



## Lab A7-3 *Martial Arts Fitness Program*

In recent years, martial arts workouts such as cardio boxing, kickboxing, and Tae Bo have become a popular form of group exercise. If designed properly, such workouts have the potential to develop cardiorespiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility. Studies indicate that a 135-pound person can burn 350–450 calories during a typical workout.

### Choosing a Class and Instructor

To get the most out of your martial arts workout, find a class that is safe and suits your needs. Observe a class before you sign up, and evaluate it using the following checklist:

- | Yes   | No    |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | Are you free from balance and joint problems that could make the martial arts moves in the class difficult or unsafe for you?  |
| _____ | _____ | Is the class progressive, so that activities are adapted for people of varying fitness and skill levels?   |
| _____ | _____ | Are the participants in the class at a fitness and skill level similar to your own?  |
| _____ | _____ | Are appropriate warm-up, cool-down, and stretching periods included in the workout?  |
| _____ | _____ | Is the class small enough to ensure individual attention by the instructor as well as plenty of room to work out safely?   |
| _____ | _____ | Do the routines seem easy to follow—not too fast or too heavily choreographed?   |
| _____ | _____ | Are any periods of high-intensity exercise alternated with slower activities (to help prevent fatigue and injury-producing bad form)?                                  |
| _____ | _____ | Is the instructor certified by a nationally recognized organization, such as the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) or the American Council on Exercise (ACE)? |
| _____ | _____ | Does the instructor have training or experience in the forms of martial arts exercise included in the class?   |
| _____ | _____ | Does the instructor keep a close eye on the class and make appropriate modifications in the routines for participants of varying fitness levels?                       |
| _____ | _____ | Does the instructor clearly explain how to perform all the moves in a safe and effective manner?   |
| _____ | _____ | Is the emphasis of the class on developing health-related fitness components and successful stress management?   |
| _____ | _____ | Do you have appropriate clothing, shoes, and equipment for the activity you've chosen?<br>(List: _____)  |
| _____ | _____ | Does the class seem fun? Do you think you would enjoy it?  |

(over)

## LAB A7-3 (continued)

### Sample Martial Arts Workout

The following sample martial arts workout includes an appropriate warm-up and cool-down and activities to develop the health-related components of fitness.

COMPONENT/ TIME	DESCRIPTION
<b>Warm-Up</b> 6–8 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tai chi–inspired: breathing and balance focus</li><li>• Bob and weave moves to stimulate heart rate</li><li>• Standing stretches (legs and chest, shoulders)</li></ul>
<b>Conditioning</b> <b>Part 1</b> 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Box and weave</li><li>• Punching series: jabs and hooks</li><li>• Advance and retreat using punch combinations</li></ul>
<b>Part 2</b> 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kicking series: knee strike and front kick</li><li>• Punch and kick combinations</li><li>• Performance variation: punches and front kick with explosion jacks</li></ul>
<b>Part 3</b> 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Punching series: uppercuts and crosses</li><li>• Lateral slide using punch combinations</li><li>• Performance variation: alternate jogging in circle executing cross punches with lunge-switch jumps</li></ul>
<b>Part 4</b> 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kicking series: side kick and rear kick</li><li>• Kicking series with squat jumps and front kick</li><li>• Squats with rising blocks alternating hook</li></ul>
<b>Post-Conditioning</b> <b>Taper</b> 2–3 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bob and weave</li><li>• Slow, shallow squats with shoulder rolls</li></ul>
<b>Muscle Fitness</b> 6–8 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Abdominal/upper body strengthening</li></ul>
<b>Cool-Down</b> 5–6 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flexibility stretches and focused breathing</li></ul>

Source: Scharff Olson, M., and H. N. Williford. 1999. Martial arts exercise: A T.K.O. in studio fitness. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal* 3(6): 6–14.

### Practices to Be Avoided

For a safe workout, the following practices should be avoided:

- Fully extending or locking elbows, knees, or other joints when throwing punches or kicking
- Kicking beyond your normal range of motion (beginners should avoid high kicks)
- Kicking without pivoting the foot on which you are standing
- Wearing weights or holding dumbbells when kicking or throwing punches
- Performing many repetitions of a single move
- Attempting fast and/or complex combinations
- Exercising beyond your skill level or to fatigue
- Hitting a bag or sparring without appropriate instruction, equipment, and skill development
- Not warming up, cooling down, and stretching
- Not drinking enough fluids

Sources: Scharff Olson, M., and H. N. Williford. 1999. Martial arts exercise: A T.K.O. in studio fitness. *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal* 3(6): 6–14. American Council on Exercise. 2000. *Fit Facts: Kick Your Way to Fitness* ([http://www.acefitness.org/fitfacts/fitfacts\\_display.cfm?itemid=88](http://www.acefitness.org/fitfacts/fitfacts_display.cfm?itemid=88); retrieved April 27, 2000). HealthAtoZ Fitness Center. 2000. *Kickboxing: Getting a "Kick" Out of Your Aerobics Class—Safely* (<http://www.healthatoz.com/atoz/fitness/cardiocraze/kick.asp>; retrieved April 27, 2000).