

Putting it All Together

Now that we've got the muscles down and how they work together for kicking, the next step is setting up a training program that complements the muscles used. This article will focus on basic weight training terminology, and our philosophies regarding resistance training.

Sets, reps, pre-exhaustion, supersets, burns, retro-gravity reps? *ai carumba!*

Ever notice that the more complicated something is, the less fun it is? So let's keep it simple:

- Repetition - a complete cycle of an exercise. An example would be a barbell curl. This movement begins from a standing position, arms fully extended, and the hands grasping a barbell resting on the upper thighs. As the biceps are contracted, the bar is rotated upward to shoulder level, and after a short pause, the biceps muscles relax allowing the bar to return to the starting position. This is one repetition, or rep.
- Set - simply a group of repetitions, normally in the 5 -15 range depending on the goals of the weight lifter. As muscular endurance increases, the number of sets can also be increased.
- Routine - all of the exercises/reps/sets performed during a given training session. A sample beginner's Taekwondo routine might consist of a group of exercises performed by completing 1 set of 12-15 reps with as little rest between sets as possible.

An important aspect of a beginning routine is to focus on the major muscle groups. For example, if you are performing an overhead pressing movement, you are not only exercising your shoulders, you are also using your triceps, upper back, and upper chest muscles, in addition to your forearms which are used to grip the bar. This *compound movement* has the benefit of working multiple muscles at the same time.

As you gain experience, you'll begin to feel the effect various exercises have on specific

The Basic Program - set 1

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muscles. This is known as the *mind - muscle connection*, one of the most important benefits of resistance training.

A common mistake beginners make relates to repetitions. Although there are many schools of thought in this area, it's important to decide what your goals are, then choose the best strategy. In a previous article, we discussed the fact that for martial artists, developing muscular endurance and quick/explosive movements are the keys to improving your technique and performance. So for resistance training, we prefer a basic program that focuses on higher repetitions, shorter rest periods between sets, with an emphasis on exercises that duplicate Taekwondo kicking motions.

Another important aspect of resistance training is muscle confusion. If you came to Taekwondo class and practiced the same warm-up, stretches, kicking, etc. you would get bored pretty quickly. Your body will also adapt to doing the same workout, slowing your progress. Varying the routine keeps us interested, and also keeps your muscles on their toes. When we change things up, our muscles get confused, forcing them to recruit different muscle fibers and support muscles to get the job done. This helps keep our bodies learning and our minds interested in training.

Next: Basic Resistance Training Routines