

The Foundation of Martial Arts - Yoga

By [Paul Jerard](#)

At first glance, Martial Arts and Yoga seem like opposing forces and philosophies, but these two health maintenance systems have more in common than meets the eye. For a moment, consider the similarities between Tai Chi and Hatha Yoga. Within the warm up, you notice very similar movement, philosophy, and principles.

Why does "climb the mountain" stance look so much like Warrior I posture? Is it coincidence, luck, or a common link? Why does Kundalini have movements that resemble punching, kicking, and martial arts foot work? Are Kung Fu forms an extension of Vinyasa? Each has been referred to as meditation in motion.

The place of origin, for most Asian martial arts, is agreed to be the Shaolin Temple. Apparently, the monks at the Shaolin temple had become very proficient at meditation, but had not developed a health maintenance system to sufficiently train their bodies.

In the sixth century A.D., Boddidharma, a visiting Buddhist monk, from India, began to teach the monks at the Shaolin temple, a form of physical health maintenance, which is believed to be Yoga. It is also said that Boddidharma was a member of the Warrior caste. Therefore, he should also have had working knowledge of Kalaripayat; an indigenous Indian Martial art.

Boddidharma is said to have reached a level of meditation that was very advanced. The body can be trained to a point, but the mind should also be trained as well. This is a cornerstone to all martial arts training. How often have we heard about the three conflicts of mind, body, and spirit?

This is why each martial arts school should encourage a Yoga class. The healing aspect of Yoga is very beneficial to all martial artists - regardless of their style. Some karate and kung fu centers have incorporated Yoga as part of the class schedule. The reason was to attract mothers, who were hanging around the waiting area, to pick up their kids.

While there is a demand for Yoga classes among women, some martial artists, both male and female, will join in to feel the healing benefits, meditate, increase flexibility, and much more. The fact is, much like martial arts, there are many styles of Yoga.

Some are very physical and demand a lot of endurance. So, there is no end to the possibilities of where the need for Yoga can fit within a karate or kung fu studio. After all these years, it looks like Yoga and martial arts will be together again.

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