

## Benefits of Taekwon-do and other martial arts for Health and Fitness

While traditionally, martial arts have been viewed as self-defence classes, in recent years there has been a huge increase in the number of people taking up Taekwon-do as a means of increasing health and fitness.

Taekwon-do is a martial art form incorporating traditional principles and modern exercise science. Now an Olympic sport, Taekwon-do's popularity has reached new levels.

There are many benefits to taking Taekwon-do and other martial arts including: self-confidence, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness, weight loss, improved posture, balance and agility.

According to physical therapist, Derek King: "Taekwon-do training improves flexibility and core strength. These are two aspects that are vital for addressing poor posture and muscular imbalances which lead to common sources of back/neck pain."

The punching and kicking drills of Taekwon-do improve neuromuscular function leading to increased aerobic fitness. This has the benefit of increased metabolic rate which results in more efficient calorie expenditure

and thus greater weight loss, according to Patrick Holford, Institute of Optimum Nutrition, UK.

Galway man Shane Fitzgibbon's Taekwon-do Academy is one of the few martial arts centres in Ireland that takes a holistic approach to health and wellness by offering lifestyle and nutritional assessments to its students. This leads the students to a better understanding of how they can increase their overall health and fitness by making more informed lifestyle choices.

"Shane's dedication to constantly improving his knowledge in areas such as nutrition, exercise science, injury prevention, and general well-being, takes his classes a step above the rest," said Orthopaedic and Sports Physician Dr Paul Sandys.

Shane Fitzgibbon is the only practising martial arts instructor in the West of Ireland with an internationally recognised sports fitness qualification. He runs Taekwon-do classes all over County Galway and can be contacted on 087-2070577.