



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

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



Healthy & Happy Holidays

The following article originally appeared in our newsletter of November 2019...pre-pandemic. We thought it would be nice to rerun it now as we return to a time when we can enjoy the holidays more again with our friends and family,

The holiday season should be a highlight of each year with happy times spent with friends and family. Unfortunately, it can also be a time of stress and anxiety for many people. With shorter days, bad weather, the hustle-and-bustle of shopping, and pressure to meet goals and expectations, it can be a challenge to stay positive and enjoy ourselves. Here are some ideas for keeping the holidays healthy and happy.

Treat yourself Although the holidays are a time to think of others, we need to be kind and be mindful of ourselves, too. More important to a little side-gift for ourselves, we should also be sure to get plenty of rest, avoid skipping meals and make healthy food choices. We also need to be careful about exposure to the cold, becoming too run down, and even things like walking on snow and ice! Be sure to include down-time in your schedule. Simple things like having a nice hot cocoa and taking some time to read will also help a lot.

Happy Environment One way to reduce stress and anxiety is to create a pleasant environment for ourselves. This may seem impossible at first, but there are some simple things that we probably do have control over. For example, choosing music that is positive and uplifting will have a very different impact on us than music that brings us down. The same can be said for any other media like movies, books, games, etc. Keeping your living space clean, well lit, warm and smelling nice can also help.

Stay Positive Keeping a positive and optimistic outlook on things is a great way to insure a happy and healthy holiday season. Try to see the good in any situation and avoid 'crashing' emotionally about things that probably aren't super important. Avoid feeling like the victim or that the world is against you. Let stuff go. Tolerate people and situations. Be happy. Count your blessings. Just being able to celebrate another holiday season is a gift.

Surround yourself with friends The holidays are a great time to be with family and friends. But, we should remember the purpose of this is to relax and enjoy ourselves while doing that. It is important to maximize time with the people who make you happy and are willing to at least tolerate your own views and choices. Conversely, time with individuals who tend to create stress and anxiety in our lives should be minimized. Sometimes we may need to edit our 'friends list' for the sake of our quality of life.



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Advanced Training

The next round of our 'Advanced Concepts' clinics have now been scheduled. These are slated as follows:

Jiu-jitsu - Saturday, December 3 (Blue Belt and up)
Muay Thai - Saturday, December 10 (4-Stripe White Prajiat and up)
Uechi-Ryu - Saturday, December 17 (Brown Belt and up)

These all have a start time of 1:15 PM, and should run for about 90 minutes each. Please note that these take the place of our usual competition trainings on those days. Eligible students are strongly encouraged to attend.

Working Construction

We are now closing in on completion of some major improvements at ZenQuest in 2022. From new lighting to expanded training space, here are some updates on how these are all going.

First, we're finishing a reconfiguring of the space for our back training room or 'Training Room 2.' Basically, the space that was our fitness room prior to the pandemic is now being added to the room primarily used for Jiu-jitsu and Thai Kickboxing classes. This will result in about a 43% increase in the size of that room. The expansion is due to the growing need for additional training space, and the fact that the fitness room has been under utilized over the last 12 years.

At the time of this newsletter, the space is just about ready for the new floor and wall mats to be installed. Although there are still a few minor tasks to be completed, the expanded mats will allow classes to be conducted in the new larger space. As part of this project the entry into the room has been changed, an additional ceiling fan has been installed, the lighting is being reconfigured, and additional training equipment storage is also being added.

With the elimination of the fitness room it will no longer be possible to watch classes from there. However, a closed circuit camera system will be installed soon so that classes may be viewed from our reception area. This work is expected to be finalized by the end of the year.

We also recently began replacing our 'old school' florescent lights with new LED fixtures. The new fixtures will provide the same amount of light but use as much as 70% less electricity when compared to the 40+ year old fixtures. In addition, the new fixtures do not require bulbs or 'ballasts' like the old ones, which needed replacement periodically. With over 70 fixtures throughout the building we were in a constant battle to keep up on replacing these parts.

The lights will be replaced in stages, concentrating on one room at a time. This approach will lessen the burden of the costs, and provide an opportunity to recycle parts for the old lights remaining. We expect that it will take about one year to complete this project.

Other Improvements underway include repairs to the building's exterior and HVAC systems. So, join us as we watch the best martial arts school in the Berkshires get even better!

**END
CONSTRUCTION
ZONE**

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. Students can verify these closures by checking the school's website or Facebook page, checking their e-mail, and by checking for a message on the ZenQuest phone at 413-637-0656.



IMPORTANT DATES

Sat, 12/3 - Adv Jiu-jitsu, 1:15 pm
 Sat, 12/10 - Adv Muay Thai. 1:15 pm
 Sat, 12/17 - Adv Uechi, 1:15 pm
 Sunday, 12/18 - Dan Test, 1:30 pm

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

NO CLASSES - 12/24, 12/25, 12/26, 12/27
 (Sat/Sun/Mon/Tues)
NO CLASSES - 12/31, 1/1/23, 1/2
 (Sat/Sun/Mon)

NEW STUDENTS!

Welcome: Landon Shields, Nilani Broussard, Sheila Nickerson, Musa Thompson, Karen Fenton, Nathan Fenton, Theo Susse

Welcome Back:
 Richard Houghtaling

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Antonio Carlino 12/2
 Chloe Chuck 12/4
 Hayden Joyce 12/5
 Christopher Kupernik 12/6
 Heather Tatro 12/7
 James Losaw 12/7
 Joseph Penna 12/10
 Oliver Brooks 12/11
 Frank Scago 12/12
 Liam O'Brien Sevilla 12/12
 David Carusotto 12/14
 Smith O'Donnell 12/14
 Westley Didio 12/15
 Anthony Cummings 12/15
 Riley Sabato 12/16
 Kyle Pezzano 12/17
 Celeste De St Andre 12/18
 Paige Blake 12/18
 Grigori Fateyev 12/19
 Julie Murphy 12/22
 Tom Hedges 12/22
 Joshua Petell 12/24
 John Walak 12/25
 Max Cusack 12/26
 Michael McLaughlin 12/27
 Arthur Coleman 12/27

RECENT PROMOTIONS**TIGERS:**

8kyu - Liam O'Brien-Sevilla
 9kyu - Abby Havill, Caleb Tullock

COBRAS:

5kyu - Amber Nivello
 4kyu - Michael McLaughlin

UECHI:

1kyu - Alex Bock
 3kyu - Michael Siktberg

PYTHONS:

1 stripe white - Max Polastri

JIU-JITSU:

1 stripe white - Kyle Dube

MUAY THAI:**Terminology****Posture**

Japanese: Shisei
Brazilian: Postura
Thai: Tatong

“Best Martial Arts Academy”
ZenQuest Martial Arts



*Berkshire Eagle's
 Readers Choice Awards*
**SIX YEARS
 RUNNING!**



Gift Ideas

Not sure what to get your favorite martial artist for the holidays? ZenQuest has a variety of gifts for that special warrior in your life including custom T-shirts, sweatshirts, beanie hats, baseball caps, mugs, uniforms, training shirts, shorts, and more. Students and parents can also order a wide variety of gear and equipment including punching bags and targets for home at up to 20% off.

We also have gift certificates available in any denomination. Support your gym by shopping local, and stop by the front desk to grab one of these stocking stuffers now for the holidays!



(Continued from page 1) **Healthy and Happy Holidays**

Limit portions The holidays are an amazing time for good food and drink, but limiting our intake can go a long way towards avoiding problems with overindulgence. These can include anything from upset stomach, to excessive weight gain, to added stress on our bodies. Rather than have a mindset of 'pigging out' now and starting a diet in the new year it is much smarter to simply limit the amount of each thing we eat or drink. Remember to strike a balance between enjoying these things and overdoing it.

Limit Spending Some of the stress from the holiday season can come from spending beyond our means. Set a reasonable budget for holiday spending and stick to it. Being smart about spending for the holidays will not only reduce stress during the season, but also make the start of a new year happier once the bills come.

Exercise The holiday season can be a challenging time to maintain or start a fitness program, but having a routine of exercise is one of the best ways to reduce stress and stay energized. Studies show that regular exercise provides body and brain chemistry that reduces stress and actually boost our energy level. It also improves 'cognitive function' or helps us think more clearly. Exercise makes us more fit, helps us be sleep better, and makes it easier to regulate our food intake. Of course, martial arts training is an amazing way to exercise the mind, body and spirit and we would recommend to continue or start training at ZenQuest.

Meditate Many people scoff at the idea of meditation, but this doesn't have to mean some weird and mystical activity. In many cases the 'M' word simply means taking some time to practice being relaxed and focused. There are many different methods of meditation and each person can usually find one that helps them. Just a few minutes a couple of times each week can go a long way to staying calm and thinking more clearly during stressful times. Just giving ourselves time in our schedule to relax for a bit can be a great form of meditation. One healthy trick is to think of every challenging situation as 'zen' training or an opportunity to practice staying calm. Every class at ZenQuest includes a form of mental exercise or meditation that can help.

Play with your Pets Many of us have pets at home that love to play and get attention from their owners. Studies show that taking time to hang out and play with them is great for both them and us. We can easily fall into a pattern of neglecting our pets when we're busy, but engaging with them actually elevates our mood and reduces stress. Improving the quality of their life will also improve yours.

Cut back on technology Today's world has us spending a huge portion of our time on our gadgets, computers and TVs. Too much time spent on technology can also be a source of stress for us and we need to be smart about using our 'smart phones' and the like. Set intelligent limits for using technology and give yourself frequent breaks. Avoid neglecting meals, sleep and personal care. Try to match your technology usage with an equal time doing other activities. Do some activities with the kids to break up their tech time, too.

Following these tips and staying mindful about our mental and physical condition during the holidays should help us stay happy and healthy during this wonderful time of year. Set the example for others and remember to reach out to those who may have a more difficult time. If we all have the attitude of spreading joy to others and taking a leadership role during the holidays...and all year round, the world will be a better place.

Happy holidays everyone!