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A Quick Guide to Mixed Martial Arts by Sharen

Article published on July 9th 2012 | Sports

If you have watched any of the big action films in the last decade then you are likely to have heard of mixed martial arts. Whether you were first attracted to it in The Warrior, or whether it was Never Back Down where it first caught your eye, this kinetic and highly practical martial art has understandably been the focus of a range of big action movies in recent years.

But what's the reality behind the silver screen? Are mixed martial arts really as dramatic and powerful as the films make them seem? And how did they come to be? Here we will look a little bit at the philosophy of mixed martial arts, where they come from and why they are one of the better ways to train.

Mixed martial arts essentially do what they say on the tin. In other words this is a mixture of martial arts which means that you are not restricted to just one style of martial arts. If you look for a list of martial arts then you will quickly notice just how many options there are â€“ from Karate to Kung Fu, to Tai Kwon Do etc etc. All of these have subtle differences and there are many strengths and disadvantages of each. For instance Judo â€“ meaning 'gentle way' â€“ focuses on throws, locks and 'ground work' but doesn't involve any actual strikes (though at a very high level you might learn some).

Alternatively, Karate involves punching and kicking and Kumite (sparing) but doesn't involve throws or locks (though Wado Ryu involves more of these). This then means that someone who does Karate is going to be better at fighting longer range â€“ because they can kick and jab, while someone who does Judio will be better at throwing. Tae Kwon Do meanwhile involves strikes but focuses more on kicks meaning it's even better for long distance combat and for taller fighters.

The problem is that in a real fight you often don't get to decide on the range of the fight. If you do just Karate and someone should wrestle you to the ground then that would leave you mostly vulnerable. Where mixed martial arts improves on this idea is by allowing you to try a whole range of types of martial arts. This then means you can focus on the parts you are best at, but also means that you have all of the different parts of your 'game' covered â€“ you can deal with long distance blows just as well as you can do ground work and get someone into a lock.

In many ways mixed martial arts have their origin in Jeet Kune Do â€“ 'the way of the intercepting fist' â€“ which was originally devised by Bruce Lee. Bruce Lee was angered at the overly 'traditional' approach of most martial artists and saw their loyalty to old forms and practices as misplaced. He instead created a martial art that aimed to be free of structure and instead was focused on taking the quickest route to stop an attacker, and on adapting what works for you from a whole range of different types of martial arts.

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There are many different a types of martial arts which can make choosing the right one to start difficult. In some ways a mixed martial arts can help you to overcome this problem. Click the links for more or to learn about other styles.

Article Keywords:
types of martial arts, mixed martial

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