

The Nine Amazing Benefits of Forms

"Difficult undertakings have always started with what is small" – Lao-Tsu

Have you ever wondered why we put such a heavy emphasis on forms here in our academy?

Well, in this article I'm going to tell you why. We're going to look at the purpose and benefits of our Songahm forms. You're also going to discover why forms have been such an important part of martial arts for centuries - going all the way back to the Shaolin monks who created Kung-fu! So read on!

History of ATA Forms:

Our 18 Songahm Taekwondo forms ("poom-sae" means form in Korean) were developed by Eternal Grand Master H.U. Lee. These copyrighted forms have been refined over the years and they are one of the best systematic methods for teaching martial arts ever created.

Now, many people misunderstand forms. They confuse them with sparring. For example, I've heard people say, "People don't fight like that. I've never seen opponents who take on 90-degree angles. Forms are unrealistic". Well, guess what? They're missing the point. So let's take a look at the nine big benefits of forms. You'll quickly understand why they've been a proven part of

martial arts training for centuries.

Benefit 1: Technique Refinement

The repetitive nature of forms allows you to refine a particular technique over and over again until it's just about perfect. And not just single moves, either. The important thing about forms is that they link various moves into a natural, logical sequence.

And since forms are a sequence of moves, you're gaining the ability to go from one move to another fluidly, without hesitation. This is handy in both a real-life as well as a sparring situation. Instead of doing punches and kicks in isolation, forms put your techniques into a context.

Benefit 2: Memory

Forms train two types of memory: mental and muscle memory.

First, the sheer act of committing your forms to memory improves your long-term recall. This not only pays off in martial arts, but other areas as well. Take for instance, school. How often have you said to yourself, "I wish I had a better memory?" Well, forms will help you with that. As one ATA parent said recently, "If my



Ms. Lesley Casey
3rd Degree Black Belt and

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For a complimentary subscription, please call (304) 282-1664

*** contact ***@***.***

son can memorize 40+ moves in his form, he can certainly remember his homework!"

Second, forms burn your techniques into "muscle memory". This means you'll be able to perform your moves "mindlessly" (to borrow a Zen term) and without consciously thinking about them. If you ever find yourself in a real-life self-defense situation, this can literally save your life. If you don't have muscle memory working for you, you're in big trouble. In a dangerous situation, you don't have time to "think" about your choice of technique. For this reason, it pays to practice your forms. Forms etch your techniques into muscle memory so you can execute them instantly!

Benefit 3: Balance and Coordination

In our Songahm forms, each technique alternates between a right side and left side move. There is good reason for this: it creates symmetry in your techniques as well as your muscle development. You should be able to perform, say a jump front-kick, just as effectively with your left leg as you do your right. The more you practice your forms, the more you'll develop your "weak side" and bring it up to par with your strong side. This is the essence of symmetry.

Balance, too, is improved by forms. Like I said a moment ago, performing a side kick by itself is different than performing a side kick and then quickly moving to a high block. This requires you to shift your weight and transition into a new stance, thereby improving your balance. Forms also help to develop hand-eye coordination, foot-eye coordination and hand-foot timing.

Benefit 4: Focus and Concentration

You may notice that when you're doing your form, the rest of the world "tunes out". Yes, the mere act of performing a poomsae forces you to empty your mind, "put your blinders on" and focus on only one thing: your next move. This builds your powers of concentration and gives you the ability to focus on the task at hand. It's also one of the many reasons Taekwondo is so effective at treating ADD / ADHD. It enhances your focus.

Forms also create rhythmic breathing, and provide an almost meditative state of mind. That's why people say forms are so relaxing: they empty your mind of the day's challenges, relieve stress and help recharge your batteries.

Benefit 5: Motor Skill Development

One of the biggest reasons parents enroll Tiny Tigers in our academy is to help develop gross and fine motor skills. And guess what? Forms are the best way to do just that. Here's why: As the colored belt forms progress from white to black, each form includes finer and finer degrees of motor skill training. For example, the white belt poom-sae focuses more on gross motor skill development with large muscle moves such as front kicks, side kicks, high blocks and simple punches. Then, as you move up through the Songahm forms, the moves become more refined and bring more fine motor skills into play. Our Songahm forms are an excellent gross motor skill training system for anybody, not just Tiny Tigers!

Benefit 6: Performing Under Pressure

Listen: One of the most important skills in life is public speaking. Whether it's a

college class, a business seminar or community presentation, at some point you WILL be expected to present something in front of others. To be a true leader (and that's your goal, isn't it?) you must master this skill. Unfortunately, speaking in front of a group ranks at the top of most people's worst fears.

So what's the answer? You guessed it: Forms! Forms help you overcome this fear, and here's why: You may not realize it, but every time you do your forms, you're performing in front of others! This includes instructors, other students, parents as well as guests!

This helps you overcome shyness, boosts your self-confidence and gets you comfortable in the leadership role of having others watch and listen to you. Just think of me: every time I teach class, I'm on stage! Practicing forms played a big role in developing my self-confidence, speaking in public and presenting for others. It will for you, too!

Benefit 7: Strength and Stamina

Perform all your colored belt forms in succession (The Songahm Star) and you have a complete exercise routine at your fingertips. The great thing is, you can do your forms anywhere and any time. You don't need any fancy equipment. You don't need to wear any special gear and you don't even need mats! Wherever you are, you've got an amazing cardiovascular exercise at your disposal. Want to unwind after a long day at work with a relaxing stress-reducing workout? Then do your forms slowly...with concentration and focus ("Tai Chi" style). In the mood for an aerobic exercise and want to get that heart rate up? Then move through your forms one after the other with speed, intensity and power. Believe me, that'll do the trick! Yes, the Songahm Star is a complete exercise routine in itself: something you can do anywhere, any time...for the rest of

your life!

Benefit 8: Goals to Achieve, Levels to Reach

Here at our academy, we introduce students to techniques gradually, step-by-step through our Songahm forms. That's because each rank has its own unique poom-sae to teach the techniques required for that level. One of the advantages of this approach is that we provide students with an easy-to-follow system to increase their skills. At each rank, you know exactly what is expected of you. And you know what you need to do to reach that next level. This creates clarity and helps you in your own personal goal-setting!

And don't forget: The very act of learning your forms requires perseverance (our word of the month!), hard work and discipline.

Benefit 9: Beauty

Let's face it: watching a black belt execute their forms flawlessly looks downright cool. It hits you at an emotional level that's hard to describe. The power, the agility, the intensity... the grace!

This is one of the big reasons so many people are attracted to Taekwondo. There is a "live performance aspect" to our martial art that's beautiful and exciting to watch! This stems from only one thing: forms. Our forms are truly a "spectator sport". They let you show your stuff and put your own personal expression into the martial arts. Remember: forms are the "art" in martial arts! It just wouldn't be the same without them!

This Month's Call to Action:

In the days and weeks ahead, I want you to bring greater focus, perseverance



Practicing Your Forms Has Many Important Benefits

and dedication to your forms. They're that important. If you're a colored belt, take some time this month to watch the black belts here at our academy. See what they do differently. Look for the little things: hand-foot timing, balance, speed, power, ki-yaps, etc.

On the other hand, if you're already a black belt, watch your higher ranks and see how you can improve your forms even more! There's always room to improve.

--- Ms. Lesley Casey

Welcome to the Family! New Members and Upgrades

NEW MEMBERS:

Christopher Bozzato
Nathan Flowers
Michael Howes
Jacob Lynch
Brandon Lohmann
Eric Post
Luke Proctor
Alexander Davis – Bridgeport
Derek Hess – Bridgeport
Andy Hess - Bridgeport
Emily Hess – Bridgeport

Adelina Hill – Bridgeport
Anneliese Kaczmarek – Bridge.
Steve Kaczmarek – Bridgeport
Cameron Neely – Bridgeport
Colin Neely - Bridgeport
Tyler Walters-Tustin – Bridge.
BLACK BELT CLUB UPGRADES:
MEL BANKHEAD
JONATHAN SUITE
KEITH KNOTTS
COLLIN KNOTTS

JORDAN LANCASTER
ALEXANDER ANDREWS
LEADERSHIP UPGRADES:

KRISTEN BARBER
ALEXIS BERRIOS
ALEA HESS
JARED SMITH
Congratulations to all new members.

Student Birthdays Here At Casey's ATA Black Belt Academy

Aug 2nd – Bryson Raber
Aug 3rd – Hayden Starcher
Aug 5th – Corder Helmick
Aug 7th – Trevor Chick
Aug 9th – Stacy Pforr
Aug 10th – Collin Knotts
Aug 11th – Madison Huber
Aug 11th – Madelina Collins
Aug 14th – Tom Spencer
Aug 15th – Haley Johnston

Aug 15th – Noah Wilmoth
Aug 16th – Conner Dusch
Aug 18th – Lexi Starcher
Aug 18th – Lauren Bowlin
Aug 19th – Daniel Nowak
Aug 21st – Mr. Casey
Aug 22nd – Jonathan Suite
Aug 23rd – Caitlyn Matteo
Aug 29th – Jordan Lancaster
Aug 30th – Jason Denjen

Aug 31st – Levi Gilchrist

Let's wish all the birthday students a warm and happy birthday!

Mr. and Mrs. Casey

Please Read! August Announcements:

DEAR PARENT: Do you own a business? Are you a professional who would like to reach other people in our community? If so, you can now sponsor our newsletter each month! By doing so, you'll reach other parents in your target market and pick up some new clients or customers! You never know whose hand this newsletter lands in. The price is just \$25 for a business card-sized ad for one full month. We even post this newsletter online. Try it out for a month, help our school and get some extra business to boot! See me, Ms. Casey, to get started. All you have to do is provide me with a copy of your business card and we'll insert it in our Through the Ranks for as many months as you want! Give it a try and see what happens! See me NOW to get started! Thanks for your support.

NEXT TESTING IS SET FOR SEPTEMBER 20TH – MR. ROBERT HOWARD 5TH DEGREE BLACK BELT AND MRS. LORI HOWARD 3RD DEGREE BLACK BELT WILL BE OUR VERY SPECIAL GUEST JUDGES (MS. CASEY'S TAEKWONDO INSTRUCTORS FROM MISSOURI....)

Saturday Aug. 2nd – Chevron Clinic for all Black Belt Leadership students. 12- 2 pm

Friday Aug. 8th – Black Belt Candle Light Ceremony.

Saturday Aug. 9th – Gumdo Clinic (sword)
Open to all ages. \$60 includes sword and lunch.
Limited to 20 students. 9 am – Noon.

Sunday Aug. 10th – Casey's ATA BBA picnic at Chestnut Mt. Ranch. 1- 4 pm Sign – up at front desk.

Leadership Camp 9 – 1 am Deadline Aug. 1st.
\$199 does not include testing fee.

Saturday Aug. 23rd 11 – 3 pm Morgantown Open House. Fun games, safety and nutrition information. Bring your friends and enter for a Wii.

Aug 2008 Calendar of Special Events

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 DEADLINE FOR LEADERSEHIP CAMP FRIDAY NIGHT CLASSES BEGIN	2 CHEVRON CLINIC NOON – 2 PM SIGN UP AT FRONT DESK
3	4	5	6	7	8 BLACK BELT CANDLE LIGHT CEREMONY 8 PM	9 GUMDO (SWORD) CLINIC 9-NOON \$60 LIMITED TO 20 STUDENTS
10 PICNIC @ CHESTNUT MT. RANCH 1-4 SIGN UP AT FRONT DESK	11	12	13	14	15	16
LEADERSHIP CAMP 9 AM - NOON						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 OPEN HOUSE MORGANTOWN SCHOOL
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 WVU FOOTBALL GAME AT HOME
31						

Life Skill of the Month:

Perseverance!

There's no way you can reach your goals without one important ingredient: Perseverance. Everybody faces challenges. It's having perseverance that pulls you through. What does perseverance mean to you? To me it means:

- Sticking to your goals no matter what it takes...
- Never giving up...
- Hanging in there when the going gets tough (and it will!)...
- Not allowing negative, outside influences get the best of you...
- Using positive "self-talk" and visualizing your goals...
- Putting forth the best effort you can muster at any one time...

- Striving for your best outside of class: at home, in school, with your friends and family as well as in your community...
- Giving that "little bit more": throwing one more kick, punch or doing one more technique...even when you're tired and don't feel like it...
- Practicing your forms at home

Like I said in the main article, this month I want you to use perseverance when working on your forms. When you have the habit of great perseverance, you'll reach your goals that much faster!

Aug 2008 Student of the Month!

Daniel Nowak!

Here's a Student Who Demonstrates
Great Perseverance to Reach His Goals!

This month, I want to acknowledge a student here at our academy that exemplifies the true spirit of perseverance: Daniel Nowak! Let's all congratulate him for being chosen as Casey's ATA BBA Martial Arts' Student of the Month for August 2008!

Here's why I chose Danny as our Student of the Month this month:

First of all, Taekwondo hasn't always been easy for Danny. When he first started, he had quite a few challenges: he had a tough time learning some of the moves, his coordination needed improvement and his balance wasn't what it needed to be. But that didn't stop him, no sir!

Danny dove in headfirst and decided that – you know what? – I'm going to overcome these challenges. See, the one thing he did have when he started was a great ATTITUDE. From day one, it was an attitude of perseverance and "I can do it"! He hung in there! And over the months that followed, Danny used his positive mental attitude of "sticking to it" to improve his skills greatly and achieve his goals.

Danny is living proof that a positive outlook can overcome many, many physical challenges.

Remember: this is all a learning experience. It doesn't matter where you begin, what matters is where you end up. As I've said before:

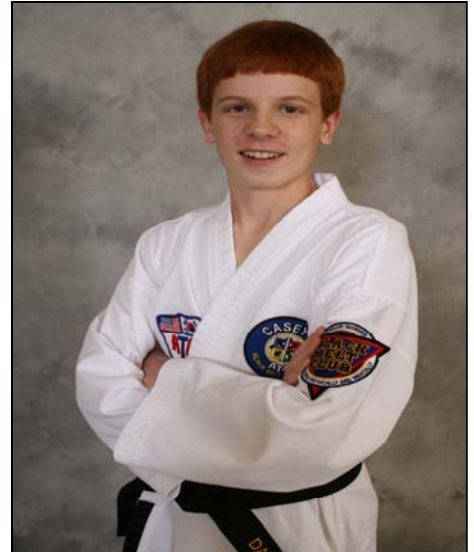
"If you think you can or you think you can't, you're absolutely right".

In other words, your attitude creates your altitude. Your physical skills are not the most important ingredient in the mix. Danny has shown us that with his dedication, level of effort, his guts and most important, his perseverance.

Here are some of the major milestones Danny has achieved since he's been at our academy:

- 1.) Improved his forms greatly...
- 2.) Started attending tournaments and placing!
- 3.) Achieved the level of First Degree Black Belt and continues to work towards his Second Degree Black Belt.

We can all learn something from Danny: how to stick to your goals no



Aug 2008 Student of the Month:

Daniel Nowak

matter how tough it becomes at times!

Let's All Congratulate Daniel Nowak for Being Chosen As Casey's ATA Black Belt Academy's Student of the Month for Aug 2008!

It's time for... **TAEKWONDO TRIVIA**
Test Your Martial Arts Knowledge...and Win!

Student Name _____

According to the main article:

QUESTION #1: Forms help refine your technique because...

- ___ a.) They are so difficult to perform
- ___ b.) They link individual moves into a logical sequence
- ___ c.) They're based on actual fighting moves
- ___ d.) They're a required, tested element
- ___ e.) None of the above

QUESTION #2: Forms help develop two types of memory ...

- ___ a.) Short-term and Long-term
- ___ b.) Logical and Sequential
- ___ c.) Mental and Muscle
- ___ d.) All of the above

QUESTION #3: Forms help develop balance because...

- ___ a.) You train both sides of your body in each form
- ___ b.) You're not allowed to fall down while doing your form.
- ___ c.) Poom-Sae
- ___ d.) You kick higher each time you reach a new rank

QUESTION #4: An important leadership skill is public speaking and presenting for others. Forms help develop this because...

- ___ a.) They build your self-esteem
- ___ b.) Every time you're doing your forms in class, you're performing in front of others
- ___ c.) They link self-defense moves together
- ___ d.) Leadership classes teach this skill

QUESTION #5: Many people are attracted to martial arts because of...

- ___ a.) The self-defense skills taught in class
- ___ b.) The MMA
- ___ c.) Old Bruce Lee movies
- ___ d.) The beauty of forms

Don't forget! Any student who answers all the questions correctly (without help from an adult) wins a \$5 Karate Dollar towards their next testing, something from the pro shop or tuition! (Note: one Karate dollar per purchase, please).

Referral Reward Program

I'd like to thank those of you who have participated in the Student Referral Program! Marketing for new students costs us tons of time, money and energy. Like any business, we need new students to stay in business. Over the years we have found that looking for new students takes away from the time we would rather be spending with you and for you and teaching other students!

If I've already helped you or your child with Taekwondo instruction, then you know how well I serve my students. When you refer your friends and relatives to us, everybody benefits. We can serve you and your kids better. You receive \$30 in Casey's Cash to use towards any testing, tuition or apparel. And we assure that we'll take the very best care of any friends or family that you refer our way! For

more information about our referral reward program, just give us a call at: (304) 282-1664 or (304) 629-0669. It's a great program where, as our way of saying "thanks", we send you a token of our appreciation for recommending us!

Also: If you would like any of your friends, coworkers, relatives, business acquaintances, etc. to receive a FREE subscription to this newsletter, please call me at the same number: ((304) 282-1664 or (304) 629 - 0669. We'll also send them a note with their first issue telling them that you suggested they receive this newsletter, and to contact us if they would like it to stop at any time. If you enjoy this newsletter, share it with people you know, with no hassle for you!

Help Us Grow Our School in August and WIN a Wii!

Win a Wii Gaming System!

You know all the amazing benefits you get from your martial arts training: strength, confidence, discipline, leadership, self-esteem, focus, balance, agility, coordination, self-defense...the list goes on! So it makes sense to extend these amazing benefits to your friends and get them excited about becoming a martial artist, too! (And it's always a blast to work out with your good friends anyway).

So FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, I want every student to bring as many buddies to class as they can and be an ambassador for our school! To motivate you, we're running a contest: the student who refers the most buddies who sign up in August or September wins a Wii gaming system...absolutely FREE*! Yep, you heard right: refer the most students in August or September and you go home with a brand-new Nintendo Wii gaming system (the only gaming system that gets you off the couch and gets you moving)! BUT - the competition will be stiff. We have lots of motivated students here, so see me NOW to get more information, set some goals and get FREE buddy passes! So, get focused, join the competition and do your best! Game system to be awarded at September Testing

Help Us Grow Our School and WIN a Wii!

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Morgantown, WV
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Casey's ATA Black Belt Academy
Bridgeport, WV
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