



Ten reasons Martial Arts benefit children

In a culture that seems to glorify violence in everything from music to video games and television shows, the idea of enrolling your child in martial arts training classes doesn't always seem like a good one. While martial arts action films seem to be filled to the brim with violent behaviour and gory injuries, you may be surprised to learn that martial arts' training is actually very beneficial to kids. Like so many other things that Hollywood doesn't always get right, martial arts isn't quite the brutal, vicious pastime that it seems! In fact, these are 10 of the reasons why you may want to consider martial arts training for your kids.

- 1. Fostering Self-Discipline** – One of the central tenets of all forms of the martial arts is an absolute focus on self-discipline. Today's kids are so accustomed to receiving instant gratification that lessons in self-restraint and discipline aren't always easy to come by. Kids with a martial arts background, however, are continually reminded of how essential self-discipline is.
- 2. Boosting Social Skills** – Kids who don't always thrive in highly social environments may find it easier to get to know people and make new friends when they're in a room filled with peers who share a common interest. The children in the playground may not always have much common ground, but students of the martial arts are able to get to know one another through shared pursuits. Working with partner in class can also foster camaraderie, as they encourage children to help others and build their skills together.
- 3. Encouraging Physical Activity** – Limiting screen time is a great idea when it comes to getting kids off the couch and encouraging them to be more active, but it only goes so far. Enrolling an inactive child in such a physically demanding pastime not only discourages the sedentary lifestyle they're used to, but also gives her an enjoyable activity that inspires them to keep moving.
- 4. Learning to Set and Achieve Goals** – Most forms of martial arts are based around an accomplishment system of coloured belts that signify the wearer's degree of skill. When your child strives toward each new belt, he's learning valuable lessons about setting and reaching his goals.
- 5. Increased Self-Esteem** – Confidence comes with achievement, so your child's self-esteem level will get a boost with every new move he masters and every belt he earns. Kids who struggle with a low sense of self-worth usually become more confident as time progresses while they're enrolled in a martial arts class.

6. **Instilling a Sense of Respect** – Learning any martial arts style will require your child to show respect to her fellow students and to her instructor. Today's culture doesn't always include respect for authority, adults or those in advanced positions. When she goes to her martial arts class, though, your child will be learning lessons in respect along with new moves.
7. **Encouraging Non-Violent Conflict Resolution** – Thinking that martial arts instruction promotes violent behaviour is justified if your only experience with the activity comes from television or movies. In fact, many defensive styles teach kids peaceful, non-violent conflict resolution skills and emphasise the importance of avoiding a physical altercation. For example, our junior creed at the start of every class includes the phrase *"I will use common sense before self-defence, and never be abusive or offensive"*
8. **Improving Listening Skills** – In order to master the skills she's being taught and advance through the belt ranks, your child will have to exercise superior listening skills. Kids who aren't always adept when it comes to paying attention to what they're told can benefit from the verbal instruction and one-on-one work in the dojo.
9. **Developing Teamwork Skills** – Whether he's breaking boards to get a new belt or sparring in a practice setting to master a new manoeuvre, there are few things that your child does in his martial arts classes that will be done on his own. Working together to learn new things and accomplish goals is an important life lesson for kids to learn, and instruction in the martial arts can help your child learn that lesson.
10. **Improvement in Other Areas of Life** – The benefits of martial arts training don't end in the dojo. The boost in confidence, increased fitness level and new cooperation skills will also help your child navigate the academic and social aspects of school, affect his behaviour at home and have an all-around good influence on him as he develops into an adult.

If you have any concerns about encouraging violent tendencies or teaching your child to 'fight', it may be helpful to visit a school and watch a class for yourself. Speak with the instructors, students and other parents to get an idea of how things operate. At the Black Belt Academy, we welcome visitors at any time, and you're welcome to take a month of classes absolutely free as our guests.

More info at: <http://www.blackbeltacademy.info/30-days-free-membership/>

If you have any questions or you would like to discuss any aspect of the martial arts, please don't hesitate to give us a call on 01453 549460 or 07973 368304 at any time, or email us at enquiries@BlackBeltAcademy.info or via the website above.