

# 12 Essential Benefits of Learning Martial Arts

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Martial Arts  
12 Benefits of  
Learning Martial  
Arts



Practicing martial arts carries with it many advantages in life. A few benefits of martial arts are that it builds confidence, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and improves people's overall well being. Below is a list of 12 essential benefits that come with practicing martial arts consistently over time.

# 1. Improved Physical Health

A person's life changes the second they place their foot onto the mat for their first training session. They get their heart pumping with striking movements and their arms and shoulders start getting sore. Grappling arts require a person to constantly use muscles they did not know existed. All of them teach a person how to remain calm and control their breathing cadences so their stamina increases, which helps with everything else they do outside of the gym.

Practicing martial arts increases their Vo2 Max levels, which is an indicator of how much a person's body is able to absorb and use oxygen. Doing so strengthens the muscles needed for an improved cardiovascular system, which increases a person's metabolism. It is a fun way to burn calories, a great way to lose weight, and get better sleep.

# 2. Increased Flexibility

A person engages in a lot of active and passive stretching when they participate in martial arts. Properly warming up their muscles and practicing the movements of their respective discipline increases their flexibility and circulation. A few martial arts that are known to increase a person's flexibility are jiu jitsu, kickboxing, Muay Thai, and taekwondo.

A person learns how to move their body in ways that they have never imagined previously while practicing jiu jitsu. There are many solo and partner drills to practice that keep a person loose and mobile both inside and outside of the gym.

A person has to remain loose and warm so they deliver kicks and punches harder and faster in striking sports such as boxing, kickboxing, Muay Thai, and taekwondo. People have a natural tendency to tense up while nervous or while exerting energy, but practicing one or more of these martial arts help them get rid of that nasty and counterintuitive habit.

### **3. Lowering Blood Pressure and Heart Rate**

Practicing martial arts improves circulation, which alleviates a lot of health risks that come with living a sedentary lifestyle. High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a serious issue that plagues many people. Numerous studies have concluded that there is a direct link between getting a lot of exercise and a lowering in blood pressure. The heart has to work harder to pump blood when it is weak, and exercise strengthens the heart. There have been many cases where people were able to get off of their blood pressure medication after remaining dedicated to their training.

### **4. Enhanced Mental Well-Being**

Practicing martial arts is viewed as a form of therapy to just about everyone who does it. A person's focus completely shifts to what is happening in class and all of life's problems are put on hold for a couple of hours. They learn early that there is an infinite amount of knowledge to pursue, which means they never stop improving and adapting.

There have been multiple studies indicating that hard body contact in martial arts increases and prolongs cognitive functions that naturally decline over time. Jiu jitsu is colloquially known as human chess because the two grapplers are working to solve a puzzle and predict what their opponent is going to do so they take advantage of a potential vulnerability. Sparring responsibly in striking sports can be a fun way to improve reflexes and mobility. Self improvement always leads to a happier mindset, and martial arts training is all about focusing on just that.

### **5. Reduce Stress Levels**

Stress has been linked to multiple health issues and lead to depression, hypertension, strokes, weight gain, hair loss, and many more. In fact, around sixty percent of all health problems are linked to stress levels that are higher than

normal. A good thing, though, is that physical exercise reduces the negative effects that stress has on the body.

The therapeutic effects of martial arts participation on people are underappreciated in the mainstream. Martial arts help reduce stress and anxiety in many ways. It is a full-body workout that releases feel-good endorphins throughout the body. A major component of martial arts training for many people is conditioning their body to properly relax, remain calm, and breathe in the face of adversity and tense situations.

Punching the heavy bag or sparring with a partner is a great way to channel frustrations. Spending time with friends in a fun and positive environment helps people forget about the real world for a little while. There is a reduction in cortisol levels which helps alleviate a lot of anxiety so they are able to enjoy life a little more. Stress lowers a person's overall quality of life and makes it much more difficult to enjoy things that they normally would.

## **6. Enhanced Focus and Concentration**

Practicing martial arts trains a person's mind to remain calm and focused during tense and high-speed situations. Building these attributes play a vital role in being able to remain focused for longer periods of time and are helpful with multitasking. A person is usually able to concentrate a lot more and focus a lot better on their daily tasks and responsibilities.

A person's body is usually exhausted after a hard training session, which helps with the overall quality of sleep that they are able to get. Getting quality sleep is essential in being able to optimize potential in anything a person does.

## **7. Increased Self Confidence**

Training in martial arts builds a person's self-confidence levels in ways that no other activity is able to. Continually training how to defend oneself while finding and attacking their opponent's weaknesses makes them feel like they are able to handle almost any tense or volatile situation outside of a controlled setting.

The lowering of stress and anxiety leads to an overall increase in self confidence. A person's mind is strengthened, which helps them to more easily deal with adversity. They learn from their mistakes and failures and realize along the way what they are capable of achieving. They are able to tell when they are better than they were the day before, and a ranking system works as an incentive for people to continue training and competing.

They remind themselves that they are doing something that many only ever dream or talk about at the end of the day.

## **8. Improved Coordination**

A person's coordination skills develop significantly once they begin training in martial arts and learning how the human body functions. The best way to do that is by practicing challenging tasks that develop coordination with repetition such as hitting stationary and moving targets. Doing so allows a person to build up to more complex movements and combinations. Their brain and body start to become synchronized and muscle memory begins to develop, which improves their spatial awareness so they are more aware of their surroundings.

Practicing those moves not only keeps a person's reflexes sharp, but it corrects any muscle imbalances that they have. It does so by forcing them to use their weakest and uncoordinated side, such as their left hand if they are dominant with their right hand. All of these factors ensure that their reflexes remain sharp and muscle memory is retained.

## **9. Improved Self-Defense Skills**

The world is, unfortunately, a very violent place. Martial arts exist so that a person learns how to properly control and defend themselves if they ever encounter an attacker. Their reaction time starts to improve immensely once they have been training for even a short amount of time. They develop toughness and a sense of fortitude and their stamina starts to increase.

While a lot of what a person learns is in a controlled setting does transfer to the streets with steady practice. Most people do not know how to fight. Someone who knows what to look for (i.e. a telegraphed overhand right) from someone who does not know what they are doing is able to properly react and defend themselves.

Training across multiple disciplines is the best way for a person to prepare themselves for real-life situations. While many fights end up going to the ground, all of them start standing. Knowing how to react if someone throws a punch is just as important as knowing how to react when someone is trying to take another person down to the ground because either happens in real life.

Martial artists learn how to keep a safe distance during verbal altercations and how to properly react to any sudden movements. They become a lot more vigilant and, in many cases, are able to see what a potential threat is thinking about doing well before they even try anything.

## **10. Increased Self-Discipline**

A person's lifestyle choices start changing once they begin taking their martial arts training seriously, especially if they decide to take the next step and start competing. It is much easier to stay in shape than it is to get in shape, and self-discipline is required for a person to stay in shape. They begin making healthier choices with their diet and their alcohol intake decreases. It sounds like a sudden dramatic change at first, but it becomes much easier to maintain once they begin to notice some changes in their physique and improvement in their fitness levels.



# 11. Opportunities for Socialization

Joining a martial arts gym is a great way to socialize and make new friends. Many people do not have much in common with their coworkers and traditional fitness gyms are usually filled with people listening to their headphones. Martial arts gyms are filled with like-minded individuals who share similar goals and come from all walks of life. They provide people with golden opportunities to build trustworthy relationships with people much easier than in many other social settings.

# 12. Cultivation of Respect and Humility

Fighters and martial arts practitioners are some of the nicest people around despite the violent nature of competition. It is largely because everyone has been humbled in the gym throughout their years of training. They have been thrown around and taken some punches that sometimes made them think twice about their career choices. They all began at the bottom with very little knowledge of the sport and worked their way up. They have never forgotten how difficult that process truly was and feel a sense of obligation to help those who are currently where they used to be.

There's a mutual amount of respect between people in the gym even if they do not have much in common with each other. There are those who have trained with many people who shared completely different perspectives and lived different lifestyles, but they still respected each other as martial artists and shared a tacit understanding that they have each other's back if they ever needed help.

## What are Martial Arts?

"Marital" can be defined as having characteristics that define a warrior and is a derivative of Mars, the Roman god of war. Martial arts prepares a person for

organized combat and self defense against another person or groups of people. They are systems that have been developed over time and are placed into two categories: grappling and striking.

Grappling, or ground fighting, is a system where a smaller opponent is able to defeat a much larger opponent using leverage, balance, and technique. The grappling art of jiu jitsu has seen an exponential rise in popularity and participation over the past decade for that reason. Traditionally, there is no striking in grappling arts, which is another reason for its rising popularity.

The striking arts, however, are another story. They focus primarily on using combinations or various kicks and punches to incapacitate an attacker or opponent. Traditional styles include karate and taekwondo but, thanks to the sport of mixed martial arts (MMA), disciplines such as boxing and kickboxing have seen an increase in participants. A major appeal, especially with women, is sticking with the other aspects of training such as hitting the heavy bag for strength and focus mits for coordination since doing live sparring rounds is not be for everybody,

## **Why is Learning Martial Arts important?**

Learning martial arts carries innumerable benefits, both physically and mentally. One of the biggest benefits is that it builds a person's confidence by realizing that they are able to adequately handle themselves in the event of an altercation on the street. They get a sense of fulfillment after a hard training session and feel better about themselves because they just endured some pretty difficult physical challenges. Training is therapeutic and has been shown to reduce stress and mitigate the risk of hypertension.

Martial arts teaches a person discipline. They make themselves go to the gym when they do not feel like it. They maintain a healthier diet even when there is no competition scheduled. They realize that it is much harder to get in shape than it



is to stay in shape and are galvanized to maintain those fitness levels as long as possible.

Martial arts participants meet new people and create new friendships that are based on trust and acceptance. There is a different type of camaraderie developed between people who are participating in an activity that relies on the other person letting go before breaking their partner's arm or releasing pressure on a choke before they pass out.

The more a person practices, the more they learn, and they never stop learning or improving. Most martial arts have ranking systems that serve as milestone achievements. It is another reason why many continue to train even if they do not have much of a desire or time to be a serious competitor.

## **How Early Should a Person Learn Martial Arts?**

The risk of any child being bullied is greatly reduced if they are active participants in martial arts training. Children are able to begin learning martial arts when they are just a few years old. Disciplines such as karate and taekwondo are common for young children because there is hardly any physical sparring involved.

Grappling arts such as jiu jitsu and wrestling have been gaining in popularity among people of all ages, especially children, because it has been shown to be greatly effective in most situations. It is one of the most physical sports that someone can find but, since there are no punches involved, kids as young as four years old are getting involved and loving it.

## **How Does Learning Martial Arts Cultivate a Child's Thinking?**

Children who begin martial arts training at an early age are able to easily develop a precocious mindset due to the critical thinking skills that are required, especially in the grappling arts, which is colloquially called human chess for a

reason. It teaches them resiliency and how to solve problems in the face of adversity while staying calm in the process.

Many children lack the fortitude and emotional development to analyze problems that require solutions with which they are unfamiliar. Martial arts help them improve their focus and concentration by reaching various milestones like obtaining a new belt within the ranking system. It teaches them that incremental progress, no matter how small, is still progress and must be recognized as a form of growth and self improvement.

A child's confidence grows with each training session. An unfortunate fact of life is that there are always bullies, but training in martial arts helps them learn how to better deal with them. They learn how to more easily handle tense situations and how to properly react when someone is being bullied.

## **How Many Martial Arts Are There?**

There are many different styles of martial arts that exist and many that have slowly faded away over time. Currently, there are close to 200 different disciplines that are practiced around the world. Many of them serve practical purposes and are effective against an attacker in certain situations, while others are centered around mysticism and tradition.

A few martial arts have experienced a growing number of participants because of MMA's rising popularity. Jiu jitsu has quickly become the most popular due to its practicality, and people seem to really enjoy participating in the sport.

Muay Thai and kickboxing have become popular among those who prefer to remain upright. Many fitness gyms have integrated cardio boxing and kickboxing classes into their schedules, which is a great way for people to learn the basic movements while experiencing high-intensity workouts and releasing any frustrations they have. Gyms that train competitors offer up a different look in that they focus more on improving their skill set with partner and solo drills. Live

sparring with a partner is always optional in these gyms, and people still get a great workout.

### **How to choose what Martial Arts to learn?**

Determining which martial art to learn does not have to be a difficult process. A person researching the practicality of the ones in which they have taken an inherent interest is a great place to start. Some are more fun than others depending on personality type, and it takes trial and error to see which ones are right for them. Many people are turned off by the physical nature of the grappling arts, so they end up trying Muay Thai instead. Others sometimes feel the same way about grappling but have no desire to endure the type of physical contact that comes with striking sports, so they participate in cardio kickboxing classes.

### **ARE MARTIAL ARTS VERY USEFUL?**

Martial arts training provides a person's body with innumerable benefits that they are unable to get from any other activity. Traditional fitness gyms can get boring and crowded. The monotony of weight lifting and running on the treadmill leaves a lot to be desired for people who seek out fun new challenges.

Weight loss and muscle gain are two major reasons why people begin training in the first place, and the benefit of knowing how to defend themselves is often viewed as an added bonus. What they later discover throughout that process, however, is how their lifestyles change for the better through discipline and social life changes from being around like-minded individuals in a positive environment.

### **CAN SOMEONE LEARN MARTIAL ARTS BY THEMSELVES?**

There are many ways that a person is able to practice martial arts alone, but room for improvement is often limited. There are many drills in grappling that they are able to practice, such as shrimping to improve ground movements and sprawling to improve takedown defense. The most effective drills to practice

striking are hitting both the heavy bag and speed bag for increased power and timing and shadow boxing to improve speed.

It is hard to improve much without sparring or practicing new techniques without a partner or coach.

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