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**Eight Fitness Tips For The Combat Realist**

**By Robert Bussey**

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Forget being the toughest guy on the planet. It's pretty easy for martial artists to adopt complacency and begin to rest on their laurels. Not you? Well, if the circumference of your waist is large enough to hide the knot of your black belt, this article may be for you. Even if you are in top condition, read on if you want to look lean and feel your best as a combat warrior. I'll make it real easy for you. I promise you won't have to execute ten thousand kicks or hold a sword over your head while standing on broken glass. Lets face it; you'll never stick to your work out plan if it reminds you of torture. So, instead, I'll give you eight simple instructions designed to maximize your combat performance while maintaining good health and longevity. I've managed to remain fit after three decades in the martial arts and you can do the same.

**Tip. #1**

Warm up with slow motion exercise and speed up gradually as you loosen up. This process has become more important as I've gotten older. Before and after an exercise session, you should perform a general stretch routine to help break up adhesions and feed the muscles with blood to help speed recovery. The combination of flexibility and strength together will make a significant difference in effecting your technical performance. As strength training builds muscle it limits the overall range of motion. Stretching can counter this effect by limbering up muscles as they become larger.

**Tip. #2**

It may be necessary to reshape your attitude and perspective. In our cravings for perfection, we sometimes place a heavy emphasis on rank, titles, or goals that don't necessarily relate to meaningful life-goals. Aim higher at achieving a sense of over-all health and self esteem in addition to competitive rigors. It's easy to avoid what is necessary to

## Eight Fitness Tips For The Combat Realist

take care of yourself and to take short cuts. Martial arts are a discipline, which should compliment your lifestyle of fitness and long life. Instead of rationalizing your un–healthy choices or using past accomplishments as an excuse for not making the effort, take responsibility for yourself. In other words, exercise accountability.

### Tip. #3

Martial arts are generally not the most efficient aerobic activity.

This is primarily because as you get better at it, you learn to pace yourself during the execution of moves.

Stacked against other aerobic exercises, martial arts activity scores low because the practitioner is usually not in constant motion. So, change that

by engaging in non–stop aerobic exercise for 30 minutes at least three times a week. Your heart will love you. To avoid boredom and gain maximum calorie burning, try to diversify your sessions every week or two. In violent conditions, normal breathing is altered which can adversely affect your performance. Good conditioning is not only beneficial for your physical well–being, but also reduces panic, distress, and anxiety.

### Tip. #4

I know it may be hard for all you young readers to believe, but in my day it was frowned upon by masters to combine weight training with martial arts. The 60's and 70's are behind us now and well–researched weight training has become an important tool for thousands of world–class athletes. Remember, exercise increases physical reserve. You may need to call upon that reserve in a life–threatening encounter. Conduct intense weight training exercises such as the barbell curl, tricep extension, bench press, etc., for 30 minutes to an hour, two or three times a week. Consider exercises that target the internal and external obliques such as torso twists and weighted crunches. It's these abdominal muscles that help you change direction quickly during grappling, increase kicking power, and help absorb the impact of a blow. When you lift weights, you tear myofibrils, the tiny sinews of tissue that make up the muscles. It takes a couple of days for muscles to repair themselves and it's during that period that you actually become stronger. You don't have to be a mad man when you work out, just remember to work furiously with little rest between exercises while conducting each move with precision and good technique. Gym's are great, but make sure to develop routines that provide a workout without specialized equipment so that you can remain fit when your on the road or can't make it to a facility. Push–ups, crunches, and chair dips are high on the list.

### Tip. #5

Every martial artist knows that practice makes perfect. Depending on your goals, the trick to performing well as a technician is to retain

## Eight Fitness Tips For The Combat Realist

worthwhile combat strategies via repetitive practice until they become natural instinctive reactions. In English; good technique + practice, practice, practice = skill. The benefits of being well rounded and active are going to contribute to your overall fitness but won't be enough to keep the fat off. It's true; physique does not make a good martial artist. That's why we see so many porky masters who are pretty tough. However, if you want peak performance you'll need to take off excess flab. Reducing weight is by far the easy phase in weight control. Eat less, exercise more, and wallah! However, maintaining ones target weight is the tough phase. This is achieved with a sustained life style program. Once this is established, you'll wonder what life was like without it. More muscle and less flab will translate into improved fighting prowess, a better instructor image, and a happier you.

### Tip #6

The accepted regimen these days is to eat a fist full of food, six times a day. That is, a chicken breast, yogurt, or whatever, in portions

about the size of that lethal knuckle sandwich of yours. For each body pound, consume approximately ten calories, one gram of protein, one gram of carbohydrates, and at least .6 oz of water. In all, you'll be eating six small meals that contain about 200 – 400 calories each depending on your weight and drinking lots of water (almost a gallon). Of course, restrict your fat intake and remember your multivitamin just in case your diet doesn't give you what you need. You may not feel any different taking a multivitamin but believe me; your body will make good use of it. I focus on taking my carbs in the morning when I need the energy. My protein is consumed after workouts, and I avoid eating late at night.

### Tip #7

Relaxation is the key to optimum performance in martial arts. Rest and work compliment each other. Do yourself and your body a favor and rest. You need the down time for peace of mind and your muscles need time to grow and recover between workouts.

### Tip #8

Work on yourself from the inside. Avoid addictions and general bad behavior. There are few things as ugly as a martial artist who lacks character. It wouldn't hurt for you to consider some personal introspection. In fact, being a better person can relieve stress and help you feel a whole lot better. Exercise can make a difference too. I believe that these primary influences will ease tension and stimulate creative thinking and overall alertness.

That's it. In time, you'll bump up your metabolism, burn fat, think

## Eight Fitness Tips For The Combat Realist

more clearly, build muscle mass, and perform better at your art. What more could you want? Well, okay, you have me there. But if you genuinely want to see some results, I encourage you to stick with these tips for a few weeks and make the improvements that I know you deserve.

Robert Bussey is one of America's pioneers of martial arts, Ninjutsu, and reality based personal protection. His lifelong commitment to his work has made a significant contribution to the stream of strategic practices throughout the world. He can be reached at: <http://www.busseystyle.com>

### **Setting Body Perfect Fitness Goals for the New Year**

**By Robert Adams**

#### **Setting Body Perfect Fitness Goals for the New Year by Robert Adams**

##### **Goal Setting 101**

All of our lives, we have many things we want to accomplish, but somehow, somehow, things just don't get done. That includes sticking with a lifestyle change that helps improve your overall fitness and health.

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Robert Adams holds an Associates Degree in Culinary Arts from the Culinary Institute of America, is a Certified Coach in Coaching for Personal Development as well Interaction Management, is a member of NESTA– National Endurance Sports Trainers Association, and lives a healthy lifestyle through his Body Perfect Fitness philosophy of healthy eating and fitness focus.

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