

JEET KUNE DO SOURCE

I do agree that this makes the martial arts different from any other sport. More intangibles are involved. A mistake in the ring or octagon is much costlier than in other sports. Take one hit in the wrong place at the wrong time, and you could be flat on your back, game over. But other sports can be similarly cruel—think speed skating or the giant slalom. That X factor of "heart" so often mentioned in boxing circles applies to all sports in which an athlete faces physical and spiritual challenges at the elite level.

You might argue that because the martial arts don't rely on technology—at least, the arts of unarmed combat don't—they're not as subject to change. But if we look at track and field or swimming, we see that those sports are still seeing elevated levels of performance, with records being shattered on a regular basis. Even in a sport as seemingly straightforward as swimming, times keep getting faster and faster, and technique continues to evolve. When races are won and lost on a fraction of a second, every little bit helps.

It would behoove the martial arts to approach training and instruction the same

way most other sports do. It may seem like splitting hairs, an over-analysis of minute details, but that's what it takes these days. If you can be that fraction of a second faster than your opponent, you'll hit him first. Isn't that worth the extra effort?

An important amendment to this call for change is that improvement doesn't mean reinventing the wheel. Take *jeet kune do*, for example. Adding unrelated techniques to it isn't purposeful change. While tennis has evolved, no new strokes have been added to the game. There's still the serve, volley, forehand and backhand. In boxing, we still have the jab, cross, uppercut and hook. It follows that we don't need to add new techniques to the JKD arsenal. Even though we must keep up with ever-improving performance and science, remember that Lee said there's still "always a most efficient and alive manner for each individual to accomplish the purpose of the performance—that is, with regard to proper leverage, balance in motion, economical and efficient use of motions, and energy."

He also said we all have only two arms and two legs. There's nothing new under the sun in terms of kicks and punches. Lee

gave us a scientifically sound foundation, and it still holds true today. The kinesiology textbooks he referred to in the '60s are still in publication. The modifications from here on out will be smaller and smaller as we head toward true refinement using the latest research in biomechanics, conditioning and nutrition. ✘

About the author: A registered dietitian who specializes in sports nutrition, Teri Tom is a board member of the Bruce Lee Foundation and the first woman to be certified to teach jeet kune do under Ted Wong. The Jeet Kune Do Source is the official column of the Bruce Lee Foundation. The image and likeness of Bruce Lee are used with the express permission of Linda Lee Cadwell and Concord Moon LP. All rights reserved. For information about ordering Bruce Lee's books, visit www.blackbeltmag.com.

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