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What is Myo Sim Karate and Kendo?

Myo Sim Karate and Kendo, founded by Grand Master Sung Hong, is a school with traditional Korean, Okinawan, Japanese, and Chinese martial arts roots. Starting his school in South Korea in 1958, Mr. Hong first brought Myo Sim, translated as “Ultimate Mind”, to the Washington D.C. area in 1963. Three years later Myo Sim was introduced to Charlottesville as a student club at the University of Virginia.

Currently the longest standing martial arts school in Charlottesville, for decades Myo Sim was only available to University of Virginia students through a class or the club. Master Instructor Edmund Campbell began to teach Myo Sim Karate, meaning “Ultimate Mind and Empty Hand,” at ACAC Fitness and Wellness Centers in 1995 where the classes were open to the general public. In 1999 the instruction of Myo Sim Karate at ACAC was expanded to include kendo, translated as “the way of the sword.” At one time reserved only for study by Myo Sim Karate Brown and Black Belts, Myo Sim Kendo became available to novice students under the direction and instruction of Master Instructor Gary Shaw, Mr. Hong’s senior most student. Now people can choose to train in one or both martial arts from the beginning of their study of Myo Sim. Today, Master Instructors Gary Shaw, Fred Morton, and Edmund Campbell, and head instructors Rick Wellbeloved-Stone and Christian DeBaun offer over 20 hours per week of Myo Sim Karate and Kendo instruction to youth and adult ACAC members.

Studying and practicing Myo Sim is an excellent method of exercising the body, mind, and spirit. Contrary to what some believe, it does not require natural athletic ability or a lifetime commitment to realize its benefits. Myo Sim simply requires a commitment to learn. Regardless of one’s previous training and physical conditioning, Myo Sim challenges each person at his or her own level of fitness and ability. Long time athletes and first time exercisers find Myo Sim to be challenging and rewarding in ways according to their bodies and temperaments.

Indeed, this is the dynamic nature of the body, mind, and spirit practice of Myo Sim: it reveals an individual’s strengths and weaknesses and challenges the student to confront and improve upon them. How long one commits to studying Myo Sim depends on each individual. Many people find a benefit in studying Myo Sim for a relatively short period of time before changing to some other form of exercise, while others discover Myo Sim to be just what they were looking for and continue to practice it for months or years or even a lifetime. No one can predict how it will fit them until they try it.

Walking into class for the first lesson you only have to be committed to learning the art for as long as you are in the room. How long that commitment lasts is unique to each student. For some it may be only one class, while for others it may be a lifetime. How long it will be for you is for you to discover.

“Karate is like a school text, the information is handed to you; how well you remember is up to the individual. Myo Sim provides the path, but it is the student who must choose to faithfully follow the way of karate.”

-Grand Master Sung Hong