

# Females in Taekwon-Do



**By Kirsten Livingstone II Dan**



# Introduction

It is a well-known fact that in the past, Martial Arts has been seen as a male dominated sport.

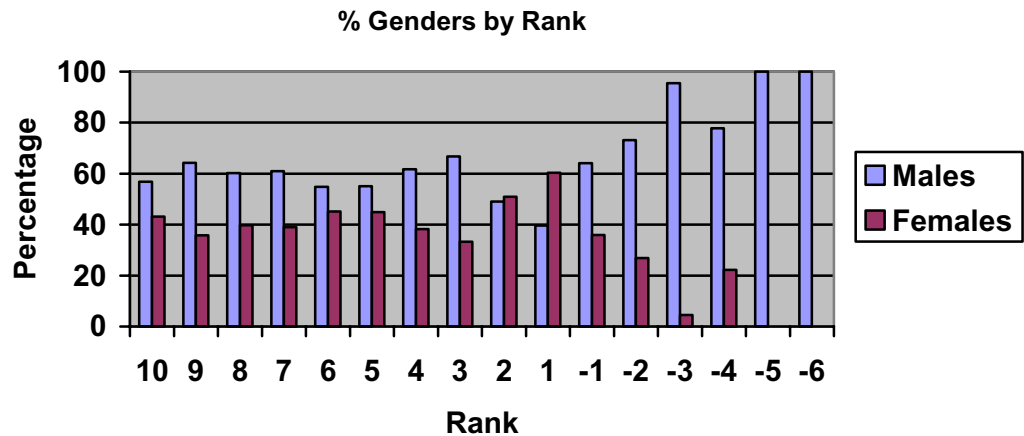
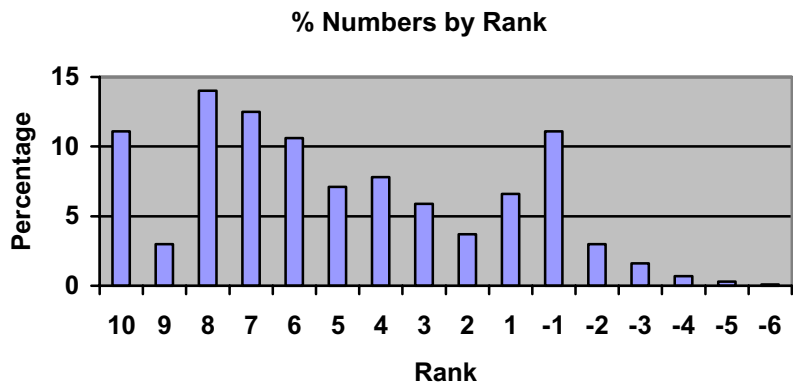
The slow integration of women in to all sports, specifically Martial Arts has made it more balanced.

Certainly Taekwon-Do (ITF/NZ in particular) have now got approximate statistics of 61% males vs. 39% females currently training.

**National Data (taken from ITF/NZ database statistics as from 14<sup>th</sup> March 2001).**

Our Total Membership is 1379, with 61% males and 39% females

Belt Rank	No's
10	153
9	42
8	206
7	172
6	146
5	98
4	107
3	81
2	51
1	91
-1	153
-2	41
-3	22
-4	9
-5	4
-6	2



For my thesis, I decided to do a questionnaire on Females in Taekwon-Do.

I wanted to find out such things as: Reasons for starting Taekwon-Do, what motivates them, goals etc.

Below is the questionnaire I sent out to all instructors via the Internet. I asked for the instructors to hand it out either via email (the student could reply via email), or photocopy the questionnaire for the student to post back to me.

I had a fairly good response, with some questionnaires being returned within a few days of being issued.

In my final analysis, I actually left out a few questions, as I didn't think they were all that pertinent.

## Female Females in Taekwon-Do

Dear female student. I am putting together a thesis about females in Taekwon-Do, and would appreciate it if you could spare some time to fill in this questionnaire.

Thank you for your time.

Kirsten Livingstone II Dan

Name: \_\_\_\_\_(optional)

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Belt rank: \_\_\_\_\_

- Time since started Taekwon-Do?
- Is your instructor: (please tick)  
Male   
Female
- Would you have felt more comfortable starting Taekwon-Do with a male or female instructor? Please explain.
- Have you always had the same instructor? Do you train with other instructors? If yes, please explain.
- How did you find out about the club you train at?  
Advert       Demonstration       Flyer   
Internet       Word of mouth       Other  (please explain)
- How often do you train?

- What was your main reason for starting Taekwon-Do?
- Do you prefer to train on your own or with others? (Outside the class situation)
- What motivation keeps you going?
- list 3 short term goals(i.e.: present to 1 year)
- List 3 long term goals (1 year onwards)
- Is there any person in Taekwon-Do whom you aspire to be like? (male or female)
- In order rate from 1 ñ 10 (1 being the most liked to 10 being the least liked).

Patterns	Step sparring
Sparring	Self defence
Destruction	Breakfalling
Pad work	Theory
Line work	Stretching

- Did you start Taekwon-Do with a friend or family member or on your own?
- What do you find physically the easiest to do?
- What do you find physically the hardest to do?
- Name your favourite aspects of Taekwon-Do. Reasons?
- Name your most disliked aspects of Taekwon-Do. Reasons?
- How do you get to training?

Walk	Get driven
Bike	Other (please explain
Drive	

- What personal advantages have you noticed since starting Taekwon-Do?
- Have you ever had to use your Taekwon-Do experience in a self-defence situation?
- Are there any areas of Taekwon-Do that you feel are unsafe?
- Do you wear chest protectors while sparring? If so, how do you feel about wearing them?

- Do you feel chest protectors should be made compulsory for tournaments?
- If there were chest protectors available, would you wear them?
- Do 'monthlies' interfere with your training? If so, how
- Are there any ways that you feel females are at a disadvantage in Taekwon-Do? Please explain.
- Are there any ways that you feel females are at an advantage in Taekwon-Do? Please explain. I would appreciate any comments you would like to add about being a female in the 'Art of Taekwon-Do'.

Please return this questionnaire either by email or by post as soon as possible. Close off date being April 1<sup>st</sup> 2001.

Please post to  
Kirsten Livingstone  
59B Seaview Road  
New Plymouth

Or email your return to [kirstone@xtra.co.nz](mailto:kirstone@xtra.co.nz)



## Age and belt rank of respondents

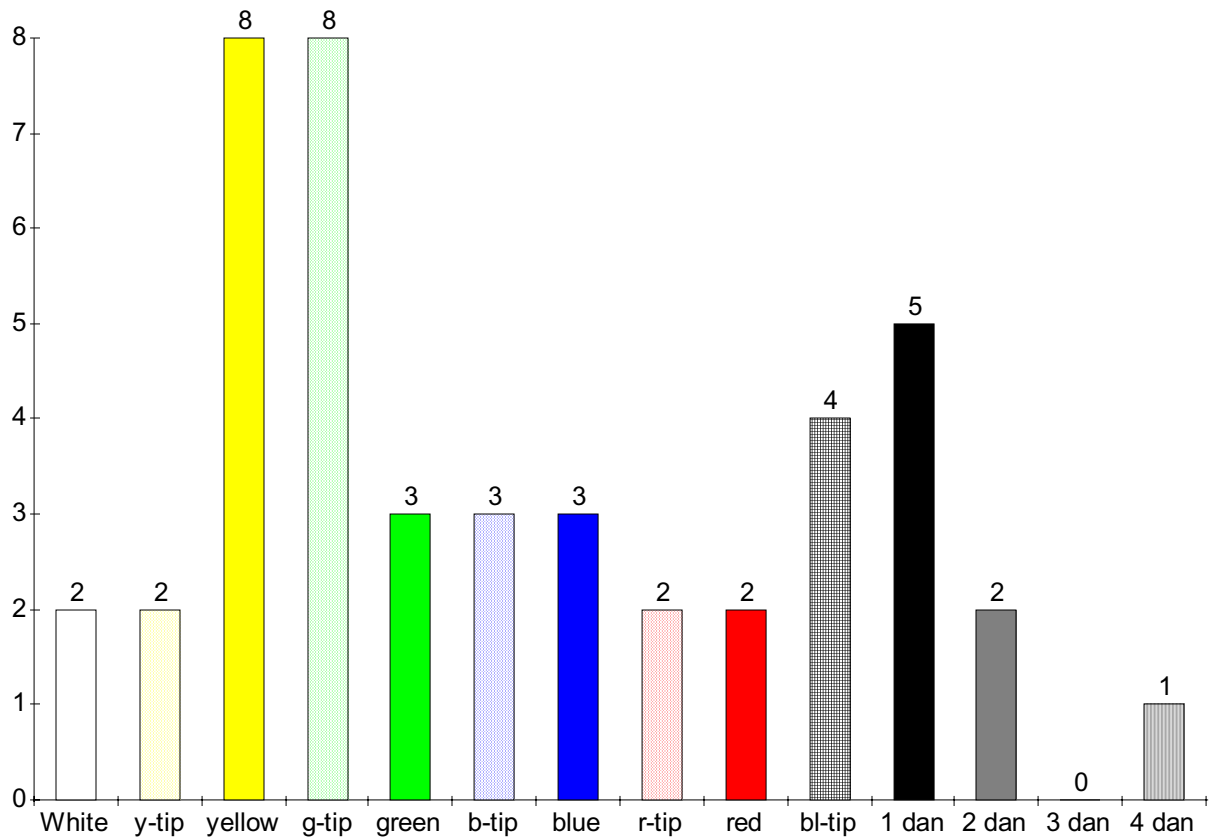
### AGE      BELT RANK



3 years

10	White belt (10 <sup>th</sup> gup)
15	Green belt (6 <sup>th</sup> gup)
12	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)
25	Black tip (1 <sup>st</sup> gup)
23	Red belt (2 <sup>nd</sup> gup)
33	Green tip (7 <sup>th</sup> gup)
31	2 <sup>nd</sup> Dan
12	Green tip (7 <sup>th</sup> gup)
33	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)
21	1 <sup>st</sup> Dan
33	4 <sup>th</sup> Dan
10	Yellow tip (9 <sup>th</sup> gup)
21	White belt (10 <sup>th</sup> gup)
21	Blue tip (5 <sup>th</sup> gup)
25	1 <sup>st</sup> Dan
8	Green tip (7 <sup>th</sup> gup)
11	Green tip 97 <sup>th</sup> gup)
43	1 <sup>st</sup> Dan
28	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)
15	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)
21	Blue tip (5 <sup>th</sup> gup)
16	Blue belt (4 <sup>th</sup> gup)
35+	Red tip (3 <sup>rd</sup> gup)
14	Green tip (7 <sup>th</sup> gup)
15	White belt (10 <sup>th</sup> gup)
15	Green tip (7 <sup>th</sup> gup)
27	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)
31	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)
12	Yellow tip (9 <sup>th</sup> gup)
16	Blue tip (5 <sup>th</sup> gup)
15	Red tip (3 <sup>rd</sup> gup)
29	Red tip (3 <sup>rd</sup> gup)
16	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)
24	1 <sup>st</sup> Dan
52	Black tip (1 <sup>ST</sup> gup)
37	2 <sup>nd</sup> Dan
34	Green belt
39	Black tip (1 <sup>st</sup> gup)
16	Red belt (2 <sup>nd</sup> gup)
24	Blue belt (4 <sup>th</sup> gup)
15	Black tip (1 <sup>st</sup> gup)
57	Green tip (7 <sup>th</sup> gup)
39	1 <sup>st</sup> Dan
16	Blue belt (4 <sup>th</sup> gup)
14	Green tip (7 <sup>th</sup> gup)
15	Green belt (6 <sup>th</sup> gup)
16	Yellow belt (8 <sup>th</sup> gup)

Jaime Livingstone -



Graph = how many from each rank replied

I found it interesting that I received the majority of replies from the yellow belt/green tips. I was also pleasantly surprised by the number of black tips/ and black belts. Of course I would have liked a lot more, especially from those who instruct.

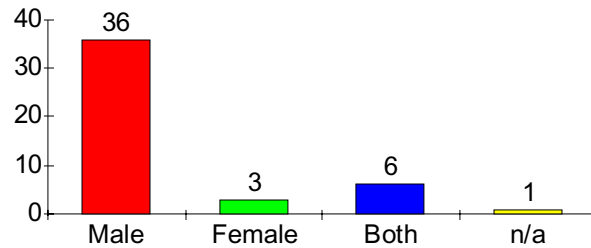
I think a fairly good average from most ranks was represented.

Roshni Patel



Melody Schweiger

## Is your instructor male or female?



(The 3 females were my students before I amalgamated with Mr Livingstone's club ñ those that have indicated both, now train with both Mr Livingstone and myself)

## Would have you felt more comfortable starting Taekwon-Do with a male or female instructor? Please explain.

Out of the 47 responses. I only had two replies that said outright that they would have preferred a female instructor. These people actually knew me personally and are young girls. The other replies said either male or female as long as they were getting taught what they need to know, but generally associated Martial Arts with males.

I have included some of the comments from this question.

- My expectations were such that a male instructor seemed logical. I associated Martial Arts largely with males.
- Did not matter to me. Only mattered if I liked the instructor and what they had to offer in the way of what I wanted.
- It doesn't bother me, but I would probably choose a female.
- To date I have had male instructors. I have no special preference although it is good to see females in an instructor role. We can do it too.
- Male. I wouldn't be completely sure a female knew what they were on about.
- Character matters more than gender.
- Possibly a female instructor but I may have pushed myself harder being a mostly male club (not show so much weakness).
- As I had no idea what to expect, it wasn't an issue with me.
- The sex of the instructor was not important but their manner and way of dealing with older unfit students was.
- I would have done. There were very few women let alone female instructors when I started. There were no "female" perspectives to speak.

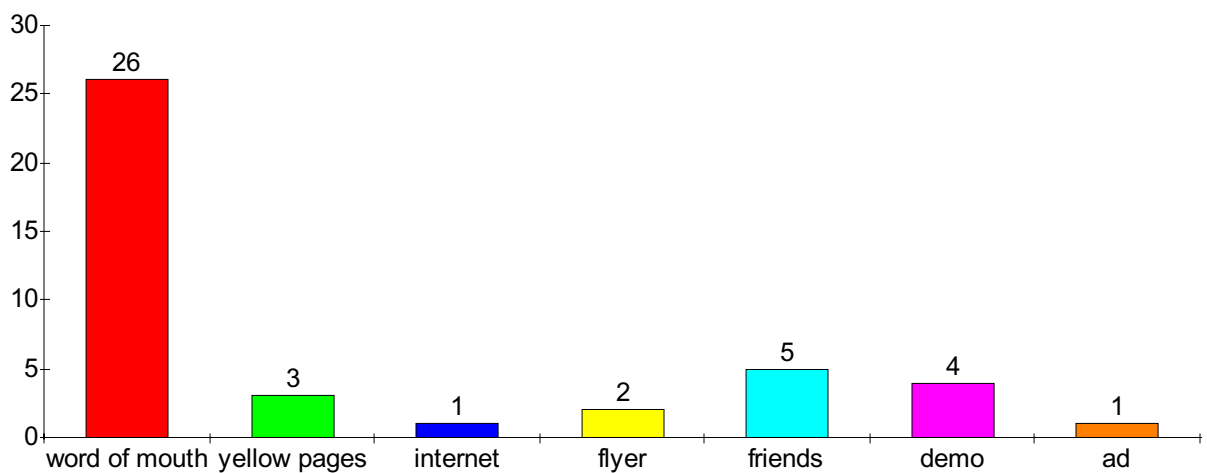


## How did you find out about the club that you train at?

I was quite amazed to see that the main response to this question was that people found out about their club via 'word of mouth'.

All the advertising, flyers, even TV and radio commercials we have done in the past is nowhere near as effective as 'spreading the word'.

Obviously there were people who had found out about clubs via these other ways, so really it is essential that we cover all bases when it comes to advertising.



As an Instructor, and realising that 'word of mouth' is the best way to advertise, we have introduced an 'introduce a friend' scheme.

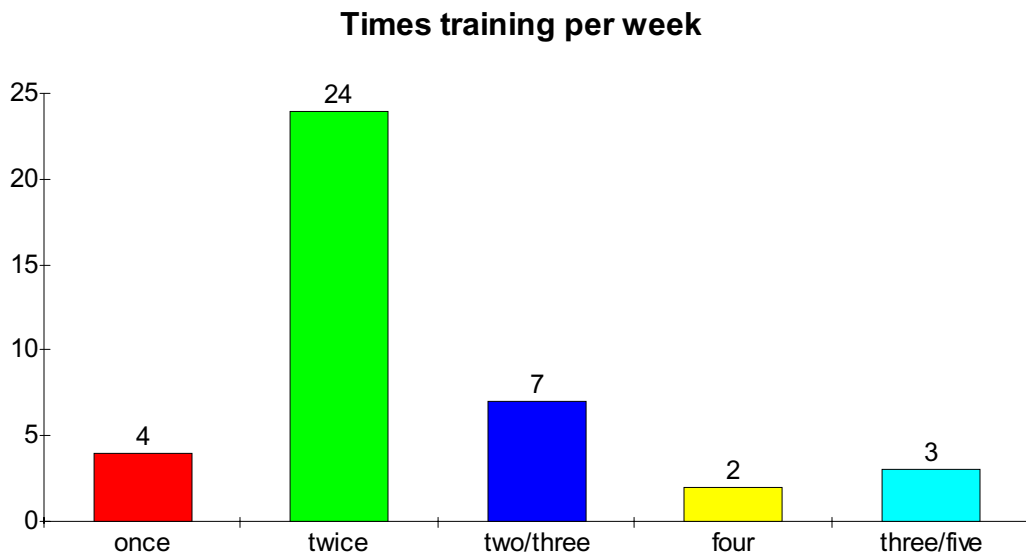
If you bring a friend or family member along to train, and they join, you shall receive one month's free fees.

We have found this very successful in the past. It gets the student enthusiastic about bringing someone along, and trying to keep him or her to stay.

We have done a demonstration at the Multi Ethnic Extravaganza in front of approximately three thousand people. Coincidence or not, we received many enquiries and beginners starting the following week. We have done demonstrations at schools and get plenty of enquiries, but none that actually come along or join up. It's a hard thing to gauge.

I guess the main thing is exposure. As long as we are putting ourselves out there, the public knows who we are, and when they are ready, will come to us.

## How often do you train?



Some people who replied to this question mentioned that they would like to train more if they had more time.

Students often said they trained more during the school holidays.

Training doesn't necessarily mean getting out there and doing your patterns etc. It could mean reading the encyclopaedia, checking out the Taekwon-Do web sites and perhaps going for a run.

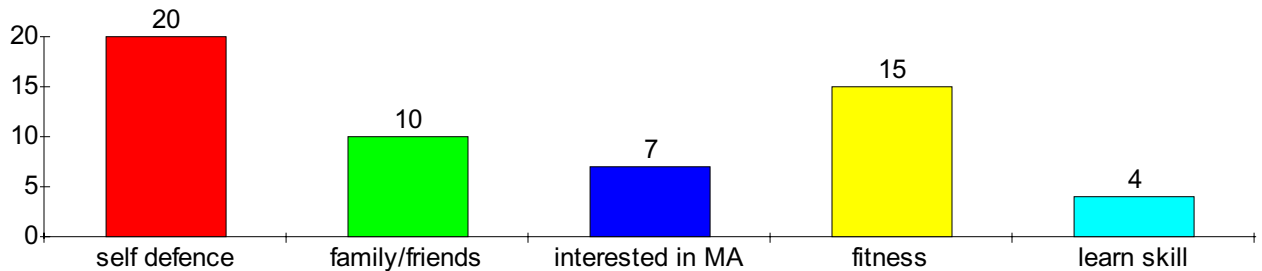


# Reasons for starting Taekwon-Do

Self defence = 20  
Recreation / physical activity = 2  
Fitness = 15  
Enjoyment = 1  
Challenge = 3  
Friends/family doing it = 10  
Self confidence = 3  
Time out = 1  
Discipline = 3  
Flexibility = 2  
Learn skill = 4

Interested in Martial Arts = 7  
Strength = 1  
Stress buster/ channel aggression = 2  
Self control = 1  
Co-ordination = 1  
Associate with other people = 1  
Husband/Mum made me (talked me into it) = 2

## Main reasons for starting Taekwon-Do



### Comments:

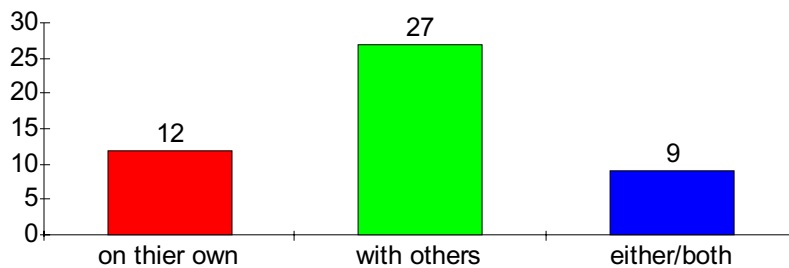
- To learn self-defence. So I can defend myself when need to, or just to have it as another skill to have.
- My children had joined and I used to sit and watch them. So I decided to try it for fitness and I liked the general look of it.
- We did Karate but didn't like the way it was. We saw a demo and thought 'that's for us'.
- Fitness, co-ordination, seemed interesting and worth while.
- I have always wanted to learn a martial art mainly for the self-defence but also to help build self discipline and self-confidence.
- For physical activity and as a stress buster.
- I saw a movie on TV about karate and I thought it would be fun to learn a skill so my dad found a club for me.

I personally started Taekwon-Do because I went with my boyfriend (now husband), who instructed his club of 3 students at the time, to it's 1<sup>st</sup> kup grading. I thought it looked very achievable. I guess I held martial arts in awe previously, and to think it was something I could actually do excited me.

Previous to this I had played representative soccer for my region for 13 years, so it was time for a change. I found Taekwon-Do was something that if you put the effort in, you usually got results.

For me self-defence and fitness weren't a priority if I even thought about that at all, it was the learning of a new skill.

## Do you prefer to train on your own or with others?



Generally those who replied that they prefer to train with others, did so for the main reason of motivation.

Also when they wanting critiquing or needed partners for step sparring etc.

Those who replied that they train by themselves did do as they can accomplish more without distractions.

Those who said either or, prefer to do some things i.e.: patterns on there own and certain others within a group situation.

### Comments:

- I usually prefer to train alone unless I need some 'critical' advice or a partner e.g. for 1 step
- Both, depending whom the person is and what I am practising.
- Definitely with others as it keeps me motivated.
- With others if I can. It's more motivating and you don't quit so easily when you get tired.
- I prefer to train on my own so I can concentrate but if I train with someone I could learn something, so I don't mind.
- With others, especially who are better than me or heading towards a similar goal. Keeps me focused, motivated and forces me to push myself, especially where my self discipline is not that great.
- On my own
- Depends on mood, but 99.9% of the time it's with others.

- I do both, but prefer input from others.

## What motivation keeps you going?

Enjoyment in class/fun x 12  
 Striving for next goal/grading x 12  
 Self confidence x 1  
 Social contact x 6  
 Defend myself x 2  
 Instructor relying on them x 1  
 Learning new patterns x 1  
 The challenge x 1  
 Fitness/self control/self defence x 6  
 Self improvement (learn/teach more) x 3  
 Love of the art x 2  
 Instructor/friends/family x 5  
 Time out x 1  
 Seeing skills that others have x 1  
 Health x 1  
 Lack of anything else to do x 1  
 Good question! X 1  
 Ambition x 1  
 The threats my Mum gives me x 1  
 Stubborn. I like to finish what I start. X1



**Chloe Arbuckle ñ red belt**

### Comments:

- The fitness aspect and self-control. I enjoy the challenge of a new technique or pattern etc.
- To reach a goal I've set for myself, to prove that I am capable of achieving what I want and also encouragement and praise.
- I enjoy the work out and my son has just started.
- The thought that one day I will be able to perform the techniques gracefully and with skill. I'd like to put together a whole lot of jumping kicks that look impressive.

It's interesting to see that enjoyment/fun seems to be just important to people as striving for their next goal. I guess if you are not having much fun or enjoyment in class, you are not very motivated.

From an instructor's point of view, it is always challenging to find new ways to teach the same things. Repetitiveness has its benefits, but it also has drawbacks such as boredom and lack of motivation.

We try to make classes as varied as possible. Of course there is the syllabus which takes the most importance when it comes to gradings, but trying to keep our students and of course ourselves motivated is one of the biggest challenges for me.

We try to get students to as many other events as possible. Helps generate interest too. Ever noticed that if the instructor doesn't attend many events, their students don't either. It seems the motivation of the instructor rubs off on the students.

## List 3 short-term goals.

- Reach black belt or higher x 8
- Go to Nationals/Regionals x 7
- Get fitter x 14
- Learn/improve techniques i.e. flying x 24
- Get A pass next grading x 5
- Grade/ get next belt x 25
- Learn/improve Korean theory x 3
- Have students do well at gradings x 2
- Improve flexibility x 3
- Best instructor/assistant that I can be x 3
- Improve health/lose weight x 3
- Be international instructor x 1
- Get CNZ1 certificate x 1
- Improve board breaking i.e. 3 boards with turning kick x 2
- Get stronger (legs, ankles) x 3
- Work harder/attend more classes/listen better x 3
- Enjoyment/best as I can be x 2
- Look good/ earn recognition x 2
- Practise at home/stick to training schedule x 3



**Anita Schweiger ñ black tip**

The majority of people wanted to grade to the next belt level and also keep learning or improving on all techniques, especially flying kicks.

To improve fitness was also high on the list, but in general, I noticed people just want to 'self improve' in whatever area it may be.

From an instructor's point of view, the three main short-term goals I would want for my students would be:

- 1) to fully understand their current grade in the syllabus (and below of course)
- 2) train regularly and hard (at class and at home)
- 3) To pass their gradings as well as they possibly can.

## List 3 long term goals

- Compete at World Champs/Olympics/be world class x 6
- Improve Taekwon-Do x 6
- Go to Nationals/Regionals (achieve titles) x 7
- To instruct/assistant instruct x 2
- Have own club x 2
- Keep training/ grading /get next belt x 10
- Get black belt or higher x 25
- Get A passes x 2
- Be more involved in ITFNZ/ at Regional level x 2
- Get students to World Champs/Black Belt x 2
- Maintain or increase fitness x 5
- Support children as they go through Taekwon-Do x 2
- Become a female "Master" x 1
- Coach a national women's team x 1
- Better stretching x 1
- Continue to observe the tenets of Taekwon-Do x 1
- More Taekwon-Do knowledge x 2
- Improve destructions x 1
- Keep enjoying Taekwon-Do x 3
- Build self confidence/esteem x 2
- Self defence knowledge/defend myself x 2
- Inspire/help others x 2
- Be healthy/lose weight x 2
- Keep club alive, well and growing x 1
- Learn another Martial Art x 1



Mrs Lena Walton III Dan

I was pleased to see that the majority of replies saw that achieving their black belt or higher was their main long-term goal. I think it is vital to keep getting black belts coming through. Even though it is not an easy grading, it's obvious that people think it's achievable and within their grasp.

Grading and to keep training in general were the two highest listed.

From my point of view the three long-term goals for my students would be:

- 1) To have them reach black belt or higher.
- 2) To have a commitment to TKD (open their own club)
- 3) Represent New Zealand at the World Champs.

Is there any person in Taekwon-Do whom you aspire to be like?

- No = 16
- Mrs Master Sereff (USTKD) ñ great self defence x 1
- Neill Livingstone ñ (very skilled) x 1
- Rachael Younger ñ (kicks butt, commitment) x 2
- Mr Paul McPhail (passion, and precision of techniques, knowledge) x 4
- Mr Travis (for down to earth teaching style) x 1
- Kirsten Livingstone (Only female Black Belt Iíve seen) x 1
- Mr Maheesh Bhana (so talented yet so humble) x 1
- Anita Schweiger x 1
- All female senior members x 1
- Mr Graham Patterson (makes everything look so easy) x 1
- Nicki Mantjika x 1
- Alisha Oldridge (awesome stretch ñ is a blue stripe) x 1
- Shane Taepa (personality, humble) x 2
- Jeanette Joe x 1
- Mr James Rimmer x 1
- Ashley King x 2
- John Hare x 2
- Timm Lynn x 2
- Jake Pearson x 1
- Mr Andrew Salton x 3
- Murray Smith x 1
- Master Leong (inspired by) x 1



**Master Renee Sereff ñ 7<sup>th</sup> Dan- USTF**

I found it unusual and strangely disconcerting that 16 of the respondents had no one who they aspired to be like.

I think it is an important part of self-improvement, to have a role model or someone whom you want to be like.

I remember an instance when I was a green belt at a national camp, and seeing Ms Younger whom was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan at that stage. I can actually remember talking to her and saying to her, I'm going to be just like you (and here I am going for my 3<sup>rd</sup> Dan).

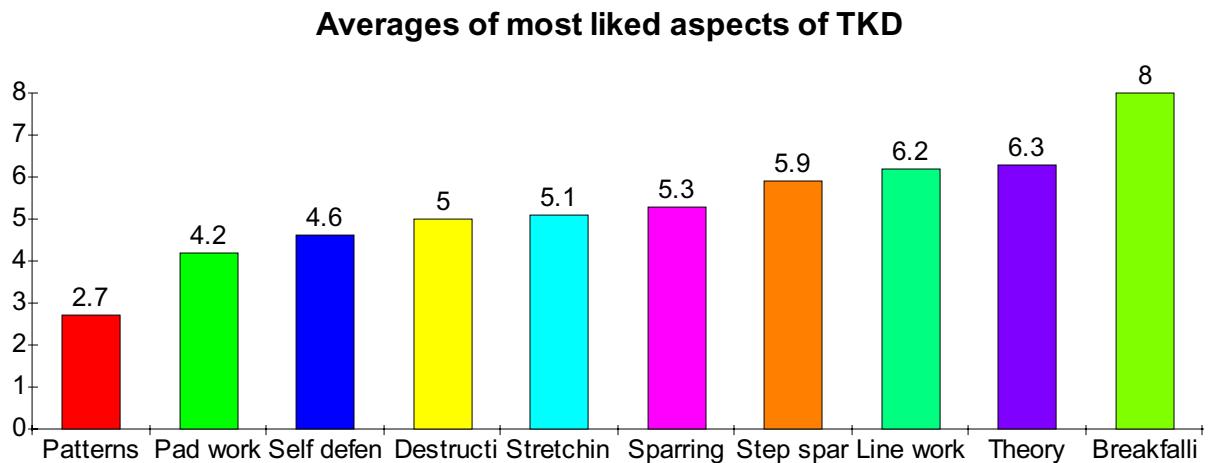
Perhaps the students are not being exposed to those who excel in Taekwon-Do (the young ones any way).



The majority of responses aspired to be like people whom they actually knew personally (trained at the same club, or was their instructor etc.). This is great, but maybe more exposure is needed?

Perhaps seminars (not just in the main centres), from those who go to World Champs, Senior Dans doing classes etc.

In order rate from 1-10  
(1 being the most like to 10 being the least liked)



Patterns

1,2,4,1,1,2,1,1,1,1,3,5,1,3,2,1,1,3,5,1,6,2,8,1,1,6,7,9,3,5,1,3,1,1,6,3,2,3,3,4,4,2,1,1,1,1

Sparring

10,4,3,7,n/a,4,6,2,7,6,10,9,3,2,9,7,8,5,6,6,3,1,5,10,8,10,1,6,1,9,2,6,7,8,4,1,1,1,2,1,5,8,9,10,3,9,

Destruction

8,3,9,2,n/a,1,6,n/a,10,7,6,7,4,1,6,10,6,1,4,8,1,8,1,7,3,3,3,3,2,7,9,3,4,7,8,3,4,4,4,2,10,5,7,2,7,4,

Pad work

3,1,2,3,4,7,4,4,2,3,4,2,8,4,7,2,3,2,3,3,2,5,7,1,7,7,4,8,4,8,10,4,6,6,5,4,2,3,5,5,2,2,6,4,4,3

Line work

5,9,1,5,?,9,3,n/a,3,n/a,7,6,7,5,8,3,2,4,8,9,?,10,8,4,n/a,6,10,10,8,2,8,9,5,9,2,8,5,7,6,8,3,9,4,6,9,7,

Stepsparring

9,5,6,6,6,5,3,n/a,8,3,1,8,2,9,4,6,9,10,2,10,5,7,6,6,6,8,7,5,10,5,3,2,9,2,7,9,8,6,10,9,7,3,5,3,2,6,

Self defence

6,8,5,8,2,3,2,6,5,2,2,1,5,8,1,8,4,8,4,8,1,5,4,3,2,2,2,5,2,2,6,4,1,5,7,10,3,6,2,6,8,7,6,1,10,3,8,5,5,

Breakfalling

7,10,10,9,n/a,10,5,n/a,9,8,5,10,6,10,10,9,10,9,10,9,10,2,10,4,10,9,n/a,n/a,9,3,n/a,7,7,8,10,9,7,9,9,7,8,n/a,6,10,9,10,10,

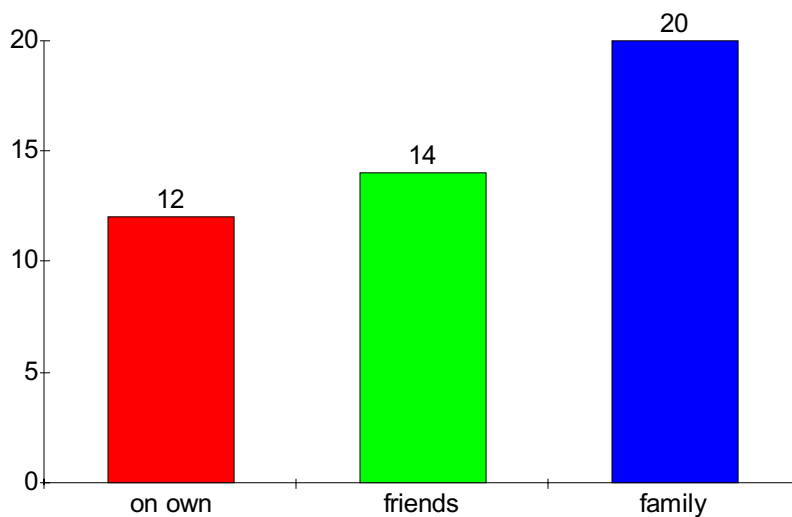
### Theory

2,6,8,10,5,8,4,5,4,5,8,4,9,6,3,5,7,7,9,4,8,9,9,5,5,2,8,4,7,6,6,10,1,5,10,5,7,10,9,10,8,7,2,5,8,8,

### Stretching

4,7,7,4,3,6,2,3,6,4,9,3,10,7,5,4,5,6,7,7,7,6,4,3,4,4,5,9,5,1,4,8,2,4,3,10,10,5,1,4,5,1,8,7,6,2

## Did you start Taekwon-Do with a friend or family member or on your own?



### Comments:

- I started with 2 friends, my mum and brother
- 1st child had started already, 2<sup>nd</sup> child and I started together
- With my 2 teenage children
- With my younger sister
- With a friend
- Friend from work said she was keen, so that really did it for me. (I had been thinking about it a month prior).
- Started myself, but my boyfriend had already been doing it.
- My brother is the instructor and had wanted me to train for years
- With a friend who was a 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan, but other wise going through the ranks by myself
- On my own, but then my dad started
- I was the last family member to start

I was surprised that so many people started Taekwon-Do with family members. In my experience, there has been many instances where parents have come to watch their kids at

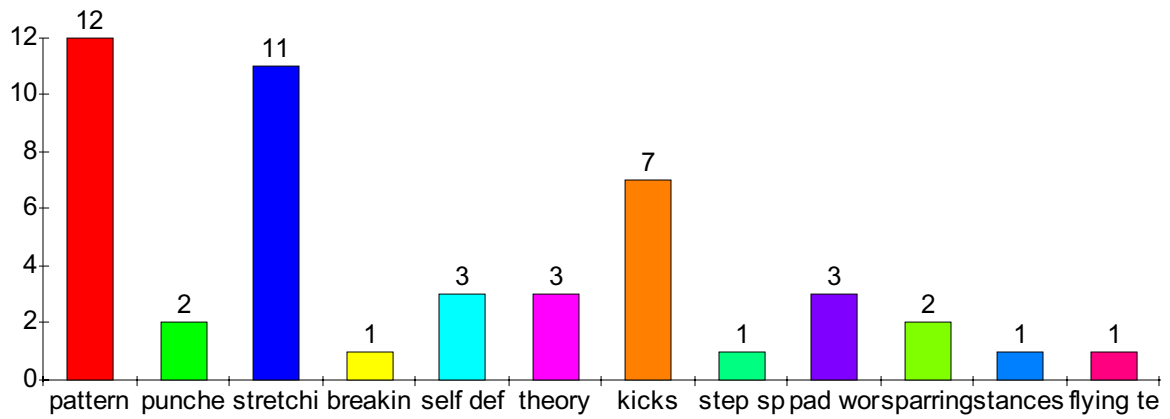
training, and thought 'I can do that too !!!'. I know of a young black belt who's dad watched him go from white to black before he decided that he wanted to do it too. He's now kicking himself for not starting 5 years ago.

I also know of an instance where 2 girls in one family did fantastically well at the Regionals.

Their other 2 sisters came to watch and since have joined Taekwon-Do.

Taekwon-Do is very family oriented as it caters for young/old, male/female and it's one of the few physical activities that the whole family can participate in.

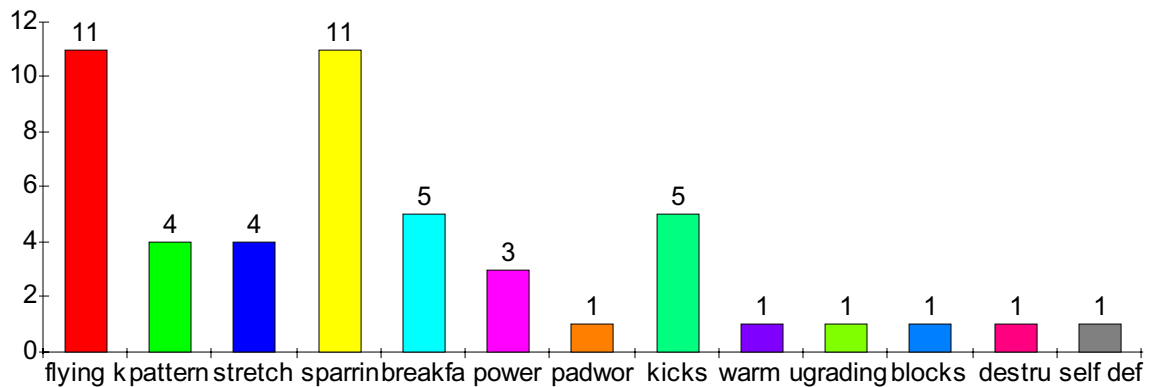
## What do you find physically easiest to do?



It's interesting to see how the 'most liked' aspect of TKD is also 'the easiest to do'. Patterns flow, introduce rhythm, technique etc. I guess it's what you could call the 'spiritual' side to Taekwon-Do. Stretching doesn't involve a 'cardio' workout as such, but still requires a certain amount of fitness and flexibility to do it well, but still rates high in the graph. (It may be interesting to compare this graph to a male survey?)

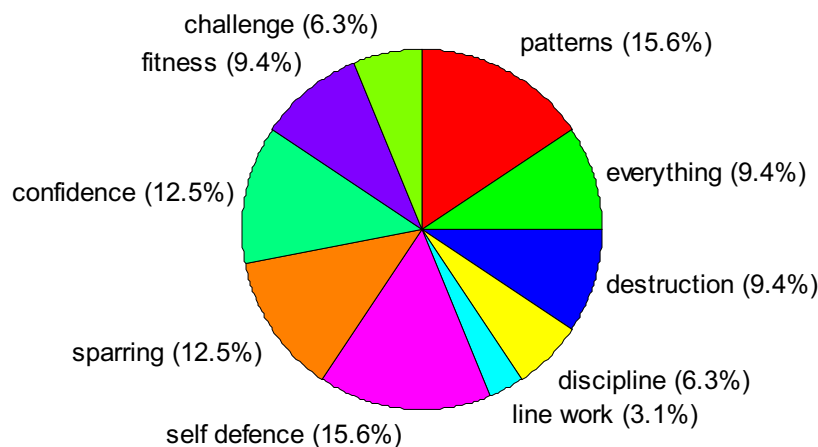
Kicks seem to be in the middle range of easy to do/hard to do.

## What do you find physically hardest to do?



I found it unusual how sparring was high in the 'hardest to do' category as most people view Martial Arts as fighting, and expect to do it. Perhaps it is the intimidation of males or senior belts? Lack of technique or confidence that makes it a difficult area. Flying kicks is also high on the graph. Most females I know of just don't like doing them. It's physically harder to get our bodies off the ground due to our lower centre of gravity and less muscle mass and bulk than males.

## Name your favourite aspects of Taekwon-Do?



There were so many different 'favourite aspects', so I listed just the main ones in the graph. Comments:

- Destruction, because it's fun breaking boards
- The real showy demonstration techniques, kicks, philosophies, sparring, patterns
- Patterns. It's the symmetry, the balance, technique etc. I guess patterns can be viewed as the spiritual side of Taekwon-Do as you need to be centered to do a pattern really well.
- Everything, it's great!
- Self-defence, I like to be in control.

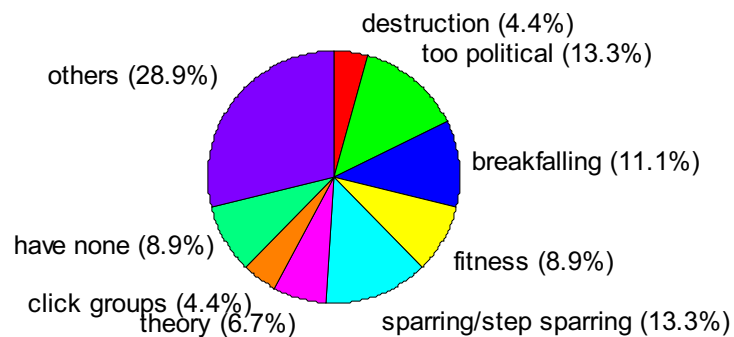
- Patterns! I just love doing em! Line work is very good too, and pad work, but we never do enough.
- Everything about Taekwon-Do. The people for inspiration and support. I am probably bias but I think it is one of the best arts.
- The tenets of Taekwon-Do because I believe in them. TKD is self-discipline and respect for others and ourselves. Whether male or female. I work in a feminist and pro-woman, woman empowering environment (midwifery), so having men as seniors and instructors has been very humbling for me.
- The feeling of being a part of something that's a group and individual thing and it being a lot of fun. Being encouraged to try things the best that I can, builds confidence.
- Learning new techniques i.e. pattern movements, self defence moves etc. It feels good doing something new and powerful.

I would just like to mention my personal favourite aspects of Taekwon-Do. The fact that it is such a scientific martial art. That techniques usually have only one correct way of doing things. It makes it easier to learn and teach this being the case.

I would have to say patterns are my favourite area. As mentioned by one of the replies, it's the symmetry, balance, flow etc. It's amazing how much power you can generate if patterns are done with all these facets.

Pad work is also a favourite as it puts our techniques into practise, with a good work out as well. Nothing better than being exhausted after smashing pads.

## Name your most disliked aspects of Taekwon-Do?



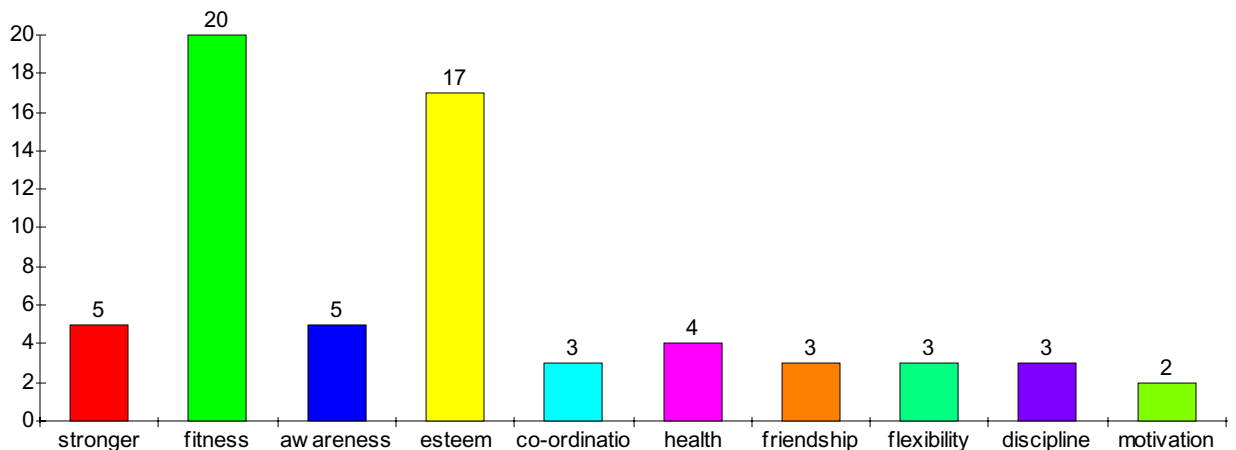
### Comments:

- Doing things over and over again. It's gets boring especially doing things with younger belts.
- All the 'behind the scenes' politics (that goes with the running of any organisation I suppose).
- Grading. Always nerve racking. To be tested by a panel of men and in front of a room full of people. I will get over it.
- One-step ñ boring. Destruction's, cos I'm useless at them and it's embarrassing as I'm a Black belt.
- I don't have any.

- The politics, double gradings ñ we should respect each step, the 2-page curriculum/grade. Learn those 2 pages and grade. There is soooo much more not being taught.
- Besides those lovely breakfalls, Iím not keen on sparring. At times it can be incredibly dangerous and out of control. I donít mind getting hit, but there is a difference between controlled and uncontrolled sparring.
- Iíve met some awful people!! Trainers who have caused me injury ñ e.g. Cracked ribs by what I consider ñ inappropriateî training for my sex, size and age.
- Politics ñ too much of it. Weíre here to do TKD folks! Cocky junior males who pick on juniors and only think theyíre there to beat everyone up.
- Nothing really. Maybe knuckle push-ups, as I canít do them.
- I think it can become very political at times within our organisation and this does impact on the students from the attitudes in training to turn outs at events. With all honesty, I believe there is a lot of ñ click groupsî and if you are not in the right crowd, no matter how much hard work you put in, it may not be noticed.
- Breakfalling. Because itís not taught enough I end up hurting myself and I feel like an idiot doing something that I have no clue about.
- It is hard to keep motivated all year, every year.

My most disliked aspect of Taekwon-Do is the ñpoliticsí. Letís just get in there and do Taekwon-Do. I also really disagree with the heavy contact that goes on with sparring at tournaments. Itís meant to be ñtouch!î contact. (All part of the tenet ñself controlí.)

## Personal advantages since starting TKD



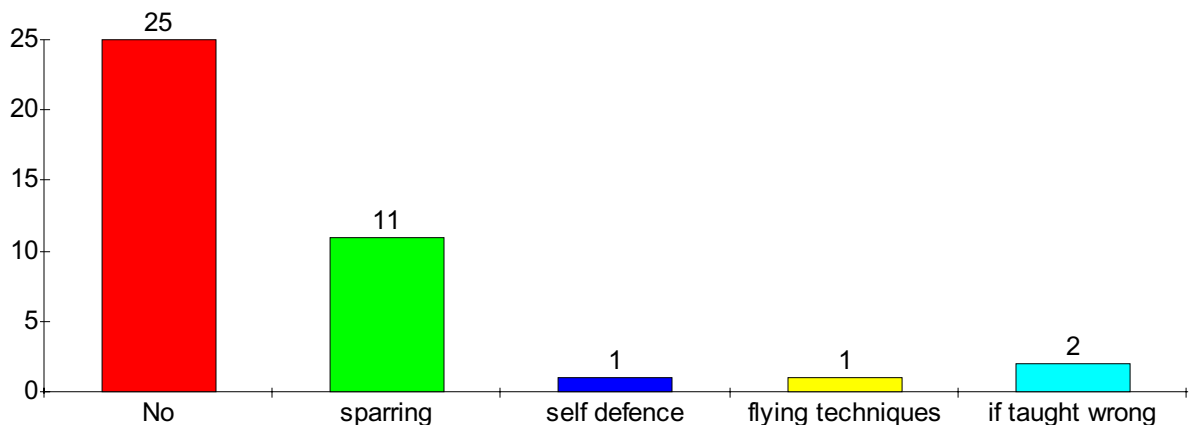
### Comments:

- Increased fitness, more friendships, increased self-confidence walking through town at night.
- Improved co-ordination, self-confidence, and ability to speak to groups of strangers.
- Better self control. I donít get uptight over things now. I try to remain calm about things instead of reacting negatively. I try and stick to the tenets, which has all had advantages to me.

- Flexibility, more confident, met great people too.
- Learnt that not just men can be strong ñ ladies can be too.
- I have better left/right balance.
- Loss of weight, gain muscle mass.
- More motivation outside Taekwon-Do. Iím actually fitter. I can actually jog now without dying.
- Itís been the first physically demanding outside interest Iíve had since I left school, so regaining my fitness ability has been huge.
- Fitness increased. I can start the lawn mower myself now.
- Physically I feel great, more energy and ěrun instead of walkí. I am more alert of my surroundings, people, morale and judgement is a factor in my life.
- I have more confidence and self esteem outside TKD. I am mentally more disciplined and depending on how hard I train, can be very fit.

I guess the main advantage since starting Taekwon-Do is self-confidence. There is no way that I could ever have spoken in front of a group of people 10 years ago, let alone get up in front of a class and demonstrate Taekwon-Do. I guess itís the confidence of knowing what Iím doing. Also the fact that I feel safer in general, knowing that I know a bit of self-defence. I take comfort that if any one attacks me that I will give them a hell of a run for their money.

## Any areas of TKD where you feel unsafe?



### Comments:

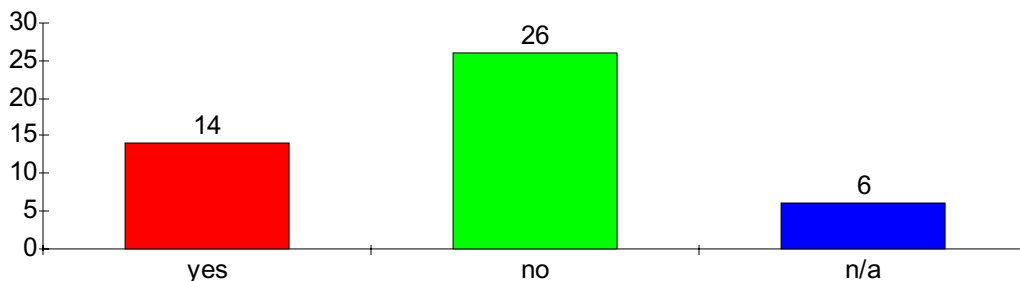
- When sparring against aggressive men.
- No, because safety is always an issue and enforced and people are given the choice whether they want to do something or not.
- Not really. I have seen instances where a higher grade is teaching a lower grade without supervision and when it comes to destruction, this can be dangerous if taught incorrectly.
- Flying techniques. I fall and hurt knees etc.
- Anything is unsafe if taught incorrectly.
- The teaching of self-defence as motions without the practise with a big guy grabbing you to see how it really works.

- Sometimes I think tournament sparring gets out of hand.
- Sometimes sparring ñ when we don't have all the pads on.
- Yes, sparring and destruction with an unqualified instructor.
- While I think that ñmachi trainers are appropriate in some circumstances, I feel that I have to be a bit wary.
- At times I feel sparring is unsafe. Depending on who is in control at the time in club, it can be quite dangerous.

It was quite good to see that most people thought there were no areas of Taekwon-Do where they felt unsafe, however, the majority of those were junior belts, who hadn't experienced sparring or breakfalling yet.

I must agree with some of the comments about free sparring sometimes being dangerous. I think we really have to clamp down on the contact at some tournaments. Being the instructor of 3 students who were badly hurt at the last nationals, I was quite disgusted by the contact being allowed. One had a ruptured nose, (couldn't compete in the final due to such bad bleeding and swelling), one had a fractured rib, and the other took several very heavy blows to the head and chest area. If it were not for the chest protector she was wearing, I would hate to think what state she would have been in. These kinds of injuries should NOT happen at a touch contact tournament. It needs to be addressed, as every year, the same problem exists.

## Do you wear chest protectors? If so, how do you feel about wearing them?



### Comments:

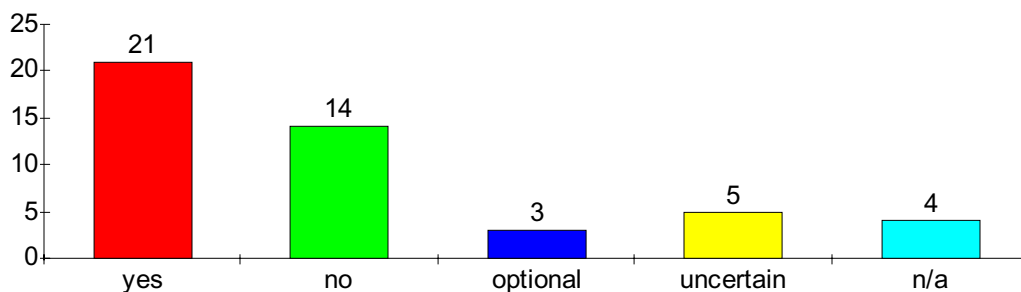
- No, as I do not spar in competition, but would like my daughter to wear one.
- No, I have only just started sparring, so feel I can't answer this question adequately.
- No, I don't think I would want to, as I believe they would restrict movement, as some are very bulky.
- Yes, I don't like them but I'd rather wear them than get punched in the chest.
- Yes, in tournament sparring. I think they are good (not so afraid of getting hurt).
- No. Don't mind though as it does allow you to feel more protected, though it does restrict movement and gets very hot.
- I have never worn one, but have recently bought one. It is not a full chest one, it is reasonably comfortable.
- Yes, you get use to them. Feel better knowing I'm protected.
- I have done. They are really awkward ñdidn't like it; it hurts with or without.



- Yes, they are uncomfortable.
- Yes, I feel fine about wearing them but they hurt under the arms.
- I would love to wear a chest protector, if only they came in my size. I find it hard enough to find a bra for 14E and those ones they use in WTF really don't permit the legs to move for those high kicks.
- No, might feel better about wearing one.
- No, but I don't free spar a lot and I haven't got much of a chest.
- Yes, vital.
- I have started to, I think it's a good idea.
- Haven't had to yet. If so, probably disadvantaged.
- Only when visiting the club in New Plymouth. They're hot but ok.
- Yes I do. They are uncomfortable, but should be worn.
- No, I've never sparred out of club.
- Yep, feel safer.
- Yes, don't mind.

I would just like to mention that 12 out of the 14 students who wear chest protectors are from the Taranaki region where I have made it compulsory to wear them if free sparring at my club.

## Do you feel chest protectors should be made compulsory for tournaments?



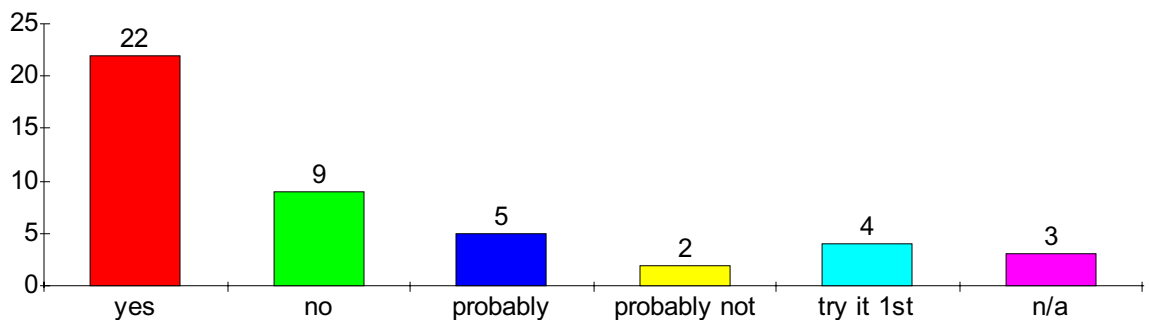
### Comments:

- Yes, but it's their loss if they choose not to wear one.
- No, only if you want to wear them.
- Yes, for older people but below 8 maybe not.
- I'm not experienced enough at contact sparring to know.
- No, they should be optional.
- I am not sure. I have never used one to know any advantages or disadvantages of them.
- Not compulsory, but available for those that want them.
- No, not for adults who are old enough to weigh up the risk. Minors though need to accept guidance from family and instructors.

- Yes, though I would like to know exactly what risks to women are ñ how much permanent damage can be done.
- Not really
- Go ahead on the idea of making chest protectors compulsory for tournaments. However in doing so, you need to guarantee that for ALL that take part can get one for there size.
- No, not if people donít like them.
- Maybe, líve not seen many women injured in the breast area.
- Yes, for protection.
- Not sure, I guess so.
- Yes, as the chest area is a legal target area, they should. (As in, why men wear groin guards). For protection of sensitive areas.
- Absolutely
- No, we should learn to protect these.
- I think they shouldnít. They should be optional whether you want to wear them or not.
- Yes, it takes away peer pressure ñ embarrassment with teenage girls - and a feeling of failure if they wear them.

I personally think they should be made compulsory right from the youngest age (good practise).

If there were chest protectors available, would you wear them?



Comments:

- Yes, but the comment the girls have is restricted movement, cumbersome, disadvantaged. So compulsory will level out those problems.
- Iíd try it but honestly, not being that well endowed I donít think I would. It really depends on size.
- Probably, but I wouldnít like them.
- Yes, after getting over the initial awkwardness.
- Yes, I wouldnít want to get hurt. Especially when you have the choice not to be!!
- It would be good to have them available yes. I probably would, and I would recommend them to others.
- Yes, but not for patterns.

- No. I rather learn control, rather than wear tons of protective gear. Mouth guards for teeth tho.
- In sparring, yes.
- I would have to try one on first to know if I could move freely in it.
- If chest protectors were available I would wear them ñ if only they came in my size.
- Probably not, I don't do much sparring anyway.
- I think so ñ but I don't think anyone likes those plastic cups much.
- Yes I do. I have my own.
- No, too hot.
- I would try it and see how it goes from there. Can't give a definite answer because I have never used them.
- No, probably wouldn't make a habit of wearing one, I haven't been hit there yet, so I don't feel it's much of a problem.
- I would try them out.
- Depends on what we were doing.
- No, probably not.

Good to see that most people would like to try chest protectors out, or would definitely/probably wear them if they were available.

## My opinions on chest protectors for females:

Well, in my opinion, I think chest protectors should be made compulsory for tournaments, in particular Nationals.

I would like to see that they become a compulsory part of the sparring kit whether it's in club training or at the World Champs.

When I had my NP East club up and running, I had almost 16 females in the teenage years (some that were very well endowed, but hated sparring in case they got hurt in the breast. One of these students made it to the nationals but unfortunately got badly winded and hurt in the breast.

From that day on, I vowed that I would try and make them compulsory.

I applied for a grant and now have 12 chest protectors of various sizes, which we use when, free sparring in class and at tournaments.

I know for a fact that they don't particularly like wearing them as they can be hot and a bit uncomfortable, but do guys really like wearing groin guards? I don't think so.

The girls certainly spar a more open style now instead of constantly having their arms over their chests. They are more confident, and if they get hit in the chest area, it doesn't hurt.

**I did a little research, and contacted the Cancer Foundation. There is no written proof that repeated trauma to the breast can cause cancer, however, it can increase the risk of breast cancer and cause tissue damage.**

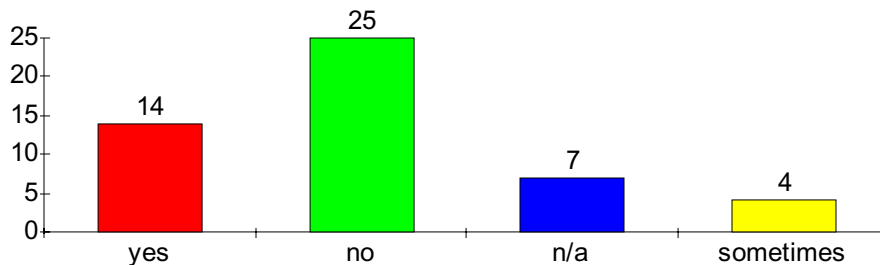
I was talking to Max Rutherford who produces chest protectors here in New Plymouth. He told me about an article that a karate student (Christina Crank) sent to the "Grandmaster Magazine" and to him about Tournament Safety Equipment.

I have included a few quotes about chest protectors.

"I personally think that with the amount of contact being made in the Martial arts today that all females should wear some type of chest protection."

"Some organisations do not allow the use of hard plastic chest protectors. I am still trying to find a good reason why not. If it is because it can hurt your opponents hand, then I have two suggestions that these safety committees for the organisation need to look at: 1) If they are worried about the opponents hand being hurt, it tells me that the opponent is hitting way too hard. That ranges in the excessive contact area. It does not matter where you hit someone, if it hurts them badly, it is definitely NOT controlled. 2) There are new chest protectors that are out there now where the plastic piece that protects the chest can be inserted in between two layers of a sports bra. With this new design, you are comfortable, no limits of mobility, and the plastic is insulated from the body, so the user doesn't get over heated."

## Do "monthlies" interfere with your training?



### Comments:

- You sometimes feel sluggish or sick.
- Yes, at tournaments it's annoying.
- Worrying if the blood will show on the uniform or something happens.
- Yes, inconvenience, fatigue, mood changer.
- No, I don't let it.
- No. (in fact just if you are interested, my exercise science lecturer told us that most women who are in the very middle of their period they are in fact at their strongest physically, so a lot of elite athletes plan for this to happen in their event, so they can be at their physical peak).
- Less keen to train.
- A test of motivation when training is on the 1<sup>st</sup> day.
- Sometimes if they're heavy I can't train.
- No, but I'm old.

- Yes. First 2 days with cramping/heavy flow makes it virtually impossible to train. An absolute nightmare if it co-insides with a camp or grading.
- I have concerns with flooding in a white do-bok.
- Yes, I get intimidated.
- Sometimes, lack of energy to run an active training session, also a nuisance. Definitely don't perform as well.
- Yes, I tend to not have the physical energy needed to put in 100% effort.
- Occasionally. Sore tummy inhibits training. Very conscience of white do-bok.
- No, but as you can imagine, white is not the best colour to wear!
- Yes. I do not go. White and periods do not match.
- No way. (Depends actually, but I still come to training.)
- Yes, apart from feeling absolutely horrible, my motivation and energy is down and basically I can't be bothered.
- Occasionally yes, as I will get a sore back from them, but generally going to training gets the body pumping and I'm better for it.
- Only first day. Tender, heavy bleeding. White do-boks! Fortunately Taekwon-do and 1<sup>st</sup> days rarely happen.

As I have a lot of young women in the club, I felt I have to be prepared for mishaps that may happen during class. I have purchased sanitary pads as a precaution. They know where they are, and can discreetly use them if needed. I'm sure most have it under control, but if heavy training, usually means heavy bleeding. A real nightmare with a white do-bok.

## Are there any ways that you feel females are at a disadvantage in Taekwon-Do?

- No x 19
- I don't think so. Unless you want to consider the lack of aggression for sparring. However I feel that that the lack of aggression makes us better at sparring, as we tend to think more strategy. However I can say that the do-boks (uniforms) are NOT designed for females. In fact, I don't think they're designed for males either.
- Most of the women are not as tenacious or aggressive in trying flying or jumping techniques, sparring, self defence. In time I think we will get there.
- No. I don't think I know any women who would feel that way. We are always given equal opportunity.
- Hard to say. All around I think we are treated much as anyone else. Obviously we are not as strong as some males etc. But then again, we make up for that by being better looking.
- Physically less strong.
- No. Just the periods. It is often on my mind.
- Some males may be more lenient on females than they're a little more fragile.
- No, I think there has been more of an awareness that women are different to men in training aspects and this is taken into consideration.
- No, as I don't think Taekwon-Do works on brute strength, but more on techniques and how you execute them.
- Generally females find it harder to fly. I think due to our womanly figures.
- Not really, because we don't do anything that are different from guys.

- Not really. I think instructors tend to let us get away with too many excuses. I used to train with an army guy in Wellington (Paul Hermans) who was really tough on everyone. We all worked so hard. What a high and fun too. His catch phrase: 'Come on female, equal pay equal push ups'. He was a laugh.
- Weaker upper body strength. (A generalisation).
- Not as much as in the past. I feel females are on a much more even footing than say 10 years ago. Also not physically as strong. Seem to find jumping challenging.
- The whole system was designed for males. I have to juggle my life a lot to get to Taekwon-Do things. (Even regular trainings).
- In some ways we are still treated as 'novelty' by the 'big guys'.
- No, there are compensations made for differences in body strength e.g. kneeling push-ups.
- Height. Most are shorter and need slightly different techniques taught to deal with taller males. (Their reach etc.)
- Some females I think are put off joining because of age, weight, and the perception of uncontrolled aggression.
- No. Evolution says men are stronger, but women can be just as good if not better in their own right. It's in the mind.
- Only that there aren't as many females and that males can be a bit rough.
- Some females have power disadvantages but everyone is different.
- Yes, don't get pushed as much to do the hard stuff.
- Perhaps in press ups, as males have a stronger upper body, and in the jumping kicks, as they have larger quads.

## Are there any ways you feel females are at an advantage in Taekwon-Do?

- No x 17
- Sometimes in sparring, because some guys have a 'thing' about hitting a female.
- No, there is no special treatment given to females.
- Yes, for the Black belt fitness test we are required less.
- Height and speed can be an advantage but again every one is different.
- They can have more flexibility.
- Less fear of being kicked in the privates (just kidding).
- They're better at accepting that it takes time to perfect some moves.
- 'Man smart, women smarter'! Most males feel a bit reluctant to 'hurt' a female which can give one an advantage in mixed sparring.
- Seem to grasp the 'finer' points of patterns more easily and learn the theory more quickly.
- We generally have more rhythm. Find patterns easier. They look and flow nicer perhaps than males.
- Maybe? Women tend to be smaller build, so weigh less, which could be used as an advantage for speed? agility?
- Usually more flexible, able to do higher foot techniques.

- Yes. In such things as required breaks, fitness tests (Black belt gradings). Even World Champs qualifications I find women tend to have it a lot easier than the guys. I know that we are capable of more than is required. We've proven it.
- Sparring. Less chest area.
- Not really advantaged. Most guys don't bully, but if they feel you can't match them, they don't hold back because you are a female.
- There is a definite advantage for females in the way our pubic bones are shaped. I (And many other females in the club) tend to find some of the kicks quite natural in terms of the way my hips move.
- I do. Because I think we are more sensible.
- Possibly slightly more encouragement? Impressive conversation starter.
- Stretching seems to come easier, more natural. Often pick up things easier than males (technically, patterns).

The only ways I feel females are at a disadvantage in TKD is that we don't have the body strength as that of males. Especially when it comes to flying techniques, press ups etc. However, I feel we more than make up for this in other areas such as grace, rhythm etc.

The advantages I think are a lower centre of gravity, therefore better balance for patterns, kicks etc. As an instructor, I also feel females seem to pick up things a little faster than males, the reason for this, I'm not too sure.

## Additional comments from respondents:

- It's great to show the guys up or equal them.
- It's the greatest experience of learning. More people should do it.
- I'm glad that trouble has been made to conduct this survey, but I feel that TKD is very good at including and having fair and equal opportunity for male and female.
- I think that all in TKD start for different reasons, male and female alike. In general I feel it's all related to how you attack a new challenge.
- As much as I hate flying techniques, I think females should learn and be required to perform to TKD standard. A lot of women join TKD for self defence and in the real world there is no compensation given to women when self defence is needed. (Age, disability should be compensated for).
- That all of us females are as good as any male, maybe better in some things, and that we all have the ability to get our kicks as good as theirs.

- Although I love TKD for so many reasons, there is one small area that I would like to confess. When I started and even now, men (Outside TKD) generally think that they are the tougher/stronger sex, so it's nice to know that I can do something that they, at times can only dream of.
- I've just become the only female in my club and having realised that, I wondered if things might be different but they haven't. I'm given the same courtesy and my fellow students still acknowledge my rank. Sometimes I come across young males who think I'm not really a martial artist but I relate that to their age (And the fact that I make them work so hard they're too tired to disobey me).
- My club in Tauranga is very large and there is a decent ratio of males and females. I am often the only female in my group of friends there though. I do feel comfortable there and don't really notice that I am different to them. Being a female in Taekwon-Do is pretty cool.
- I think Taekwon-Do is an excellent way for females to become more confident and learn how to defend themselves and have fun at the same time.
- I'm proud to be a part of such an old art, which is often synonymous with men. It gives females empowerment and confidence, which we all appreciate.
- It's great for women to be out there succeeding and enjoying a once dominated sport. The support from my husband, the instructor and the other black belts has been immense; I thank them for that.
- I think it is a good art for females to do, but I wouldn't discourage looking at other martial arts for better self-defence techniques. Cool survey.
- I feel that females have the same capability as any male.
- I think that Taekwon-Do is a really good sport to be doing especially for females, because some people may think that females are weaker than males. But if you join Taekwon-Do it builds up your confidence and have knowledge of self-defence.
- It's good that ITFNZ attracts so many women, including women instructors. I instructed Mt. Albert club for 3 years and found some men wouldn't join, but more interestingly women didn't stay because I was fairly tough physically. Guys who joined were dedicated though. (Now I'm just an assistant instructor again so can't influence how sessions are run so much ñ i.e. content. I always try to encourage female students to do their best and don't let them wimp out of hard work. (But then I'm not so fit myself these days ñ getting older).
- We see TKD differently to the males usually. I feel we have more emphasis on perfecting the techniques opposed to showing personal strength.



- I think it much better now that we have senior women and we have female instructors. The female support system is very important, and the growing numbers of female students reflects this. Long may it continue.
- Makes me feel safer outside Taekwon-Do.
- I've constantly had to battle to be accepted in a lot of situations but feel that this is changing, in particular in ITFNZ with so many inspiring women (like yourself etc.) and women present at all gradings, tournament etc.
- More females should take up Taekwon-Do. It is very self-empowering and you should learn self-defence. But I don't feel that there is really a place for things like make up and being delicate. Girls need to leave it at the door and just train hard.
- I don't feel a female is disadvantaged overall. The club dynamics makes the atmosphere and the instructor as the head sets the tone if he or she has no problems with females then this will be the same for the club. Instructors and seniors can ensure a club is gender neutral.
- Women tend to be less aggressive so need to apply technique.
- Being a female in any martial art does improve confidence and esteem.
- Some women do find TKD hard with months and having a chest and things like that but the younger ones I don't think have anything to worry about.
- It is a great sport. It gives me more confidence. I have met some really nice people but I find it hard sometimes as sparring males all the time they get up tight if a female beats them.
- I find it hard being the oldest female in club and being pretty much the only female in the adult class apart from a couple of girls who aren't even at high school. The guys sometimes get a bit big headed but I don't really mind a challenge.
- Cool survey.
- Compared with segregated sports or with everything from schools to business, where men or boys can dominate without having more skills, Taekwon-Do is great. Skills = rank = respect, and if a young girl outranks an adult man her skills earn respect. This especially good for girls. Equality is real.
- Taekwon-Do is good for females cause by doing martial arts females feel more confident.
- WE NEED MORE!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Anything I say must be considered in light of my age and restrictions which that places on some movements ñ also as a wife/mother I cannot easily drop everything and race off to

extra trainings (over the years I have managed by some level of determination to get to extra seminars etc.).

I don't spend much time thinking about being a female in TKD. It's nice when there are female only trainings but I'm just as happy at mixed trainings. I think it was a terrible shame that one of our prominent female Dans recently showed appalling lack of integrity. I expect a higher, not a lower standard from women. The old story. We work harder to confirm that we're just as good, and I don't think we need to be let down by one of our own.

- I believe that women can do anything they choose to do. We live in a patriarchal world. However, I believe that women should be women. I accept the limitations of physically being a woman ñ wrong choice of words- the margins of being a woman. However, women do not have to prove anything to a man or try to be a man. Women should be the best women they can be.

Taekwon-Do comes from Korea so with learning it, I presume, I am also learning the Korean culture or values of an art within the context of their beliefs in the female and male roles. It seems to me that man and women are treated equally in our do jang. There have never been signs of harassment or inequality. Respect for seniors and instructors are regardless of age, sex, race. However, within the context of living in New Zealand, there appears to be less females attending Taekwon-Do. Our lives are filled with so many important issues and time, freedom and motivation is the essence for what women choose to put their energies into.

Because I am, I believe, quite over the top with woman's choice, woman's rights within the health sector, it was initially difficult to respect the senior men and male instructors. Once I forgot they were men, I started learning. Taekwon-Do is now a humbling experience where I think that gender does not matter. Of course it is wonderful to see two women on black tip and one black tip woman who regularly attends classes. It is also wonderful to see members of the same families grading and also for me to see Maori attending Taekwon-Do.

I am proud of being a woman in the art of Taekwon-Do. I do not foresee myself having to protect myself. I feel proud of myself when my mind and body do what they are supposed to do. I feel good when it is right because my mind and body feels it is doing what it is meant to do.

- In the 7 years that I have been doing Taekwon-Do, I have found it has increased my self confidence (speaking in front of others), awareness of my surroundings and general fitness has increased.  
I find that I get addicted to TKD (well, I am always doing something to do with TKD). Even thinking my patterns through in my head if I can't do the physical training.  
I love the social aspect. Meeting new people at tournaments, seminars etc. Getting to know my students and seeing the improvements they make as they go through the ranks.  
I am proud to be doing something for myself. It is probably the most rewarding thing I have done in my life (except having my daughter). I only hope that I can continue to pass down the skills I know to my students for a very long time. (Body willing). I thank my husband to introducing me to the art in the first place.



Master Renee Sereff ñ 7<sup>th</sup> Dan

I have done a little research on plyometrics, as a lot of women found flying techniques to be most difficult. Also the differences between men and women physically and explanations on fitness.

ì Jumping in to Plyometricsî by Donald A. Chu PhD

ì The myth that females must train differently than males still exists in some circles. But there is no reason that female athletes cannot perform plyometrics with the same degree of skill, proficiency, and intensity as males. The controlling factor of having a strength base is applicable to both sexes.

Any athlete who chooses to ignore complementary strength training is headed from difficult times and perhaps injury. It is true that many female athletes are new to strength training and this possesses the requisite entry-level abilities. It is the responsibility of the coach and the athlete to upgrade this area of development before attempting plyometric training.î

ì Sports Training Principlesî Frank W. Dick

Male/female body variations

Due to extreme width of the female pelvis compared with the male pelvis, the angle between femur and tibia is generally greater for women than for men. This is clearly a disadvantage when force of knee and hip extensions is required and highlights the high injury potential not only at knee and hip, but also at the junction of sacrum and ilium, and pubic symphysis, which are less stable in women than men.

The female shoulders are also narrower than in men and the lateral angle radius/ulna on humerus is greater, providing a weaker force application potential in pulling activities. The length of the female spine is approx. 86% that of a male spine and this, combined with a greater distribution of weight towards hips/thighs, gives women a relatively lower centre of gravity.

Sports Fitness for women by Elizabeth and Ken Day

#### Physiological gender differences

It is generally agreed that men have a greater sports capacity than women in those activities which favour strength. This assumption can not be made when measurements of stamina and skill are concerned.

The natural core functions of the female of any species are different from the male, to the point of being almost opposite.

The skeletal frame of a woman is specially formed to allow her to reproduce. The need for bulky muscles and large bones is not the first priority, and the balance of strength between shoulders and hips (or arm and legs) is nowhere near equal. In man, however, the vastly greater muscular power of the shoulders is easy to see.

#### Attitudes to women in sport

Women, who take sport seriously, not necessarily to an international or even national level, may well find that planning the family timetable is as important as planning their training sessions.

Whilst women are unlikely to compete against men in the majority of sports, this is no reason to disregard the importance of fitness in women.

Fitness- signs of:

- Seldom breathless even under stress
- Muscles don't ache after lifting and carrying
- Skin and hair feel fresh and clean
- General health and vitality is high

***Elements of physical fitness are stamina, strength, speed, flexibility, and skill.***

**Stamina** ñ fitness is when the heart and lungs are capable of working hard for long periods.

**Strength** ñ In general, women are not built strongly because nature has not devised them as a workhorse. Feminine muscles are strong, however, and become stronger without being bulky.

**Speed** ñ Anyone who can move quickly is automatically a strong individual. Speed is an essential element of most sports. If you are able to control speed, then it is of the greatest use. Practise of any sport increases the ability to use speed without great tense effort, and therefore the quality of movement and the muscular effort involved are balanced.

**Flexibility** ñ Some people have extremely flexible joints and pliant muscles. Most of us lose our childlike flexibility in our mid teens, from which time, the joints of our bodies work only in the convenient middle range. Good flexibility aids breathing circulation. Also prevents common injuries, permits easy use of the muscles and allows skills to be quickly learnt.

**Skill** ñ (often ignored). If a skill is repeated many times, fatigue sets in the quality of movements begins to deteriorate. In order to enjoy a sport fully, you must be fit, and reasonably skilful, since when the fitness fails, so does the skill.

ì How does exercise affect me? ñ Judy Sandgrove

An unused body deteriorates, just like a rusty old bike abandoned by the roadside. If we sit around all day long and don't use our bodies, we will soon lose our physical fitness. Being chronically unfit causes changes in the heart, lungs, blood, bones and muscles that will eventually harm our health.

Flexibility or suppleness is vital for the future. Some old people get so stiff that they can't bend down to cut their toenails. And while you're young, being flexible makes you more graceful.

Stretching lengthens and relaxes your muscles so that they become more elastic, allowing your joints to pass through a wider range of movement.

In general, women are more supple than men. (Females tend to work more on their stretch). Stretching reduces risk of injury.

### Bone density

When you walk or run, the bones of your legs and spine support your weight against gravity, which tries to pull you downwards. This weight bearing exercise increases the bone's density, making them stronger and less likely to break.

Building up bone density is vital when you're young, especially for girls. The stronger a young girl's bones are, the less likely she will be to suffer from Osteoporosis (brittle bones) in her fifties and beyond.

If you do any form of exercise, you will end up more cheerful than when you started. Exercise increases the levels of endorphins in your blood. Endorphins are substances produced by the brain to relieve pain and make you feel good.

People who exercise have fewer headaches, stomach aches and sleep problems.

Exercise pumps up the brain as well as the body. This can be seen in old people who take regular exercise. They remain mentally sharp and are less likely to lose their memory, learning ability and powers of thought than old people who don't take exercise.

Girls need a well fitting sports bra, because vigorous exercise can cause breast pain.

I would especially like to thank all those who replied to my questionnaire. It was really exciting getting the replies, and comparing them. I could never have done this without them.

I also want to thank the instructors who handed out the questionnaires for their efforts too.

I have really enjoyed doing this thesis. It has been very interesting.

I hope the future of women in the ITFNZ, only gets stronger and better and that female play a more predominant part.

Kirsten Livingstone II Dan