

Are You Combat Fit?

If you are looking to compete in Ju Jitsu Kumite or submission grappling then one of the main factors to consider and improve his fitness. This, in and of itself, is a vast subject.

Now, when I first began to compete, my supplementary training was primarily weight training and long slow distance running. In terms of strength development I scoffed at anything else other than weight training.

However when sparring with friends and training partners, while initially strong, I soon found myself running out of steam. Eventually, I had to admit, my physical training (while providing aesthetic benefits) was not functional for the goals I had.

When I fought in competition in the earlier days I relied too much on strength and this led to technically superior fighters often using this against me. Essentially, due to my supplementary training, I was gifting fighter's victory over me!

I began to look into other training and fitness methods from old time fighters and wrestlers, along with more contemporary training protocols.

The result?

Out went the longer slow distance style training along with the weight training the way I had been doing it and in came bodyweight exercises along with deep breathing exercises. As I began to train using my own bodyweight more, and using it as a unit and not isolating little muscles here and there, I noticed my strength endurance go up noticeably!

This is vital when training to compete in a competition format. I also developed a better awareness of my breathing that allowed me to loose tension when I gained a decent controlling position against my opponent. Instead of wasting energy in these positions I conserved it while letting my opponent use his energy trying to escape.

I found that working my body in this more holistic fashion allowed me to condense my workouts into quick, brutal, sessions that closer reflected the chaos of a real time fight than did my previous training methods.

When I first began I could barely do fifty body weight squats in a row, but that repetitive use of strength is often what is required in a tournament format. I worked my way up to doing, at one time, five hundred in a row in about fifteen to sixteen minutes (I don't suggest you do this or that it is necessary, it is just I am an extremist!).

Combining squats, push-ups of different varieties, bridge work, hill sprints (a favorite of collegiate wrestlers in America) and many other exercises done in sequence with little rest in-between all served to really improve my competitive fitness.

Also, due to the nature of the training, using as it does the whole body with a keen focus on the breath, I found that my RHR (resting heart rate) dropped down to the low forties! (Normal adults should be around sixty to eighty).

OK, what lesson can be learnt from my experiences?

Well, first of all, I have to say that such training won't make you technically better. However, it will often allow you to push your opponent beyond his physical thresholds while you remain within yours.

First, train your Ju Jitsu.

Secondly, add in relevant physical fitness and health training.

Allow this training to reflect the full-bodied activity that fighting actually is.

Don't make the same mistakes I did!

NOTE: This article is not meant to be a knock on weight training. I teach weight lifting as part of my job. It certainly does have benefits and has helped

many people. However, never ignore the power and functional strength you can create using your bodyweight from all angles and positions. The crossover to competing is substantial

About the Author

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