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An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Maia Jiu-jitsu Network and Sityodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER
December 2025

Healthy & Happy Holidays

Updated from December 2019

The holiday season should be a highlight of the year—filled with joyful times spent with friends and family. Unfortunately, it can also bring stress and anxiety. Shorter days, bad weather, the rush of shopping, and pressure to meet expectations can make it difficult to stay positive. Here are some ideas for keeping the holidays healthy and happy.

Treat Yourself - Although the holidays encourage us to think of others, we also need to be kind to ourselves. Beyond the occasional small gift, make sure to get plenty of rest, avoid skipping meals, and make healthy food choices. Be mindful of exposure to the cold, the risk of getting run down, and even simple things like walking on icy ground. Build downtime into your schedule. A hot cocoa and a little quiet reading can work wonders.

Create a Happy Environment - One way to reduce stress is to shape a pleasant environment. Small, intentional choices can make a big difference. Choose uplifting music and media that improve your mood rather than drag it down. Keep your living space clean, warm, well-lit, and pleasantly scented. A comfortable environment supports a comfortable mind.

Stay Positive - A positive outlook is key to a healthy holiday season. Try to see the good in difficult situations and avoid emotional "crashes" over things that might not matter in the long run. Don't fall into a victim mindset. Let things go, practice tolerance, and count your blessings. Simply being able to celebrate another holiday season is a gift.

Surround Yourself With Friends - The holidays are a wonderful time to reconnect with loved ones—but remember that the goal is to relax and enjoy yourself. Spend more time with people who make you happy and respect your views. Limit time with those who increase your stress or anxiety. Sometimes, editing your "friends list" is essential for your well-being.

Limit Portions - Holiday food is abundant and delicious, but mindful eating can help prevent stomach issues, weight gain, and unnecessary stress on the body. Instead of "pigging out" now and dieting later, simply limit the amount you eat or drink. Enjoy festive treats without overdoing it.

Limit Spending - Overspending is a major source of holiday stress. Set a reasonable budget—and stick to it. Responsible spending not only reduces anxiety during the season but also makes the start of the new year feel much better.

Exercise - It can be tough to maintain a fitness routine during the holidays, but regular exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress and stay energized. Studies show that exercise improves mood, boosts energy, and sharpens cognitive function. It also helps regulate sleep and appetite. Martial arts training is an excellent way to strengthen mind, body, and spirit—so continuing (or starting) your training at ZenQuest is highly recommended.

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TCO Record

On November 8th & 9th five members of Team ZenQuest competed in the 2025 'Tap Cancer Out' grappling tournament. The annual fundraising event was held in Danvers, Massachusetts and hosted over 900 competitors. Representing Team ZenQuest this year were Michael Siktberg, Katie Lefkowitz, Shawn Chambers, Chris Boyle, and Weston Aube.

Despite a high level of competition the team turned in some amazing matches and everyone did well. Although they didn't bring home any hardware, the group set a team record raising over $8,300 for the cause. In all the event raised over $330,000 for cancer research and treatment.

The team was presented with a custom banner for their fundraising efforts which is now displayed in our reception room. Thanks to the competitors for representing the school well, and for their amazing efforts in the fundraising. Special thanks to everyone who generously donated, too!

Tuition Adjustments

To compensate for increasing expenses, the tuition at ZenQuest will be adjusted slightly in 2026. Starting in January all tuition for adults and children will increase by 3.7%. This means an increase of $5 per month for the basic monthly adult tuition, and $4 per month for the basic monthly children's tuition. Discounts for three, six, or twelve month commitments and Easy Pay enrollments will still apply. Discounts for families, college students and Law Enforcement Officers will also stay in place. The amounts to less than 2% annually, which is actually less than current inflation rates. These tuition rates will take affect on January 1st, 2026.

Students and parents may want to consider taking advantage of the existing rates and committing to longer enrollments prior to the new rates going into effect. This is also a great time to consider enrolling in our **'Easy Pay'** subscription payment plan. Doing so before January 1st will lock in the current tuition rates, and remain unchanged for as long as you stay enrolled with it. This is an excellent option for students who are committed to continuous training over the long term and not recommended for seasonal students.

To enroll in Easy Pay, or for any questions related to tuition please contact us or stop at the front desk. As always thanks for your understanding and support!

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Meditate - Meditation doesn't need to be mystical or complicated. At its core, it's simply the practice of being relaxed and focused. There are many methods, so most people can find one that works for them. Just a few minutes a couple of times a week can improve calmness and clarity. Even scheduling brief periods of quiet relaxation can serve as meditation. A helpful approach is to view every challenging moment as "zen training." Every class at ZenQuest includes simple mental exercises that support this mindset.

Play With Your Pets - Pets love attention, and taking time to play with them benefits both them and you. It's easy to neglect pets when busy, but interacting with them boosts your mood and reduces stress. Improving their quality of life improves yours as well.

Limit Technology - Modern life has us glued to gadgets, computers, and TVs. Too much screen time can increase stress, disrupt routines, and impact mental health. Set healthy limits, take regular breaks, and avoid neglecting meals, sleep, or personal care. Balance tech time with other activities—and encourage kids to do the same.

By following these tips and staying mindful of your well-being, you can enjoy a healthier, happier holiday season. Set a positive example for others and reach out to those who may be struggling. When we all approach the holidays—and the rest of the year—with kindness and leadership, the world becomes a brighter place. Happy holidays!

IMPORTANT DATES

AC Uechi - Sat, December 6
Karate Sparring week - December 15-20
NO CLASSES - Wed/Thurs/Fri - December 24-26
NO CLASSES - Wed/Thurs - Dec. 31-Jan. 1
AC Muay Thai - Sat, January 3
NAGA Albany - Sat, February 7

NEW STUDENTS!

Welcome: Ashton Sekowski, Ken Rosen Jeff Lynch, Henry Cadorete, Andrew Cass, Norah Boska, Jaxson Granger, Masachs Boungou, Brandt Jones, Rudra Pandey, Bryce Codwise, Cole Codwise, Charles Pratt IV, Aadhya Vasireddy, and Shaurya Vasireddy

Welcome Back: Ian Bridgman

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Michael Petell
Dawn Micale
Stephen Mercier
James Losaw
Brian Huntley
Christopher Kupernik
Max Kolb
Brooks Sherman
David Carusotto
Yukino Strong
Dalton Peck
Autumn Snyder
Juan Cabrera
Max Cusack
Mariangel Mejia
Smith O'Donnell
Westley Didio
Aksel Robbins
Paige Blake
Arthur Coleman
Gracie Dufur
Rudra Pandey
Kiera Schneider
Louis Allegrone
Eva DeWolf
Ashton Sekowski

Terminology

Teacher

Japanese: Sensei
Brazilian: Professor
Thai: Kru

RECENT PROMOTIONS

TIGERS:
8kyu - Ezekiel Arango
9kyu - Margo Boska & Adam Curinga

DRAGONS:
4kyu - Montanna Inesta & Theo Susse
5kyu - Joel Ospina Cruz
9kyu - Enoch Ortiz-Ramirez, Hazel Hage & Finn O'Donnell

COBRAS:
1kyu - Nico Dort & Zooey Bayles
5kyu - Roman Bates
9kyu - Max Roll

UECHI-RYU:
6dan - Beth Yanuskiewicz
2dan - Stephen Mercier
1dan - Ashton Brennan & Michael Siktberg
2kyu - Connie Gordon
3kyu - Matt Winter
4kyu - Declan Drozd
8kyu - Scott Carlotto, Jr.
9kyu - Ed Partyka & Thomas Frelinghuysen

PYTHONS:
3-stripe Grey - Weston Aube
3-stripe White - Anders Carlsen & Dresden Schneider

JIU-JITSU:
Brown Belt - Tom Aube
4-stripe Purple - Russell Moody & Glenn Giumarra
3-stripe Blue - Dan Dufur & Chris Kupernik
1-stripe Purple - Jenn Sommerville & Chalice Mitchell
3-stripe Blue - Craig Jones
1-stripe Blue - Robert Inesta, Andrey Norin & Michael Siktberg
Blue Belt - Kelsey Koldys, Tyler Fogg & Phil Peligrad
2-stripe White - Zach Suffish

MUAY THAI:
1-stripe white - Jenna Outwater & James Ladd

AC Clinics

We had a great turnout for Advanced Concepts Jiu-Jitsu on Saturday, November 15. This one focused on strategies using the 'Lockdown' and counters. The Lockdown involves entangling an opponent's leg from the bottom of 'Half-Guard' to limit their options and improve your own situation.

Eleven people earned promotions at the conclusion of the clinic, including: Philip Peligrad, Tyler Fogg, and Kelsey Koldys to Blue Belt; Robert Inesta and Andrey Norin to 1-Stripe Blue Belt; Craig Jones to 3-Stripe Blue Belt; Jennifer Sommerville to 1-Stripe Purple Belt; Dan Dufur to 3-Stripe Purple Belt; Glenn Giumarra and Russell Moody to 4-Stripe Purple Belt; and Tom Aube to Brown Belt. Congratulations to everyone promoted and thanks to all for being there!

'Advanced Concepts' clinics for Uechi-Ryu and Muay Thai are scheduled as follows:

- Uechi-Ryu Karate -- Saturday, December 6 (Brown Belt/Nikyu and up)
- Sityodtong Muay Thai -- Saturday, January 3 (2-Stripe Prajiet and up)

These will all begin at 1:15 PM and last about 90 minutes. Students ranked appropriately are encouraged to attend if possible. ZenQuest's Advanced Concepts clinics are a great opportunity for eligible students to learn and practice advanced techniques and strategies in their respective art. ZenQuest's AC clinics are provided to enrolled students at no extra cost. So, join us if you can!

Gift Ideas

Shop small this holiday season and choose a gift from ZenQuest for your favorite ninja. In addition to memberships for friends or family members, we have a variety of gift ideas including: custom uniforms, training shirts, shorts, t-shirts, sweatshirts, gear bags, hats, bracelets, and more!

Students and parents can also order a wide variety of training gear and equipment including sparring gear, targets, and punching bags for home. If you're not sure what to get, or something needs to be ordered a gift certificate is a great way to go. This can be purchased at the ZenQuest desk, or online in $25 increments at zenquestmac.com.

So, make the holidays extra happy for the martial artist in your life with some these stocking stuffers from ZenQuest!

WEATHER CLOSURES

Occasionally, the weather will become intense enough during the winter months to present a serious travel risk for our students and instructors. This can result from a single, severe weather event happening at the time of classes; or from an accumulation of events leading up to the time of classes. Other indicators can be other major organizational closings and local travel advisories.

If it appears that travel will be too risky during class times, the school will close for that time. When that happens we send out notices by email and text, and post information on our social media and website. We also try to put a message on the ZenQuest phone at 413-637-0656.

If you don't currently receive these notices by email send a message to train@zenquestmac.com. If you would receive notices via text message simply send the word ZENTEXT to 413-352-0678. Drive carefully!