

# SAGE MIND

NEWSLETTER

## 23 BENEFITS OF A MARTIAL ARTS LIFESTYLE

**SAGE Mind** [Seeing Advantages Gained from Experience] is a term I coined years ago around this perspective: our world today is abundant with information. **We build gadgets for all sorts of interests and experiences. Tech wonders produce amazing life comforts. Yet we still fail to solve the problems of the inner states, how to exceed arrested personal development, how to live lives that are holistically healthy. The missing element is wisdom, necessary for knowing how to properly wield knowledge.**

Since creating SAGE Mind, AI proliferated. To this recent tech wave I'll add that algorithms, while beneficial to achieve specific goals have potential to stifle the development of a person's wisdom faculty. The more a person allows their consciousness to be subservient to algorithms' information recommendations, the more depressed a person's ability to discern (to decide in one's best interest) becomes. Hence we have increased information but weaker wisdom.

This arm of my newsletter will explore wisdom's value, showing how it fuses into daily life alongside career development, leadership and the coaching profession.

First topic is dear to my heart. To supplement physical training at the dojang, I took a summer in high school to explore [Bodhidharma's Muscle Tendon Changing and Marrow Washing Classics](#) (this link is the comfortable book; at the time I printed the texts out in their raw form) so I could learn how to transform the body-mind through qigong. A starting point for a continuous learning experience understanding secrets housed internally.

After 30 years immersed in this arena, I'll emphasize the importance of martial arts viewed not just as a practice but lifestyle path. I've seen elderly people take it up in basic form and gain more confidence using their bodies and 5-year-olds carrying themselves with dignified bearing you'd expect of a regal.

Martial training improves health and power to act in the world. You can search up more articles and research on the general benefits.

Here I'll briefly explain some of the deeper benefits when martial training becomes a way of living.

**1. Dexterity, Hand-to-Eye Coordination.** Includes picking up objects, catching them, graceful movement handling tools.

**2. Health Consciousness. Awareness of physical, mental/spiritual health and the active cultivation of wellness in a holistic way.**

Increased sensitivity makes you aware of how your system is performing down to the muscle twitches, deep to the cells. If this becomes a lifestyle path for you, expect a deepened interest in ways to enhance health including nutrition, superfoods, herbalism and other techniques.

**3. Enhanced Focus.** Strengthened capacity for holding onto an idea for extended duration. Simply have to when aiming to improve on technique. For a basic movement like how to step forward or backward, this may require hundreds of repetitions for it to become second nature. The focus can transfer into other life domains.



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**4. Understanding of Tonifying.** A more familiar term is "conditioning." If you're dealing with authentic training methodology you learn the body needs to be conditioned either before or in sync with learning technique. Teaching martial stances would be technique but the strength to maintain them requires conditioning; the legs need strength and endurance training. This same philosophy you learn to apply also to your internal systems. Your immune system, inner organs and blood also can be tonified or conditioned to become stronger through specific breathing techniques and nutrition.

**5. Enhanced Physical Strength.** Simple as that. You can lift more, walk more, carry more, clench tighter, hit harder. At the basic level, this is because your muscles are stronger overall. At the deeper levels, your bones, ligaments and fascia transform into a stronger quality.

**6. Enhanced Intuition.** By definition this means "inner teaching" coming from in-tuition, tuition meaning teaching. With consistent self-exploration, using the body-mind in harmony with the environment, this internal teaching not only strengthens but you learn to trust it more. AI algorithms, with their recommendation capabilities act as potential adversaries to people's inclination to follow their intuition. A martial lifestyle grants you solid fortification against this intrusion into your mind space so you work with this technology intentionally.

**7. Disinterest in Negative Health Habits.** The other side of health consciousness, over time degenerative health habits fade. Important element here is the disinterest, different from willfully resisting these habits, as you grow in your art you actually don't have the desire for them.

**8. Consistent Positive Thought Vibrations.** Without going deep into the chemical effects in the body through martial training, consistent experiences facing an obstacle and overcoming them reveals to you just how powerful you are, the real agency you have in life. This naturally sets your mental frame on the positive, entertaining more consistent thought forms. A martial lifestyle makes your glass half-full.

**9. Body-mind Continuum Harmony.** Related to more esoteric techniques, you develop the sense of integration between the body and mind, how they perform in unison, their relationship to the external environment, communication with nature, ultimately reaching a soul connection with the Source of all things. Increased internal sensing, understanding, detecting states, the nuances of them, how they shift. Increased access to the autonomic system / subconscious. At this point you can perform actions like speed up and slow heartbeat, raise and lower body temperature, alter mind states at will. As a lifestyle, you carry this consciousness with you in all your endeavors.

**10. Pain Reduction.** Pain is felt through the nerves rather than the actual event causing it. I remember once accidentally closing a door with my finger in it and didn't feel a thing immediately. Then felt a pulse from the finger go up my arm and then to my brain. Happened in seconds but I sensed the flow. Depending on your martial art and how often you experience sparring / combat scenarios, you learn to consciously reduce pain experienced through awareness, meditation and breathing techniques. This has many practical applications. Pain reduction reduces distress, slowing or halting the body from flooding its system with cortisol. Excessive cortisol harms the immune system, induces panic states, creates inflammation among other negative effects. Note: Ill say pain is also important as an information signal that something is out of harmony, but training can help to manage it so it's not paralyzing.

**11. Enhanced Self-regulation.** Through training you learn how to modulate, dial up and down, move fast or slow or slower then speed up, change direction, think or react, react then think. At advanced development you learn to access and modulate emotions; you can be aggressive without being angry, empathetic without absorbing people's feelings, ambitious without becoming tyrannical, move fast while thinking long-term. As a lifestyle this has numerous practical benefits.

**12. Enhanced Situational Awareness.** Very important topic worth its own article. Especially in a time where we have more volatility in society, situational awareness shows how to assess an environment for danger. Signals to be aware of others project and how to signal not-a-victim. You realize habits like these can make you a victim going about the day: walking with your head down, walking with headphones visibly in the ears and music on, walking while reading, slumped shoulders while walking, sleeping in open environments, standing too close to the edge on the sidewalk or in a train station, walking with the smartphone openly in the hand, walking with a hood over the head blocking peripheral vision, speaking about personal information out loud on the phone in public spaces, walking flaunting items that signal wealth or riches.

**13. Enhanced Flexibility.** Freeform movement. Ability to twist, extend, maneuver, turn, roll with less bodily resistance. This flexibility transfers mentally for cognitive agility of the same caliber. Being a tree with strong roots and branches that flow with the wind.

**14. Enhanced Durability.** Less prone to physical harm from bumps and bruises. Transfers to mental endurance, bounce back from setbacks.



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**15. Immunity Enhancement.** Resistance to disease. Immunity tends to be associated mostly with catching colds or viruses, but the holistic system involves resistance to infection on all levels. Resistance to ideas, programs, mind viruses, habits and biological invaders poised to create imbalance.

**16. Fear Dissolution.** With increased awareness and self-control, you learn to distinguish between fear & caution states. Fear is the paralyzing energy, causes you to freeze, locked in inaction. Caution increases awareness of danger in a situation but you can still take action and remain calm. Some say fear is healthy; with martial training you come to understand that enhanced caution is what you're aiming for not to be paralyzed with fear. In daily life, you're more capable of meeting uncomfortable circumstances instead of avoiding due to fear paralysis.

**17. Enhanced Planning Via Frontal Lobes / Cortex.** Any martial training worth its existence will have meditation synthesized in its program. Meditation is the yin balance to the martial yang. With consistent mind concentration, the prefrontal cortex receives increased activation, giving you access to better planning, envisioning and self-regulation power. I find road rage to be a fascinating study for how just a bit of self-regulation could avoid these kinds of conflicts.

**18. Longevity.** You learn that chronological age and biological age gradually separate. Lifestyle choices can rapidly age a young person and make an older person more youthful. Cultivation arts show you this different perspective: that you can increase in health and power with age instead of automatically deteriorate like the commercials try to program us to think.

**19. A Gateway Art.** A martial lifestyle becomes a gateway to learning other arts like food as medicine, painting, dance, gardening, drawing, music, etc.

**20. Psychosomatic Nature of Physical Advancement.** Example - breaking a board is both mental and physical. Someone who psyches themselves out of doing it can injure themselves attempting to break. The board may break and also hurt or not break at all. Full confidence in oneself and the break can result in accomplishing without any injury.

**21. Comfort with Ambiguity, the Unknown.** The moment you step in front of your sparring peer or on the mat to perform a technique, you actually don't know how it will conclude. You simply act in the moment relying on your training, with each new moment producing multiple new opportunities to act. You're in quantum superposition where there are multiple potential realities. The one that happens is the one you focus on. At the same time you have plans, experience and intent. Intentionality meets the unknown regularly. Martial training helps you gain composure with these in-between spaces of knowledge and space.

**22. Power Dynamics.** You learn how true power is internal, power over Self radiated outward to the environment.

**23. Continuous Learning to Mastery.** A direct understanding of the mastery process. As a lifestyle, you apply this experiential approach to the rest of your world.

**Trent Rhodes is an autodidact, career development leader, polymath writer & educator. With a passion for martial arts, tea and tech, he's an avid reader and writes on topics bridging futuristic career education and self-directed learning. Discover more of his work on his blog, [Crown of Mind](#) and [MasterLearn](#).**

