat this switch 10 times.



Suggested Reading

Barlow, *Jujutsu*.

Craig, *Japanese Jiu-Jitsu*.

Gracie, Helio, *Gracie Jiu Jitsu*. Balck Belt Books, 2006

Gracie, Renzo, and Royler Gracie, *Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu*.

Kirby, *JuJitsu*.

LESSONS 18–20

MUAY THAI



One of the most devastating Asian fighting styles is Muay Thai. It uses elbows, forearms, knees, shins, fists, and feet as weapons. This style of fighting is a favorite among mixed martial arts (MMA) practitioners because it is the most effective fighting method for close-quarters combat. Before MMA became popular, Muay Thai was the only martial art that allowed the use of clinches, elbows, and knees.

HISTORY OF MUAY THAI

Muay Thai, or Thai boxing, was born in the jungles of what is now Thailand, Burma, and Laos. It was primarily used by soldiers in the armies of these kingdoms. The main martial art of this region of Southeast Asia utilized swords and long knives. However, there were also empty-hand versions that eventually evolved into Muay Thai.

Thai boxing is known as the art of eight limbs because fighters use both fists and both feet as well as both elbows and both knees. This means that the style depends on close contact in order to deliver blows with the knees and elbows. Some martial art historians surmise that this style evolved because of the dense jungles in this region. The vegetation made it impossible to use long swords, spears, or the long-range kicking attacks seen in tae kwon do.

Because Thai boxing is such a direct and violent style of martial arts, many people are surprised at the gentle nature of the people who practice and teach it. This section's guest instructor, Kathy Long, says that the main philosophy of most Thai boxers is: "Can I simply be better than my opponent—today?" In other words, this is a philosophy of self-awareness and self-development.

BASIC STANCE

To enter a basic Muay Thai stance, make sure your feet have some space between them. You don't want the feet too close, and you don't want them in a line because you'll tend to lose your balance that way. The left foot should be forward and the right foot should be back. Your weight should be distributed evenly between the two legs. Your hands should be up protecting your face.



From here, you can practice drills. Remember to breathe out every time you strike.

TYPES OF PUNCHES

Muay Thai incorporates four basic types of punches. The first is the **jab**, which, from an orthodox stance, is thrown with the left hand.

A common follow-up to the jab is the **cross**, which travels across the body. Thrown with the right hand, this punch takes longer



than a jab but generates more power. Refer to the video lessons for more footwork details during this type of punch; the foot, knee, and hip should move with the punch.



Uppercuts can be thrown with either hand and involve bringing the fist in an upward motion. Like crosses, they require a pivot with the lower body to generate power.



Hooks can be used on their own or as a follow-up to other strikes, like crosses. They rely on complementary foot movement to generate power; for example, the left foot needs to turn during a left hook.



TYPES OF KICKS

Lesson 18 introduced two basic types of kicks: the front (or *teep*) kick and the round kick. The front kick drives opponents back and is typically aimed at the stomach area.



The round kick comes around from the left or right and typically aims for the leg, rib area, or head.



EXERCISES

Effective Muay Thai depends upon flawless basic technique. One great method of perfecting your technique is to practice the following exercises in the mirror. Always aim for your own targets in the mirror: your nose, your ribs, and your groin.

1. Drill yourself on side-to-side footwork. From your fighting stance, move your front foot to the side first, and then step with your back foot. Move three times to the side. Then return, moving your back foot first and then stepping in with your front foot.
2. Shadow box at slow-motion speed. Build up slowly. Start with the jab, then add the cross, the hook, the uppercut, and the overhand punch. Gradually increase speed, but only as long as your aim is accurate in the mirror.
3. Once you are comfortable with the basic combinations, start to add in elbows and knees. Also practice the clinch techniques introduced in the Lesson 20 video.

Suggested Reading

Delp, *Fitness for Full-Contact Fighters*.

——, *Muay Thai Basics*.

Harvey, *Mastering Muay Thai Kick-Boxing*.

Panyā and Pitisuk, *Muay Thai*.

Schuyver and Villalobos, *Fighting Strategies of Muay Thai*.

Question to Consider

1. Muay Thai is an almost no-holds-barred martial art. Kicking to the groin and strikes with the knees and elbows are all acceptable. However, it is considered an insult and bad practice to kick your opponent in the head, because in Thailand the head is considered the most sacred part of the body, and the foot is considered lowly and dirty. How would you show respect to an adversary?

LESSONS 21–22

JEET KUNE DO



Perhaps no one exemplifies the martial arts to the Western world more than Bruce Lee. He ushered in the golden age of martial arts in the late 1970s, and his legacy lives on today in the form of mixed martial arts, or MMA. Bruce Lee was the first martial artist to study multiple styles of fighting systems in order to find techniques that were most effective. He rejected the formality and style typical of Asian traditional martial arts. He instead opted for a martial style that continually changed and adapted. Today's MMA is the modern-day version of what Bruce Lee created: jeet kune do, a mix of methods from Thai boxing, Brazilian jujitsu, kung fu, and more.

HISTORY OF JEET KUNE DO

Bruce Lee was born in Hong Kong in 1940, and as a young man studied a kung fu style known as Wing Chun. His teacher was a famous master named Ip Man, and Lee was his best pupil. When Lee came to the United States, he brought his Wing Chun style with him and soon began teaching classes.



In the wide-open environment of the United States in the 1960s, Bruce Lee began to expand his study of martial arts to encompass other styles. He even used styles that had not been used as actual combat arts for centuries, like Western fencing. After a time, a new style began to emerge. More accurately, a new approach to fighting emerged, because Bruce Lee was adamant that his new system was not a style at all. He called it jeet kune do, or “the way of the intercepting fist.”

The essence of jeet kune do is captured in the motto written by Bruce Lee: “Having no way as way. Having no limitation as limitation.”

TECHNIQUES: *PAK SAO* AND *LAP SAO*

Two important techniques from the video lessons are *pak sao* and *lap sao*. *Pak sao* involves one hand pushing while the other hand strikes. For instance, in the image below, the right hand is pushing as the left hand strikes.



Pak Sao: Right Hand Pushes, Left Hand Strikes

The opposite can also happen: The left hand can push while the right strikes, as in the following image.



The other technique, *lap sao*, involves more of a pulling motion. Like *pak sao*, it can be done in two ways. Below is an image of the left hand pulling while the right hand strikes.



And next up is an image of the opposite configuration: The right hand pulls while the left hand strikes.



EXERCISES

This section introduces two important exercises: the pendulum kick and distance drills.

Pendulum Kick

The pendulum kick is meant to be quick and distracting to your opponent. Kick low to the shin, knee, or groin the after an opponent's high reaction attack. Practice shadow-kicking 10 times on each leg.

Distance Drills

The most important principle in Bruce Lee's jeet kune do is being able to judge distance. You want to always stay far enough away from your opponent's reach so they cannot hit you, but close enough to them that within one step you can hit them.

To practice this skill, pick a target on a wall, pole, or tree. Stand facing the target and place your fist on it. Now take one large step back and drop into your fighting stance. Start moving left to right, or around the target if you are able. Every so often, stop and quickly punch the target. You should only have to take one step.

Suggested Reading

Cheng, *Jeet Kune Do Basics*.

Ip, *Wing Chun Kung Fu*.

Lee, *Jeet Kune Do*.

——, *The Tao of Jeet Kune Do*.

Seaman, *Jun Fan Gung Fu*.

Questions to Consider

1. Bruce Lee was trained in traditional Chinese martial arts, yet he went on to advocate “having no style as style.” Do you have a style in the way you handle business, education, or relationships? What would your approach to these be like if you had no style?
2. *Jeet kune do* translates as “the way of the intercepting fist.” In other words, the goal is to stop an attack before it has a chance to gain momentum. What words or ideas could you substitute for *attack*? (Hint: Think about conflict.)

LESSONS 23–25

KRAV MAGA



Imagine a martial art in which there are no rules. According to experts in this style, groin kicks, spitting, biting, eye gouging, and hair pulling are all acceptable. This is a style of fighting that's not pretty or elegant—but it doesn't try to be. It's the martial art known as Krav Maga, a system of fighting practiced by the Israeli Defense Forces. Krav Maga is gaining popularity among law enforcement and security professionals worldwide. The style combines a wide range of elements from jujitsu, aikido, boxing, wrestling, and street fighting.

HISTORY OF KRAV MAGA

Krav Maga was invented by a man name Imi Lichtenfeld, although *compiled* or *systematized* might be better terms than *invented*. Lichtenfeld had learned boxing and wrestling from his father, and excelled as a competitive athlete in gymnastics. But when gangs of fascist party members began attacking Jewish citizens on the streets of Poland in the 1930s, Lichtenfeld found that the boxing and wrestling he knew were not effective against determined (and often armed) thugs.

Lichtenfeld set about putting together a system that drew from classical martial arts techniques like karate and jujitsu as well as from street fighting tactics. Krav Maga fighters learn three important aspects of the style: techniques, principles, and variations. The variations aspect is further divided into two parts:

1. Variation of solutions, or different ways of handling an attack using the techniques.
2. Variations of problems: Different versions of a basic attack may require different variations of solutions.

There are no rules in Krav Maga per se. It is neither a martial art nor a combat sport, but a straightforward system of street



Krav Maga is a straightforward system of street fighting

fighting. However, there are concepts. An important one is to define winning. A win in Krav Maga comes in one of two ways: the attacker no longer wants to continue or the attacker is no longer able to continue.

UNDERLYING PRECEPTS

Krav Maga has a code of ethics. Its basic creed is one of non-violence. Krav Maga fighters are taught to use restraint: They are not to attack when there is no real threat. Fighters are also taught to be self-aware enough to know their own motives and intentions and, in the words of instructor Eyal Yanilov, to “keep them pure.”

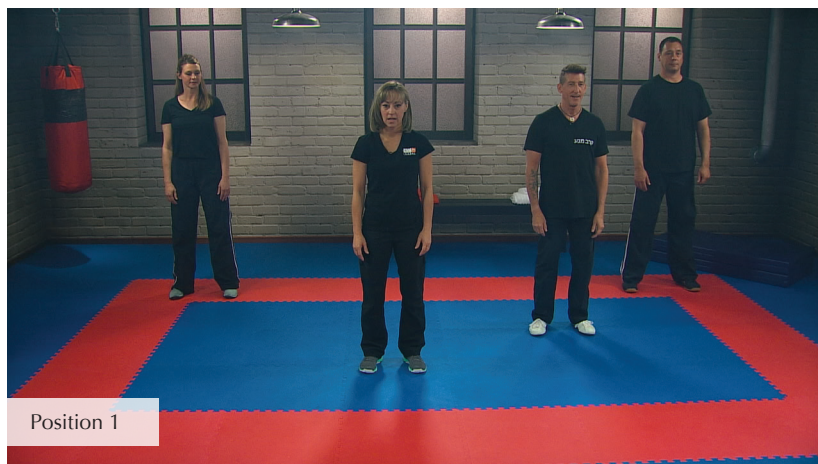
Another highly important principle is to avoid injury, whether in training or in actual combat. If one is humble, according to this philosophy, one avoids being reckless. This even extends to the

way a Krav Maga fighter thinks about their opponent. Although the idea is to dispatch an opponent quickly and efficiently, this doesn't condone deadly force unless as a last resort. This level of restraint relates to the amount of training and skill development one has.

POSITIONS

Lesson 23, the first of the Krav Maga lessons, introduced three different positions that are important to the martial art. Here's a recap of them.

Position 1 is formed with the feet neutral underneath the body and the hands down.



Position 2 is similar to Position 1 but with the hands raised up to guard.



To enter position 3, step forward with your non-dominant leg. That would be the left leg for a right-handed person. The heel of the back foot should come off the ground.



EXERCISES

This segment introduces two exercises. One has you practice the rhythms of Krav Maga. The other has you practice managing bystanders during a confrontation.

Striking Rhythms

The video lessons introduce multiple rhythms used in Krav Maga for striking an opponent. Shadow boxing is the classic way that martial artists practice techniques like this. Practice the striking rhythms with shadow boxing, using 10 repetitions for each rhythm.

Witness Conditioning

Witness conditioning is an important concept in Krav Maga. Often, by the time a bystander turns to look at you while you are defending yourself, they might see you appearing to be the aggressor. Therefore, part of the defense is to loudly say things like, “Back away! Stop attacking me!”

But don’t assume this will come out of your mouth naturally in a high-stress situation. That’s why it’s important to practice. Stand in front of the mirror, and practice loudly saying your own personal script of “back off” phrases.

Suggested Reading

Ben, *Krav Maga*.

Byers and Daniel, *Krav Maga and Self-Defense*.

Draheim, *Krav Maga*.

Kahn, *Krav Maga Defense*.

Levine and Hoover, *Black Belt Krav Maga*.

Questions to Consider

1. Krav Maga was developed to be a defensive answer to violence. One reason why bullies find victims is that bullies are prepared to do violence and damage, but regular people are not. Do you think you could put yourself in the frame of mind to do harm to another person if they were attacking you?
2. The frame of mind referred to in the question above is known as determination in Krav Maga. It might also be called single-mindedness or one-pointed concentration, and it requires one to be in the moment. How do you tune out distractions in your life in order to be in the moment?
3. An unprovoked attack is by definition a moment of chaos. One theory of Krav Maga training is that the way to train yourself to be calm in such a moment is to rehearse your techniques with a lot of noise and distraction going on. Pick a task that normally requires concentration—like balancing your checkbook or preparing a meal from a recipe—and add noise and distraction. Play loud music and turn on the TV at the same time. How well did you do? Try this experiment 10 times and see if starts to get easier by the 10th time.
4. There is a principle in Krav Maga that says, “Be so good that you don’t have to kill.” This is a principle of restraint. It means that sometimes making the choice not to use deadly force is harder than taking a life. It requires ultimate expertise. What are you most expert at? What are you so good at that you can exercise restraint and still accomplish your goal?

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Barrett, Rick. *Taijiquan Through the Western Gate*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2006. The author connects many traditional Tai Chi principles and concepts to modern Western ideas, like quantum theory and biomechanics.

Boedicker, Freya, and Martin Boedicker. *The Philosophy of Tai Chi Chuan: Wisdom from Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Other Great Thinkers*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2009. Tai chi has a unique philosophy because it deliberately draws from several other religious and philosophical systems in China. The authors illustrate these roots and how they influenced tai chi.

Buck, Pearl S. *All Men Are Brothers*. New York, NY: John Day Co., 1933. Many martial arts have been lost over the centuries. Some systems die out due to isolation, others because their followers were literally hunted down and killed, as during the China's Boxer Rebellion. Sometimes the only record of certain martial traditions is in literature. *All Men Are Brothers* is a translation of a classic Chinese martial novel, and is full of descriptions of different martial styles.

Chen, Weiming (author), and Benjamin Pang Jeng Lo (tr.). *T'ai Chi Ch'uan Ta Wen: Questions and Answers on T'ai Chi Ch'uan*. Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 1993. Chen Weiming was the disciple of Yang Chen-fu, a teacher who really brought tai chi into popularity in China in the 1920s and 30s. This book is an insight into the traditions of late-19th-century and early 20th-century tai chi.

Cohen, Ken. *The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing*. New York, NY: Wellspring/Ballantine Books, 1999. The author illustrates how the practice of qigong is both science and art. It is science in the sense that it follows an organized theory of energy flow in and around the body. But it is art in the sense that individual style and practice can influence how you manipulate that flow.

De Bremaeker, Mark, and Roy Faige. *Essential Book of Martial Arts Kicks: 89 Kicks from Karate, Taekwondo, Muay Thai, Jeet Kune Do, and Others*. Rutledge, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 2010. Every martial artist wants to learn more about how to improve their kicks. This book also shows how to increase the number of kicks you know.

Funakoshi, Gichin. *Karate-Do: My Way of Life*. Tokyo, Japan: Kodansha International Ltd., 1975. Told in the words of the person who brought Okinawan karate first to Japan and then to the West. This book explains why Funakoshi shifted the emphasis from purely fighting to a “way of life” practice.

Funakoshi, Gichin, and John Teramoto. *The Twenty Guiding Principles of Karate: The Spiritual Legacy of the Master*. New York, NY: Kodansha USA, 2013. Going deeper into the philosophy of Karate, this book lists 20 individual principles. This gives a much deeper insight into the reasons WHY karate is practiced as it is.

Gracie, Renzo, and Royler Gracie. *Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: Theory and Technique*. Montpelier, VT: Invisible Cities Press, 2001. The Gracie brothers are fourth-generation masters of the Gracie family

Brazilian jujitsu. They represent the most modern understanding and approach to this adaptation of classical Japanese jujitsu.

Huang, Ai Chung-liang. *Embrace Tiger, Return to Mountain*. Moab, UT: Real People Press, 1973.

Hyams, Joe. *Zen in the Martial Arts*. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1979. Written by a Hollywood screenwriter in the time of Bruce Lee, the book shows how martial arts can shape a person's life outside of martial arts study.

Kahn, David. *Krav Maga Defense: How to Defend Yourself Against the 12 Most Common Unarmed Street Attacks*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2016. Krav Maga is intended to be a practical answer to real-world aggression. This book describes the most common attacks that people experience from muggers, bullies, or drunk and belligerent brawlers.

Kane, Lawrence. *The Way of Kata: A Comprehensive Guide for Deciphering Martial Applications*. Boston, MA: YMAA Publication Center, 2005. The routines practiced by martial artists in many traditions are beautiful to watch and provide an excellent way to work out. But it is important to recall that the movements are based on self-defense applications and should lead to a greater ability to apply those techniques in a fight.

Kobayashi, K., and H. Sharp. *The Sport of Judo*. New York, NY: Tuttle Publishing, 2011. This book gives the general guidelines and rules used in judo as a sport.

Lee, Bruce. *Tao of Jeet Kune Do*. Chicago, IL: Black Belt Communications, 2011. This is considered Bruce Lee's definitive explanation of the style he created. It was written while he was convalescing from a back injury—one that his doctors had predicted would force him to quit martial arts.

Levine, D., and J. Whitman. *Complete Krav Maga: The Ultimate Guide to Over 250 Self-Defense and Combative Techniques*. Berkeley, CA: Ulysses Press, 2016. The authors of this book have outlined a complete guide to the art of Krav Maga. The book presents over 250 techniques used in this combative sport.

Mushashi, Miyamoto, and Thomas Cleary (tr.). *The Book of Five Rings*. Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1993. This is a well-known classic on strategy written by the man most consider the greatest samurai of all time. The book is also popular with non-martial artists for its insights into business negotiation.

Nicol, C.W. *Moving Zen: Karate as a Way to Gentleness*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing Co., 1975. This is considered a classic book on karate. It was written in the early 1970s by an American who lived in Japan and studied from very traditional teachers.

Parker, Ed. *Ed Parker's Infinite Insights into Kenpo: Mental Stimulation*. Los Angeles, CA: Delsby Publications, 1982. Ed Parker combined many aspects of karate and kung fu together to create a modern and American style of martial arts. This book summarizes his insights into the mental aspects of kenpo.

Prayukvong, K., and L. D. Junlakan. *Muay Thai: A Living Legacy*. Bangkok, Thailand: Spry Publishing, 2007. This is a very significant book as far as Muay Thai is concerned. The authors present the art as living legacy. The book outlines some of the basic aspects of the art.

Salzman, Mark. *Iron and Silk*. New York, NY: Random House, 1986. Mark Salzman is an American who lived for several years in China to learn kung fu and tai chi. His book (later made into a movie, in which he played himself) described what it is like for a “foreigner” to become accepted as a student by a martial arts teacher.

Sharif, Sulaiman. *50 Martial Arts Myths*. New York: New Media Entertainment, Ltd., 2009. In this book, the author shares his research into more than 50 martial arts myths as well as positive practices and beliefs about martial arts as a tradition.

Tegner, B. *Judo: Sport Techniques for Physical Fitness and Tournament*. Ventura, CA: Thor Publishing Company, 1976. This book addresses the various technique used in judo sports.

Ueshiba, Morihei, and John Stevens, tr. *The Art of Peace*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Books, 1992.

Yang, Jwing-ming. *Qigong, The Secret of Youth: Da Mo's Muscle/Tendon Changing and Marrow/Brain Washing Classics*. Wolfeboro, NH: YMAA Publication Center, 2000.

Yanilov, Eyal. *Krav Maga: How to Defend Yourself Against Armed Assault*. Tel Aviv, Israel: Dekel Publishing House, 2001. Most traditional martial arts today only superficially address self-defense against knives and guns. But Krav Maga addresses both unarmed and armed attacks. This book is written by the man who took the original Krav Maga training and captured it in a systematic format.

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