

Tetsudo - Further Reading
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Tetsudo -

**Further
Reading**

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History

Tetsudo is a martial art that has its roots in Asia. The late great Master Tambo Tetsura was born in Tibet but it is known that he travelled extensively and studied all aspects of martial arts such was his interest in them. He studied Karate (Japan), Tai-Chi (China) and Ghatkhan (India - stick fighting). Master Tetsura noticed that most of the martial systems tried to make students conform to the pattern of the "style" and not for the needs of the individual. In the late 1950's he arrived in England and, as mentioned, was well versed in all aspects of martial arts but found that none incorporated a philosophy for the individual person. It was in 1960 that he met a young person called Balbinder Singh Dhaliwal in the Wolverhampton Library. It was at this time that the whole core of the Artform we now call Tetsudo (The Way of Tetsura) came into being. This young person became the sole heir and possessor of the knowledge that Master Tetsura had of martial arts. Master Tetsura died in 1966 leaving Balbinder Singh Dhaliwal his sole student to be the flag bearer of his method of martial art. At first Mr. Dhaliwal named this method [Goyararu](#), but it was 23rd July 1994 that became Foundation Day for the Artform of Tetsudo - The Way of Tetsura.

Tetsudo students are actively encouraged to explore their emotional persona which will aid them to gain greater understanding of themselves and the environment in which they live. Rather than stifle diverse thinking, each individual student (shishu) can with basic methods of body movement explore their full potential within this unique Artform.

This information is aimed purely to give you an idea of what general training in Tetsudo can be like, but it is stressed that reading a web page cannot come close to training in a real session. If you are interested or curious in getting more information on Tetsudo, please look at the "Clubs" section: on this site.

Philosophy

Tetsudo can be defined as a set of exercises and drills that enable an individual to gain a control and understanding of their minds and bodies. The art of Tetsudo teaches principles and concepts rather than set methods and responses to given situations. This encourages students to express themselves through their training. The teaching formats of Tetsudo are formalised and well structured, because before a student can fully express their art, they need a solid foundation in the basic principles of Tetsudo.

Tetsudo is sometimes known as "the thinking person's martial art". An individual during their time in training will develop various skills and abilities which can aid them in dealing with conflicts situations. The skills that they possess may be rendered useless if the student does not know how to use their abilities WISELY. A great chess master may be able to play a formidable game of chess, but the very same pieces in the hands of a novice will have a very different effect. Tetsudo teaches its students to act wisely and appropriately when dealing with problems or conflicts both within the martial arena and within the arena of life itself.

Tetsudo is an artform that can be defined as neither hard nor soft. It embraces both sides of the spectrum as one side is ineffective without the other. Tetsudo training incorporates the use of a full spectrum of training aspects from the use of high-energy dynamic movements to the gentle, sublime and therapeutic exercises.

One of the main differences in Tetsudo from some other martial arts is the emphasis of a non-lethal approach to self defence. Non-lethal and non effective are two different entities and one should never be confused with the other. Non lethal self defence approaches allow Tetsudo practitioners to be able to respond without hesitation in a controlled yet fully committed way, while still staying within the moral and legal boundaries of modern society.

In summary, Tetsudo strives to be a useful and pragmatic martial art. Though in some ways it can be seen as a modern martial art, it incorporates philosophy dating back many thousands of years. All teachings within Tetsudo are of practical use, since knowledge that cannot be applied into life might as well not be learned in the first place! Tetsudo strives to teach the root concepts behind the martial arts, it is then up to the student to APPLY these concepts in a way that befits them.

The Concepts of Freestyle

One of the corner stones of Tetsudo thinking is that in Nature "Everything exists in a state of duality" and as practitioners we are introduced to this concept very early on in our training life in the form of 'soft and hard', 'vigorous and passive', 'fast and slow', 'right and left'. This practice suggests that we are both body and mind, needing the application of both to achieve the satisfaction of performing a sound technique. In the practice of kedh (kata) we learn to change from one emotional state to another with speed and fluency. We learn to develop artistry as well as scientific clinical movement.

It is in the practice of Freestyle, however, that our one-sidedness stares us straight in the face. It can be a physical one-sidedness (i.e. too much use of favourite hand/leg). However it could be that the biggest struggle within ourselves is with an excess of aggression or we go the other way with too much yielding and passivity. Tetsudo freestyle provides an environment in which we learn the need to be both forward and backward-moving, fast and slow, giving and receiving, otherwise it cannot "work" between two people never mind within ourselves.

Therefore to enjoy and perform good freestyle we have to learn to RESPOND APPROPRIATELY. Otherwise we give up trying to respond, usually blaming our own or our partner's lack of understanding, or complaining that the demands of the instructor are too high or not clear.

In learning through Tetsudo about the dual nature of our being, we may decide that we could put our compromising skills to good use in the outside world. We deal more effectively with our own personal contacts and everyday stress situations. So why, with these new-found skills, do we feel we keep coming up against obstacles and disappointment in life?

I believe the reason is because that in the early stages of learning our compromised freestyle is not spontaneous. It contains elements of 'past' and 'future'; we use "favourite combinations" that we feel comfortable with. We are also planning when to slip these combinations in whilst we are actually participating! Surely we cannot apply our mind to two things at the same time? How can we perform effectively if this is the case?

In our everyday lives we can see how this concept of 'past' and 'future' gives us problems. We pine for the 'past' because we think it was better than what we have now. We tend to dream of a golden future that never meets up to our expectations. Because of these fixed thought patterns it is extremely difficult for us to experience things NOW exactly at the point at which events happen. Every one of our daily experiences has a beauty all of its own but we live unconscious to this fact because we are never right there in that moment of time. Usually we are floating away on some 'past' or 'future' fantasy, not seeing what is right under our noses.

Competitive freestyle takes this problem out of the equation. We are forced to become reactive and respond because we want to score the point - the stress of the situation brings our consciousness right up to the forefront of our sub-consciousness, often for the first time in weeks! This is what makes Competitive freestyle uncomfortable for many practitioners, they cannot hide from this confrontation of the present. But as we leave the competitive arena we slip back into a comfortable drowsy vision of thinking to ourselves "I've done better than that before" ('past') or "I'll get a point next time!" ('future'). We do not however forget that uncomfortable feeling we had when we had the realisation of being confronted by the present!

Many practitioners are sometimes heard to say. "I don't want to enter the Competition" or "I think I'll stop at Blue Belt". and this fear of facing the present moment is the reason why. The competition experience and/or Tetsudo practice at a senior level forces us to face up to ourselves in glorious Technicolor and we often don't like what we see.

As our experience of freestyle practice continues over the years, we find when freestyling with less able opponents, that their actions seem to become slow and predictable. We find that we can hold our own with the more senior students, our defences becoming more effective, and our attacks, swifter. This is positive feedback and confirms the now for us. It shows us that although we were apprehensive of being in the present it actually feels very good the more we let ourselves experience it.

When we observe the Senior exponents of our Artform performing freestyle, we see how they are able to deal with any situation by having no fear of failure, and no plans; everything is reacted to at the precise moment that it actually happens. No concern for past or future.

Whenever I see someone make hard contact during a Competitive bout, it makes we wonder if that person would do the same thing in the outside world when presented with someone whose defences were down, maybe not striking with a physical blow but with a verbal attack which could be even more hurtful.

We are all students in our World, and in the end we are only answerable to ourselves for our own frustration, and only by understanding and coping with our own frustrations can we ever hope to help others with theirs.

The acquisition of skill carries an enormous responsibility for it has to be used wisely. We can never be Instructors - only living examples.

In conclusion, then we can say that our practice of Freestyle in Tetsudo allows us to ride the waves in our multi-faceted world, by showing us that we need to be more aware of the many sides within ourselves. It can give us freedom from the one-sidedness of thought and from the frustration, which this creates.

When the enlightened mind flowers, all that is, flowers with it.

Self Defence

Self-defence is not the function of tricks or pre-programmed responses but of the spontaneity of the human being's survival instinct.

In Tetsudo, we do not teach pre-programmed, set solutions to self defence; but rather teach the student concepts that he or she will learn to an instinctive level. Once this is achieved, the student can react in a natural and spontaneous way to deal with a threat situation.

Tetsudo self defence is not geared towards a violent battlefield scenario, but focuses on non-lethal responses needed for today's world and society. Non-lethal does not mean non effective - there is a distinctive difference between the two! For example, if every doorman, security guard or police officer were to blind, paralyse or kill every person that they had an encounter with: there would be many court cases and prison sentences to follow! Lethal self defence approaches can burden martial artists with the choice of whether to respond to a threat or hold back. Within this time, it may already be too late to respond - as self defence is a very fast and quick action which does not leave space for hesitation!

In the words of Guru B S Dhaliwal - *"if one wants to learn how to gouge peoples eyes and jab them in the throat, they need not dedicate themselves to a system for 10 or 20 yrs just to learn this, my young son can learn that in the school play ground!"*

The basic techniques in Tetsudo teach the student body mechanics and the integration of the whole being (mind and body) into the movement/action. The real life application of these techniques however, may look very different from the classical training methods since the individual may need to modify their technique to strike from any angle, any position, any stance - whether they are upright, falling over or jumping in the air.

Awareness is always of key importance, and the knowing of how to read a situation, body language, and of how to avoid confrontations is a necessity. At the end of the day the best form of self defence is not to be their in the first place!

Surviving a confrontation situation is determined by the type of training and preparation that has been done beforehand! At the moment of confrontation, it is far too late to try anything new, and as the fight/flight instinct sets in, the body will resort back to what it is most familiar with. In effect, the art of self defence can be considered a state of mind that utilises the conditioning and skills that the body has attained through years of hard work.

Energy States

Energy States	Emotional Expression	Description of Corresponding Movement		
High Energy	Volatile Tension, Expressive Anger	Vigorous	Strong & Explosive	Instinctive
High Energy	Internal Tension, Non-expressive Anger	Dynamic Tension	Strong & Restrained	Conscious & Deliberate
Medium Energy	Formal	Firm	Restrained & firm	Conscious & Deliberate
Low Energy	Relaxed, Buoyant	Light and Fast	Unrestrained, Soft and fast	Instinctive
Low Energy	Sedate, At Ease, Relaxed	Passive	Unrestrained, Soft & Slow	Conscious & Deliberate

The Biology of Funnel Breathing

"EXHALE as you perform a vigorous punch; and with that exhalation let out the KIA!! - INHALE as you return to the starting position...." - INCORRECT ADVICE

This is probably what most beginners in the martial arts are taught. Sadly, this advice is incorrect and reflects the Instructor's lack of understanding of the biology of EXERTION and BREATHING.

Extensive scientific studies have proved that the correct way to breath when powerfully exerting yourself is to inhale and HOLD your breath during the exertion phase of your movement and exhale on the return. The reason for this is that HOLDING one's breath creates a rigid rib cage. This helps to "pressurize" the thoracic cavity (the area enclosed by the rib cage) so as to provide support for your upper spine. At the same time, you build up INNER ABDOMINAL pressure through the contraction of your abdominals, which helps to keep the lower spine rigid - performed this way the exertion movement will not place dangerous stress on your spine.

If you think that holding your breathe during exercise is bad for you, consider the countless sporting events in which this breathing technique comes into play:

1. In Archery: *before releasing the arrow*
2. In Tennis: *at the moment of full contact with the ball*
3. In Baseball: *at the moment of full contact with the ball*
4. In Golf: *at the moment of full contact with the ball*

The reason for holding the breath is two fold:

1. to create a taut chest against which muscle can work efficiently and effectively
2. holding your breath enables a biological steady state to be achieved.

Studies show that holding your breath during vigorous exertion enables you to generate up to 20% more force, force that is concentrated.

Another concept that many beginners are taught is not even to exhale - inhale in synchrony with exertion/relation cycle BUT TO BREATHE NORMALLY. This is a very common error. To breathe normally may be possible during very relaxed passive movements. However, during vigorous exertion it is virtually IMPOSSIBLE since you must control and regulate your breathing in order to EXERT. Maximal exertion situation call for forced inhalation _ holding during exertion phase and forced exhalation.

So why is so much incorrect information so widely disseminated to students of Martial Arts. I personally think it is due to an incomplete biological knowledge of what is known as the VALSALVA EFFECT. This is the process of latently forcing expiration while keeping the nostrils and mouth closed - as many of us occasionally do to clear the pressure in our ears. When you perform a maximal exertion, pressure within the thorax is built up and this can increase to such an extent that it squeezes the thoracis blood vessels shut and inhibits blood flow. In turn, the flow of blood back to the heart is diminished - and if the pressure is great enough, the flow can actually STOP. The same chain of events occurs during the outgoing flow which moves blood away from the heart. Under extreme circumstances the blood flow to the heart and the brain could be impeded to the point where a person could 'blackout'. Even more important is that the increased pressure may cause blood vessels to rupture leading to serious complications or even death. There is no question therefore that the VALSALVA EFFECT can be very dangerous - BUT IT IS HARMFUL ONLY IF YOU HAVE SERIOUS CIRCULATORY PROBLEMS or IF YOU HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR TOO LONG UNDER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF EXTREME EXERTION.

However, when executing explosive movement in any sport, a partial VALSALVA effect is desirable. You want the beneficial effects of the increased pressure but you want to avoid the negative aspects. Thus the key is to not hold your breath for too long - when it is held for short periods of time, there is absolutely no likelihood of any ill effects.

No vigorous technique is or can be performed at maximal exertion along the entire route of its trajectory. In reality vigorous movement involves both maximal exertion elements and low or moderation exertion elements. The low or moderate exertion phase generally occurs during the early stages of the movement and the maximal exertion [FOCUS!!] occurs at that final MICRO-SECOND of target contact.

Conclusions on the concept of FUNNEL BREATHING

The Great Ustad Tetsura devised the concept of Funnel Breathing as a mechanism that eliminates the negative aspects of the VALSALVA effect (i.e. the prolonged build-up of extreme intra-thoracic pressure as a result of breath holding) but retains all the positive effects of the VALSALVA EFFECT (i.e. increasing thoracic tautness to provide mechanical support for the spine and active muscles). However, the Great Ustad's method also provides facility for another dimension. That is that the mechanics of funnel breathing greatly facilitate the attainment of emotional and intentional focus. Even the visual symbolism of a funnel is towards a focus, a point of concentration.

So in practice, a student will exhale in a fairly relaxed manner at the start of the techniques, and as the technique arrives at its focus point (ie the point of real or imaginary impact), the windpipe will close down leaving only a minimal gap - so as to almost hold one's breath on impact. The funnel effect to breathing accompanies the whole body structure in bracing and tensing onto the impact surface. This now means that the breath is in harmony with the movement, so at the relaxed starting phase of the movement the exhale is more relaxed, and at the more rigid finish of the movement there is a tension in the breath.

The Benefits of Weight Training

Physical conditioning is a highly important aspect of the martial arts. It is of such importance that Master Tetsura introduced conditioning as a primary aspect of Guru BS Dhaliwal's early training. Conditioning does not mean simply strengthening the striking implements such as the hands for breaking objects. Conditioning means strengthening the whole body so that it will be better suited to meet the physical demands of training.

I recall early on in my personal training Mr Dhaliwal emphasising the benefit of weight training as a total body conditioning exercise for the martial arts. Weight training strengthens the muscle tissue, bones and connective tissue of the body and has numerous benefits, as described below under the following categories:

Training and performance

1. The ability to generate more powerful movements
2. An ability to generate faster and more explosive movements
3. An increase in the overall agility of the body

Health and injury prevention

1. A stronger body is more resistant against training injuries and is able to heal quicker
2. A strong body can better absorb physical trauma (for example a strong midsection can better absorb a physical blow to that area)
3. Weight training can be used to specifically target weaker muscles, creating a balance and symmetry in the body, improving posture and guard against injury incurred through muscle imbalances
4. For older people, weight training can be used to combat the degenerative effects of aging by keeping the muscles, connective tissue and skeletal system strong

Other benefits

1. An increase in muscularity increases the bodies metabolism and is therefore a useful aid to burning excess body fat
2. Enhances self confidence

There is much advice available nowadays regarding weight training. Countless magazines run articles giving advice and tips as well as advertising many quick fix fitness regimes, training gimmicks and supplements. I will follow up this article with further articles covering weight training tips and strategies. But for now, here are a few points and recommendations that I would like to give:

1. Avoid using steroids and supplements such as creatine - train naturally using sound training techniques and principles
2. Protein powder supplements can be used if needed, but try and use normal protein rich foods in place of powders
3. Avoid over training - remember the body builds muscle while resting; not while working out and therefore a particular exercise should be performed ideally once a week - for example if you perform bench press on a Tuesday then you should not have to bench press again till the following Tuesday - thus leaving ample time for muscle repair, growth and strength gains
4. Master using perfect form for an exercise and develop a strong mind-muscle link - this is the key ingredient to effective weight training
5. Eat a well balanced diet - carbs and protein are not the only food sources a body needs
6. Get plenty of sleep and rest
7. Balance the body properly, don't just strengthen your favourite muscle groups, the body should be balanced and the smaller stabiliser muscle groups needs to be strong also
8. Work your muscles through a full range of movements and don't forget to stretch properly after a session (please note: do not perform too much deep static stretching before lifting weights as this can inhibit your strength levels)

9. Perform your cardio training after doing your weight training, as cardio training performed beforehand can effect your weight training performance
10. Always warm up properly, but do not tire yourself doing countless warm up sets
11. Ego is no place for the gym, lift using appropriate weight to allow you to keep good form - remember muscles are actually worked harder with strict form and less weight than poor form with heavy weight

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