

THE ART OF EXPRESSING THE HUMAN BODY

BY TERI TOM, M.S., R.D.



Ted Wong holds the focus mitts while columnist Teri Tom polishes her kick.

For this month's column, I've decided to address an overall approach to martial arts training, rather than the specifics of technique. The reason I tend to spend so much time on the technical aspects of *Jun Fan jeet kune do* is that it really is an art—a fighting art, to be sure, but an art nonetheless. Just as musicians should know their scales and chord progressions so they're free to improvise, JFJKD practitioners should know their tools inside and out so they

have unconscious command over them in combat. And to truly understand these tools, you must be present in your training.

By this, I don't mean just being physically present. You must be there, all of you—mind and body. This is one of the key reasons so many people fail in their fitness regimens. At the gym, I see them day in and day out trudging up the treadmill to nowhere, reading magazines, watching TV, listening to iPods—doing anything to distract their minds from the fact that they're exercising. For some, this works just fine, but the majority of people just get bored. So they wander over to the cardio-kickboxing class, where they receive minimal instruction and flail away absent-mindedly. In a few months, they get bored with that and move on to the next thing.

Unfortunately, this same mind-set is prevalent in the martial arts. In large

classes where it's difficult to receive individual instruction, there's a common pattern of "monkey see, monkey do." Without delving deeper under the surface of the movements they're learning, students become bored and start looking to other techniques or arts. That's why school curricula tend to rely so heavily on memorizing large numbers of techniques—to keep students coming back and paying their dues. Even Miyamoto Musashi was hip to this in the 1600s when he

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