

## **TAEKWON-DO AND PHYSICAL FITNESS**

The study of Taekwon-Do offers several unique advantages to the physical fitness of the student. No doubt one of life's most treasured assets is good health. Therefore, one of the great cardinal sins of mankind is his abuse of this asset. Incidentally, he who does not abuse or hurt his own body, including the hair, is defined as obedient to his parents; so described in Oriental philosophy.

Wealth, power, fame and the blessing of physical beauty are all relatively unimportant if one does not possess good health. An individual owes it to himself and his family to constantly maintain and improve his health. Confucius said "Being in good health is a way of showing great devotion to the parents, as child's health is their utmost concern."

The students will realize how important Taekwon-Do is to human health through the following article written by Dr. Robert S. Arner, a black belt holder of Taekwon-Do.

"Taekwon-Do may be practiced individually or in groups without the use of weights or special equipment. It is, in most cases, practiced alone except the sparring. Since the body sets its own limits, injuries or strains are rare and the physical condition of the student paces him automatically. The entire muscle system of the body, from the fingers to the toes, is brought into play.

The training does not produce large knotty muscles; it tends to exchange flabby fat tissue for lean tissue. The thick muscles developed through weight training tend to push the blood vessels apart without adding new ones to fill the gap. Such tissue has difficulty in receiving oxygen and disposing of waste through the blood stream and thus tires more easily.

Taekwon-Do's high repetition, low resistance movements develop a longer, leaner and more flexible musculature. Such muscles have more of their areas close to blood supply routes, thus producing maximum endurance and well-being (Brown and Kenyon, "Classical Studies on Physical Activity"p231.)

The emphasis in twisting the trunk in executing the kicking movements and in counterbalancing the hand movements builds a firm, well-muscled abdomen. The high leg raise preceding most of the kicks in Taekwon-Do also develops the side of the trunk and inner thigh muscles. The study of Taekwon-Do is particularly recommended for women because of its development of the lower abdomen, hips and inner thighs; areas which produce a youthful feminine figure for women of all ages.

After childbirth in particular, these areas are stretched and weakened; Taekwon-Do training is ideal to restore muscle tone for health as well as appearance.

The typical training regimen, involving extensive movements of the entire body, raises the pulse rate and oxygen characteristics of the heart and lungs over an extended period. This increased ventilation is termed an aerobic effect (Cooper, Kenneth H. "Aerobics" p108) and provides the following benefits:

1. Helps the lungs operate more efficiently.
2. Enlarges the blood vessels, making them more pliable and reducing the resistance to blood flow, thus lowering the blood pressure.
3. Increases the blood supply, especially red blood cells and hemoglobin.
4. It makes the body tissue healthier in supplying it with more oxygen.
5. It conditions the heart, providing more reserve for emergencies:
6. It promotes better sleep and waste elimination.

The training tends to be a normalizer of body weight in that it results in a gain of solid tissue for the underweight and a loss of body fat for the obese. The estimated calorie-consumption for a vigorous Taekwon-Do workout is about six hundred calories per hour, one of the highest for any sports activity.

Since the expenditure of about 3,500 calories results in a weight loss of one pound, it will be seen that a weekly training schedule of only six hours will result in weight loss of one pound per week.

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