

A Different View on Health and Performance for the TKD Practitioner

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We have all come together with a common passion, the passion for Taekwon-do. And yet with this common passion there is also diversity, diversity in practice, focus of training, goals, and observable (and unobservable) benefits for each Taekwon-Do practitioner. However there is always one constant 'the human body', the training of it, and it's striving to excel. It is this rigorous physical and mental training that sets apart the Taekwon-do practitioner from the average person, we sacrifice time, time that could be spent earning money, socialising with friends and family, resting or engaging in team or solo sports and hobbies. We sacrifice this time because we see the bigger picture, the larger aspect of life. By training ourselves to become more well-rounded citizens in the physical, emotional, moral, and community sense. It is this harmony of being that allows us in our free time to interact with one another with love and respect, perform in activity whether leisure or occupation to 100% and nothing less, and when trying times arise for what ever reason, to act with diligence, perseverance, and courage.

In training over the years the martial artists have recognised that apart from hard training there also needs to be smart training. The ability to pump out 100 press-ups on your thumbs whilst the instructor is beating you with a rattan cane would no doubt be great for you stamina, pain threshold, perseverance and mental conditioning, there are more scientific and intelligent ways to get the most out of the human body, this is called 'smart training'. We all know that apart from the physicality of TKD, adequate nutrition is also a corner-stone of effective training, as is enough rest (physical and mental) to allow healing, building, and waste removal. What is little appreciated is the central coordinating factor of the human body, of which will be discussed below.

To be effective in Taekwon-Do or any other martial art you need to have balance, in yourself and in your actions. This is so that you can summon up all of your skill and training and convey it through your body at the appropriate time for the appropriate situation to be sufficient for victory (if this is your actual focus for training). You want no interference to this process obviously, because when using the martial arts in their ultimate test it really comes down to a life or death situation.

I am a passionate Taekwon-do practitioner, I want to be balanced in my art and myself, and I want to get the ultimate use and function out of my body, that is why I get checked by a Chiropractor and actually pursued to study to become a Chiropractor myself since it was a life changing experience. This is the focus of this black belt essay - to shed some light onto what the objectives, philosophy, and art of chiropractic really are and how those whom are serious about their bodies, their health, and their Taekwon-do can benefit from the chiropractic lifestyle.

FROM BIRTH

All essential ingredients for health and self-repair are within the body itself.

From the moment of birth your body has manufactured all of its own hormones, enzymes, acids, blood, sweat, tears, and all the other vital chemicals to keep you alive; and has done this merely out of the foods you ate, fluids you drank, and the air you breathed. When you cut your skin from practicing destructions, the severed edges were healed from the inside out with the materials made by you. If you were unfortunate to break a bone when landing from a dodgy flying side-piercing kick, the union of the bone was achieved with the material manufactured inside your body. If you have a black eye it gets well because of the function of your internal repair mechanism.

In most instances the body, given the time, is capable of achieving its own cure, so long as there is no interference with its proper function and manufacture of essential ingredients. In other words your body possesses an internal wisdom that required no training or education, an innate intelligence. It is respect for this innate ability and its awesome power that we have lost in today's society of pill popping one-stop shopping people. But times are changing people are looking more towards a wellness approach to their healthcare as opposed to crisis management and disease care.

THE CONTROL SYSTEM OF THE BODY

All the manufacturing processes (and everything else) inside the body must of course be directed. Just as in training you need an instructor whom coordinates, directs, and organises the class; the same is true for the body. The master control system (instructor) for the body is the 'Nervous System', it is the system that direct and co-ordinates the functions of all other systems "one ring to control them all". These systems include the digestive, respiratory, circulatory, musculoskeletal system etc. The nerve system is concerned with the integration of function throughout the body and supervises the reactions and adjustments of the body to its environment and with conscious life. These adjustments are called 'adaptation' and basically what separates us (living beings) from the wood or concrete on which we train on. We adapt to and offer resistance to the environment; this is the very definition of being alive.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE BODY

The body is not just a chemical factory, it is also a dynamic machine made up of millions of moving parts. There are more than 200 bones alone, including the spinal bones, which are moveable through infinitely variable directions and ranges of motion, how did you think we could actually do all the fantastic Taekwon-do techniques? Ask any engineer or mechanic about a machine with moving parts. He or she will tell you that any such machine, especially when in use for 24 hours a day, month after month, year after year for an entire lifetime, will need periodic maintenance. Moving parts constantly under stress become misaligned and require adjustment. Life is full of many types of stress - physical, mental, emotional, chemical, bacteriological (yes also TKD). Not only is it impossible to avoid all stress but much of it is essential for the body's wellbeing. From an early age you ran, jumped and fell, heaved, tugged and strained, got jolted and bruised. This sounds just like a regular training, but is actually just living life. You may have worked in awkward or restricted positions for lengthy periods of time (eg occupational).

VERTEBRAL SUBLUXATION

When the demands of such activity exceed the ability of the body to adapt, fatigue and damage occur which can work the mechanical parts of the body out of alignment. When spinal bones become misaligned not only is normal movement affected, more importantly, that part of the nervous system that passes through and between the spinal bones is prone to interference and irritation, this is called 'vertebral subluxation'. Without normal nerve function the vital information doesn't get to its destinations as was intended and the body cannot direct and co-ordinate the actions necessary for health and function. Organs and tissues deprived of their normal nerve control show altered function and impaired adaptability. Disease and ill-health can result. On a more basic level, your muscles may not contract as strong or fast, gross body co-ordination and reaction time is not as efficient.

THE PATH TO OPTIMAL HEALTH

To regain true health, normal nerve function must be restored. To restore normal nerve function the structural parts that have been: strained, jolted, or forced out of alignment must be adjusted back (obviously) to proper alignment and mobility. When normal spinal function has been restored the nervous system can again direct the normal processes of the body; and if damage has not gone too far the body can once again manufacture the materials and tissues necessary for self-repair and health.

ENTER THE CHIROPRACTOR

What kind of diseases do chiropractors treat? The answer is NONE. Chiropractors base their practice upon a respect for the innate (born with) ability of the body to heal and organise itself (innate intelligence). They recognise that a great deal of sickness and suffering is caused by failure of some body parts to function properly. Even infectious diseases are more likely to occur when resistance has been lowered by disruption of normal function.

THE CHIROPRACTIC ANALYSIS

So how does chiropractic fit into the picture that has now been described? Well, the chiropractor analyses your spine for areas of interference to your nervous system i.e. they check for vertebral subluxations. Since chiropractors know that these vertebral subluxations are a detriment to your health and body's performance (thus Taekwon-do) they want to help our body remove them. Once the subluxations are found they are corrected by means of a chiropractic adjustment. An adjustment is a very quick and specific low depth force applied to the subluxated vertebra, unlocking the joints and freeing up its movement. The body recognises that a subluxation is bad so it uses the muscle to try to realign the vertebra, and thus very little 'specific and correct' force is needed by the chiropractor to adjust the vertebral subluxation.

PATIENTS AND SYMPTOMS

Many people seek chiropractic assistance for headaches, backache and musculoskeletal pains because they have been told that chiropractic is good for those things. Well in truth, those probably did get good results for those problems; HOWEVER, as mentioned before the chiropractor did not treat those problems. The body dealt with them because that is what it does, it heals itself when given a proper chance. People are amazed when symptoms far from the spine start to subside, and people with little or no discomfort are surprised when the chiropractor

finds areas of the spine that are severely subluxated affecting their overall health and performance.

YOUR BODY EXPRESSES YOUR HEALTH

Remember you were born with an innate intelligence, an internal wisdom that continually tries to obtain optimal performance from your body in all respects. However, when there is interference to the control system the body cannot do this as effectively. Whether it is TKD, digesting a kebab, or taking in information from a book or this essay, all aspects of your body are working below par if you are subluxated.

Chiropractors therefore, seek not to treat the sickness or the symptoms, but rather, through the correction of spinal misalignments to restore normal function in the spine so that the body can repair and organise itself optimally and express full health. Healing comes from the within once normal function has been restored. Continued good health is the result of harmonious body function.

THE CHIROPRACTIC LIFESTYLE

Vertebral subluxations can occur anywhere in the spine (from the base of your skull right down to your tailbone, many can go unnoticed), but this doesn't mean they aren't affecting your health and performance. Only regular spinal checkups by your chiropractor will detect these subluxations and deal with them appropriately. It is funny how a person will take their car for a service even if they don't know anything is wrong with the car. People do this because they know if they get it serviced regularly problems can be detected and fixed before they become major, and the person will get much better performance and life (hence resale) out of that car if it is regularly maintained. So it has to be asked, "what is more important, your car, or the body that you will have for a lifetime?" Everyone wants the most out of their body especially Taekwon-do practitioners, and your body is the single greatest and most amazing thing you will ever own, so make it last. So back-tracking it doesn't matter how hard or often you train, how closely you monitor your nutrition and rest, if your spinal neural health is compromised, these factors are irrelevant you will not function at 100%. Every body has a spine therefore everybody deserves to be under chiropractic care to ensure its proper function. Make sure your health and performance is closer to optimum, get your spine checked.