

The Benefits of Stances and Strikes or Why We Need Jungshin Fitness

500 some odd years before the common era there lived an ancient soul, a great philosopher and politician. If we had the name for it then, a group-exercise coach and personal trainer. It might surprise you to find learn his name was 'Confucius.'

In those times, before the discovery of Penicillin, the world did not require a separate category for fitness. Every single moment embodied the precarious struggle between life and death. Perhaps life was not quite as precarious as it had been during our hunting and gathering years some one hundred thousand years ago. (By the way - that's 10 to the 6th power. We will revisit powers of exponents and movement in a moment).

Still, in 500 BC, people were doing everything they could to stay alive. If you caught a common cold, that could be the end. There were no reliable cures for illness. Only ancient witches brews. Today we call them Kombucha.

This is why our old friend Confucius is so important. Confucius was known to lead exercise groups. Nearly everyone he encountered became his personal fitness client. He developed a series of exercises designed to address the health of the body. Now, as we all know, the body is alive because of the organs and the glands. If the organs and glands stop functioning, well then, the body is dead. So the exercises Confucius developed benefit these very organs essential to our overall health. Each stance, each strike, with and without weapons, targeted a particular ailment -- just like needles in acupuncture, pressure points in massage therapy, or breath in yoga. Like yoga, martial arts were originally

developed for the health of the spirit, followed by the related health of the body. Unlike yoga, however, many many styles of martial arts have coexisted and multiplied with little understanding of the deep wealth of health benefits hidden within each movement, the gold nugget rooted within each stance.

Fast forward to the 21st century. We find ourselves in the modern world, living almost entirely outside of our bodies. We are brain heavy and computer savvy. The powerful CEO's of multimillion dollar companies forget to breathe while daily meditation has become doctor's orders. We watch 80% of our elders die with decaying bodies and dementia-swollen brains, the health of their internal bodies ignored for too long.

In my view, if we are truly going to enjoy living longer, then we must retrieve those nuggets of health tucked away deep within our movement modalities. We must go beyond the simple external version of a movement, which only provides about 60% of the potential benefits. We can reap the full benefits when we are attentive to the mind/ body connection of each movement and understand it in relationship to our inner health. When we witness our internal body, our internal body, in response, triggers hormones that enhance well-being, calm the nervous system, and allow for peak performance in parasympathetic forms. In effect, we can recover before the workout is over. If we ignore a baby, it dies. If we ignore our internal body, we die.

This is why I created Jungshin Fitness.

Junshin Fitness is a martial arts based program developed around particular stances and strikes which correlate to brain, heart, kidneys, liver, digestive tract, and lungs. It is a simple eight by eight system of flows, using a tactile unit--the wooden practice sword--to allow for play with gravity and one's surroundings.

The swords are weighted, allowing for a fast-moving high intensity workout, or a slower-paced one. The program actively tones the arms and legs, abdominal, and back muscles, while simultaneously delivering needed attention to the organs and nervous system. As with ancient fighting arts, breath controls every movement, so the practitioner can balance body and mind to reach the full potential of each movement and reap its full benefit.

Jungshin Fitness has quickly been embraced around the world with over fifty master trainers and over 400 hundred instructors. The program is available especially tailored for kids, athletes, recovery groups, and a course called Dignified Warriors for the aging population. The heart of the Jungshin Fitness program is the group class sword workout. I'll describe two popular examples: Rhythm, and Slice It Up.

Jungshin Fitness - Rhythm - Short Swords Workout

This dynamic 60-minute class is a fun, full-body workout for all levels involving the Jungshin short swords with a focus on synchronizing precise movements in sync with the rhythm of energizing music. You will build stamina and strength in your arms and legs, core, joints and tendons, and develop your coordination and mental focus as you unite the internal rhythm of your body with the external rhythm of the music. Join us as we sweat, slice, kick, jump, and drum to the beat!

Jungshin Fitness - Slice It Up - Long Sword Workout

Using custom weighted wooden swords, Jungshin Fitness will take your body and mind through a stimulating, cutting-edge workout. During this 120 minute session you will experience the deep benefits of ancient eastern modalities while you achieve maximum health through movement. Jungshin, with its simple eight stances and eight strikes, will get you to the look and feel you desire, both inside

and out. Jungshin reaches the heart of what keeps us alive--our organs--while modeling how to attain your healthiest mind and body. The physiological benefits are integrated into the non-stop workout so you will reap the benefits as the sweat drips and the swords slice. This class stimulates the endocrine and the metabolic systems, while being one of the toughest yet accessible workouts for all ages. It's a life changing class.

Two and a half thousand years ago, Confucius taught us the connection between internal and external movement, the balance between clear mind and healthy body. He imbued deep knowledge of those connections into each pose in his exercise program. Now Jungshin Fitness is here to help us regain that wisdom.