Will Martial Arts Really Help You to Defend Yourself? by Liam

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When looking at doing a martial art like Muay Thai, there are many things that motivate people such a the chance to meet new people, the potential fitness and health benefits, and the opportunity to learn about another tradition and culture.

However perhaps the most important and basic element of a martial art of course is the ability to defend oneself and that is after all what these classes are hinged on. In theory, doing martial arts should help you to feel more confident walking the streets and in verbal confrontations because you know you can take care of yourself should you have to, and ultimately it should help save your life if you are ever attacked.

However there are those that question the usefulness of martial arts and who look at them as being too old and esoteric to really work. So can something like Muay Thai really help you to defend yourself and should you start it up? Here we will look at the answers.

First of all it's important to understand what a martial art is and what it isn't, and the difference between various different kinds of styles. The first thing to bear in mind here is that the most effective forms of martial arts on an immediate basis are the 'hard' styles which include things like Karate, Jeet Kune Do and Muay Thai. These involve things like strikes and blows as well as throws and locks and are very direct. A typical class in one of these martial arts will involve repeating the basic movements over and over, against pads, in set forms and against opponents. This way you can perfect your techniques and learn the most effective ways to deliver particular punches and kicks which is where the first benefit of martial arts comes in. If you punch normally you will do so with no technique and you will not only be likely to hurt yourself, but likely also to waste a lot of energy so that your punch doesn't do as much damage as it could. Kicking is even worse for most people as they will be unlikely to ever really have kicked anything making it slow, cumbersome and off-balance. After a while doing martial arts your kicks will be sharp and explosive.

On top of this you will also learn to block and will practice doing so over, over and over. This will give you the ability to react in an instant because you won't have to think about it - it is now a natural reaction. That in turn will mean that you are able to quickly block a punch in real life which is highly valuable.

Then you will learn other techniques which involve things like elbow and knee blows in Muay Thai, or things like how to get out of locks in Wada Ryu Karate. If you can remember these things they can come in handy in very specific circumstances that you may find yourself in.

So the short answer is yes, martial arts really can help you in a fight and particularly if you do the right styles.

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