

The Dragon Gym



*A Solo-Training Primer for Tae Kwon Do Students
(or Traditional Martial Artists)*

“Build a physique to withstand all odds and be free from ailments as far as practicable”

**DRAGON GYM MARTIAL ARTS AND
FITNESS**

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A Solo-Training Primer for Tae Kwon Do Students (or Traditional Martial Artists)

Taekwondo, and martial arts in general, is not a mere hobby. In order to reap the many and full benefits of Martial Arts training, a more dedicated and conscientious approach is necessary. Yes, you will get in shape and learn about Taekwondo just by attending a few classes per week; however, you will forego the ultimate potential that your training can offer. In addition to attending your regular belt classes there are a few basic things that you can be doing in order to enhance your physical condition, improve your technique, and expand your overall Martial Arts Experience.

1. Explore and take advantage of additional classes if you have opportunity to train at a gym where a variety of styles are taught in an open minded way. Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Muay Thai Kickboxing, Boxing, Kettlebells, and even Yoga can all be excellent compliments to your training. Additionally, these classes are offered at a variety of times that can suit your schedule.
2. Practice and Train on your own. This can be done either at the gym or at home. A list of sample routines will follow.
3. Exercise/General Physical Preparation. If nothing else, just exercise and raise your general fitness so that you can maximize your in class time with drills and technique. YES, there is a difference between *training* and exercise. **The beauty of Kettlebell training and the Strong ON! system is that it bridges that gap.**

Sample Routines:

Spend a few minutes at home, before class, or after class.

The important thing is to do something every day AND remember to vary the intensity from day to day.

A few minutes every day will be more beneficial than trying to *blow it out* once a week.

You don't have to do everything every day, just do something every day. What should that *something* be? Evaluate your priorities and determine what are the 5 most important elements or qualities of your martial arts training. Pick from that list.

Practicing Technique - These are NOT conditioning workouts. Take your time and prioritize the quality and correctness of each repetition. **The goal is to *get better*, not to *get tired*.**

1. Basic Kicks. You should be doing at least 100 kicks per day. If you have been training for over one year, the number should be more like 200. The better you get the **more** you should be practicing. If you are a beginner, do these kicks slowly, focus on technique and get all the parts right: stance, foot position, targeting, chambering, and defensive posture. All kicks can be practiced from a neutral or sparring stance.
 - a. Cover all your bases. Perform 10 kicks on the right, then 10 kicks on the left. Then move on to the next kick.
 - i. Front Kick
 - ii. Inside Crescent Kick
 - iii. Outside Crescent Kick
 - iv. Round house kick
 - v. Side kick
 - vi. Back thrust kick (for more advanced students)
 - vii. Back Hook Kick (for more advanced students)
 - b. Focus on depth of one kick. Pick a kicking technique and perform a descending ladder. This will yield 110 kicks, 55 per leg. For example, choose front kick and perform 10 kicks on the right then 10 kicks on the left, then 9R/9L, then 8R/8L all the way down to 1.

2. Blocks and Strikes. Although we have more dexterity and control of the hands and arms practice is still required to perfect each technique. Remember, **practice makes permanent**, our goal is to perform as many perfect repetitions as possible in order to refine a technique. You can use similar schemes as described for the kicks above. Either perform 10 repetition/side for each technique or pick on technique and perform around 100 repetitions. You can also remain stationary in a given stance or take a step with each repetition and simultaneously practice your stance transitions.
 - a. Riding Horse Stance – Middle Punch, High Punch, Low Block, Inside Block, Outside Block, High Block
 - b. Front Stance – Middle Punch, High Punch, Low Block, Inside Block, High Block
 - c. Back Stance – Outside Block, Outside Forearm Block, Knife-Hand Block
3. Forms/Patterns/Poomsae – One of the great things about forms practice is that it combines so many elements of the martial arts into one drill. Remember, a form is not merely memorizing a sequence of techniques, you are practicing and refining your steps, your stances, blocks, kicks, strikes, **breathing**, and perhaps most importantly refining and developing your **intention** whilst executing techniques.
 - a. Practice 4-8 forms in a given session
 - b. If you know many forms, practice only a sampling as not to get burned out and sacrifice the quality of the practice
 - c. If you only know a few forms, practice them several times.
 - d. QUALITY OVER QUANTITY!
4. Partner Drills, One Steps, Self defenses, etc...
 - a. Practice falling and standing up – a lot.

- i. Basic Break Falls – Forward, back, left and right
 - ii. Standing up while protected – from your back, from your chest
 - iii. Rolling – Forward, Backward, Sideways
 - b. Without a partner visualize the attacks and walk through your techniques by yourself
 - c. If a partner is available practice basic takedowns, holds, escapes as well as any requisite techniques that you may have.
- 5. Sparring – By definition is done with a partner, but there are some things you can do on your own to prepare yourself better
 - a. Practice all footwork in front of the mirror: advancing, retreating, evading. Focus on your stance and defensive posture. Start slow and try to make your movements smooth and natural, speed can come later.
 - i. Moving Forward and Backward without changing leads (sliding)
 - ii. Moving Forward and Backward with changing leads (stepping)
 - iii. Side stepping
 - iv. Shuffle Step
 - v. Runner Step
 - vi. Switch Step
 - vii. Combine Footwork with attack and defensive combinations

Conditioning

Perform all conditioning “on the clock”. For example: 2 minutes of work followed by 1 minute of rest. Without the discipline of a clock, it is very difficult to maximize your solo training.

Here are some complimentary exercises that you can utilize as elements to construct conditioning routines:

1. Skip rope for 1 minute, hold a plank for 1 minute.
2. Alternate Forms and Planks
3. Alternate kicks and chairs sits or wall sits
4. Alternate forms with pushups or dands
5. Alternate kicks with pushups or dands
6. Alternate kicks with squat jumps or box jumps
7. Create a complex with pushups, pull-ups, and squats
8. Alternate kicks with Kettlebells swings
9. Alternate forms with Kettlebell clean and press/jerk
10. Alternate kicks with tire swings (works especially well with rotational or spinning kicks)

Example Workouts:

1. 5 Rounds. 2 minutes on, 45 seconds rest.

Round 1: 40 Two Hand Swings then alternate front kicks from a neutral stance

Round 2: 40 Two Hand Swings then hold a plank for the remainder of the round

Round 3: 40 Two Hand Swings then alternate side kicks from a neutral stance

Round 4: 40 Two hand Swings then hold a plank for the remainder of the round

Round 5: 40 Two Hand Swings then alternate back kicks from a neutral stance

2. 5 Rounds. 2 minutes on 45 seconds rest. The examples below are for Tae Kwon Do foot work. Substitute foot work applicable for your Martial Arts

Round 1: 40 Two Hand Swings then alternate Front foot slide and back foot slide. Switch leads after about 30 seconds

Round 2: 40 Two Hand Swings then Front Foot Slide – Side Step – Back foot slide – side step. Change leads after 30 seconds

Round 3: 40 Two Hand Swings then Front Foot Slide – Side step – Switch step – Back Foot Slide

Round 4: 40 Two hand Swings then Back Foot Slide – Single Step Forward

Round 5: 40 Two Hand Swings then Runner step back – Single Step Forward

3. 8 Rounds. Around 2 minutes on, 45 seconds rest.
Round 1: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 1
Round 2: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 2

Round 3: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 3
Round 4: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 4
Round 5: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 5
Round 6: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 6
Round 7: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 7
Round 8: 6 Reps Double Clean and Press, Form 8

4. 5 Rounds. 2 Minutes on, 45 seconds rest
Round 1: 20 Tire Swings then alternate round house kicks
Round 2: 20 Two Hand swings then Skip rope for the remainder of the round
Round 3: 20 Tire Swings then alternate round house kicks
Round 4: 20 Two Hand Swings then skip rope for the remainder of the round

Round 5: 20 Tires swings then alternate round house kicks

5. 5 Rounds. 2 Minutes on, 45 seconds rest
Round 1: 5 Turkish Get Ups. Lie on your back, stand up and kick, lie on your back...
Round 2: 1 Minute Plank then backwards break falls for the rest of the round
Round 3: 5 Turkish Get Ups. Lie on you back – kick from the ground -- stand up and kick – lie on your back...
Round 4: 1 Minute Plank then alternate break falls to the left and right for the remainder of the round
Round 5: 1 Minute Plank then forward break fall – backward break fall – stand up and kick

6. Heavy bag work. 5 rounds. 2 minutes on, 1 minute rest
 - Round 1: 20 Two Hand Swings then Jab – Cross – Lead Leg Round Kick for the remainder of the round. Switch leads at will.
 - Round 2: 20 Hand-to-Hand Swings then Jab – Cross – Rear Leg round Kick for the remainder of the round. Switch leads at will.
 - Round 3: 20 High Pulls then Lead Leg Round Kick – Cross – Jab for the remainder of the round. Switch leads at will
 - Round 4: 10 High Pulls Left then 10 High Pulls Right then Rear Round Kick – Lead Hook – Cross for the remainder of the round. Switch leads at will.
 - Round 5: 10 Cleans Left then 10 cleans right then Bump off the bag – Rear leg Round kick – Lead Leg round kick for the remainder of the round.

7. More Heavy Bag. 10 Rounds. 3 Minutes each.
 - First 30 Seconds – Two Hand Swing
 - Second 30 Seconds – Plank
 - Second Minute – Kick
 - Third Minute – Skip Rope (this is your active rest!)
 - Round 1 – Front Foot Front Kick
 - Round 2 – Rear Foot Front Kick
 - Round 3 – Front Foot Round Kick
 - Round 4 – Rear Foot Round Kick
 - Round 5 – Front Foot Side Kick
 - Round 6 – Rear foot Side Kick
 - Round 7 – Back Thrust Kick
 - Round 8 – Straight Knees
 - Round 9 – 45 Degree Knees
 - Round 10 – Crescent Knees

8. Side Kick Ladder

- a. 10 Kettlebell Front Squats then 1 side kick on each leg
- b. 9 Kettlebell Front Squats then 2 side kicks on each leg
- c. 8 Kettlebell Front Squats then 3 side kicks on each leg
- d. 7 Kettlebell Front Squats then 4 side kicks on each leg
- e. 6 Kettlebell Front Squats then 5 side kicks on each leg
- f. 5 Kettlebell Front Squats then 6 side kicks on each leg
- g. 4 Kettlebell Front Squats then 7 side kicks on each leg
- h. 3 Kettlebell Front Squats then 8 side kicks on each leg
- i. 2 Kettlebell Front Squats then 9 side kicks on each leg
- j. 1 Kettlebell Front Squat then 10 side kicks on each leg

9. Kettlebell Snatches and Forms. You may need to start with less than 10 reps per side: I worked up from 7. Start with 1 minute rest between rounds. Shorten the rest periods as desired. I used this sequence to prepare for my 5th degree Black Belt test and RKC re-certification snatch test which coincidentally (luckily?) were within a month of each other. I'll write out the forms I was practicing, but you can insert ones appropriate for your rank and style.

Round 1: 10L/10R – Kwan Gae

Round 2: 10L/10R – Po Eun

Round 3: 10L/10R – Gae Baek

Round 4: 10L/10R – Koryo

Round 5: 10L/10R – Keum Gang

Round 6: 10L/10R – Tae Baek

Round 7: 10L/10R – Pyong Won

Round 8: 10L/10R – Sip Jin

Round 9: 10L/10R – Gitae

Round 10: 10L/10R – Chunkwon

Round 11: No Snatches – Hansoo

10. The Core Six. 2 Minutes on. 1 Minute Rest

Round 1: 10 Two Hand Swings, 10 One Hand Swings, Switch, 10 One Hand Swings.

Kick for the remainder of the Round

Round 2: 2 Turkish Get Ups. Break Fall – Kick from ground – Stand up for the remainder of the round.

Round 3: 5 Double Clean and Front Squat. Lead Leg Side Kick and Reverse Punch for the remainder of the round

Round 4: 5 Double Clean and Press. 1 Form.

Round 5: 10 Snatches Right / 10 Snatches Left. Skip rope or shadow box for the remainder of the round.