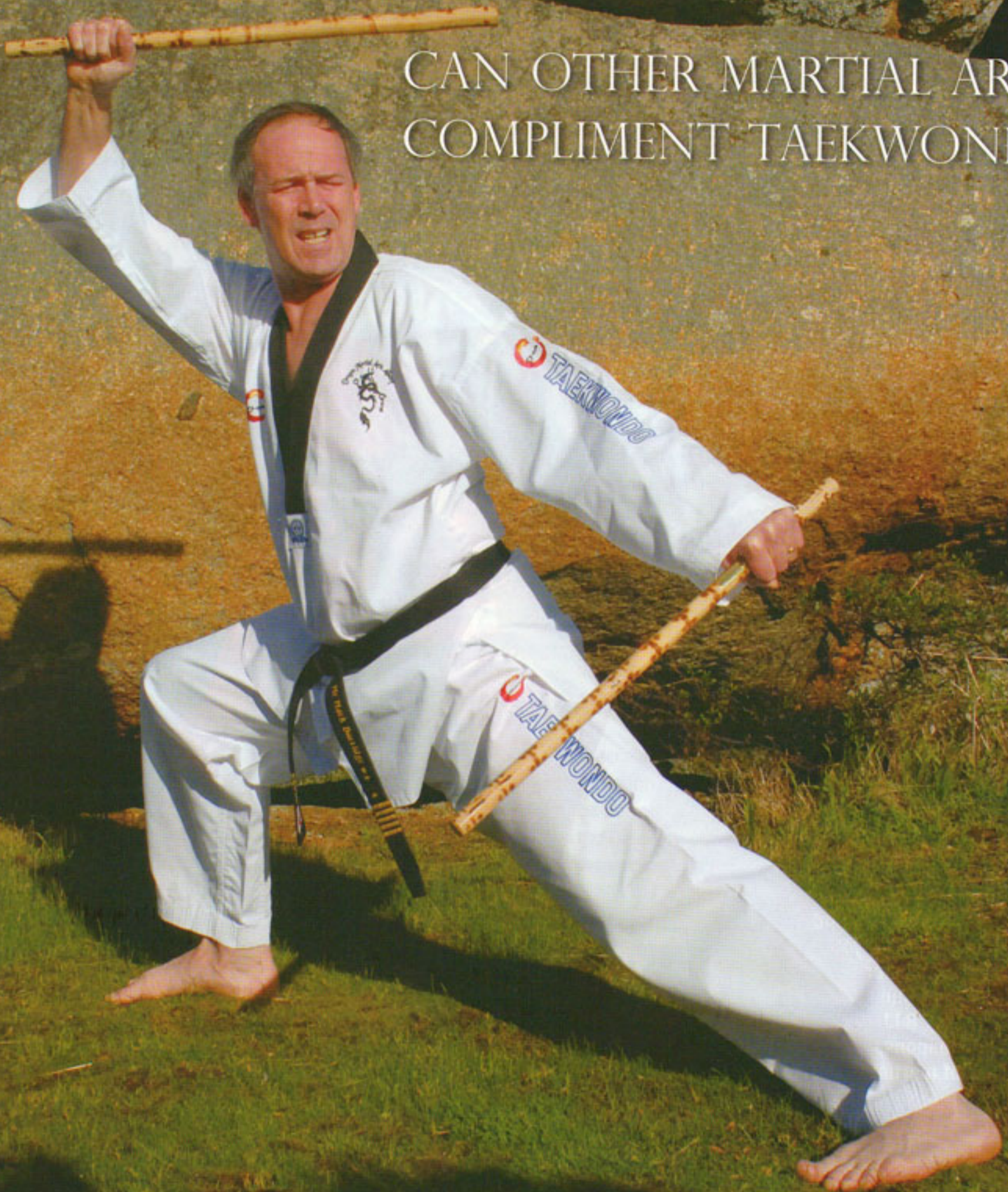


# CROSS- TRAINING

CAN OTHER MARTIAL ARTS  
COMPLIMENT TAEKWONDO?





*The question of cross-training has been hotly debated in the taekwondo world for a long time — is taekwondo a complete art in and of itself, or can students benefit from training in a variety of styles? Should practitioners choose just one art and stick with it, or do we need to open our minds to other possibilities? Mark Burridge from Dragon Martial Arts looks at these questions.*

They are also very fast off the mark and can kick hard. Taekwondo training focuses a lot on speed drills, step work and timing for defence. However, I recognise it has its limitations in some self-defence scenarios.

The main weakness in taekwondo, I feel, is any close-range or ground-fighting attack scenarios, where you

by evading the oncoming punch, then using kicks to defend. Or just hand techniques, for example, block and evade, following through with punches, back-fists, uppercuts, and hook punches (boxing, karate, taekwondo), knife-hand or palm-strikes (kung fu, karate, taekwondo). Or close range techniques, such as elbows, knee-strikes, head-

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## WITH CROSS TRAINING, YOU HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS.

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just can't kick. We remedy this by adapting elements of other martial arts. For example, at a close range, we adapt kickboxing or Wing Chun, and in ground fighting, we adapt BJJ. In sport taekwondo, players can clinch until the referee breaks them up, but in the street, they will be punching or grappling you to the ground.

My students follow the grading syllabus of WTF (Kukkiwon) taekwondo, as I believe it is important to keep the basic techniques and forms work strong and it is an excellent foundation to build upon. However, I incorporate other arts in lots of different ways. Each and every class is different to give variety in our classes and keep training exciting.

However, each class will also have a theme. For example, long-, mid- or close-range techniques, or fitness and speed. This helps to focus on which arts to use and how to explain them in certain situations.

Sometimes we teach students to just use kicks (taekwondo long-range)

butts, takedowns, sweeps (kickboxing, taekwondo, kung fu, BJJ).

We use a lot of hapkido, aikido and BJJ moves within different grab scenarios such as wrist grabs, front grabs, hair grabs, back grabs, headlocks and bear hugs. It's important to give our students options for every situation. Once or twice a month, I hold special seminars and workshops focusing on a particular art such as BJJ or weaponry, including bo staff, jo staff, kali sticks, nunchuku and bokken.

With sparring, we use all the styles and rules, such as point sparring and continuous sparring, WTF taekwondo full-contact rules and wrestling rules. In the sparring classes, we mix it up by controlling what the players can do.

With cross training, you have all the answers. If the fight goes to ground, then your BJJ comes to the fore. The purpose of grappling is to subdue your opponent, forcing them to submit. Outside the dojang or sports arena, these grappling skills are best used

I have been doing martial arts for about 25 years now and am a 5th degree Black-belt. I love it as much as the first day I started; taekwondo and teaching martial arts are my passion. I have now run five successful full time schools. Over the years, instructors such as Mr Sok Pong Kim, Jinho Jo (Taekwondo Australia), Ross Harnett (Taekwondo Oh Do Kwan), Master Leigh Childs (ITF taekwondo in the UK), Steven Burrige (BMAA), John Donohue and Habby Heske (Extreme BJJ and Fight Club) have influenced me. I have extensive experience in a variety of martial arts, including different styles of taekwondo, Muay Thai kickboxing, hapkido, aikido, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and weaponry such as bow and jo staff, kali sticks, nunchuku and sword training.

I think taekwondo stacks up well against the other fighting arts; a good taekwondo player is very hard to beat. They have more range than most, which can keep an opponent away.



when you don't want to hurt the person or it is your job to control or restrain someone. For example, if a friend or family member is drunk and out of control, posing a threat to themselves or others, or if there is a loudmouth harassing you.

These are low-level threats where you don't want to hurt the person and it is neither necessary nor legally justified to do so. Aside from these sorts of situations, you're unlikely to want to take someone to the ground in the street. Lets face it, outside the padded comforts of the dojang lies bitumen, rocks and broken glass, making ground fighting potentially harmful to oneself.

Rarely is a street confrontation one-on-one. Therefore, from a self-defence point of view, no one art has all the answers. Cross training gives the student more choices to cover any street attack scenario. Even in sport, it gives you more choices in different rules, or with Mixed Martial Arts competition such as the National

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## PEOPLE REALLY DO GROW FROM TRAINING, IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

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All Styles. Furthermore, cross training also gives you more of an edge as to understanding and reading what your opponent may do or use against you.

As a self-defence tool, all martial arts styles on their own have limitations. I think it's important to equip students with the skills that will enable them to help themselves or others out of any predicament. A great advantage of cross training is that it gives students more streetwise defence scenarios to enable them to handle any aggressive situation and gives them more choices on how to handle themselves.

Mixing it up not only keeps classes exciting and instructors and students learning, but also broadens your student base, as it appeals to and caters for all aspects of martial arts training. It's about spreading the word of martial arts to help as many people as you can. People really do grow from training, in so many different ways.

Some feel that cross training is too much for a student to take in, but I believe





that martial arts is a lifetime pursuit of excellence and growth, both mental and physical. As Bruce Lee, an innovator in cross training once said, "keep what is useful to you and throw away what is not." Some instructors shun cross training and think people should choose just one martial art and stick to it. I feel the reasons for this could be the martial art is very traditional, which we find in a lot of karate styles, or they are governed by an association that won't allow it. This is a bit of a contradiction, as most instructors will have studied other styles. In fact, many students on achieving their Black-belt may look to do a different style. Some instructors may only know one art, or they run a part time school, where they have other jobs and teaching martial arts is a hobby for them.

Ultimately, each individual student has their own reasons for training in martial arts; some for sport, tradition, self-defence, self-discipline, or fitness. Having taekwondo as a main form allows students to have the traditional art, whilst the cross training gives students a comprehensive self-defence base, giving them options for any situation. TS

