

CAFFEINE HIGH

Official Newsletter Australasian Ving Chun Kuen Instructors Association

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Welcome to this the 4th edition of our official Instructors newsletter.
We invite any and all questions, feedback, compliments
and even welcome constructive criticism

Just like when we are having a coffee and chat

'Thank You' to those of you who gave us feedback on previous issues.

My article on the health benefits of Kung Fu training – in particular the health benefits of training on Ving Chun's Wooden Dummy – has created considerable interest, with requests for more information and explanation. I am currently working on an article concerning the why and how those health benefits can be achieved. Meanwhile, if you continue to create regular training habits the benefits will accrue.

**"Everyone has a doctor in him; we just have to help him in his work.
The natural healing force within each one of us is the greatest
Force in getting well..." - Hippocrates**

THIS ISSUE

In **"Learn To Think Before You Walk"** I analyse some kungfu "Kuen Kit", to explain what in my opinion are fundamental differences between Ving Chun theory and certain theories of other kungfu systems. This is in line with my oft repeated view that Ving Chun is the opposite to other martial arts, and that it can be a mistake to copy other martial theories, or employ them in our teaching method.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

In today's world the term "martial art" is such a widely used abused and misunderstood term that at times I shrink from describing Ving Chun as a martial art for fear the listener will associate the art and myself with competitive sports like UFC, K1, or MMA

In my opinion this is partly the fault of some (to many) Wing Chun practitioners who compare themselves to MMA style fighters, try to compete with them in the ring, or host their own full- contact tournaments and chi sau competitions. Kungfu is not a sport. It is an ancient art of warfare. It is a warrior art. Warriors do not compete, for the spirit of a warrior does not consider winning or losing... *JUST MY RANT*



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FOR YOUR EYES ONLY
PLEASE DO NOT SHARE**
If you would like to ask
questions about any of the
material presented herein
or if you would like to submit
an article of your own for
publication in this newsletter
or on the website email

Admin

ADMIN EMAIL

Beginning next issue in the
article **EVERGREEN** I will
begin to define Earle's Ving
Chun -Your lineage -
and analyse the importance of
what I believe are the
fundamental Ving Chun
principles - Kevin Earle

"Caffeine High" is a discussion. I won't be offended if you do not agree with some of the ideas I present.

In fact I welcome all feedback, questions, and constructive criticism - Kevin

EVERGREEN

LEARN TO THINK BEFORE YOU WALK

*an excerpt from my manuscript "Ving Chun Kuen: The Art Of Invincibility".
Kevin Earle*

From time to time I come across versions of Wing Chun Kuen Kit (*"martial sayings", "commandments" or "words of wisdom"*) described by some as being *"truly intrinsic"* to Wing Chun Kungfu. These Kuen Kit are widely published (*I should say "blindly" published since I have yet to see any reasonable explanation or analysis of these sayings provided*) and (*presumably*) adhered to by many Wing Chun schools.

However just because something is passed down through the centuries and repeated by hundreds of devoted followers doesn't make it right. Most Kuen Kit appear to be imported into Wing Chun from other systems of kungfu and are open to broad interpretation while some, I believe, are plainly incorrect for the Wing Chun practitioner and will set him or her on the wrong path.

Here are three examples of so called "words of wisdom" each followed by some explanation of why I believe they are misleading and would in all probability prove detrimental to ones Ving Chun training if adhered to. These three are;

1/ Pull in the chest, push out the upper back, and bring in the tail bone.

2/ To maintain good balance of strength, grip the ground with the toes.

3/ A weak body must start with strength improvement.

Really? Let's see...

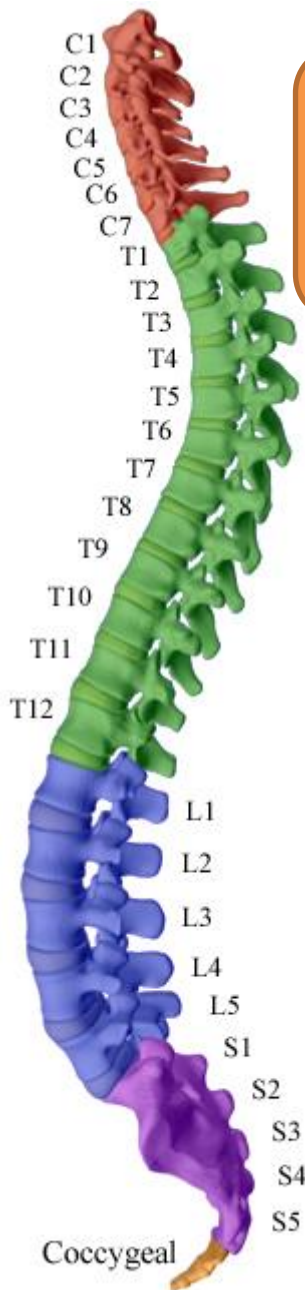
"EVERGREEN"

In this and upcoming newsletters I shall attempt to give some detailed analysis of Ving Chun and the Siu Nim Tao form. Some of this information may have never been published before, so it could be said that it is unique to Earle's Academy Ving Chun. Regardless, I have arrived at my present understanding as a direct result of my personal training over some 45 years.

You are reading this material because I wish you to have access to it before I place it in the public domain (if ever).

It is from my manuscript "Ving Chun Kuen: The Art Of Invincibility", and is subject to copyright.

I ask that you do not publish this material elsewhere, but respect that I am presenting this information to you the Instructor for your own use in your personal Wing Chun journey, and to use with your students when appropriate. The ideas as presented are not complete and may not be fully understood without hands on guidance to accompany the idea. **Kevin Earle**



Maintain an upright posture keeping your spine as upright and straight as possible (as seen here) without forcing or otherwise compromising the natural "S" shape curve of the spine

1/ Pull in the chest, push out the upper back, and bring in the tail bone. Recognisable by the sunken chest, hunched back and rounded shoulders as practised by some devotees of Shaolin systems such as Pak Mei, Mantis, and Dragon, it looks good in the movies.

But such an exaggerated posture can build rigidity and tension, restrict breathing and lung capacity, and expose the collarbone and the shoulder joint to breakage and dislocation. Also practised by some branches of Wing Chun, it does not fit well with the Ving Chun principal of "natural **human** body movement". **A natural posture is your key to power and mobility.**

Your structure is determined by your posture. Poor posture becomes poor structure. There is nothing to be gained from corrupting your posture and misaligning your spine. Maintain an upright posture.

Nothing is lost by maintaining an upright posture. Your spine is supported by **anti-gravity** muscles that keep you upright. Your spine is the **structural core** of your body. It is your **power centre**. Maintaining the natural curvature of your spine is the key to redirecting force, absorbing force, and transferring force to other parts of your body.

So while we might gain inspiration from the movements of animals and birds or some mythical creature, your Ving Chun posture and movements should be based on the physiology of the body you were born with.

An **elastic** body! A body with **spring**! A body that feels **alive**! Rather than attempt to adopt postures that a contortionist would struggle with, simply present the chest then relax and sink the upper back, shoulders, chest and elbows, while gently lifting the perineum.

Which brings us to the second kuen kit on our list:

2/ To maintain good balance of strength, grip the ground with the toes;

No! No! No! Another import from Shaolin kungfu. Think about it:

(a) Try to "grip the ground" through a pair of kungfu shoes, Nike's, or New Rocks with a three-inch sole. *Can't be done.*

(b) Attempting to "grip the ground" with your toes creates tension in the muscles of the feet, ankles and the calf muscles, culminating in a rigid posture that will make you less stable and not at all well-balanced from a Wing Chun perspective.

(c) Conservation of Energy is a Ving Chun principle. Building up tension and rigidity trying to "grip the ground" does the opposite. It burns up energy.

(d) Relaxation. Since one purpose of Siu Nim Tao is to develop power through relaxation as well as to conserve energy, what sense does it make to create tension?

When standing naturally one's bodyweight is spread evenly between three points of each foot. The heel, on the ball of the foot just behind the big toe, and on the ball of the foot just behind the little toe. Think of the triangle formed by those three points on each foot as the base of twin pyramids which support your entire bodyweight. Two concave pyramidal arches which put the **spring** in your step.

When curling up the toes in that futile attempt to grab the ground not only do you build up tension and rigidity and burn up energy, you compromise the natural spring in your step which in turn affects your balance, mobility and flexibility.

Instead, you should keep your feet naturally relaxed, flat, and pressed evenly (*through the three points of each triangle*) against the ground, your body weight evenly distributed over both feet. Now imagine that you are pushing the ground away from underneath you as you gently lift the perineum and **elongate your spine** as if it is extending through the top of your head.

That is the key to developing **dynamic balance** and **explosive power!** You want to develop the **dynamic explosive power of an Olympian accelerating out of the starting blocks**; not the constriction that comes from building up tension in the suspension while trying to grip the ground.

To the third kuen kit, re strength development

3/ A weak body must start with strength improvement. I agree that there is no harm and every advantage for any person to maintain their health and longevity through a personally tailored health program. Certainly ones skill in Ving Chun is conducive to (and will be supported, not hurt by), living a healthy lifestyle.

As to those persons who wish to enter the competitive arena they should, in my opinion, most definitely invest the greater part of their training effort into developing overall combat toughness by undertaking a rigorous routine that includes strength, endurance, and fitness training, repetitive drilling, and sparring, as suits their sport.

However Ving Chun is not a competitive sport and it is my considered opinion that strength training is the antithesis of Ving Chun. I believe that serious Ving Chun practitioners need be aware and study carefully the contra affect strength training may have on their Ving Chun development. I refer in general to the practise of lifting weights to develop strength.

Weight training is *resistance* training. It employs pushing, pulling, lifting and the carrying of weights - exercise types which respond by creating an automatic reflexive resistant tension of the muscles upon meeting a force. On the other hand, however, it should be the goal of the Ving Chun practitioner to meet force, absorb force, deflect the force, or redirect the force of their training partner or an opponent *without* resisting; *without* resorting to pushing and pulling, lifting, or carrying the force or weight of the other.

Further, it is a mistake to assume that someone with big muscles will have powerful strikes. The amount of **power** one can produce is not determined by the size of their muscles but by the **percentage of their mass** that they can recruit and how fast they can **accelerate** it.

Ving Chun as I understand it is suitable for the small, the weak, and the vulnerable. If that is true, and I believe it to be so, then developed strength is not necessary. While there are a number of obvious benefits to be had as a result of strength training it can be detrimental to your Ving Chun development. And injuries are common in strength training regimes.

The only physical strength that an individual requires to excel at Ving Chun is their **"natural" strength**, as in the strength to move their arm. Since enhancement of one's natural strength is a natural by-product of Ving Chun training, I believe ones training time should be better spent practising Siu Nim Tao, chi sau, etc., rather than spending - *wasting*- that time building developed strength which may in fact hinder ones progress in developing skill in Ving Chun.

And there is a bonus; Injury-free training. Kevin Earle

Chinese Evergreen Oak - (*Quercus myrsinaefolia*)

