



Combative vigorous exercise such as martial arts and kick-boxing helps you fight off cancer and infections.

By Dr. Gordon Ko MD CCFP(EM) FRCPC

Dr. Gordon Ko MD is a Physical Medicine-Rehabilitation specialist and Assistant Professor, University of Toronto. His clinical expertise includes chronic pain and sports injuries treatment with Platelet-rich plasma injections at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre and the Canadian Centre for Integrative Medicine, Markham.

Dr. Ko lectures on research studies that strongly supports the health benefits of martial arts training in both the young and the old. Studies published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine and others showed both direct and indirect benefits of more strenuous exercise such as those practiced in TaeKwonDo and Kick-boxing. Training was found to elevate the body's white blood cells (your natural killer cells) which translates into a greater ability to fight off infections and cancer cells. In one study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine 2004 (D.Nemet), a 250% increase in these cells was noted in high school boys who trained regularly. This applied also to children as young as 8-years-old in a 1996 Journal of Pediatrics study (S.Boas). Improvements in muscle strength and endurance also ward off degenerative diseases such as osteoporosis. Cardiovascular conditioning helps to prevent obesity and complications of heart disease and diabetes. Even moderate exercise such as Tai Chi (a gentler form of martial arts) is also of benefit to the elderly, cancer and heart attack survivors and improved balance in those with Parkinson's disease.

Dr. Ko usually recommends active exercise for his patients (more information at www.DrKoPRP.com), and works to practice what he preaches. He and his family participate regularly in Authentic Tae Kwon Do Martial Arts academy in Markham where his three older children already have their blackbelts. Dr. Ko and his wife Dr. Hum work-out in the

adult kick-boxing classes usually led by 5th-Dan blackbelt Dr. Daniel Gibbs.

According to Dr. Ko, regular exercise is crucial for good health.

To be consistent in exercise, Dr. Ko usually recommends the following "**WE FITTE**" tips:

1) Exercise should be safe and begin with a WARM-UP and END with a cool-down. For those who are older or have existing health issues, pre-screening by the family doctor should first be done.

2) It must be **FUN**. Martial arts and boxing classes are an enjoyable way to train in a class setting. Compliance with strenuous exercise is much greater when it is fun...elevating the body's endorphin levels even higher.

3) Exercise should be **INTENSE**. Exercise that get the heart rate up, sweat flowing will benefit the cardiovascular system. Calisthenics and weight-training will enhance muscle strength and control. Boxing and controlled sparring also help to release stress and anger.

4) **A TRAINER**-mentor is helpful. Having someone such as a personal trainer or group instructor will motivate high intensity workouts and monitor good, safe progress.

5) It should be **TIMELY** and practical. Classes usually run during after-work evening time and on weekends. Better compliance occurs as parents participate while their kids are in their classes.

6) It should be **EFFECTIVE**. The Authentic TKD mandates are the attitudes of self-control, perseverance, integrity, courtesy and indomitable spirit. Emphasis is also on learning skills for self-defense and for integrating exercises that train the body for any emergency or stressful situation.

For more information about the Authentic Tae Kwon Do martial arts academy 7676 Woodbine Ave (near Hwy 14) in Markham, contact Master Farah at 905 947-1235. [HYPERLINK "http://www.AuthenticTaeKwonDo.com"](http://www.AuthenticTaeKwonDo.com) www.AuthenticTaeKwonDo.com

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