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Jin Suh Discusses the Mental Health Benefits of Taekwondo Training

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Taekwondo, which originated in Korea, is an all-around exercise and practice, consisting of a system of punches, kicks and blocks, with sweeps and throws at times incorporated as well. It is a martial arts discipline with a name that translates to “the way of the foot and hand.”

More than the physical rewards (strength, endurance, and flexibility) though, Taekwondo also offers a host of mental health benefits, emphasizing the power of the mind and spirit.

Grand Master Jin Suh, a former U.S.A national team member and the founder of High Performance Martial Arts in Bayside, New York, outlines some of the major mental health benefits associated with Taekwondo training.

Greater Self-Confidence

One of the significant mental health benefits gained from Taekwondo training is enhanced self-confidence within students, Grand Master Jin Suh states. People with low self-esteem can improve their mindset through training and become increasingly assertive, prepared to confront any challenges that are presented to them. A child who has experienced bullying, for example, will be more self-assured in handling these situations after receiving Taekwondo training. Your mental attitude will become noticeably altered because you have achieved an inner belief and eliminated whatever self-doubt previously held you back. Additionally, as you progress through the ranking system and earn new belts, these accomplishments will only serve to further elevate your self-esteem and group of admirers within the club.

Focus and Determination

Consistently training in Taekwondo, you quickly understand that concentrating your mind on the immediate task before you is pivotal, according to Jin Suh. You must fully focus on one goal at a time, whether it is a new technique or summoning the strength to shatter a board. After some time and patience dedicated to training, you will realize the extent to which it sharpens your mind. Going forward, the physical work of Taekwondo will expose you to more mental health benefits as you appreciate the spiritual aspects of martial arts. Such exertion and tenacity will eventually influence other aspects of your life, ensuring that you are ready to meet all obstacles or objectives head-on.

Endorphin Energizer

Taekwondo training on a regular basis is scientifically proven to aid your mental health, Jin Suh says. When exercising, chemicals in your brain (neurotransmitters) release endorphins, a type of hormone that basically acts as a natural painkiller and sedative. At the end of the day, you are left in a state of elation, calmness, and confidence, all of which largely boost your self-esteem. Not to mention that endorphins can make you more happy in general.

Better Self-Control Tendencies

As you attain more experience in Taekwondo training, your physical motions and decisions are controlled and calculated, an indication that, psychologically, you are maturing. Now, ethical, moral, and religious considerations enter your thought process. Although emotions such as frustration, sadness, shock, love and euphoria are generally featured in our daily lives, Taekwondo training teaches you to harness these forces, notes Jin Suh. Mentally, an astute student is capable of controlling these emotions and, with experience, will grow into a conscientious individual who follows the principles learned from Taekwondo.

Opportunities to Socialize

Another mental health benefit of Taekwondo training is the social circles it introduces you to, as you will meet various people who are all there to improve themselves. These circumstances, where many students are already together and naturally conversing, are particularly helpful for those who are socially shy. Everyone is there for the same purpose: to learn Taekwondo and aspire to execute its methods to the best of their abilities. Conversation starters will be straightforward and the chatter will be organic. Groups, made up of coaches and fellow students, will propel your performances and expose you to several new friendships, too. These newfound friends will motivate you to maximize your potential during every practice.

Superior Cognitive Function

For children, Taekwondo training is known to improve cognitive functions and, neurologically speaking, equip them with a finer memory, says Jin Suh. This boils down to the physical activity that their bodies have been exposed to, a commitment that can certainly pay later dividends during school testing and the end-of-year grading on their report cards.

Less Stress

Our lives are subjected to constant sources of stress, but Taekwondo training is wonderful for your mental health because it separates you from those factors. On the mat, it is solely you, practicing mindfulness and completely free of your worries. Without the distractions of technology or the everyday struggles imposing their will on you, Taekwondo keeps you in the moment, calmly focused and observing your current surroundings, says Jin Suh. In Taekwondo, you are genuinely in control of your mind and body when stress is fought off, protecting yourself and your opponents throughout the sparring exchanges.

An Outlet to Unleash Anger

Finally, Taekwondo training is a suitable solution to release the frustrations that are built up through workplace conflicts, family complications, friendship quandaries, or any other problematic situations. In training, you can take out those aggravations on the pads or punching bags, producing some of those calming endorphins during the physical activity that you engage in. If that doesn't

solve the matter, focus your mind on grasping a new Taekwondo technique. A Taekwondo training class provides you with a controlled environment to relieve yourself of that pent-up fury that has perhaps been compounding. Now, bear in mind, while it is a great outlet for working out your anger, be careful that you aren't taking it out on your opponent to the point where you may injure them.

Final Thoughts from Jin Suh

Grand Master Jin Suh has thoroughly demonstrated the numerous mental health benefits that can be earned through Taekwondo training, most of which will be equally useful when you are outside of the gym. Focus, determination, self-confidence, communication skills; these are uplifting to one's mental health and they are easily incorporated into the day-to-day lives of all individuals. So, if you are grappling with mental health concerns or wish to improve your mindset in general, Taekwondo training can undoubtedly be a long-term solution, that is, if you can handle the rigorous training first.

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