



SPOTLIGHT

# Combining art and fitness

Are you tired of lifting weights? Are those 10 kg annoyances getting to you? Do you feel like your gym workouts are super repetitive and don't entice your mind? If you do, then you are definitely not alone. Health and fitness is important. In fact, staying healthy and fit should be one of your priorities in life. So why doesn't everyone go to the gym and do the workouts? Some just don't have the time while for others the same exercises just don't cut it so they are reluctant to put in that time. The good news is that there are other ways to stay fit other than going to a gym to lift weights and run on a treadmill!

## BANGLADESH KARATE-DO

First on the list is Bangladesh Karate-Do. Established in 1995, Bangladesh Karate-Do is one of the oldest karate facilities in Dhaka. It is home to Sensei Awlad Hossain who, with the help of his Assistant Coach Maya Mondal, teaches a very diverse group of karatekas (karate performers) out of a small studio in Elephant Road. As soon as you register, your karate experience starts off with not a round-house kick but an evaluation of your weight and height. "Depending on the ratio of your height and weight, we make adjustments to your initial workouts to prepare your body for karate exercises and techniques," said Awlad Hossain when talking about new arrivals. The sensei teaches the Shotokan style of karate to his students. The style, which has developed from various forms of martial arts over many years, is divided into three major parts.

The first is the kihon (basics) which is followed by the kata (forms or pattern of moves) and then the kumite (sparring). Known for being a dynamic martial art,



Shotokan helps develop speed and strength. The technique used in Shotokan strengthens the legs, provides stability and improves precision.

The institution is run much like a school and follows the Bangladesh Karate Federation as well as its rules and regulations. There are different classes for children and adults. The kids are taught separately in a more playful learning environment. As for the adults, there are fixed timings for classes and exams are

taken every few months to monitor progress. Passing the exam is the only way for karatekas to advance to the next level.

Despite the school-like approach to teaching karate, the students seem to have taken it in full swing. Zarif Hossain, a student of the Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Department, the University of Dhaka said "It is true that Karate teaches me self defence but people forget that the essence of karate is that ideally a karateka should never fight outside

his dojo. It is not militarism but a practice to find ones true self."

Bangladesh Karate-Do has been around for quite a while and with a master teacher to teach them and with students getting invited to participate in regional and global competitions, Karate-Do seems as impressive as ever. So, if you are looking to work on your fitness and want some discipline in your life, then take up some Shotokan karate. Who knows? It just might be right for you!

Check it out here:

<https://www.facebook.com/Bangladesh-Karate-Do-1424740504463803/?fref=ts>

## KO FIGHT STUDIO

KO Fight Studio is a full-contact fighting gym that offers a combination of stand up (kyokushin) and ground fighting (Brazilian jiu-jitsu) techniques. Founded by two-time Bangladesh full-contact champion, Abdullah Mohammad Hossain, the fighting gym is known for its offensive approach to contact sports and teaches its students knockout as well as street fighting.

KO Fight Studio offers kyokushin, taught by Chief Instructor Abdullah as well as Brazilian jiu-jitsu, taught by two of Abdullah's most trusted students, Sawasdee and Tanvir. The curriculum consists of four month slots where every four months, the students sit for a belt test.

When asked what a newcomer would learn in his first class with the studio, Abdullah said, "As a newcomer, at first you will learn the basic punch, block, knife-in-hand and the kick while standing still.

**Photo courtesy: Karate Do and KO Fight Studio**