



25. Your Pre-Workout Workout

By David Mazor
Massachusetts State Director

As an instructor, I preach that what you put into your workout is what you get out of it. The job of the instructor or coach is to help the athlete reach a level of technique, fitness and overall performance that they would not be able to reach on their own. However, along with motivating an athlete to work harder and dig deeper, it is also our responsibility to make sure that the athlete is properly prepared for their workout. Often I've come into dojangs and tournaments and seen people come in from the cold, drop to the floor and begin stretching. This approach, which often passes for getting ready for a workout, leads to injury and reduced performance. The key to a successful workout is a successful pre-workout to prepare the mind and body for maximum performance.

First, let's begin with the mind. Rushing into the dojang after a long day at work or school is the norm for many people. They try hard to sandwich in their training between numerous other commitments. However, to train successfully we need to set aside the rest of our daily stresses and bring our focus to the task ahead. Whether it's a minute or two of meditation or a visualization of the training session to come, take the time to center yourself and fully commit yourself to your workout. Use visualization to mentally run through where you want to strike and how high you want to kick and to set goals for your workout.

Second, warm-up your muscles. A good fifteen minutes of light exercises are necessary to increase blood-flow to your muscle blood. Jumping jacks, light running in place, skipping rope, shadow boxing and practicing patterns with light to moderate levels of power are all excellent ways to warm your muscles. Make sure you warm up your entire body not just your arms and legs. Remember that your warm-up is not about perfecting technique or demonstrating your power, it's about getting ready to push your body to a higher level.

And finally, stretch. Young athletes are often limber enough that they shortchange the stretching stage. Stretching not only prevents injury and increases flexibility, but also give athletes another opportunity to slow down and mentally connect with bodies.

Done correctly, your pre-workout workout should leave you warmed not winded. If you break a light sweat you've earned the badge that says you are ready to go all out in your workout.