

The background of the cover is a warm, golden-yellow sunset scene. A single, tall, thin tree stands on the right side of the frame. In the foreground, a body of water reflects the sky, with a single water droplet captured mid-fall, creating concentric ripples. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

THE JEET KUNE DO MINDSET

**MARTIAL ARTS WAYS
FOR A BETTER LIFE**

MARTIN O'NEILL

THE JEET KUNE DO MINDSET

Martial Arts Ways for a Better Life

Martin O'Neill

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*“Life can only be understood backward; but it must be
lived forward” – Kierkegaard*

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My friends who keep my feet on the ground. All at Clann Eireann Youth Club, who have kept faith in young people during the nightmare that took place in Northern Ireland for 40 years.

Go raibh mile maith agaibh.

FOREWORD

Martin O'Neill has a scintillating personality. He never fails to keep you in stitches with deep laughter with his unique philosophy on life.

Behind this light-heartedness there glows a serious and thoughtful man who commands a high degree of respect. He has paid his dues and carried himself up by his bootstraps to deserve great respect and admiration from his peers.

In my judgement, his respect and deep feelings with regard to the inimitable teachings of Bruce Lee are rock solid and I know that there are martial artists, scholars and just plain folks who would wholeheartedly agree from the core of their hearts.

Martin has a very respectful martial arts background that precedes his exploration of Bruce Lee's art.

He is an excellent exponent of Bruce Lee's teaching. He is able to impart not only the physical but the philosophical message as well.

I know that Bruce would have welcomed Martin's sincerity.

The message at Bruce's grave site reads, "The key to immortality is to first live a life worth remembering." This resonates deeply with Sifu O'Neill and it is reflected in his actions.

Martin is a very sincere and compassionate warrior who understands the how and what to teach, and identifies with his students who come to him for physical and mental betterment, which ultimately advances to each and all to cope with the complexities of our being.

Martin, please "walk on" and continue to teach from the depths of your heart the true and inimitable teachings of our great leader, Bruce Lee.

Taky Kimura, Seattle, USA, 2008

Bruce Lee's Assistant Instructor

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT ME

Hi, I am Martin O'Neill. I was raised in a Northern Ireland "ghetto" during what is called "the Troubles" by the mass media. In reality, it was a civil war – thousands of people were killed and injured over a period of 40 years. The violence has generally ended but the resentment, hurt and hate bubbles away just under the surface.



I left school aged 15 feeling a complete failure and two years later found myself making trash cans. I later worked for many years as a welder across Ireland and in London.

By chance I discovered the Open University in my early 20s and enrolled on a social science foundation course. I couldn't make it to many of the tutorials due to having no transport. There was no bus home and it was too dangerous to hitch a ride at the time – people were being murdered all over the place. Somehow I still got through the first-year course.

I moved to London to join my girlfriend and started work as a welder while volunteering with homeless people at Centrepont Soho. I was later accepted onto a four-year BA Hons social science and social work course as a mature student. For the next 30 years my career was in social work; spanning probation work, child care, disability, mental health, adult care and I ended up specialising in community development and social work.

I began training in martial arts in January 1976 in the karate style of Wado Ryu in Dublin, Ireland. This was at the height of the international Bruce Lee craze following his record-breaking movie, Enter the Dragon. I gained a 1st Dan black belt in 1980 and was

involved in fighting in many semi and full contact bouts and tournaments.

In 1986, I enrolled as an apprentice instructor for five years with Steve and Mike Krause, who were instructors under Guro Dan Inosanto. In the early 1990s, I travelled to America and trained with Sifu Lamar M Davis II, who is a well known instructor in JKD. I studied with Lamar for nearly ten years becoming a full instructor in 2002.

Since 2000, I have been studying with the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute in Seattle, USA, with Sigung Taky Kimura, his son Andy Kimura and my Sifu and dear friend Alain de Preter.

In 2008, I had a heart attack during a mass attack training session and almost died. I had to have an immediate triple bypass operation and it took more than a year for me to recover my strength to be able to return to training. I had to learn that my training needed to change as a result of the problem, but it was fantastic to be doing it again.

Then in 2013 I was delighted and humbled to be accepted as a student on the International Instructor Programme at the Inosanto Academy, USA – to train under the guidance of the brilliant Guro Dan Inosanto.

This has opened a new perspective on martial arts and life for me, highlighting the genius of the man and his incredible, generous teaching methodology.

I got into fights in my younger days, when I was an angry young man. I have been stabbed, bottled, punched, kicked, concussed, given black eyes and have had my feelings hurt along the way. Numerous brain cells have somehow disappeared into the ether.

However, I have lived to tell the tale and some of my stories are in this book along with advice on good training methods, defence techniques and how not to get battered. It also offers tips on improving your health and wellbeing, and how to live a more fulfilling lifestyle.

I have taught martial arts for 30 years at Clann Eireann Youth Club in Lurgan, County Armagh, which has been a very violent part of Northern Ireland; deeply affected by the Troubles.

Our JKD students are from many nationalities and different sections of the community. We have an open-door, inclusive, anti-sectarian, anti-racist approach – something that gives me pride.

"Under the stars under the heavens there is but one family"

Bruce Lee

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

This book is aimed at those who want to improve their lifestyle by taking a more thoughtful and considered approach to society and how it acts, while embracing the martial art of Jeet Kune Do (JKD).

You do not need to be currently practicing JKD and this is not intended to be a manual for experts: there are many technical books and resources available.

Instead, the book offers sound and solid information to those who want to make positive changes and includes advice on auditing your lifestyle, health and wellbeing, improving friendships, fitness, strength and analysing your current and future priorities.

The book also shares self-protection and personal defence techniques used in JKD that work in real world scenarios with practical advice on how to “clobber and overwhelm enemies ” by using superior training and tactics to outwit them.

This approach is introduced and supported throughout the book. The JKD training methods will help you to have the confidence and competence to use your full abilities to succeed in life.

Surprisingly or not, our biggest enemy is often just ourselves and our over inflated egos.

“The price of wisdom is above rubies”

Job

A SHORT HISTORY OF JEET KUNE DO (JKD)

Who is Bruce Lee?

To many Bruce Lee was the most electrifying, innovative and inspiring martial arts movie star of the 20th century. He is also known as someone who died before his time, at the age of just 32.

However, when we look more closely we find a renaissance man, someone of great creativity, a philosophical thinker, writer, researcher, and family man. He was a fanatical physical trainer who changed his physique and athleticism beyond normal human boundaries.

His martial arts exploits are legend and he eventually created his own art of Jeet Kune Do (the way of the intercepting fist) dedicated to the creative martial artist.

Bruce was a phenomenon filled with boundless energy and creativity. He overcame obstacles in life that would have crushed most people. He remained a brave compassionate warrior for all his short life and worked against racism and discrimination. He encouraged and educated his students and fans to raise their horizons, smashing beyond the purely physical realm and make their dreams a reality and live each day to the full.

JKD therefore is a relatively young martial art, based on physics, physiology, kinesiology and psychology. It was created by Bruce in the early 1960s and it was further researched, developed and perpetuated by Guro Dan Inosanto. Sigung Taky and Andy Kimura

are the keepers of the flame and guardians of Bruce's grave in Seattle, USA.

Bruce had trained in Wing Chun for several years in the 1950s under Grandmaster Ip Man in Hong Kong. But he was critical of some traditional martial ways, which seemed to hold the practitioner in set patterns that he called "organised despair".

Instead, he wanted a modern, scientific approach to test and evaluate the principles of combat and JKD against a resisting opponent. He advocated applying a rational manner to a training programme to ensure that it's straightforward, direct and effective, and honest.

Jeet Kune Do has its own ideas, philosophy and training methods that make it a unique martial art.

Begin training with Jun Fan Gung Fu (Bruce Lee's Gung Fu) TM

It's highly recommended to begin training with Jun Fan Gung Fu (JFGF) TM as a base system, which has a curriculum. Some of this is outlined in this book. However, unlike Jun Fan Gung Fu and most martial arts, JKD does not have a set syllabus to follow. That's why it's important to have a solid foundation to build upon.

The technical basis of the art is:

- the on guard stance
- footwork and mobility
- punching and kicking
- five ways of attack
- economy of motion and interception
- energy sensitivity drills
- fighting skills in all ranges, standing and on the ground

Training methods are based on effectiveness, efficiency, practical application, and reality. Basic techniques need to be learned quickly and remembered easily to be effective. Street survival, and living a happy fruitful life through confidence, skill, creativity and love is the ultimate goal of the JKD practitioner.

Ironically, top practitioners are very humble and would never seek out trouble. However they would face up to a bully, mugger or tyrant in an instant; never backing down.

WHAT THIS BOOK COVERS

THE MINDSET OF JKD

There is more to JKD than the physical elements of combat. We will first look the mental aspects and other ways in which this martial art can have a massive impact on your life and how you live it.

We will discuss the ability to identify fear in a disciplined way and how failure to control this emotion can lead to disaster.

The JKD approach begins with self-help; building your confidence and self-esteem through participation in challenging training sessions that builds a fighting spirit and strong mind and body.

Only when this is done successfully do we advocate helping others to set and reach their goals, but examples are included of how to assist others and the pros and cons involved.

Giving something back to our friends and families and community is important in JKD. This goes way beyond the physical approach of being fit and tough. It goes into building a strong sense of self-worth, team spirit, leadership and paying back our instructors and being grateful to the creator.

The results of this can be as straightforward as listening to a person who is having a difficult time emotionally. It can give a sense of hope and fulfilment to young people seeking a positive role model, helping them to deal with risk taking behaviour due to substance misuse, for example.

The benefits of this section are about self-knowledge and giving back and being grateful to our loved ones and others.

JKD TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT

The most important pieces of equipment at your disposal are your mind and body. You will always need these and they will need to be kept in good condition to be effective.

This section will give a brief look into that as well as introducing other equipment such as boxing gloves, focus pads, skipping rope and heavy bag. But remember: you don't need a huge amount of equipment to get started.

INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKOUTS

You will be taken through a practical and challenging and progressive series of activities and training over a 12-week period.

The idea of this programme is to give you the best start in your training and take you to the next level of fitness and conditioning. The benefits of these activities are tried and tested, and will get you into great shape and improve your cardiovascular capacity and fitness.

FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES OF JKD

You will be taught the fundamental techniques of the martial art which can be easily learned and remembered – and quickly recalled when needed.

When under severe pressure, your brain will only remember gross motor skills and you will be unable to perform fine technical details due to a range of stress factors. JKD teaches techniques that are effective in such scenarios.

You will be shown the upper body, hand, lower body and leg techniques and how to train them. When you are confident, you will be able to recall and use these basic skills when under pressure.

SPARRING AND FIGHTING

A key training element in developing your skills, we will introduce sparring at a non-contact level and evolve into all-out sparring and fighting against a resisting opponent.

Having a knowledge and experience of hitting someone, evasion, blocking and being hit can give a person advantages in a fight. Experience of sparring and the pressure situations it can bring can help you overcome the initial shock if you ever find yourself in an attack situation.

STREET SMARTS

Prevention is always better than cure, so stopping an attack before it happens is always recommended. You will be taught anti-mugging tactics and how to handle verbal and physical aggression. The benefits of knowing about self-defence and protection strategy can literally save your life.

You will be introduced to the primary natural weapons that we all have – our head, hands, elbows, knees and feet. This section will describe and demonstrate the JKD approach to using them in real situations. These skills can be learned in hours, not days or weeks. They do not require intensive maintenance, although practice is recommended.

While this section looks at the dirty aspects of street scraps, it also considers the aftermath and consequences of such incidents and dealing with the police.

BEING A HAPPY WARRIOR

Using the JKD training to get your mind and body into better shape brings about a sense of achievement and empowerment.

Knowing how to physically hurt someone in a fight and being prepared to defend yourself and your loved ones builds confidence, ability and self-control.

However the training will make you more secure in yourself and less likely to find yourself in situations where violence may occur. In fact, your JKD martial arts training will mean you no longer feel the need – if you did already – to engage in violent confrontations to prove yourself.

Training in JKD can knock the chip off our shoulders. The end result is to be a well-rounded successful individual, who deals well with people, stress and anxiety and the pressures of everyday living.

Knowing and understanding the concepts in this section will improve your life. You will feel stronger and more able to meet challenges in your life and achieve new goals. This progress enables you to give more to your family, friends and community. The result of all this hard work is that you become a Happy Warrior; comfortable in your own skin and ready for any challenge.

APPENDIX

Here you will find your full 12-week strength and conditioning schedule and workouts. Many gym-goers will be familiar with good techniques for each exercise, but if you need a little extra help then please visit www.bodybuilding.com where you will find instructional videos and advice.

This progressive training programme is proven to work and is designed across a six-day workout schedule as follows:

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday are resistance days
- Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday are active recovery days
- Sunday is a rest day to allow the body to fully recover

The book sets out guidelines on the JKD approach to self-protection, personal improvement and healthy ways to live. It is vital to start with

the emotional and mental wellbeing approach. If this is not addressed you will not stay the course.

It's important to acknowledge why you train and the fact that most of us do it as a useful hobby to improve our health and wellbeing, fitness and lives.

BRUCE LEE AND PEACE BUILDING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Hatred and resentment are never far from the surface in Northern Ireland, even though the peace process is more than 20 years old.

One of the things that interested me about Bruce Lee was the way he reacted to sectarianism, racism and hatred.

Simply, he would never hate back. We have used his example for the past 30 years to bring people together in Northern Ireland to train JKD together.

This promotes and makes friendships across the divide in my community and I think that Bruce would have supported this work.

We do this under his wonderful banner.....

"Under the stars under the heavens there is but one family"

AUDIT YOUR HEALTH

Before you start training, you need to know about your current state of health. Please complete the short health audit below and the more 'yes' answers, the healthier you are.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you a non-smoker?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you eat mostly fresh food on a daily basis?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have a balanced diet? At least five portions of fruit and vegetables daily?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you drink alcohol moderately?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you an appropriate weight for your height?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you deal well with stress and pressure in work and life?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you relax?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you regularly socialise with friends and family?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Can you walk a mile or a kilometre or climb several flights of stairs without feeling out of breath?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you exercise for 60 mins a day 5 times per week?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you sleep well and wake up feeling good?

INTERPRETING YOUR AUDIT SCORE

If you have answered 'no' to any of the questions, begin by taking positive action to address the issue. For instance, you may need to increase your intake of fresh fruit and vegetables, or ensure that you get about eight hours of sleep each night.

Everyone has positive and negative behaviours in their lives. Positive behaviours include keeping healthy, eating well and maintaining good physical fitness. It's good to have a loving environment for ourselves and our nearest and dearest. It's also advisable to read widely and keep educating ourselves.

Reduce any negative behaviours identified that may include binge eating and drinking, using illegal drugs or substance abuse. Building debts, stressing out, keeping bad company, becoming angry and blaming others may also need to be addressed as they lead to a downward spiral.

Gradually build positive things in your life to replace any negativity. Do it bit by bit and think good thoughts about yourself and others.

LET'S GO

Now you know what we will be covering, let's make a start on how Jeet Kune Do can improve your life.

SECTION 1

THE MINDSET OF JKD

"I know nothing except the fact of my ignorance"

Socrates

'Martin is a sincere and compassionate warrior who understands the how and what to teach. Behind his light-heartedness there glows a serious and thoughtful man who commands a high degree of respect.'

– Taky Kimura, Bruce Lee's Assistant Instructor

No individual has influenced modern martial arts more than Bruce Lee and his legend lives on through the teachings of his own art, Jeet Kune Do.

Lee believed martial arts had become too rigid and unfit for real-world encounters. Combat is spontaneous and unpredictable with the victor being the one who moved fluidly to any given situation and was able to adjust accordingly.

Unlike many other martial arts, JKD does not have fixed patterns of movement. It has simple techniques that are easy to learn and master, but are adaptable in the chaos of a street battle. Minimal movement with maximum effect. JKD is also a philosophy, with guiding thoughts on how to approach life and wellbeing, how to treat others and how to be a positive influence. Physical and emotional fitness and improving self-confidence are at its core – and is suited equally to a beginner or seasoned martial artist.

Renowned instructor Martin O'Neill has been studying JKD and martial arts for more than four decades and has real-life experience of using his training effectively in combatant situations as well as in the gym.

In his first book – *The Jeet Kune Do Mindset: Martial Arts Ways For A Better Life* - Martin takes readers on a step-by-step introduction to JKD including its ethos, mentality, and a guide to the basic JKD techniques of self-defence. He also offers advice on training, being mentally prepared and shares a detailed 12-week work-out programme.



Interspersed with anecdotes from his youth growing up in Northern Ireland during The Troubles to his days working as a bouncer and within social care, Martin shows how martial arts can lead you to improved physical and mental wellbeing, and to have a better life. Start your journey and become a happy warrior.

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