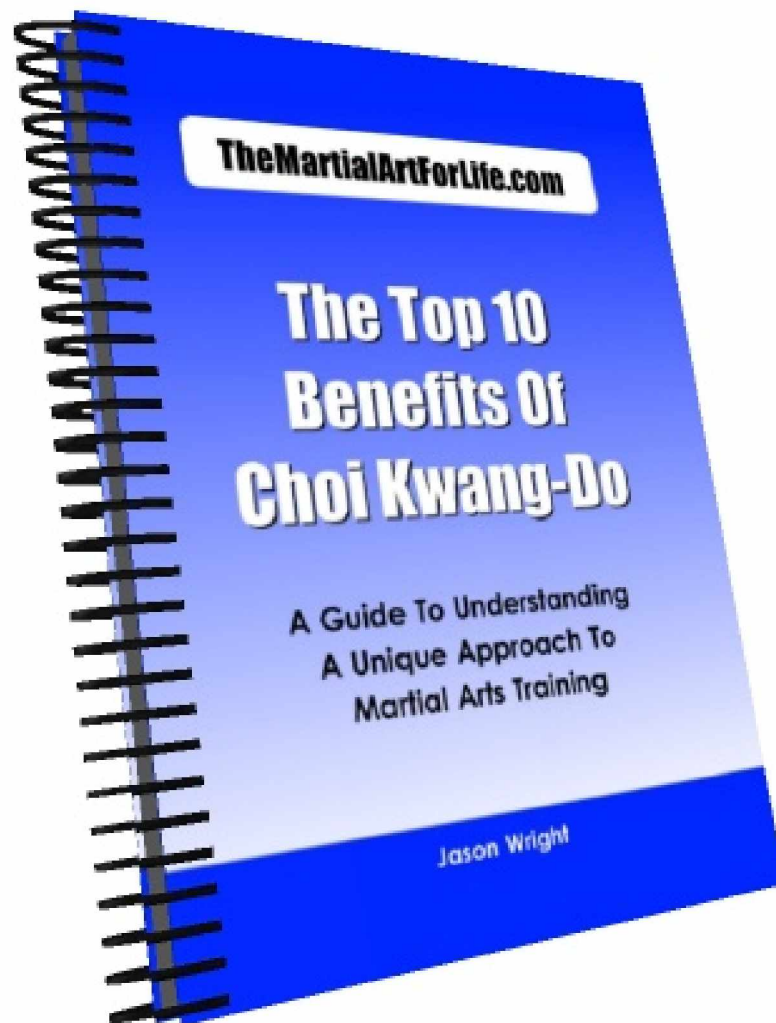


# The Top 10 Benefits Of Choi Kwang-Do



By Jason Wright

## Contents

Introduction	3
What Is Choi Kwang-Do?	4
The Benefits	6
#1 – Social Influence	6
#2 – Learning & Memory	8
#3 – Whole Brain Stimulation	10
#4 – Self Defence	11
#5 – Stretching & Flexibility	13
#6 – Regular Exercise	16
#7 – Resistance Training	17
#8 – Character Development	19
#9 – Goal Setting	21
#10 – Fulfilment	24
About The Author	26
Further Information & Resources	26

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## Introduction

Thanks downloading this ebook and welcome to The Top 10 Benefits Of Choi Kwang-Do. If you've never heard of Choi Kwang-Do this ebook will provide you with an insight into the benefits of this unique style of martial art. As a Choi Kwang-Do instructor, not only do I regularly help my students to understand and enjoy the benefits, I also enjoy them too.

The information be useful to anyone with an interest in martial arts training, health and fitness or self improvement and will be of particular interest to prospective and existing Choi Kwang-Do practitioners. Regardless of your background, by the time you have finished reading this ebook, not only will you know what the benefits are, you will also understand how Choi Kwang-Do provides these benefits. In addition, as you read through the chapters, you will get a feel for the overall philosophy of Choi Kwang-Do, its unique approach to martial arts training and the emphasis on physical and mental conditioning for self improvement.

Lastly, please note that whilst this ebook is complete, the list of benefits is by no means exhaustive. If you were to speak to existing practitioners and their families, you could easily make a list that would be double the size. I have simply chosen the top ten core benefits, as I view them, in no particular order.

Once again, thanks for downloading the The Top 10 Benefits Of Choi Kwang-Do.

Enjoy,

**Jason Wright**

PS. If you've been sent this ebook by someone else, make sure you sign up for the FREE newsletter that accompanies it at [www.TheMartialArtForLife.com](http://www.TheMartialArtForLife.com)

## What Is Choi Kwang-Do?

Choi Kwang-Do is a revolutionary martial arts and exercise programme designed to improve your health and provide you with practical self defence skills. One of the things that makes Choi Kwang-Do unique is that the techniques have been scientifically designed to work in harmony with the human body making them easy to learn and effective to use.

Choi Kwang-Do was developed by Grandmaster Kwang Jo Choi 9<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt. For nearly 5 decades, Grandmaster Kwang Jo Choi has been studying and teaching martial arts and developed Choi Kwang-Do between 1978 and 1987. The martial art is founded on the principle that self defence techniques should generate maximum force, be practical and easy to learn, enhance your health as you practice, as well as develop physical and mental conditioning.

Distinctly different from 'traditional' martial arts in many ways, Choi Kwang-Do is a perfect blend of modern scientific principles and traditional martial arts values designed for the present day.

The system focuses on developing students in three main areas:

n Optimum Health

Choi Kwang-Do is scientifically designed to be practical to use, easy to learn, and safe for the human body at any age. Our fun and exciting workouts will challenge your body in a variety of ways so that you maintain a higher level of physical fitness. You will have many opportunities to enhance your strength, stamina, flexibility, co-ordination and agility to enable you to lead a happier, healthier and more productive life. This is why Choi Kwang-Do is called 'The Martial Art For Life'.

n Self Defence

Choi Kwang-Do is much more than just another way to exercise - our unique training system will enable you to understand and address conflict in a peaceful way. At the same time, the scientific principles behind Choi Kwang-Do will enable you to generate explosive power should you ever have to use your physical skills. You will develop the confidence to apply your self defence techniques in a safe, controlled and non-competitive environment. These valuable skills could save your life.

n Personal Development

As you start to experience the physical benefits of Choi Kwang-Do, you will also notice improvements in your mental fitness. Imagine how good

## The Top 10 Benefits Of Choi Kwang-Do

your life would be if you had more confidence, greater self-discipline or better concentration and focus. Choi Kwang-Do classes are a great place to start to realise your physical and mental potential.

Benefit #1

## Social Influence

The great majority of martial arts schools have a code of conduct which the instructors and students follow, either implied or defined. A simple example could be that students bow to one another - a form of polite greeting. Other examples could be specific terminology for techniques or class commands, or the observance of a hierarchy of authority within the school. In Choi Kwang-Do (CKD), alongside a set of school rules, the code of conduct is contained within the Children's Promise, Adult Pledge and Principles of CKD - a set of guidelines and positive values that students are encouraged to memorise and follow in their day-to-day lives, both inside and outside of the school:

### Children's Promise

- To always do my best and never give up
- To obey my parents and teachers
- To tell the truth and honour my word
- To always be polite
- To never misuse what I learn in class

### Adult Pledge

- To set positive goals and strive to achieve them
- To apply self discipline to further my personal development
- To stand for justice and honour my word
- To promote friendly relationships among all people
- To use what I learn in class in a constructive manner

### Principles Of Choi Kwang-Do

- Humility
- Honesty
- Gentleness
- Perseverance
- Self Control
- Unbreakable Spirit

With these points in mind, consider a new student joining a CKD school. They will have been informed about the schools code of conduct, maybe even given a manual or guide to explain them in detail. They will have been advised and instructed how to demonstrate them and asked to begin to follow them. However, what can have an even greater effect on the new students' behaviour is social influence.

When you are training at a CKD school you are interacting with a range of

people who share common beliefs and values. For a new student, the reference group will be other students and instructors. As the reference groups' behaviour is guided by positive beliefs and values (the Children's Promise, Adult Pledge and Principles of CKD), it is likely that the new student will adopt the similar positive beliefs and values. In fact, studies in social influence show in many cases, people eventually acknowledge the reference groups' beliefs and values as their own. In addition, when we are unsure how to act, we often look to our peers or those we identify as our reference group to see how we should be acting, and conform accordingly. This is often referred to as social proof.

Why does this happen? Whether the modification takes place consciously or unconsciously, people modify their thoughts, beliefs and behaviour under such conditions because their conformity fulfils psychological needs such as belonging and esteem generating feelings of approval from the reference group. Choi Kwang-Do training can also fulfil a number of other psychological needs such as progress and achievement which will be covered later.

Think of this benefit as the reverse of peer group pressure. Instead of a group of teenagers hanging around on street corners encouraging each other to do something silly or troublesome, a CKD school is a group of people encouraging and supporting each other to better themselves in some way through martial art training. So CKD classes can provide you with a positive reference group, and the people we associate with regularly can have a profound influence on us.

Benefit #2

## Memory & Learning

Have you ever had the experience of finding something easy and enjoyable to learn with one teacher, but found it difficult to learn the same information with another teacher? There are many possible reasons for this, and one of them might have been that the teacher you found enjoyable taught the subject in a way that appealed to your preferred learning style.

As martial arts are primarily a physical activity, CKD instructors are able to appeal to different learning styles. When learning different people take in and process information in different ways - some people like to see the information: a visual preference, some people like to hear the information: auditory preference, while others like to learn by doing: a kinaesthetic preference. People do not learn in only one of these ways, it will be some combination of all three, although there will be a bias or preference towards one.

Obviously, in a single class there will be students who have a variety of preferred learning styles. For this reason, CKD instructors use a multi sensory approach by showing a technique (for the visual learners), explaining a technique (for the auditory learners) and then getting the students to do the technique or practice it with equipment (for the kinaesthetic learners). The same process can be applied to teaching combinations of techniques and other parts of the CKD curriculum.

When you are able to take in and consolidate information using a combination of seeing, hearing and doing, the learning process becomes more efficient and enjoyable. With a little creativity, you can convert your chosen subject matter into a format that suits your preferred learning style and apply these concepts to learn just about anything.

By reviewing the information regularly, it becomes absorbed more deeply and moves from short term memory to long term memory, where it can be more easily recalled. Again, as CKD is a physical activity, review and recall of the information will be predominantly kinaesthetic, ie. You attend your classes and perform the techniques and drills. However, review can also be done by reading, rewriting, watching instructional DVDs, explaining or visualising the information.

There are two important benefits here: firstly, when learning is enjoyable, you are more likely to have a positive attitude towards learning in general. This is critical for younger students who may remain in formal education for some years. Secondly, each time you have a successful learning experience (taking in



## The Top 10 Benefits Of Choi Kwang-Do

information, taking action to commit the information to long term memory, and then recalling the information) you are training your memory to work better making learning in the future easier. Learning CKD not only trains your body, it also trains your mind.

Benefit #3

## Whole Brain Stimulation

It would be easy to assume that as a martial art, CKD is just about learning to kick and punch. While students do learn to kick and punch, the way in which use your body to kick and punch can have an effect on your brain.

It's commonly known that the brain has two halves. The two halves of the brain are connected by a complex network of nerve fibres called the corpus callosum. The brain is further 'wired' in a manner whereby the right side of the brain controls and processes the left side of the body, while the left side of the brain controls and processes the right side of the body.

Each side of the brain processes information in different ways. Generally speaking, the left side of the brain (often termed the 'logic hemisphere') deals with details: words, numbers, sequences, analysis and linearity. The right side of the brain (sometimes called the 'gestalt hemisphere', meaning whole or global processing) deals with images, emotion, intuition and creativity.

Each time we learn something new, connections are made between neurons (nerve cells) in the brain. The more connections, the greater the brain capacity. When learning in a way that activates both sides of the brain, further connections can also be made across the corpus callosum.

A great example of this is walking; the majority of people move their right arm whilst stepping forward with the left leg and vice versa. This type of physical motion is contra-lateral. A baby crawling follows the same contra-lateral movement (although on the hands and knees).

In CKD, the individual techniques are contra-lateral and both sides of the body and brain are activated during their execution. Plus, many of the training drills (eg. CKD Patterns and Speed Drills) extend this further by working both sides of the body involving the eyes, hands and feet in a co-ordinated series of movements. As well as improving motor skills, these types of movements activate both sides of the brain in a balanced way. When both sides of the brain are activated through physical movement, the corpus callosum which connects the two halves is also stimulated promoting further growth of connections between both halves. This can lead to an increase in cognitive function by facilitating faster processing between both sides and the rest of the brain. Image that...increasing your mental capacity just by kicking and punching!

Benefit #4

## Self Defence

Martial arts are expected to enable students to look after themselves, and various martial arts systems emphasise and achieve this in various ways and to various degrees. So how does CKD prepare the student for self defence?

The CKD curriculum contains a series of drills which allow students to practice and develop their self defence skills with another student – Defence Drills. More specifically, Defence Drills are geared towards developing the confidence and ability of both students in a safe and controlled manner. The drills cover verbal skills, foot work, distancing, evasive techniques (dodging and weaving), blocking punching and kicks, counter attacks and pre-emptive attacks. A series of drills to escape from situations whereby a person may be held or restrained are also taught.

It's fair to say that if these skills had to be deployed outside of a class, the people involved would be under considerable stress. However, attempting to develop these skills in a highly stressful environment (eg. sparring or in a competitive environment) can be counter productive to the learning process. For these reasons, Defence Drills are cooperative, rather than competitive. As student's confidence and capabilities grow, defence drills can be performed with progressive levels intensity or resistance.

When practising Defence Drills, you are subjected to moderate levels of stress. We often hear a lot of negative things about stress, but it's important to note that, to some degree, we need stress. In fact, a response to stress has been one of the most essential ingredients in our survival. For example, crossing a busy road puts you in a temporary state of stress - you are more alert and aware of the potential danger in order to get to the other side. Stress initiates biochemical and physiological changes: sharpening our senses making us more attentive to sense danger. The heart beats faster to pump blood to large muscles, especially the arms and legs ready for action. The liver releases stored sugar to provide fuel for a quick burst of energy. (These changes are referred to as the fight or flight response, emanating from our ancestors survival which often depended on their ability to overpower or outrun predators). Once safely across the road, you are no longer at danger and the stress subsides – this is known as homeostasis.

It's important to have a physical response to stressful events in our lives in order to dissipate the excess energy away (generated in preparation for the fight or flight). The pressures of daily life can create many stresses for us and prolonged periods of time in a state of stress where the body does not return to

a homeostatic state has many detrimental effects. When the body attempts continue functioning at a high state of arousal it draws resources allocated for other bodily functions, such as digestion and the immune system, leading to illness and exhaustion. Defence Drills provide a fun and challenging way to expend that excess energy.

Studies show that under moderate stress our level of performance increases. This means that Defence Drills can help you to learn and practice your skills effectively while developing a conditioned automatic response for self defence.

In addition, an unfortunate aspect of self defence is that you may often need to strike an attacker as part of the process of protection. Whilst this is not a desirable nor humane thought, CKD training will teach you how to optimise your striking power (practised on focus mitts or strike shields, not other students!), regardless of your existing size and strength. How is this done?

In the example of a punching technique:

- n Sequential Motion  
As opposed to relying solely on the strength of the arms, chest, shoulders and upper back, the entire body is involved in the movement. These specific parts of the body are used, but their overall effectiveness is amplified by using larger, stronger muscle groups in the legs and torso.
- n Follow Through  
By following through the target, the fist is travelling at maximum speed at the point of impact, only slowing down during the recoil. Economy of motion is achieved by utilising the energy used to initiate the movement (provided by sequential motion) to return the arm back to the starting position.

This process which is applied to many CKD techniques and allows the practitioner to exploit Newton's Second Law of Motion with great effect:  $\text{force} = \text{mass} \times \text{acceleration}$ , where the acceleration is massively increased with the aid of sequential motion and follow through. Keeping the well-being of the practitioner in mind, at no point does the elbow joint fully extend. When moving with such speed and power, the elbow joint would be susceptible to hyper extension damage. The health and well-being of students is one of the core principles of CKD.

Benefit #5

## Stretching & Flexibility

A CKD class will always include some type of stretching routine. In fact, similar to a yoga class, stretching in CKD isn't just part of the warm up - its part of the training. So why is it important to stretch?

When moving the body into the various positions to stretch, you are reminding the body (the joints and muscles) of its range of movement in different directions, increasing mobility and creating bodily awareness. This should be done gently and slowly, utilising your own body weight and there is no requirement for high kicks or immense flexibility in CKD.

A stretched muscle is more pliable and resistant, meaning you can practice and perform the CKD techniques and drills easier. This is particularly helpful as some techniques take a muscle through its full range of motion quickly, (which will happen repeatedly during a single class) and the muscles need to be prepared for this. A stretched muscle also permits a greater range of motion in the joints, allowing the body to move more freely with less strain or discomfort.

People generally become less flexible as they get older, (with females tending to be more flexible than males) but flexibility can be developed at any age simply by regularly stretching the muscles in the body. Postural (or tonic) muscles are those muscles that are used to support and maintain body posture. They are required to hold contractions for long periods of time. They are typically larger than movement (or phasic) muscles - muscles which are used to lever the skeleton to perform specific movements. Unless we are engaged in some type of strength and flexibility training, with ageing, postural muscles tend to get tighter, while movement muscles tend to get weaker. CKD provides you with the necessary opportunity to stretch your postural muscles.

Whatever your current level of flexibility, regular stretching will help to either increase your flexibility, or at the very least maintain your existing flexibility. The standard CKD routine includes stretching and flexibility exercises for the whole body, from the neck down to the ankles, with a large portion of the exercises focussing on maintaining the flexibility of the spine. One of the reasons for this is that the nervous system (a complex network of nerves that transmit nerve impulses between your brain and your body) runs through the length of the spine – the spinal cord. The spinal cord has branches of spinal nerves that pass out through the spine to the body. A disorder with the spine can affect the function of the spinal nerves, disrupting the messages travelling between the brain and the body. The result can be health complaints in seemingly unrelated parts of the body.

When you are stretching in your CKD class, observe good breathing practices. Breathing is something that many people don't pay conscious attention to, yet we all understand its importance to us as human beings. It's best to use diaphragmatic breathing - inhaling fully, and relaxing your belly so that it can move outward on the in-breath and your diaphragm can move through more of its full range of motion. When exhaling fully, you should allow your belly to retract towards your spine, which supports the diaphragm's upward movement to help empty the lungs.

Diaphragmatic breathing is a powerful form of mental and physical relaxation, changing the level of brain activity from the waking alert state, to a slower, more meditative state. Using diaphragmatic breathing also ensures that the body is taking in the optimum amount of oxygen into the blood stream, and transporting the oxygen and nutrients around the body to nourish the organs and tissues. Of course, diaphragmatic breathing can be done at any time, and can be useful as a quick technique to reduce mental, emotional and physical stress. CKD stretches are for optimum health as well as flexibility.

Even if you are not a practitioner of CKD, starting a short daily routine of stretching and breathing exercises will do wonders for your health.

Benefit #6

## Regular Exercise

Exercise can be fun (honest!) but for some people, the word exercise conjures up an image of sweating at the gym four times a week and leading to feelings of fear rather than fun. Others think that the gym can be boring. Whatever your view, exercise doesn't have to be overly strenuous or boring. CKD is a great form of exercise with the added benefit of providing self defence skills. It's stimulating, varied and challenging.

The benefits of regular, moderate exercise through CKD training are tremendous. It can help to:

- n Elevate your metabolism so that you burn more calories everyday.
- n Maintain, tone, and strengthen your muscles. Exercise also increases your muscular endurance.
- n Increase your aerobic capacity (your ability to take in and utilise oxygen). This gives you the ability to go through your day with less relative energy expenditure. A 'fit' person will have more energy at the end of the day and to get more accomplished during the day with less fatigue.
- n Decrease your blood pressure.
- n Decrease cholesterol levels.
- n Makes the heart a more efficient pump by increasing stroke volume (the amount of blood pumped per heart beat).
- n Increase haemoglobin concentration in your blood (the red blood cell that carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body).
- n Increase the strength of bones and guard against osteoporosis.
- n Enlarge the arteries that supply blood to the heart.
- n Improve control of blood sugar.
- n Improve sleep patterns.
- n Guard against the onset of coronary artery disease.
- n Increase the thickness of cartilage at the end of bones which have a protective effect on the joints.

Even when training at a very gentle level, the demands on your body will increase. Your heart rate begins to rise and you breathe faster, increasing blood flow and oxygen intake. The blood carries oxygen and nutrients to the organs and the tissues, enabling them to function better. Think prevention rather than cure; regular exercise will help to prevent the onset of health problems that could occur if no exercise is taken.

Specific parts of the CKD curriculum focus on specific types of conditioning:

- n CKD stretches help to maintain range of motion by increasing muscle and joint flexibility.
- n CKD Patterns, or repetition of CKD techniques help to increase your aerobic capacity and develop slow twitch muscle fibre.
- n CKD Speed Drills provide anaerobic conditioning and develop fast twitch muscle fibre for explosive movements.
- n Equipment Drills (focus mitts and strike shields) provide a cardiovascular workout and improve muscle tone and strength.

The benefits are great, and even better is that regular attendance at your CKD class forms the discipline of regular exercise. Once the discipline of regular exercise has been formed, it's more likely to be continued. Exercise can then be viewed more as an integral part of your life, as opposed to another activity that you have to struggle to find time to fit in.



Benefit #7

## Resistance Training

Practising CKD techniques on striking equipment (focus mitts, strike shields and bags) is a regular and fun part of CKD training. These activities give you a clear indication of the power you can generate once you understand how to apply the underlying principles of CKD techniques.

The resistance provided by focus mitts or strike shields also helps in other ways too. When you strike the equipment the resistance stimulate the muscles involved in creating the movement. Bearing in mind that CKD employs sequential movements, so a basic punch could involve a nearly all of muscles groups throughout the entire body.

As mentioned earlier, postural (or tonic) muscles are used to support and maintain body posture, whilst movement (or phasic) muscles are used to lever the skeleton to perform specific movements. Without some kind of strength and flexibility training, with ageing, postural muscles tend to get tighter, while movement muscles tend to get weaker. Practising the CKD techniques using striking equipment can provide you with the necessary opportunity to strengthen your movement muscles. Muscle strength can be further increased by using body weight exercises in class, and fixed resistance machines or free weights out of class.

The endurance of the muscles can also be increased through repeated striking on equipment (as is typically done in a CKD class). As well as providing a cardiovascular workout, these actions gradually condition the muscles to perform repeated contractions (which initiate the movements) whilst resisting fatigue.

Taking part in resistance training or weight-bearing activities has been shown to decrease the risk of osteoporosis, a condition where bones become brittle and susceptible to breakage. As well as loading the muscles and improving their strength, the resistance provided by striking equipment stresses the bones and joints involved in the movements to a moderate degree. This has a number of benefits:

- n Increased bone density helping to guard against osteoporosis.
- n Increased strength of ligaments (the flexible tissue that joins bones together)
- n Increased strength of joints (where bones meet)
- n Increased cartilage thickness (the tissue on the ends of bones that prevents them from rubbing against one another. Deterioration of

cartilage can lead to osteoarthritis, stiffness and discomfort in the joints).

Training the CKD techniques on equipment is one of the best ways to understand the movements and improve them. Why? Because striking the equipment activates proprioceptors, special nerves that inform the brain on the positions and movements of the joints, tendons, ligaments and muscles. The information is conveyed via the nervous system to the brain, which sends information back to these body parts.

Regular stimulation of the nervous system causes it to work more efficiently and for longer periods of time, enabling stronger signals to be communicated between the brain and the body. When the body receives strong signals through physical activity, it is able to recruit more of the required muscle fibres involved in the movement, and trigger the muscles to respond more effectively.

Benefit #8

## Character Development

If you are a parent, do you have a strategy in place to teach your child values such as respect, self-discipline or humility? As a teenager or adult, have you ever thought about which values you display, or which values you would like to display?

With the world around us constantly changing, the CKD instructors understand that student benefits greatly from being well grounded in their values in order to make better decisions for the future and live a principle-centred life. Learning and understanding values such as respect, self-discipline, and humility are integral parts of martial arts training. In the same way, a CKD school has a clear code of conduct based around the following set of values – The Principles Of Choi Kwang-Do:

- n Humility
- n Honesty
- n Gentleness
- n Perseverance
- n Self Control
- n Unbreakable Spirit

All students are expected to remember and observe these principles and many of them will be learned through experience and influence in the class environment (see Benefit #1 – Social Influence). Most people (children especially) are reasonably good at copying, and can often learn easily in this way (eg. you see others bow as a sign of respect, so you also bow). However, without further exploration and education, the activities are merely words or actions, especially to younger students.

A CKD instructor will engage younger students in class discussions, questions and answers and role play to stimulate their minds. These activities challenge students to consider the way in which they think about themselves, other people and the world around them. By thinking about the answers to the questions, students internalise the ideas. This helps them to formulate a definition of the principle or value, what it means, and understand ways in which they can demonstrate them through their actions.

To compliment learning in class, CKD has specific strategies to extend the learning process from the class to the home. Children are given a check list of activities based on a range of values – from humility and kindness through to goal setting and conflict avoidance. Whilst the values will be introduced and

taught in class, students complete the activities on the check list at home with guidance from parents. This keeps character development at the forefront of the conscious minds for both the child and the parents. Plus, encouraging students to live by positive values helps to forge them as a part of their character, aiding their growth into well rounded adults.

Through life experience, many adults may have already formed their own opinions. Whilst this may be true, the way that we think isn't fixed; it's like learning any skill - it can be improved. Teenagers and adults also have access to their own age-appropriate workbooks to study at home, to compliment their physical study in class. These strategies for character development move the principles from thought, through belief and ultimately towards behaviour.

Just like regular exercise makes the body stronger, more resilient and realise more of its potential, character development does the same for the mind. There is more to learning CKD than just punching and kicking.

## Benefit #9 Goal Setting

One of the great things about martial arts is that goal setting is practically embedded into the framework...the belt system. Even those who claim not to know much about martial arts, seem to know that white belt indicates a beginner, and black belt indicates someone advanced. They may also know that in between these levels are a number of coloured belts. This is true for CKD too. The system of belts enables students to understand that when working towards a big goal (black belt), success is more likely when the overall task is broken down into a series of smaller, more manageable goals (the coloured belts). It's like the old joke:

Q: "How do you eat an elephant?"

A: "One bite at a time!"

Some people say that goal setting is the master skill of success. Others say that it sets you up for feelings of failure if you don't achieve your goal. Whatever your thoughts on goal setting, bear the following points in mind:

- n What you focus on expands in your consciousness. If you make a decision to buy a new television, that's all you will be able to think about, even after you have finalised details such as which model of television you are going to buy and from where! When you begin a task with the end result in mind, and arm yourself with a plan of what you want to achieve, you are better equipped to concentrate your energy towards achieving it.
- n Once you have accomplished a task (whether it was part of a goal or not) you receive a sense of achievement. Your self-esteem is elevated and you are inspired to work towards another task - you're 'fired up'! This effect is magnified for bigger tasks or goals.

If you've ever read any material on goals and goal setting, you may already know of various methods, and you will have no doubt come across the SMART acronym at some point. Various sources follow slightly different definitions for the words within the acronym, but for this example we will use the following:

Specific  
Measurable  
Achievable  
Relevant  
Timed

How do these help? They assist in creating a definition of what you want. They provide a structure by which you can state your goal, create a specific focus on what you want to achieve and how, which in turn helps you to work towards its accomplishment. If your plan was to become a black belt in CKD, you might write the following statement:

"I want to train to become a black belt in CKD in 3½ years".

Specific: The activity is specified as training in CKD.

Measurable: The measure of completion will be when the rank of black belt has been awarded.

Achievable: Provided a commitment to regular training and practice has been made, with proper instruction, reaching black belt is achievable.

Relevant: Reasons for wanting to become a black belt must be relevant to the individual. You have to be inspired to work towards the completion of the goal.

Timed: 3½ years to black belt is perfectly feasible in CKD and sets an end point for tracking progress against completion.

Your SMART definition then becomes the starting point for the remainder of the process:-

n Make A Plan

Two classes a week will already be in place for you to attend, and there may also be other schools nearby. In making a commitment to achieving your goal, you have to make a commitment to attend the classes! If your work or family commitments mean you have to miss a class, find out how to make it up so that you don't fall behind.

n Consider Any Resources

The beauty of martial arts is that you already have an excellent resource to coach you along to the path towards the accomplishment of your goal – your instructor!

n Take Action

Do something regularly to move you closer towards your goal. Don't wait until your classes to practice. If you really want to feel a steady progression of your skills, make time to review and practice at home what you learn in class.

n Review & Renew

Take a short time to review how you are progressing towards your goal. Monthly is a good duration of time, or another good opportunity for this is the grading system which may be every two or three months. This is a good time to ask yourself the following questions:

## The Top 10 Benefits Of Choi Kwang-Do

What went well?  
What has been challenging?  
What would I do differently?

The answers to these questions will help you to review your goal, or the steps within your goal in the future. Should you get to the end of your specified time, then this will also be an opportunity to review (or reset) the completion date and renew your commitment.

Part of the philosophy of CKD is using your physical and mental capabilities for self improvement. Challenge yourself to follow this simple method (or any of the many other methods available in the field of goal setting) to work towards any goal, not just in CKD.

Benefit #10

## Fulfilment

Earlier in this ebook I mentioned some of the psychological needs that can be met by training in CKD. Two of these needs, progress and achievement are derived from the belt system commonly found in the martial arts:

n Progress

Many people like to feel as though they are progressing, that they are moving forwards with their lives. After primary school, we progress to secondary school. After secondary school one may go on to further education or seek employment – either way, you wouldn't go back to primary school! The CKD curriculum allows you to follow a progressive curriculum to keep you stimulated and challenged. As well as giving you a feeling of progress, the belt system gives a visual representation of your progress to both yourself, your family and your fellow students. It can also indicate the duration of time you have committed to your training.

n Achievement

The belt system enables you to acknowledge your achievements. Once you have demonstrated the required standard for your current belt rank, with regular practice and attendance you will be entered for gradings. If successful you will be rewarded with a new, more senior, belt rank. The feelings of fulfilment that arise from working hard and having your achievement acknowledged in front of your fellow students and family should not be underestimated. This process can carry immense emotional value.

These two examples, along with many others, contribute to another psychological need fulfilment. When you acquire new skills, we feel good about ourselves and your classes will provide a framework for continual learning and perfection of these skills.

Your mind is stimulated as you are learning new information, and as you consciously control your body you are challenging yourself to precisely perform the techniques, and combinations of techniques, that you are learning. As you engage in on-going training your skills improve and you become better. When we are able to do something well, that is, become competent at an activity, our self-esteem grows which can resonate throughout our personal and professional lives. These are some of the reasons why students often experience improvements and benefits in other unrelated areas of their lives as a result of CKD training. In addition, activities like exercise, laughter, deep



relaxation, (even eating chocolate!) create feelings of fulfilment which trigger the body's release of endorphins – a hormone that acts as a natural pain killer and generates feelings of warmth and well-being. People who engage in sustained levels of exercise produce high levels of endorphins which can explain why such people are typically good spirited too.

Sometimes, when training over a prolonged amount of time, say 30 minutes or more, we can become so absorbed that we lose track of time (it seems to pass much faster) and we can even lose our sense of self-consciousness. This doesn't mean training wildly and mindlessly – more completely engrossed in our execution of the CKD techniques. Studies refer to this as the state of flow, the sense of fulfilment we feel when totally immersed in an activity. This is the same sensation that athletes call the zone, the mild euphoric state that runners feel when engaged in a race or run. The total involvement in the activity supersedes the activity itself. You can experience this in CKD too!

The state of flow is regularly experienced after a moderate to high level of proficiency in CKD has been attained, as the balance between challenge and mastery is better equated. CKD instructors promote this by periodically pushing students to the edge of their comfort zone, but not so far as to make the training overwhelming (as mentioned in Benefit #4 – Self Defence, a moderate amount of stress actually improves our performance).

So even if other areas of your life are not as fulfilling as you would like them to be, CKD classes can provide an enjoyable environment to partake in a fulfilling and rewarding activity.

## About The Author



Jason Wright is a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt instructor of Choi Kwang-Do and truly believes that martial arts training is one of the best methods available for physical and mental improvement. Despite having 18 years of experience in Choi Kwang-Do, Jason believes that he is always learning and practises Choi Kwang-Do as a means of on-going personal development, enjoying the challenges and privileges of teaching martial arts along the way.

Through teaching at various locations across North West London including evening classes, corporate gyms and schools, Jason's aim is to help as many people as possible enjoy the unique physical and mental benefits that Choi Kwang-Do provides. When he isn't teaching or training, he enjoys the 3 R's - reading, (w)riting and relaxing.

## Further Information & Resources

For more information on Choi Kwang-Do classes in Hendon and Ealing, North and West London visit [www.TheMartialArtForLife.com](http://www.TheMartialArtForLife.com)

For more information on Choi Kwang-Do visit [www.ChoiKwangDo.com](http://www.ChoiKwangDo.com)

For custom designed clothing and merchandise visit [www.MyProShop.co.uk](http://www.MyProShop.co.uk)