



## QUALITY OF LIFE

By John Peponias

**An 8-Part Series on some of the factors that can significantly impact the quality of your years.**

### PART II: MEDITATION AND BREATHING

This won't be the first time you will read that breathing and/or meditation exercises can greatly improve your quality of life. There has to be a reason why you hear about this again and again!

Whether you just take a few minutes per day to simply be alone with your thoughts, or you research and begin to practice some form of basic-level meditation on a consistent basis, giving yourself this time is a gift no one else can give you.

There are certainly not enough hours in a day if you're an active individual and your brain is constantly working for you, consciously and unconsciously. Making decisions, processing information, storing memories, interpreting visual stimuli are all things that happen constantly and simultaneously. I remember once hearing that the human brain can process something like 1,000 thoughts per second! Incredible as it may seem, and even if I'm not exactly right, I do know that the brain's processing power is often compared to that of a computer's brain, the CPU or central processing unit. Even in our sleep our brains are very active, processing thoughts at incredible speeds. Did you ever sleep a solid 8, 9 hours, or more, and still woke up feeling as tired as you did when you went to bed? Well, that's your brain working over-time.

I say meditation is a gift you give to yourself, because no one else is ever going to say, "Hey, stop everything you're doing right now, and just take a little time for you. Settle down, process your thoughts, relax, you deserve it"!

That is something only you can do for you, and it's easier than you think!!

Those with cramped texting fingers, and Blackberry junkies, pay attention! You will not be able to do this if you must always be near your device. Again, this is a gift of time you are giving yourself, and why should anything or anyone interfere with that?? Just turn it off, put down slowly, and walk away.





## QUALITY OF LIFE (cont'd)

By John Peponias

Meditation does not need to be complicated. Try this simple practice method.

1. Sit or lie down in a quiet environment.
2. Pay attention to your breathing. Try to even out the length of your inhales and exhales. You can use a counting method to assist you. For example, inhale to a count of 3 or 5, hold for a 1 count, and then exhale the same count of 3 or 5, and repeat.
3. Let thoughts pass in and out of your mind. Acknowledge them and then let your mind wander, trying not to focus on any one thought for an extended period of time. This is what you do instead of trying to "clear your mind" which is almost impossible.
4. If you have something you'd like to contemplate, then do so, and as other thoughts start to intrude, just let them go.
5. Be aware of where you are at the present moment, this is not nap time.
6. Practice for just 10 or 15 minutes daily.

You may surprise yourself once you have taken the time to allow your brain to rest a bit. Your energy level may increase, and hopefully you will experience better focus, feel less stressed and may even rest easier at night. Experience a peaceful state of mind for a few minutes a day and live in the moment a bit, instead of feeling that there's always something you have to do. Give this gift to yourself, and enjoy!





## WORTH THE REPS\*

Story and Illustrations by Luis Bonnet



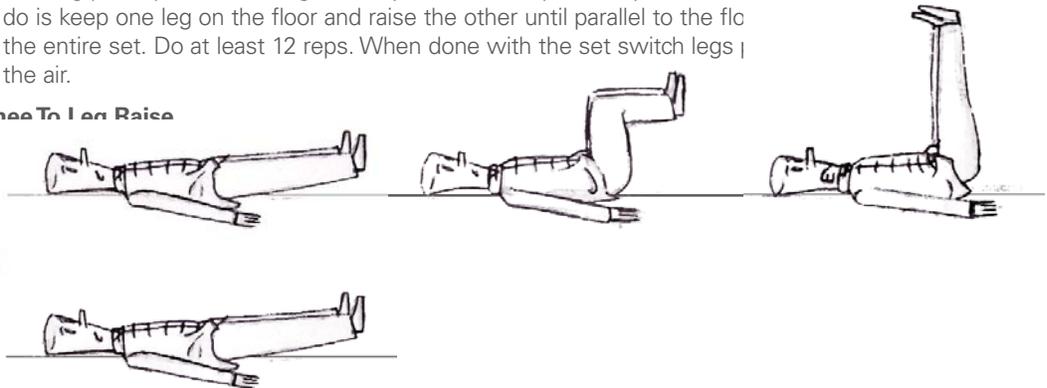
### Do you work your Abs?

The abdominal muscles for many people are one area, which can be neglected. Today you can find articles on how to get great abs without doing any sit-ups. The truth is you can do all the sit-ups in the world and not see your abdominal muscles. You still have to watch how you eat and your calorie intake.

Regardless, all athletes must work their abdominal muscles. As a martial arts practitioner it is imperative. It is vital for our physical performance. Below is a list of exercises I like to do. With the stomach it is hard to come up with a set number of reps. I feel you should do enough reps that you feel the burn. Maybe even break a sweat! If you don't than you aren't pushing yourself hard enough.

1. Crunches. I love crunches. I would say do at least 50 reps to 100 reps.
2. Bicycle kicks. Love this exercise. Try changing the pace. Start off slow and speed up at the end. Once again try to do at least 50 reps.
3. Knee to Leg Raises. this exercise I named myself. I never knew the name so I made one up. This will be shown below. This exercise I love for the lower abdominals. Do this exercise till you can really feel your abs burn.
4. Jack Knives. What can I say? They work for me and kill my oblique muscles every time.
5. One-leg pushups. Yes this is good for your abs. It helps work your transverse abdominals. What you do is keep one leg on the floor and raise the other until parallel to the floor the entire set. Do at least 12 reps. When done with the set switch legs | the air.

### Knee To Leg Raise



\* For more exercises please visit our Archives at [www.better-human.com/betterhuman\\_archive.html](http://www.better-human.com/betterhuman_archive.html).



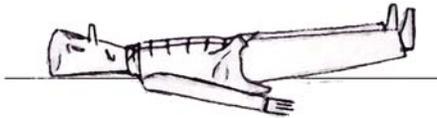


**WORTH THE REPS\* (cont'd)**

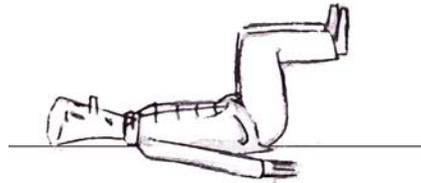
Story and Illustrations by Luis Bonnet



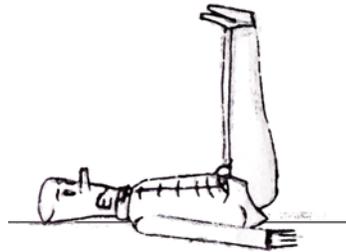
**Knee To Leg Raise**



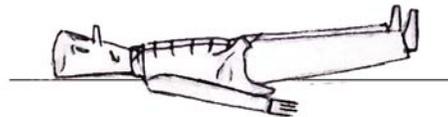
1. Legs 6" off the ground



2. Knees up, buttocks off floor



3. Legs straight up in air



4. Legs 6" off the ground

\* For more exercises please visit our Archives at [www.better-human.com/betterhuman\\_archive.html](http://www.better-human.com/betterhuman_archive.html).





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## FOAM ROLLER AND MYOFASCIAL RELEASE

By Sean A. Archer



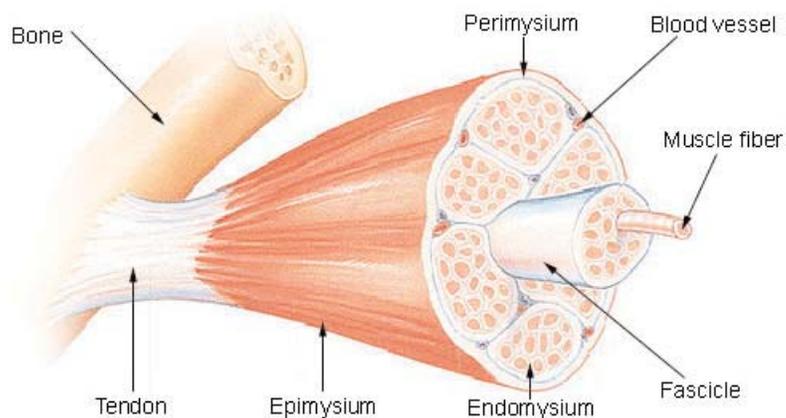
Sean A. Archer

The foam roller is so simple and such an inexpensive piece of equipment, I'm amazed it's not in every gym in the country. It can be used for a warm up and cool down. As a martial artist I find that my leg workouts (kicks, squats, power squats etc) and my recovery times are considerably better when I use the foam roller. Although Myofascial release is considered stretching, I would call it soft tissue manipulation similar to massage.

Before we get into the techniques we first have to understand what myofascial release is and how it works.

Fascia is the soft tissue component of the connective tissue system that permeates the human body. It interpenetrates and surrounds muscles, bones, organs etc. Fascia is a tissue that extends from head to toe, from front to back, everywhere in the human body. It's responsible for maintaining internal structural integrity, for providing internal support and protection and acts as a shock absorber for organs, muscle and bone. We will be focusing on muscle fascicles (see below).

### Structure of a Skeletal Muscle (Fascicle labeled at bottom right)





## FOAM ROLLER AND MYOFASCIAL RELEASE (cont'd)

By Sean A. Archer



Sean A. Archer

When muscle fascicles become tight it can stop the muscle fibers from relaxing and contracting correctly. Think of it like this, take your left hand and completely grasp your right index finger, hold on to it tightly. Try to wiggle your finger. Now slowly loosen your grip and your finger will have more room to move. Your left hand is the Fascia and your finger is the muscle fiber. Myofascial release relaxes the fascia so that the muscle fibers can move freely.

The foam roller can be used on most parts of the body, we will focus on the legs, Gluts, Hamstrings, Quads, TFL, adductors, Calf muscles and the I.T Band which is not a muscle but fascia on the outside of the leg. Most foam roller users roll on the equipment like a rolling pin rolls on dough, which is incorrect. The Golgi tendon organ, which senses tension and rate of tension change in the muscle, responds to high or prolonged tension by causing the muscle spindles to relax the agonist (muscle being worked on). This response is caused by your body weight resting against the foam roller, key word is resting. You have to find the most tender spot and rest on the foam roller and allow the body to relax. If you move to fast the GTO will maintain tension in the muscle and you will not relax or benefit from the exercise.



In the next issue we will go over the exercises.



*Sean A. Archer is a Fitness Manager with Town Sports International; He is a Master Personal Trainer, PSC certified Massage Therapist, NASM and ISCA certified, a Corrective Exercise Specialist, Presenter Boxing/Certified Kickboxing and Certified 2nd degree Kung-Fu Wu-Su martial artist with over 15 years in the fitness industry.*





## IS YOUR DIET KILLING YOU?

By Blake Baxter, HHC

I recently had the opportunity to spend 4 hours in the emergency room, assisting a friend of mine who had sustained an injury. While there, I decided to try to determine the reasons why other people were there, because there were a lot of people in the emergency room.

Clearly, some people were being treated for obvious injuries from various sources. Car accidents, falling down stairs, and sports had landed several people in the ER that day. However, the majority of people in the ER had no discernible physical injury, but their reasons for being treated seemed perfectly clear.

These unfortunates broke down into two clear categories: overweight and under-the-influence. Of course, these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they are two categories that are clearly sending people to the hospital in desperate and frightening conditions.

What you put in your mouth today will directly determine the amount of time you spend in the hospital in the future.

Now, in addition to this experience in the ER, I also have the daily experience of watching hospital employees go to and from work every day. That's because I live one block away from a large public hospital, and I see the health care workers in their scrubs walking up and down my street on a constant basis. Even after 6 years, I am still shocked at the physical condition of those responsible for providing health care to the public. They are, overwhelmingly, in terrible shape: overweight and poorly nourished (which isn't to say "undernourished," they are clearly getting enough food).

I recently entered that very same hospital and from the main entrance I could see the neon signs of a Taco Bell and a Cinnabon INSIDE THE HOSPITAL. I saw a doctor walking away from the counter with a super-sized, caramelized, sugar-ized, coffee concoction that looked like it contained enough sugar and fat to kill a rhino.





## IS YOUR DIET KILLING YOU? (cont'd)

By Blake Baxter, HHC

It all became clear to me right then. It was a perfect economic cycle, one stop shopping for illness and health services in the same building. What a beautiful efficiency of operations! Then again, maybe not. Because the cure is to simply stop eating garbage, and the hospitals are clearly not supporting that goal.

Now, hopefully you've been reading Better Human Magazine and as an athlete you've made conscientious decisions about your health and nutrition. You've reduced or eliminated fast food and sodas (regular and diet). You're trying to include fruits and vegetables in your daily routine. You're avoiding fad diets and "health drinks" that are anything but healthy. You're working out and exercising. You're thinking about your health and diet, because you can't rely on our health care system to do it for you. Not when you can get a prescription filled and Big Mac served in the same place.

*Blake Baxter is a Holistic Health Counselor and Kung-Fu instructor. He works with other martial artists to help them incorporate better eating practices and create awareness about the ways in which food impacts performance and recovery. Blake is the President of The Fifth Nine, Inc, an online holistic health counseling website. <http://thefifthnine.com>*





## WHY STOP?

By Terry Southerland



Terry Southerland

In strength training, the goal is to train your body to failure. To lift an object, at various weights, till you cannot lift it anymore. Failure. As boxers and martial artists we have a bell, or a buzzer to tell us when the end of the round is. That bell sounds and you have an opportunity to talk to your cornermen, or advisors, get some water, and oftentimes patch a cut on your face. Needless to say, it is a very NECESSARY component, when in a competition.

I've trained people for about 15 years. Anyone who has trained with me will probably tell you that the bell was rarely used. I competed as a boxer, for 24 years, and I can't tell you how much I appreciated and respected a straight through round. No Bell, No Rest! Starting out strong and ending with the feeling that my arms where on fire, my heart was going to jump out of my chest, my legs shaking, my mouth dry. Nothing I've ever done compares to that feeling. Well, besides running marathons, but we'll get to that some other time.

Training straight through the bell benefits me in many ways. I first started it when I was competing, and my trainer at the time, Victor Valle, had myself and a fighter named Glenwood Brown sparring with each other. When the bell would go off, he kept saying "Keep Going!". So we kept sparring. He would scream instructions to both of us throughout the round, so there was no need to stop, unless he needed to explain something. This went on for over 10 minutes. Glenwood was actually a welterweight, and I was a lightweight, so we were 2 weight classes, and 12 pounds apart. We were both getting ready for fights, so it was full speed, full on combat. I remember that when we finally got out of the ring, Victor said that was it, we had nothing else to do that day. I went right over in the corner of the gym, and sat down and closed my eyes. I felt like I could have slept for the rest of the day, right there in that spot.

I was on the Navy Boxing Team years ago. Our coach, Richard Pettigrew, believed that when a fight was over, if you came back to the corner, and still had enough energy to talk, you did not give it your all. If you didn't give it your all, he would sometimes make you go for a run right then. I remember fighting against the marine team once, and when I got out of the ring, he made me run 9 miles right after the fight. This was also in the 90° heat of Texas. Oh, and did I mention that I WON that fight. But, I was not exhausted. I ended up having to fight again the next day. I didn't make the same mistake that day.





## WHY STOP? (cont'd)

By Terry Southerland



Terry Southerland

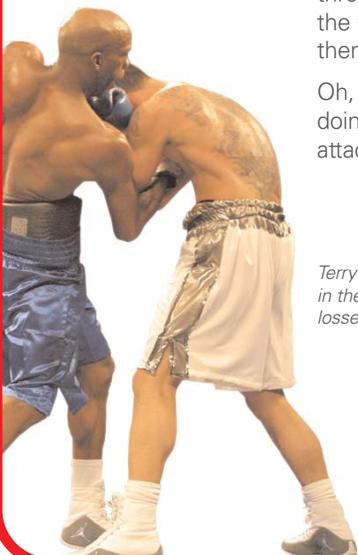
Training straight through helps me in a number of ways:

- > As a trainer, I would never ask anyone to do anything I couldn't do. Therefore anyone who is training students back to back for hours at a time knows that it can take a lot out of you. YOU, as a Master, Teacher, Coach, etc. have to be as fresh with the last student, as you were with the first.
- > I also have to spar sometimes with two or three students in a session (I stay in the ring, and they alternate in and out) I have to have enough energy to spar with them, while talking, and I can't be out of breath when I do it. We sometimes spar for the whole hour, so I can't be so exhausted, that I can't jump in the shower and train the next person.
- > When I was competing, it was used as a barometer, to show me at any given point in my training, exactly how fit I am. My reasoning: If I can punch for 12 minutes straight, I'm ready for a 3 round fight. This also works the same for 10 rounds. Thus increasing my recovery rate, and making the rest period in between rounds easier. I didn't have to work hard to catch my breath and could fully concentrate on what my trainer was telling me.
- > When I was competing, training in this way also helped me to have a mental advantage coming into every fight. I knew that if all else fails, even if my opponent was more experienced or even technically a style that would be harder to fight, I could outwork him.

Boxing is called "Sweet Science". Looking at that sometimes implies that it's purely a technical sport. My favorite boxing book of all times is a book by Bryce Courtenay called *The Power of One*. The message I got from this book was "First with the head, then with the heart." Anyone who has read the book will understand this. It is Combat you are getting ready for. No need to stop in situations where no one is throwing punches at you. So, challenge yourself today, so you can challenge your opponent tomorrow. In the words of my first boxing trainer Mazaughn Kemp when I was 15 years old "You can bounce around them all night, but when you're ready to win, you have to FIGHT!"

Oh, and one thing to remember: Don't try this in the gym without your trainer present, and without first doing the proper amount of cardio. Doing so would increase the risk of serious fatigue, or even heart attack! Don't start an exercise program without first consulting your physician, or licensed professional!

*Terry Southerland was a 3 time National Champion, All Navy Champion, and winner of many International bouts, including participation in the first Goodwill Games representing the U.S. in 1986. Compiling an amateur record of 147 wins & 18 losses, and a professional record of 21 wins & 3 losses in his Boxing career.*





## MARTIAL ARTS AND THE LAW

By Neal Zephyrin

The study of martial arts can offer many rewards to the student. It offers a sense of self-accomplishment and respect from one's peers. It builds confidence and helps exude a feeling of self proficiency. Studying martial arts also can turn an otherwise well functioning body into a living weapon. While that is not necessarily a bad thing at all, there are precautions that must be taken with respect to the law. In our last article, we concluded that the fundamental principle of martial arts was to teach self-defense. But while self-defense is a right, laws regarding martial artist using their training to defend themselves are not so forthcoming.

Here's a scenario. It's a Sunday night and you and a loved one are walking down a relatively safe, yet deserted street. Suddenly two assailants confront you and your loved one with one of the assailants brandishing a knife demanding your valuable possessions. What are your options? You can (1) talk your way out of it (of course the assailants are high as a kite, so needless to say they're not in the best frame of mind for logical reasoning) (2) run (but your significant other might be a female with 6 inch heels or a gentleman with a cast on his leg from a work-related injury) or (3) use your martial arts training and stop these thugs dead in their tracks, leaving them to ponder in their respective hospital beds what exactly hit them. If option three is your choice, you need to understand the legal ramification of taking such action. The courts say if a person is attacked, that person's only goal is to avoid being hurt. When the threat stops, so should the defensive force. If the attacker show signs of resuming his assault, then the defense can resume, but anything beyond that is vengeful and malicious and is so viewed by the courts. The general rule is that deadly force is not allowed unless under extreme circumstances. Courts have labeled three major areas in which deadly force is acceptable.

The first area is sexual assault. A person who is the intended victim of a sexual assault is allowed to use deadly force to prevent or halt the intended harm. The main reasoning behind this rule is that it is difficult for a person to find a proportional level of self-defense when one is being sexually assaulted. Thus, since this assault is so terrible to the victim and has no appropriate defense to match, deadly force will be allowed if the assault is extreme enough. Another reason for sexual assaults allowance for deadly force is that it is most often done to women. Women are often smaller than most men and thus have less of a chance of subduing their often-larger attackers with a lesser degree of force.

The second area in which deadly force is proper is when there is a threat of deadly force directed to the victim himself. Clearly, if a person is being threatened with deadly force, deadly force as a defense would be proportional to the attack. Many legal theorists argue that deadly force as a defense merely trades one death for another. However, courts justify their rulings by stating that deadly force as a defense is the lesser of two evils.





## MARTIAL ARTS AND THE LAW (cont'd)

By Neal Zephyrin

The third area recognized by courts is when there is a risk of serious bodily injury to the victim. This area is often merged with the area of the threat of deadly force. The reason being is that it is often difficult to ascertain which outcome will occur when being attacked. For example, a knife-wielding attacker is just as likely to kill his victim as he is to seriously wound him with the weapon. Serious bodily injury is classified as being an injury that severely hampers the quality of life that the victim currently enjoys. Thus, a victim who is threatened with the injury of having his legs cut off is being threatened with a serious bodily injury. Courts have deemed it acceptable for a victim to use deadly force in this situation rather than suffer the severe pain and potential eventual death that may result from an attack intending to cause serious bodily harm. It is important to remember that these three areas and the use of self-defense as a whole is subjective.

The area of self-defense is twofold. Primarily there is self-defense by justification. This of course is justified self-defense and is governed by proportionality. The victim exercises self-defense and his actions were justified due to the circumstances of the attack. In addition, there is also self-defense by excuse. This second aspect of self-defense is contingent on what the victim reasonably believes as opposed to what is actually occurring. For example, a person uses self-defense because he/she reasonably believes that he or she is being threatened with harm. Whether or not the person is actually in danger of suffering the anticipated injury is not as important as what the victim "reasonably" believes. A martial artist should be aware of these two views and know the applicable school of thought for his home state in the event his/her skills are required to defend his person.

Also, although the term "self-defense" seems to apply to defending one's own body, a person can also use reasonable force in defense of another individual or of their property. The law is much the same for the defense of third parties as it is for defending oneself. If "Joe" sees "Bob" attacking "Cory"; then "Joe"; to defend "Cory"; may use whatever force would be proportional if "Joe" were in "Cory's" place. No new rules apply. However, the defense of property is much different. How does one measure proportionality if one's person is not in danger of being harmed? Courts have answered this question by stating that a person can use self-defense to reclaim or protect their property only if the level of force exercised was the absolute bare minimum required. Therefore, if someone steals a 10 year martial arts practitioner's wallet, the martial artist is justified in grabbing the person to retrieve his property. However, he is not justified in fully performing a "catch-arm" throw, resulting in the robber landing on his back and dislocating his shoulder. The martial artist will be held liable by the courts.

Obviously, in a situation involving an individual attacking a trained martial artist with intent to kill will result in someone's death. Seeing as how the victim presents a smaller possibility of recommitting his actions and is less of a societal menace, then his deadly force is a lesser evil than that of the predatory attacker.





## MARTIAL ARTS AND THE LAW (cont'd)

By Neal Zephyrin

When confronted with a party that is a martial arts student, a court will often factor this into their analysis of the situation. Martial artists are viewed as being in possession of extra knowledge. Most frequently, a court examines this extra knowledge when determining proportionality. First, let us say that a man attacks another man in an alley (forget why one would be in an alley to begin with. Maybe in looking for the car, the victim took a wrong turn). The man under attack manages to disable his attacker and breaks his attackers jaw, collar bone, and left arm as a result. The court will consider several factors in determining whether the force was proportional. If the attacker is larger than the defender, then the level of allowable force would be greater than if both individuals were of equal size. Other factors are also weighed in. These include, but are not limited to; whether one party is a female, whether one party is intoxicated, armed, known to be a societal menace, handicapped, belligerent, etc. Thus, if a man attacks a woman, and the woman harms the man severely, a court may not look upon her actions as harshly as they would if she were a man in the same situation due to the average women so often being in possession of a smaller stature than the average man. Needless to say, if a person defending himself breaks his attacker's arm as a result of self-defense, the court will look at this defense differently if the person is a student of the martial arts. He or she will have more knowledge as to how to harm a person effectively. If it is found that he acted negligently in light of his skills then the courts will find him liable.

Thus, while I tried to shed some light on some of the ramifications of the usage of martial arts in self-defense, this is by no means an exhaustive account of the many laws regarding this subject. The goal here was to show that the area of self-defense and martial arts is multifaceted. It is important to know and understand that the privilege of knowing and possessing martial arts skills places a level of responsibility upon the student. While everyone has the right to defend themselves, a martial artist has an even greater responsibility in controlling the level of force of their defense. Rightfully or wrongfully so, that is the law.

*Neal Zephyrin is a 3rd Degree Instructor at Alan Lee's Chinese Kung-Fu, Wu-Su Association. He has been studying martial arts for over 18 years. He is currently an AVP at an Investment Bank.*





## STANCE TRAINING

By Master Robert Thomas



Master Robert Thomas

A good stance is one of the best assets one will possess in traditional martial arts. We all understand if the foundation is not good, the house will fall. In this regard we could be speaking of your martial arts foundation or your stance as it relates to your body and its position when you are delivering, taking, avoiding a blow or standing ready to do one, the other or all at the same time.

Traditional martial art training almost always begins with stance training. We see the movies where the student is told to sit in a stance for an hour or more while the master leaves the room or training hall to do something else, seemingly cold and unconcerned about the student's welfare.

Grandmaster Alan Lee's father used to leave him standing for over an hour in a horse stance with a command not to move. It is said he stood so long that his sweat as it dropped to the ground caused depressions from the constant dripping. The ground in the room where he trained was riddled with little divots.

Why is this done? Why must a student endure such humiliation? This humiliation is designed to make a student mentally and physically stronger. The student becomes mentally stronger because he or she will develop patience and discipline. You don't know when the teacher is coming back, so you stay. You become physically stronger because of the power and endurance it will build in your legs as you remain in one spot fighting the urge to move. You are working your legs in an isometric fashion as you pit one muscle against the other and the force of gravity. This training creates mental toughness.

A strong stance can help you overcome fear. While blocking punching or kicking, your ability to do so is dictated by your ability to stand firm. When your legs start to wobble, the rest of your body will follow. Once that rhythm begins all is lost. It is like the boxer whose legs begin to shake, you know it won't be long before he will fall. This is less pronounced in martial arts because we do not scrutinize the stance since it is and should be ever changing. Though we don't see it the tremors are there like a silent earthquake undermining our position. Regardless of the martial discipline, the result will be the same; a weak stance or weak legs will cause your house to fall.





## STANCE TRAINING (cont'd)

By Master Robert Thomas



Master Robert Thomas

If you like competition, stay one up on your competitors. Work your stance for a better score. Judges watch the legs and your body positions when you perform. When you step, spin or jump are you firm and still when you stop or when you land? If not, you will lose points. Those of you who are familiar with gymnastics, when a gymnast sticks their landing there are fewer deductions. The martial artist should seek the same.

Some might utilize a style of martial or fighting arts that focuses on the hands and think they don't need to work their stances. This thinking is flawed because your legs still need to be strong to get you from point "A" to point "B" to deliver those hands. Moving from point "A" to point "B" in actuality is stepping, but how can you step correctly without having first held a stable position? No matter what the style, work your stances. It will increase the value of your entire martial arts experience.



Master Robert Thomas has been a member of the Chinese Kung-Fu Wu-Su Association since 1974, where he currently holds the position of Kung-Fu Wu-Su Master Instructor and Co-Director. He has also served as an expert on the [allexperts.com](http://allexperts.com) website for six years, February 2002 to February 2008, answering various questions concerning Chinese martial arts. Most recently Master Thomas was profiled in a documentary entitled "Natural Mystery," that aired on The Learning Channel (TLC) and was distributed worldwide. You can contact Master Thomas directly concerning martial arts issues at [kungfuwusu@aol.com](mailto:kungfuwusu@aol.com).





## GYM RAT

By Shir Konas and David Bluman



Shir Konas

### Kettlebells: Part I – History & Foundation

**SK:** I'm sure most of you heard of Kettlebells. As of late, there has been quite a buzz over this mysterious piece of equipment that's been slowly infiltrating the mainstream fitness industry these days.



Having heard of kettlebells long ago, I've been using them for a few years now, whenever I could find one floating around at the gym — but recently I attended an instructor-training workshop that focused entirely on the kettlebells, and a world of possibilities revealed itself to me!

At the workshop I attended I met Dave Ganulin, CEO of Kettlebell Concepts, to whom I'd like to express my thanks for lending his support to this series of articles and giving us the permission to use some of his company's educational materials; At the same workshop I also met David Bluman, Director of Personal Training at Reality Personal Training in NY, a martial artist himself, and an expert in many related fields. He agreed to co-write this series of articles with me.

The biography of the kettlebell is an intriguing mix of fact and folklore. Unlike what some people may choose to believe, Kettlebells are nothing new to the world of fitness. History places the origins of the KB in Eastern Europe where it was traditionally measured in unites called "poods", with one pood equating to 16 kg, and approximately 35 lbs. Originally, there were only three sizes available: 1 pood, 1.5 poods and 2 poods. It is unclear when exactly KBs were born. According to Voropayev (1984), they have been around since "time immortal!" Since they were used in the US as early as the 1920s (even in our local YMCA on 23rd St. and 7th Avenue, New York city! see photo below), it's safe to assume that they were indeed created much earlier.

According to folklore, KBs were used as counterweights at Russian farmers' markets; at the end of a typical workday, the farmers would swing, toss and juggle these weights for fun and exercise. The tradition was passed through the generations, to become embedded in the local culture as "the people's" way to stay fit and healthy.

In Russia and other Eastern Block countries, KBs were recognized (alongside classic Olympic weightlifting) as an important method for strength-athletic development; a commission was formed under the auspices of the USSR Weightlifting Federation to organize citizens for group workouts, recognizing that having healthy and fit citizens will result in better productivity and minimize healthcare costs. In addition, these training methods resulted in significantly better achievements for competitive athletes.





## GYM RAT (cont'd)

By Shir Konas and David Bluman



Shir Konas

**DB:** Power, speed, balance, agility and conditioning are the key factors in the development and maintenance for martial arts, sports and activities of daily living. (ADL's). My introduction to Kettlebells has led me to joining the Kettlebell Concepts Instructor Team. Kettlebells are training tools that provide a unique avenue to achieve these key factors. Within the disciplines of martial arts and sports performance these key factors are necessary for maintaining and/or improving performance. One common denominator is what I term the "dynamic factor". Within the dynamic factor is the term so loosely used in the personal training industry as "function".

So what is function? Function is:

1. ROM (range of motion)
2. Muscle Recruitment
3. Strength
4. Coordination
5. Joint Stability
6. Endurance (muscular and cardiovascular)
7. Proprioception
8. Balance and Core stability.

Functional "dynamic factors" are the responses to a given stimulus. Explosive power, strength, balance, agility, the type of speed necessary for the type of activity we are engaged in, acceleration, deceleration, and overcoming inertial changes that affect our center of gravity (COG) are functional, and dynamic factors. Our COG is ever changing where gravity (as we know it) is a universal constant.

It's these dynamic factors that relate to the "chaos theory". Whether on the sports field, the boxing ring, sparring, or in a real life and death situation the one common constant is change; chaos and circumstances that change in an instance. Performance outcomes are determined by the adaptation and reaction to these demands.





## GYM RAT (cont'd)

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### The SAID Principal:

Specific  
Adaptation to  
Imposed  
Demand.

The SAID principal = Developmental integration systemically from our training stimulus and the adaptation to that stimulus.

This is where Kettlebells and Kettlebell Concepts (KBC) Education enter into our training regime. Kettlebells address the functional factors, the dynamic factors, changes in center of gravity, acceleration, deceleration, inertia, and the ability to challenge all of these simultaneously preparing us for the "chaos"

Mind, Movement, Muscle or KBC's 3 M's.

"Whether your focus is neural, physiological, hormonal, or other developmental factors, changes at any of these levels begin by stimulating the nervous system. (KBC Instructor Manual p54)" Simplistically training is a focus on the Central Nervous System (CNS).

Look for the Why's and How To's of Kettlebells and KBC in our next issue!

### References

1. Cronin, Khai, Ganulin (2007) *Kettlebells Level 1 Instructor Training Manual*
2. Bluman, D (2002) *Post Rehabilitation Programming*

To read more about David Bluman, visit [www.ri-pt.com/meetthetrainers.html](http://www.ri-pt.com/meetthetrainers.html)

For more information and workshop schedule, please visit [www.kettlebellconcepts.com/](http://www.kettlebellconcepts.com/)

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