

Stress: A Formidable Opponent



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Can practicing the Martial Arts actually help you combat illness and disease? The definitive answer is YES. Martial Arts provides training for the mind and the body, both of which are crucial in combating illness and disease.

In the Martial Arts, you exercise muscles and joints throughout your body. Keeping your muscles and joints strong and flexible is a key component to overall health. The exercises have a direct effect on cardiovascular health and flexibility, both of which ward off illness and disease.

Exercise also has a direct impact on stress levels. Stress presents a separate health risk factor. According to experts, as reported in Consumer Reports on Health, "Stress is now considered as much of a risk factor as smoking, overweight, or lack of exercise for a variety of diseases. And stress itself can contribute to unhealthy lifestyle choices, such as overeating."

What makes the Martial Arts even more significant in the battle against stress is that it not only is a form of body exercise, but also is the primary form of "mind exercise" that is paramount to the mind's control over stress. The relaxation and meditation techniques taught, as well as breathing exercises, all train the body to reverse the stress response. This reversal results in reduced heart rate and blood pressure, decreased muscle tension, and slowed brain waves.

These "anti-stress" techniques are actually being "prescribed" by physicians to help in the treatment of illness and disease. By incorporating the Martial Arts into your daily routine now, regardless of your current health, you are setting up your defenses to both prevent and treat the many diseases and conditions that are currently linked to increased stress. Among these conditions are reduced immunity, hypertension, coronary artery disease, and increased risk of heart attack and stroke. And with less stress, you'll be able to make more appropriate life style choices, such as healthful food selection and optimal physical activity, which are conducive to your continued good health.