

Supplementing Your Martial Arts Training With High Kicks

By [Calasanz Martinez](#)

Many Wing Chun practitioners tend to dismiss high kicks as being "useless." High kicks are not characteristic of the art. Wing Chun tends to focus more on hand movements. Lower body strikes in Wing Chun include low kicks, kicks to the midsection, leg sweeps and stomps.

Bruce Lee, who was originally a Wing Chun practitioner, did not hold the same attitude regarding high kicks as his Wing Chun colleagues. The high kicks you see him execute in the movies are obviously not from Wing Chun. He saw the usefulness of adding Korean style kicking to his martial art repertoire.

Unfortunately, some martial artists are locked into their own styles and traditions and can't see the benefits of supplementing their training in areas where their chosen art may be weak. There is nothing wrong with honoring your martial art roots, but after a while, if you want to become a well-rounded martial artist, you have to expand your horizons.

While high kicks are not recommended for self-defense, they serve several very good purposes in martial arts training and in competitive kickboxing.

High kicks help develop balance. There is nothing more pathetic than a martial artist whose kick is wobbly and lacks focus. Aiming your kicks higher pushes you to find your balance point as you reposition your body. Over time, high kicks become easier and easier to execute.

High kicks also are great for developing leg flexibility and stretching out the muscles. I also know that if a student can train himself to throw a decent high kick, then the low kicks, which are more effective for street fighting, will be effortless and powerful.

Knowing how to execute a powerful high kick could also put you at an advantage if you want to venture into the world of kickboxing or UFC fighting. If a martial artist is flexible enough, a high kick from close range can be a surprise attack in a kickboxing match. In 2007, UFC fighter Gabriel Gonzaga knocked out Mikko Cro Cop with a high kick to the head in their bout in Manchester, England. I don't think either one of these fighters would label the high kick as "useless."

In reverse, I would have said the same thing about developing good hand movements if you studied a martial art that focused more on kicking. Many martial artists who want to become well-rounded fighters, but trained in a "kicking" oriented style take up boxing.

Supplement your martial arts training in the areas where your style lacks focus or where you may have a personal weakness that you want to improve upon. Don't be afraid to round out your training!

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