



**WATERLOO KUNG-FU**  
**ACADEMY**

**Fall  
2025**

# Fu for You



Editor: Sibok Lloyd Fridenburg  
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# Editorial

by Sibok Lloyd Fridenburg

## One Thousand Times, Correctly

I once heard someone say, “man I hate it when we do repetitions to the count”. It may have even been me, in the beginning. However, after time, it becomes apparent that there is only one way to learn any martial art and that is through constant repetition. The recipe for success is to learn, assess, practice, follow corrections, practice, assess, follow corrections, and practice more.

When I practice on my own, I can still hear the words of wisdom imparted by Grandmaster Pan in the early years of my training, *“When you have repeated a single technique, correctly, one thousand times, you understand the technique.”* “Correctly”, is the key word in the phrase because if you practice something a thousand times incorrectly, it will be extremely difficult to fix. Whether it’s an advanced spear thrust or the reverse punch you learned right at the beginning of your training, practice will ensure continuous improvement along the road to excellence and understanding.

Shadow boxing is a fantastic way to practice, if you do it correctly! Too often I see shadow boxing used as an aerobic exercise, with the focus on raising your heart rate and getting a sweat on. It can and should be used as an opportunity for self-correction. Watch yourself in the mirrors and listen to the words of your instructors; not just when they are speaking in class, but when you’re practicing alone. Keep your guard up, watch your stance, keep your chin down, use a full range of motion, watch your weight distribution, pivot on a reverse hand strike, don’t bring your feet together. All of these are things that you hear instructors vocalizing in every class; those words are embedded in your mind so listen to them when you’re shadow boxing and use the exercise as a tool for self-correction.

So, what about Youth and Junior students? We have had many younger students over the years that have embraced Kung Fu training and were extremely diligent in their training and practice habits. This, however, is the exception rather than the rule. Many students come to class, follow instructions, and then don’t think much about Kung Fu until their next class. With only two classes per week for younger students, practice between classes is essential.

Parents enroll their children in music lessons and demand that they follow a strict routine of practice throughout the week, yet seldom, if ever, encourage kids to practice Kung Fu between classes. The reason commonly expressed by parents is that they don’t want them to practice incorrectly. As someone that has taught a broad range of age groups over the years, I assure you that it is easier for instructors to make corrections for those that practice regularly, even if some things are incorrect, than it is to constantly re-teach techniques to students because they have forgotten.

Five minutes of practice is better than nothing; 10 minutes is better than 5; 30 minutes is better than 10. If you’re serious about improving your Kung Fu, listen to the words of your instructors running through your head as you practice, practice, practice!







# Sigung's Corner

Another summer has passed, feeling much shorter than any other season (depending on how many kids you had at home and how well behaved they were!). Reflecting on a summer well spent, our family was thankful for the physical abilities training Kung Fu gave us, allowing us to really take on some fun and active recreation.

At the end of June, we embarked on an epic camping road trip that included stops in Gaspé, New Brunswick, PEI, Nova Scotia, Maine, Vermont, Ottawa and Northern Ontario. This wonderful adventure had lots of variety around how we spent our time outdoors.

An early stay in the trip was in the stunning Gaspésie National Park (which is actually a provincial park, but Quebec names their parks a little differently). When we stay in these majestic parks, I like to find the signature hike and challenge my family to complete it, in this case - to the summit of Mount Albert. This was described as a "classic" hike, rated as advanced.

The elevation grade started steep and just kept increasing, until we were eventually scrambling up rocks on our hands. Within a few hours we were treated to some outstanding views at the summit. We were able to enjoy this for about ten minutes when a decent storm came through. We had lunch in a small lookout shack while it blew through, but to complete the loop in daylight, we eventually had to head out in the wind and pouring rain. We quickly discovered the way back down was much harder than the ascent!

The long canyon descent started treacherous, requiring us to navigate through a minefield of rocks that required constant mindfulness of every step; one careless foot placement could be a broken ankle. I thought this initial tough ragged section was just a portion of the return trip, but it was the entire return! Though a very challenging route, it was exceptionally well plotted, as we were treated with stunning views of rivers, wildlife, mountains and waterfalls. Chantal discovered her worn sneakers didn't have the best traction, so she shocked me with some catlike agility by hiking most of the way barefoot!

In a plot twist, our youngest, Sarah, who was less than thrilled at the start and motivated by multiple threats of abandonment, shifted gears for the final leg and finished first (to her brother's protest). The final tally on this hike was 20km and 1,000m of elevation completed in nine hours. All told, it was one of the most challenging hikes we've ever attempted!

Our training in Kung Fu gave us the physical strength, agility and endurance to finish, but more importantly, it empowered us with a mindset of perseverance and an attitude of enjoying the journey (well, maybe not as much for the kids...haha). The rest of our vacation included a lot of mountain biking and even an experience surfing near Halifax – more fun activities that my family and I felt more enabled to do because of Kung Fu.





# Youth Students Column

by Chantal Moylan

Fall is almost here and it is a season of changes! The weather gets cooler, the days get shorter and the trees turn bright colors like red, yellow and orange before the leaves finally drift to the ground. If you've ever stopped to watch a leaf fall, you know it doesn't just drop straight down, it sways and floats until it lands gently. Surprisingly, there's a lot we can learn from that leaf in our Kung Fu training.

Think of our Kung Fu Dragon riding the wind, just like a falling leaf. A leaf falls gently, floating and spinning through the air without smashing into things. The Dragon does the same, moving carefully and fluidly, not crashing down. It teaches us to be calm, gentle and strong - all at the same time.

When we first start Kung Fu, one of the more important things we learn is how to improve our balance. Think about when you're practicing a kick or a crane stance. If your balance wobbles, you might feel like you're about to tip over. But just like that leaf drifting down, you can learn to stay steady, even when things around you are moving fast.

Leaves don't crash to the ground; they fall with control. Kung Fu is all about that same idea, control is just as important as any other skill we learn. Anyone can throw a kick, but a good Kung Fu kick isn't wild, it's focused. You have to make sure you kick accurately and controlled, not sloppily and clumsily.

One drill that really helps me is practicing my kicks in slow motion. It definitely feels weird at first, but this helps your muscles learn how to control every part of the kick and makes you notice all the different parts. Try this: pick a favourite or challenging kick and do it as slowly as you can. Once you can control a kick slowly, doing it fast feels much easier.

Fall also shows us how important change can be. For example, the trees let go of their leaves so new ones can grow in the spring. In Kung Fu, we go through changes as well. We start with easier stances and techniques then eventually move up to more challenging things. We also change from one belt to the next. Sometimes change might feel challenging, but just like the trees, we can learn to embrace it.

Think back to when you first started training. Maybe now you can hold a horse stance longer, kick higher, or focus better. That's progress! And it comes from accepting change just like the trees do. That's the cool thing about Kung Fu - you're always improving, even if it doesn't happen overnight! Just like the trees, you let go of old habits and make room for new growth.

So next time you're outside and see a leaf falling, don't just ignore it. Watch how it moves: balanced, controlled and ready for change. Then remember, you can train just like that!







# Junior Students Column

by Sifu Charlie Romeo

## Back in the Groove

In my previous article, I discussed the [importance of continuing your training throughout the summer](#). While recommended, this is not always possible or practical. Many families take the summer to travel, explore, or otherwise get away, which can result in spending a few weeks or months away from Kung Fu. While we encourage students to practice on their own during time away, it's not quite enough to keep improving your knowledge and skill. Rather, it's better for maintaining and refining the progress you've made so far. For the students who are returning this fall from weeks or months of being away, this article will focus on how to re-integrate Kung Fu into your schedule.

The key to a successful return is to start a consistent routine right away. This means attending classes regularly and frequently, as much as realistically possible. The worst thing you can do is to ease your way back into attending classes; an on-and-off routine is actually harder to fix than being away completely. You don't need to attend 5+ classes per week, but returning to your "2-class per week" schedule will quickly help you re-establish a consistent training routine. Be mindful that your body will need some time to readjust to the challenging and intense environment of Kung Fu training. To balance this, stick to a regular schedule, but listen to your body and pace yourself appropriately until you've re-adjusted.

It's important to set realistic goals when returning from a break. Returning with unrealistic goals can result in feeling unmotivated and discouraged, so be sure to discuss with an instructor what goals make the most sense to start with. The most common example of an unrealistic goal that we see in returning students is the expectation of testing for their next rank in the upcoming fall grading. While instructors acknowledge and admire this ambition, it's not a feasible target. A single month is not long enough to re-develop your strength, cardio, and technical skills that get lost during an absence. Particularly for intermediate/advanced students, take the following as a good rule of thumb: for any extended time away, expect at least double that time before you're ready to test. So, if you are away for 1 month, you should attend classes consistently for at least 2 months before even thinking about grading. Keep in mind, this is a minimum! There is no such thing as staying at a particular rank for too long - every student has their own journey.

Staying consistent over the summer is the best way to keep improving without losing momentum. At the same time, many families take the summer as an opportunity to travel and visit friends and family – which is great! Your instructors will be understanding of these opportunities, and what matters most is returning with a realistic, positive, and determined mindset about your next steps forward.





# Adult Students Column

by Sifu D'arcy Langois

When students think about our curriculum, the most common things that come to mind are those “hard-skills” that we teach in every class. Picture the large variety of techniques that we teach at every rank, the forms that you are required to learn, and the strategies around sparring. These are things that we focus on heavily in our classes, and so they usually end up as front of mind when it comes to grading requirements. There are, however, some additional requirements that I feel should be brought into the light and aired out for everyone to think about: essays and the infamous home-made form.

So, why do we have our students write and submit an essay as part of some rank progressions? I think there are two answers to this, the first being: it forces you to think about your own Kung Fu journey. As you write about why you chose Kung Fu, this hopefully bleeds into why you are still pursuing the Kung Fu path. At a very early stage of the journey, you get to reflect on what brought you to Waterloo Kung Fu in the first place, which often helps determine where you want to take your training. Secondly, personal essays give the instructors better insight into who you are as a person. It should be no secret that every instructor on your grading panel reads through the submitted essays on the day of the grading. This helps us understand our students, to help guide and shape the journey each of you is on. In short, it makes us better instructors.

At some point in your progression, you are also required to create and perform a form. This process should be driven exclusively by you, with no input from an instructor (or even your peers). Crafting your own form is an incredible way to express who you are as a martial artist. You'll lean into your own preferred style, and showcase what you love to do. Again, this is a great way for the instructors to see who you are as a student. Finally, this process shows your understanding of the techniques and philosophies you have been learning throughout the process. Figuring out how to combine a myriad of techniques that flow smoothly and make a cohesive pattern is an important skill for martial artists. When you truly understand the things you have been taught from the curriculum, putting together a form on your own becomes a true joy.

In reality, the “other stuff” that shows up throughout the curriculum is designed to broaden the understanding that exists between you and Kung Fu. These requirements also deepen the connection between you and your instructors, which in the end strengthens our ability to teach you the skills we strive to impart through our classes.

*“Learning is all about connections, and through our connections with unique people, we are able to gain a true understanding of the world around us.” ~ Peter Senge*







# Parents Column

by Sije Veronica Sas

## What Are We Teaching Your Child? Part 2

In the last newsletter, I discussed the [different ways in which Kung fu helps your child grow](#). This article will cover responsibility and self-confidence.

### Responsibility

Instructors at the Waterloo Kung Fu Academy expect their Youth and Junior Students to take responsibility for themselves. Many children expect their parents to do everything for them, so this is a great way to teach them how to be responsible and self-reliant in all aspects of their life. For Kung Fu, this includes things like practicing at home, getting to class on time, having their belt or sash and all necessary equipment with them. It is important to try and let your child remember things for themselves, but little reminders never hurt. Things like getting to class on time (or early) and remembering their belt/sash are your child's responsibilities, and they might receive pushups in class if they are not met. Your child is also responsible for practicing at home. This helps with remembering new skills and improving old skills. If your child wishes to grade soon, this is one of the requirements for grading. Our Youth and Junior students receive a grading letter when they are ready for their next rank and one of the boxes that need to be checked states that your child is practicing at home. This can be a great motivation to get your child to practice and is the best way to improve their Kung Fu.

### Self-confidence

Some people are naturally more confident than others. Some thrive with being the center of attention while others shy away from it. At the Waterloo Kung Fu Academy, instructors strive to build your child's self-confidence, making them more confident both in themselves and what they are capable of doing. One way that instructors try to grow a student's self-confidence is when your child is preparing to grade. The first requirement is to test for their form stripe and that might require them to perform their current forms alone, in front of the entire class. Also, when preparing for a grading, students wishing to grade might be asked to come on the floor to perform a form or sequence while the rest of the class watches. All this is to help build their self-confidence, so that on grading day, they will be more confident and hopefully a little less nervous. Another great way to help build your child's confidence is having them compete in our Spring Invitational Tournament. Competing in front of judges and against fellow students is scary, but if your child can manage it, they should become more confident in their skills. Building self-confidence in your child's martial art ability will also help them build self-confidence in other aspects of life. Hopefully your child will realize that they can do things they never thought they could, it just might take a little bit of effort.

**Note from Sibok Lloyd:** Children should carry their own equipment bags to and from the car. If Sigung Bob saw parents carrying equipment bags, he used to stop the parents and insist that they give the bag to their child, regardless of their age. Just one more thing that instills a sense of responsibility in younger students.





# Guest Column

by Sifu Anita Kay

## Be in Your Own Corner

I have been part of WKFA since I was six. Kung Fu was everything to me. I was hooked from the first class. My brothers and I found community and a second family here, and it became a pivotal part of our lives. When you're a kid and you're part of something for all your formative years, you never think that anything could keep you from it or that anything will change.

I was 18 when I earned my black sash. I am 36 now. Things are different. I now have a husband, two small children, and a career as a teacher. I also had brain radiation. I lost half of my vision, my ability to read, write, count, and forgot several members of my family. **Things changed.**

I taught myself how to read, write, and count again, and gradually rebuilt most of my cognitive abilities. I even took up some new hobbies to prove to myself that I could move beyond how I was post-injury. There was still something missing; I wanted to come back to Kung Fu.

I knew I couldn't just come back and have everything the way it was. This scared me. So many emotions, fears, and self-imposed insecurities obscured my path forward. What pushed me was my daughter. She had started in the Little Ninja program, and came in like a tiny bulldozer, fearless, determined, and ready to give it her all regardless of others' perceptions. It never ceases to amaze me how some of the greatest life lessons can come from the smallest of us. She reminded me of what WKFA can do for a person. How each of us is respected as being unique. Our paths are ours to forge, and not to be compared to someone else's. We are also pushed to continue along that path, helping us grow and move beyond our own self-imposed limitations.

But wait, I am a Sifu. I should be better than this. What if I find even more things I can't do because of my brain injury? Flip the script; what if there are things you discover you *can* do. The fear of not living up to my rank was all consuming. Ironically, it was the very thing that was getting in my way. Once I flipped the script, it all changed. Sure, I totally lost my balance and smacked into someone in line, but I also threw a jump turn side kick without hitting my partner in that same class. Sure, I can't see the target I have to hit on my blind side, but my partner will always be willing to move it for me. I am not alone.

You are not alone either. We all have insecurities that poison our self-image. I promise; no one thinks you can't do it. You have more people in your corner than you think. **Make yourself one of them.**



**Sifu Anita testing for her Black Sash in 2007**  
She tested alongside Sifu Daryl and Sifu Craig. This was the first BS grading after Sigung Dave took the reins of WKFA.



# Food for Thought

“Live life to the fullest. You have to colour outside the lines once in a while if you want to make your life a masterpiece. Laugh some every day. Keep growing, keep dreaming, keep following your heart. The important thing is not to stop questioning!” ~ *Albert Einstein*



# Youth Activity Sheet

*To participate in the Fall Fu For You Youth & Junior Raffle, submit by Sep 30*

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Connect the dots & add more lines and colour to bring this to life!



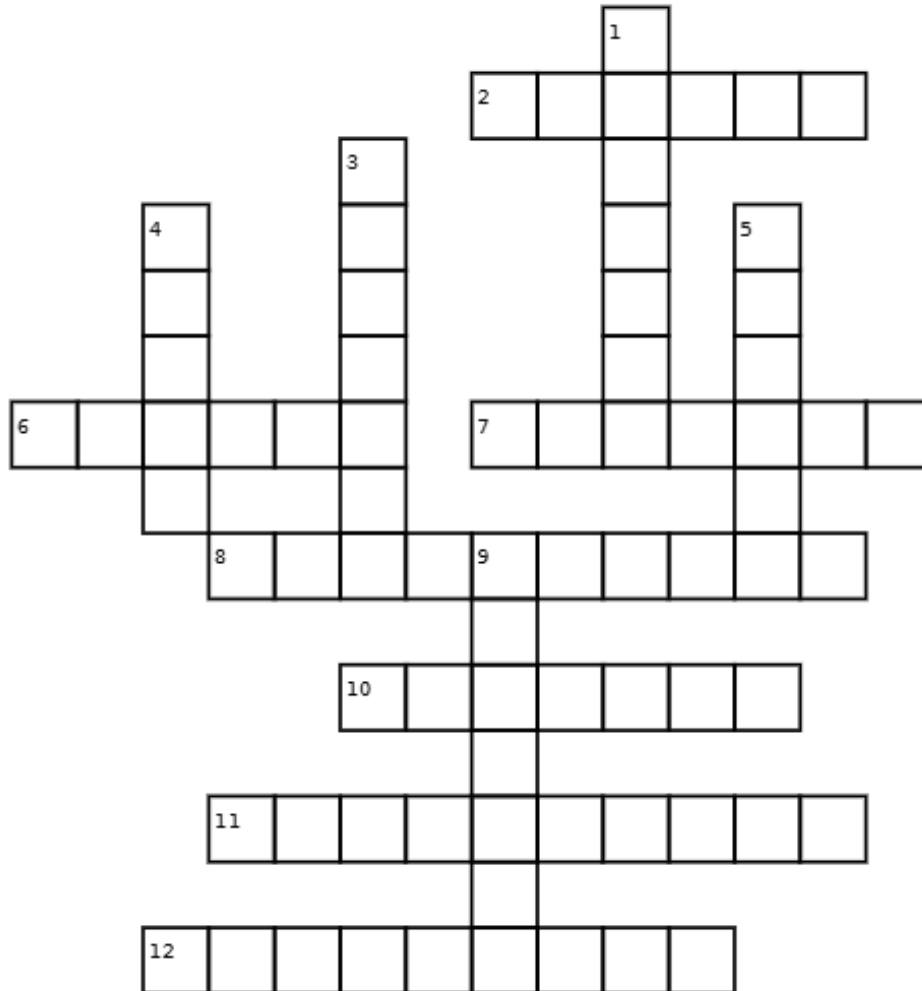
Student's full name: \_\_\_\_\_



# Junior Activity Sheet

*To participate in the Fall Fu For You Youth & Junior Raffle, submit by Sep 30*

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Use the kung-fu themed clues to fill in the crossword boxes



**Down:**

1. Keeping your body or actions calm and careful.
3. The way you think about yourself and your goals.
4. To move gently through the air or on water.
5. When something becomes different than before.
9. A regular plan or schedule you follow.

**Across:**

2. Becoming better, stronger, or smarter over time.
6. Parts of a tree that change colour in fall.
7. Staying steady without falling.
8. Not giving up, even when things are hard.
10. A path you take to reach a goal.
11. Doing something the same way every time.
12. Something that is hard but helps you grow.

Student's full name: \_\_\_\_\_