

Martial Arts Today

by Mark Davis

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The definition of martial arts is war arts. Every country in the world at one time had various forms of martial arts based on such things as geographical regions, clans, tribes and so forth. Historically martial arts were used for defensive and offensive purposes depending on the varying situation. For instance in China, Japan and Korea there were various war lords that used martial ways to control food, land and trade just as in New England the Native Americans used martial ways to protect their resources and people.

The martial arts, which is practiced today, is the result of thousands of years of evolution. Martial arts can be divided into two categories that of sport and also of self-protection based systems. However, many of the modern self-defense systems we see nowadays are not always clearly defined.

Today many styles of martial arts, which are taught, do not take into account the different circumstances of a real world attack. For example things such as weather, time of day, multiple attackers and weapons do not come into play in the safety of a dojo-training environment. This occurs because many martial arts were developed primarily as a sport and consequently there are certain rules and regulations that monitor these interactions.

When I used to kick box we did it in the safety of a gym with boxing gloves, rules and a time limit and there was a mutual agreement between the participants that at the end of the time limit it would end. Within the boundaries of the rules of kickboxing there were no kicks to the groin, no eye gauging, no second party in the ring with a weapon of any kind and so forth.

The day I was assaulted it was early spring and it was still cold. There was a slight rain falling. I was quickly walking to my car when I saw ahead of me a man that appeared to be intoxicated. At the moment when I raised my head to look at him a seemingly innocent gesture on his part of lifting his hand quickly turned into what I thought was a punch to my stomach. My body reacted in a particular walking movement that my teacher showed me in Japan.* This movement carried me out of the way of the punch and

as I looked more closely at the attack – it ended up being a knife strike to the side of my body. The man fell into the cars parked on the side of the street and I started to run. He turned with a startled look on his face and ran in the other direction himself.

Self-defense in martial arts is something that is very important in today's society but also in the same vein martial sports play an equally important role, for example they both improve health and fitness, they both increase body awareness and if taught correctly they can be fun.

These series of articles will talk about self-defense in the martial arts and how they play a role in today's society.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article and may happiness, peace and love flow through your life.

** I had been practicing this movement a significant amount for other purposes in my training.*