



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

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An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Mata Ju-jitsu Network and Siyodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER December 2020

Coping Tools

With a pandemic raging for over eight months, many people are struggling with the long term effects of social distancing, limited activities, abrupt changes in lifestyle, and isolation from friends and family. Millions of people around the world are now experiencing something being called 'COVID Fatigue' at this point. After months of having their lives upended and with the added stress of seasonal depression and having to do the holidays very differently, we are all faced with some big challenges in maintaining our physical and mental health.

Having our lives drastically changed for a long period can shake us completely out of our 'comfort zone.' With the infection rates going up and down we can be thrown into elevated levels of stress, fear, and anxiety that we've never experienced before. Adding a lack of exercise and sleep, unhealthy eating habits, and even possible substance abuse can complicate and compound these problems.

Luckily, there are some intelligent strategies we CAN use to help us cope with this and minimize the effects of COVID Fatigue. Here are some to be mindful of:

You're not alone - Its important to remember that we're not alone in this. There are literally hundreds of millions of people around the globe who are dealing with the pandemic and a spectrum of it's effects. Knowing that we are together in the COVID19 struggles can help a lot.

Stress is normal - Knowing that stress, anxiety and fear are normal reactions can put things in perspective for us. With better perspective we can keep our emotions in context and help us to stay calm and focused during the challenging times.

Take Breaks - When we feel stressed a pays to stop what we're doing and take a moment to calm ourselves down. Taking deep breaths, a short mediation, or stretching will also help. There are even phone apps and the like that we can get to help with this. Its important during these moments to observe how you are feeling and what you are thinking, without judgment. Instead of responding or reacting to those thoughts or feelings, note them, and then let them go.

Humor - Often times keeping a sense of humor during severe challenges in our lives can relieve stress and anxiety. There are many things about the pandemic that are just not funny, but we should try to laugh whenever possible in our day to day routines.

Downtime - Under normal circumstances its important to schedule downtime into your life. With all of the craziness that the pandemic has thrown at us this is critical to maintaining our mental and physical health. Be sure to plan ahead and include enjoyable activities and vacations on your calendar. Sometimes that can simply be relaxing at home for a 'stay-cation.'

Exercise - A routine of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity reduces anxiety and stress. 'Mindful' exercise which engages the mind, body and spirit is best to



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Important Safety Updates

Unfortunately, some areas in the northeast have taken a turn for the worst for COVID19 infections. This includes Massachusetts, which was doing exceptionally well until recently. This has prompted a step backwards in the restrictions in the Commonwealth, including the Berkshires. Governor Baker's office recently announced that, due to the rise in COVID cases, gyms and fitness centers are required to restrict the number of participants to 40% of capacity. This translates to a maximum of nine students in each class at ZenQuest taking affect on Monday, December 14.

We have been limiting classes to a maximum of ten even though we could have had eleven based on the previous guidelines. At this time, due to seasonal attendance patterns, there are actually few classes that have reservations for ten students in them, so only minor adjustments are needed. Further, its very common that at least one student doesn't make it to their class for a variety of reasons. This frequently results in even those classes attended by fewer than the maximum allowed.

If we see that a class tends to go over the maximum we will address it by notifying the last student to reserve that class and ask them to chose another. Students can also volunteer to relinquish a reservation in a more busy class to alleviate a problem. Rest assured that we will continue to do everything we can to make ZenQuest as safe as possible given the situation.

We appreciate everyone's help and cooperation in following our safety measures and are asking our students to stay mindful of them and continue to do their best with all of that. Additionally, we ask that our students also do everything that they can to stay safe when they are outside of the dojo. This will help to prevent a problem in the gym and keep the doors open so that we can all continue to enjoy the training that we love.

We do feel it necessary to reinforce that face-coverings need to be worn over the mouth AND nose. Additionally, we have noticed a few students wearing masks with valves in them to make breathing easier. Unfortunately this style of mask does not provide adequate protection for those around the wearer, and are therefore not allowed in the dojo. We ask students to please understand and select a different style of face-covering.

Every year we have some closures during the holiday season. This is based on attendance patterns and providing an opportunity to relax and enjoy the holidays. Under the circumstances, we will add a few additional days off around the holidays to help minimize risks for everyone in the gym. So this year our Christmas and New Year closures will include December 24 to January 1. Our normal schedule of classes will resume on January 2nd.

Lastly, public health experts are recommending that people stay home and minimize gathering with friends and family in person this season. Based on this, we are asking that any students who chose to increase their exposure via gatherings or traveling, to follow the appropriate requirements set by the Commonwealth. This includes intelligent strategies like quarantining and testing to minimize spreading infections to others. This also applies to members of households where one or more of the occupants have chosen to travel or gather outside of their immediate household.

With everyone continuing to do everything possible to be smart and stay safe we can continue to enjoy the training that we all love. Until the day comes when we can all put this thing behind us these strategies are all we have. Thank you all and have a wonderful holiday season!



IMPORTANT DATES

CLOSED Thursday/Friday to Friday, 12/24 to 1/2/21 - December Holidays

WELCOME NEW STUDENTS!

Cairo Brooks, Logan Robello, Miles Hamann, & Alex Pizzonia

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Paul Timler 12/1
 Lily Hecht 12/4
 Christopher Kupernik 12/6
 Courtney Kegresse 12/6
 Riley Sabato 12/6
 Trace Kimple 12/8
 Frank Scago 12/12
 Liam O'Brien Sevilla 12/12
 Christopher Morawski 12/13
 Hugh Peterson 12/14
 Ryan McCusker 12/15
 Tony Zaniboni 12/15
 Brandon McMahon 12/16
 Cairo Brooks 12/16
 Kyle Pezzano 12/17
 Grigori Fateyev 12/19
 Chloe Borrett 12/19
 Sharon Gittzus 12/23
 Alyssa Reed 12/23
 Joshua Petell 12/24
 Anthony Rennie 12/24
 Holly Heck 12/25
 Michael McLaughlin 12/27
 Henry Rohrwasser 12/28
 Richard (Finn) Horner 12/28
 Elise Moran 12/30
 Marie Herbert 12/31
 Raoule Khaye 12/31

RECENT PROMOTIONS**CRANES:**

2 Gold - Parker LaMont

TIGERS:

9kyu - Alana Ramos

DRAGONS:

9kyu - Sylas Ketcham

COBRAS:

9kyu - Ava Murray, Felicity Murray, Maddie Prusky

UECHI:

9kyu - Ryan McCusker
 Jun Shodan - Genevieve Buker
 Shodan - Connor Burt

PYTHONS:

Grey - Eli Stack

JIU-JITSU:

1 stripe purple - Mike Wynn

MUAY THAI:

White - Jared Bruns
 1 stripe white - Shawn Maschino
 3 stripe white - Sadie Giumarra,
 Kathy Petrucci
 4 stripe white - Glenn Giumarra
 Blue - Carlo Petrucci
 1 stripe blue - Kyle Pezzano
 Purple - Tilo Jackson

Terminology**Happiness**

Japanese: Manzoku

Brazilian: Felicidade

Thai: Kwam Suuk

**“Best Martial Arts Academy”
 ZenQuest Martial Arts**



*Berkshire Eagle's
 Readers Choice Awards
 2017, 2018, 2019
 & 2020!*



TY, TY, TY

ZenQuest has been voted the 'Best Martial Arts Academy' in the Berkshires AGAIN! The distinction is given by the area's premier news agency, and is solely based upon voting by the Berkshire Eagle's readers. This makes the award even better and we are humbly proud.

This is the fourth year in a row for ZenQuest going back to 2017. We believe that this is a direct result of doing everything possible to provide the best programs, instruction, facility and training environment possible. It's nice to know that our students and fans appreciate that and we will continue to do our best to make things even better going forward.

This award would not be possible without the dedication and support of our students, families and parent organizations. To them we say thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!



Gift Ideas

Our super popular ZenQuest sweatshirts are available again! These are black with the school name on the front, and our three core martial arts noted on the back. They are available in children's and adult's sizes up to XXL at a costs of \$45 each. T-shirts with the same design are also available for \$29 each. We also have custom ZenQuest 'Board Shorts' and training shirts or rashguards available at \$45 each, as well as custom beanie hats! Students and parents can also order a wide variety of gear and equipment including punching bags and targets for home.

Stop by the front desk, call or message us to grab one of these stocking stuffers. We also have gift certificates available which can be purchased directly through our website. Happy holidays!



(Continued from page 1) **Coping**

thoroughly engage you and take you away from stressors in your life. Even short bouts of physical activity are beneficial.

Sleep - Setting a healthy routine for ourselves is one of the most important things we can do to stay healthy physically and mentally. Set a target time to go to bed each night and get up at the same time each morning, including on the weekends. Slight variation is OK, but we don't want to slide into situations where we are operating in a 'sleep deprived' mode and stressing our body and mind because of it. Regular exercise and natural sleep aids can help us sleep well.

Eat healthy - Educate yourself on healthy eating habits. Eat well-balanced meals and limit portions. Add healthy fats, cut sodium, bump up your fiber, and aim for a variety of colors on your plate. Controlling your intake in this way will go a long way to staying happy and healthy. Avoid alcohol and drug abuse.

Stay connected - Reach out to friends and family regularly. Talking to like-minded people on the phone or by video-call is a great way to stay connected while staying safe. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Check in with your loved ones often. It will help everyone feel less lonely and isolated.

Pet Pets - Its proven science that spending time with our pets tends to make us feel happier, and lower our stress levels. Playing with the cat or taking the dog for a long walk will do wonders in this way. If you don't have a pet, consider getting one. The extra time we have due to decreased activity can be used to train a new pet.

Seek help - Reach out to a professional if feeling overwhelmed or unsafe. Many people shy away from talking with a mental health professional or clergy member because they may be branded with some negative stigma. This is just not the case and, frankly, it is just too important to keep yourself healthy in this way to worry about that. If you, or someone you know, are feeling overwhelmed with sadness, depression, or anxiety...or feel like you want to harm yourself or others, seek help.

Following these simple tips can go a long way in helping us cope with the challenges of the pandemic and all of the ways that it impacts our lives. So, be smart, stay safe, and stay healthy.