

Training the Mind and Body through Tae Kwon Do  
Black Belt 1<sup>st</sup> Dec Thesis by Kary Pierce

Through years of training in classes at Cho's Tae Kwon Do several things become second nature to the student. It's as though after a time the brain doesn't have to work at remembering patterns. However a person should always be looking to improve their imperfections while practicing. It relates to the concept "you perform what you practice." There is always something that can be improved. The mind also picks up patterns of thinking that become a part of everyday life. These philosophies are very well put in the Aims to Achieve, Pledge, and Principles of AIMAA. They too become ingrained – after time one can go months without looking at the philosophy's and still rattle them off without missing a beat. One good method to remember them is to create a personal memory link by use of a sentence or creation of an easy to remember story. Below is a sentence example:

The AIMAA pledge could be

*Two Pretty Cows Found*

- T** – To *Train* both mind and body through Tae Kwon Do
- P** – To *Promote* friendly relations amongst all people
- C** – To be a *Courageous* opponent against all untruths
- F** – To *Follow* the rules of Tae Kwon Do and my instructor<sup>1</sup>

After more than five years practicing, the Tae Kwon Do patterns become ingrained in the brain and the body gets used performing the same motions. That's why AIMAA offers more in the curriculum by challenging the body with other exercises. This can be supplemented outside of school such as formally and structured like weightlifting or informal and unstructured like hiking. These challenges to the body are what keeps well rounded muscle strength and heart fitness.

The body is an amazing thing. Movement and exercise are necessary to maintain strength and health. It is said that an athlete can become an expert at a particular movement type after practicing it 10,000 times<sup>2</sup>. Kinesiology is one term used to describe these muscle movements. There are many basic components that make up kinesiology such as Force, Muscle Movement, Articulation, Contraction, Tension Curve, Anatomy, Muscles, and Newton's Laws. The easiest to discuss is Force where the muscles perform compression (push), tension (pull), shear (slide), and torsion (rotation, twist)<sup>3</sup>. The idea is of course to strengthen and tone the body through exercise. The kinesiology addresses muscle movement, while cardio addresses the heart and circulatory system. Healthy cardio exercises can be relatively easy but there are several factors one needs to research such as resting and target heart rates, time requirements, and diet. Tae Kwon Do addresses both the muscle strengthening and the cardio. Anytime that a student jumps high and lands these forces strengthen the muscles and bones, the same is true of punching bags and

targets (with force). In addition, most fitness regimens outside of class enhance performance in Tae Kwon Do.

The mind is to the body as the helm is to the ship, it guides and directs every movement and action the body takes. All of one's discipline comes from the mind and it requires a great deal of practice. It's easy to get carried away with negative thoughts, and at times difficult to focus on the positive. However if a person can recognize and tap into their personal power they can train their minds to be more open, accepting, and positive. Regardless of what is outside of the person's mind and body it is what is within the mind that can control the thinking process to maintain a strong positive attitude. With that ability this person can impact what is outside towards the positive. AImAA's philosophies facilitate this empowerment in a most simple and direct language. They are inarguably positive and teach discipline and acceptance.

There is no doubt that training mind and body through Tae Kwon Do can be extraordinarily rewarding. It is not for everyone in the physical aspects (techniques, patterns, sparring) but certainly there are alternatives if one chooses. However, in the philosophical aspects offered through AImAA everyone can gain something very valuable.

1 AImAA Student Handbook

2 History Channel "The Brain"

3 [www.exrx.net](http://www.exrx.net)