

# JTC TIMES



## Taekwondo in Life & on the Street

There is a fundamental philosophy in Taekwondo that is not always readily apparent. At its core are discipline, respect, logic and tradition. It took me a while to recognize these elements, and I confess that as I slowly worked my way through the color belts I spent a lot of time wondering about this cultural footprint. Who among us has not asked ourselves why we walked into the dojang that first day to sign up and become a white belt? The answer is almost universal. We came to Taekwondo to learn self-defense. The ability to mount a powerful offense is and always has been the best and most respected defense, but unlike a powerful military we don't deter aggression by displaying our arsenal of weapons. We have confidence and self-discipline because of our training, and we strive to be prepared rather than hope to be lucky. There is our answer and the basis of our strength. We are capable of rendering a strong offense but choose to do so only to defend ourselves or someone else. The morality in that position is simple and profound.

The years we spend learning Forms and basic fighting skills are beneficial and healthy in a physical as well as a mental and perhaps a spiritual way. Learning that responsibility comes with fighting skills is very important. The Taekwondo lifestyle incorporates the best of the physical training with personal responsibility. Each of us must employ a set of skills that allows us to determine for ourselves how and when to properly and ethically apply what we have learned in the dojang to our daily lives.

In my life I spent some time in the military as well as about 10 years working at night as a bartender, musician and even a janitor. When I



think back to those days I often wish I had been better prepared for the risks and possibilities such a lifestyle presented. I'm not necessarily referring to fighting skills as much as a clear and rational approach that could have helped me or any one of us to sensibly evaluate the risks that can be encountered in the world and offer tactical solutions.

Grand Master Suh taught us that while we train our minds and bodies as warriors, we do not seek out conflict. Our aim is to be prepared but to avoid conflict and to think through a problem to find solutions whenever possible. It is wise, however, to be aware of the possibilities in the world and make an effort to be prepared for them. Here are four steps I believe will help anyone who takes the time to read and implement them.

1. **SITUATIONAL AWARENESS:** Be aware of your surroundings and make rational

decisions about how to proceed. Does the place you are entering look right? Does it feel safe? Are there people present who are posturing, or look angry or frightened? Are complete strangers making and maintaining eye contact with you and without smiling? What is the time of day? Is it midday or midnight? Are there other obvious dangers present? Ask yourself "Do I really need to be here now?"

2. **NEGOTIATION AND AVOIDANCE:** Learn to quickly identify and defuse misunderstandings and avoid situations that may lead to aggression. If a problem arises what does the antagonist want? An apology? Nothing is lost if you quickly apologize and remove yourself from the scene. Remember, the object is to leave quickly before an escalation can occur.

3. **TACTICAL POSITIONING:** If you start to suspect any danger, locate your exits and potential avenues of escape, wrap up your business and leave, or if you can, just leave. The best thing is to know when and how to move to safety or at least to a better tactical situation. If at all possible, keep yourself within the view of others who can help you. Avoid aggressive individuals or aggressive groups where your back might be turned to one or more of them. Remember that group mentality is not always rational and a bad situation can escalate very quickly. Don't allow yourself to be backed into a corner or tight space. You have one objective and that is to quietly leave the area.

4. **FIGHTING:** If you must fight, don't be nice

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### JTC Top Ten List

#### Taekwondo's Benefit to Other Sports

1. Footwork: Soccer
2. Speed & agility: Basketball
3. Focus & accuracy: Golf
4. Strong core muscles: Swimming
5. Flexibility: Gymnastics
6. Balance & coordination: Skating
7. Falling techniques: Volleyball
8. Stamina & endurance: Running
9. Power and balance: Football
10. Discipline: all sports activities

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## Ask the TKD Doctor: Protein - Beyond the Beef

The lack of attention which is paid to protein in the American diet is a direct result of the identification of red meat as our major protein source. Those of us who enjoy beef know that the flavor relates to the amount of saturated fat which is present in the meat. In addition, whole milk and cheese also contain large quantities of saturated fats. Because these two well-known protein sources are rich in unhealthy fats, protein in general has acquired a bad reputation.

The building blocks of proteins are amino acids, which are responsible for the structure of our body cells and immune system. Twenty of these amino acids exist in nature, and eleven of them can be produced by the body. The remaining nine, known as essential amino acids, must be supplied through our diet. In their absence, protein synthesis is severely compromised, and the adverse effects can be seen in our muscles, skin, hair, and nails.

Not all sources of protein enter the bloodstream at the same rate. Animal proteins from meat, fish, chicken, and dairy products have virtually no associated fiber, and are digested efficiently and quickly.

Vegetable sources of protein are rich in fiber, and are poorly absorbed. Protein powders from sources such as tofu and soybeans allow us to utilize large quantities of the essential amino acids with no added saturated fats.

A final word of caution: beware of the long-term effects of high protein, high fat, low carbohydrate diets. Although these diets do cause the body to use stored fat for energy, they induce a metabolic state known as ketosis. An excess of ketone bodies causes us to become dehydrated, and, over time, muscle mass can actually be reduced. In addition, excess levels of amino acids in the bloodstream eventually will be stored as...you guessed it, fat. The associated amount of saturated fats in these diets also can lead to heart and vascular disease in later life.

In the next issue, I briefly will discuss the good and bad dietary fats; and then, in a final article on nutrition, I will suggest a sensible and hopefully tasty approach to eating for health and longevity.

— Samuel C. Ballon, M.D., Second Dan

## On the Streets

*Continued from page 1*

about it. Deal with the most immediate danger first and quickly move toward an escape route. Remember you are not fighting just to win but more importantly to open an avenue of escape and when you see that opening, get yourself through it. Take some time to practice your martial arts skills with self-defense in mind and combine grappling and striking skills. Remember that it is better to lose some personal possessions than to lose your life.

Clearly, the main and underlying strategy is to avoid any situations that are threatening, and to escape any questionable surroundings.

When you encounter an obstacle in your life, why would you smash through it if you can just walk around it? Fighting to prove a point is for movies and it never proves who is right but it does show who the fools in the room are. Taekwondo is a philosophy that trains the spirit, mind and body to serve the individual, family and community. Taekwondo is about personal discipline, good citizenship and fellowship with family and friends. I believe we have a responsibility to incorporate wisdom and preparedness, and to represent our Master, our dojang and our philosophy with dignity and integrity.

— Chuck Gale, Second Dan

## The Iron Horse: To Squat to be Strong (part 2)

*(Continued from February issue)*

When you get to the bottom: push the knees out to the sides to prevent them from buckling in, drive through the heels, pull your chest up and stand back up to the starting position. It may sound like a lot of points to remember, but basically you are sitting back and down into an imaginary bench behind you and then standing back up. When you think of it that way you can see how fundamental a movement this is.

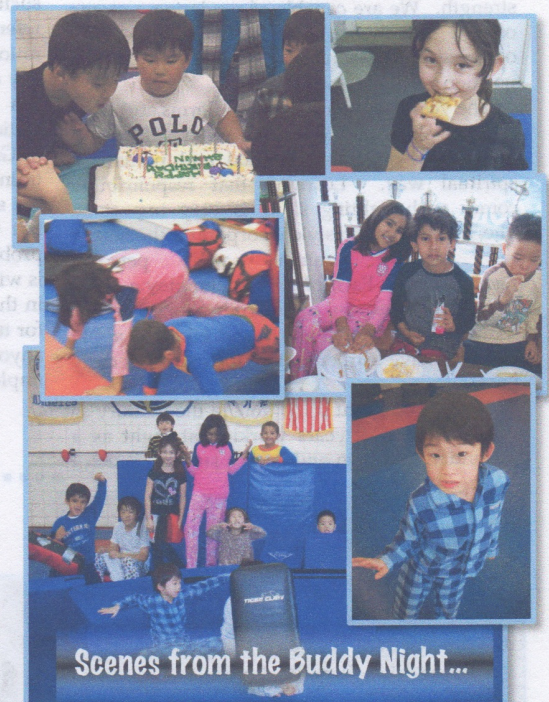
There are many different versions of the squat, each with a different focus. To begin I recommend just starting with the hands and your sides and doing sets of 20-30 reps until you perfect the form. As you get better you can begin holding weights at your sides in each hand. You can then progress to having a weight on your back or even on the front of your shoulders. You can even do them one leg at a time. Again, each of these versions is a bit different in terms of the demand and benefit so progress safely from one to the next as you get good at each.

One of my favorite and most beneficial squats is the overhead squat. This movement is great for beginning and advanced athletes alike. In the overhead squat you will start by holding a long stick overhead at arms length. Lock your elbows and think of pulling the stick apart from side to side. This will help you keep the

arms locked as you descend and work the shoulder and upper back muscles as well. The mechanics of the movement are the same as previously described. The key here is again to achieve as deep a squat as possible while keeping the trunk upright. Holding the stick overhead will accentuate and reveal any forward lean. By arching your back, tightening your abs, and keeping your arms locked overhead you will strengthen all these muscles. As you get stronger you will be able to add weight to the bar you are holding. This will require more work and strength from your abs than any sit-up or crunch exercise you will ever do.

It's never a bad time to squat. Beginners and children can begin with body weight or broomstick overhead squats. As you get stronger you can slowly add weight to the exercise to make it more challenging and keep progressing. If you've ever watched Olympic weight lifters, they perform this movement with several hundred pounds as part of the snatch. It is also a favorite of almost all explosive athletes including Olympic sprinters, as it produces full body strength and power like almost no other single exercise can. Give it a try and next time we'll put a whole workout together.

— David J Ballon, certified fitness instructor



**March Belt Promotion Test**  
**Friday, March 12**  
 4:00 pm Review  
 5:00 pm Junior Belts, 6:00 pm Senior Belts

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JTC Taekwondo Center  
 5161 Moorpark Ave, San Jose, CA 95129  
 (408) 253-0500  
 WWW.JTCTKD.COM