

Taekwondo provides fitness kick for students

BY LINDSEY WILLIAMS
Staff Reporter

There are ways to fix those too-tight-fitting jeans after the holidays.

A Taekwondo class takes place every Tuesday and Thursday from 8 to 9:30 p.m. in the rec center aerobics room. The purpose of the class is to teach beginners the techniques and moves often used in Taekwondo and to build on that knowledge for those who have previous experience. For beginners, there's no need for concern: Roughly half the class each semester is made up of newcomers to the sport.

Each session will consist of warm ups, training, drills and cool-down sessions to teach form, coordination and proper techniques when facing an opponent. Students also will be shown the ropes in sparring, which in the Taekwondo ring is fighting your opponent with quick movements of your feet and hands while wearing padding.

"Taekwondo is definitely a

lower body martial art," senior instructor Leigh Gilmore said. "It's kind of rough when you're a freshman with the whole 25 pounds that everyone seems to gain, and this definitely helps."

Gilmore said she uses Taekwondo to help her through stressful times.

"I will have to say that being able to work out, especially in martial arts, is really good," Gilmore said. "It can kind of let off some steam if you have a bad paper or a test or something, and it's really nice to work out during the week."

Cindy Maupin, who has been practicing the martial art for a little more than a year now, said attending this class helped her in more ways than one.

"I actually broke my leg in the

summer of 2007, so I decided that in 2008 I would start Taekwondo to strengthen my leg up, and it really did help," Maupin said.

Aside from getting fit, flexible and relieving stress, the class aims to teach students discipline and respect. Gilmore said she stresses timeliness, bowing when entering or exiting the room and addressing black belt participants as "sir" or "ma'am."

Students will be trained and tested throughout the semester on their kicks, blocks, hand techniques and a board break, which Gilmore said is "not as scary as it

sounds." There will be a tournament March 21 at Missouri State University, where Truman Taekwondo students will fight for the title.

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Leigh Gilmore
Taekwondo instructor

"We're also going to be having some demos in the spring, and we will be a part of Asian culture night, so everyone should check that out," Gilmore said.

Uniforms are not required of white belts, but the mouthguards are necessary and can be purchased at Wal-Mart.

Senior Amanda Miller, who is new to martial arts, said she is excited to begin taking this class to try something new.

"Maybe [it will] give me some motivation to come on a regular basis," she said.

Gilmore said she does not want newcomers to be scared off at the thought of trying something new.

"It's never too late to join," Gilmore said. "Which I can say for my senior instructor, he's 60 years old back home, you're never too old to start!"



Mayank Dhungana/Index
Sophomore Kevin Tran practices his kicks during a Taekwondo class.



Mayank Dhungana/Index

Freshman David Churchill warms up with the class by jumping (above). Freshman Megan Hartman works with sophomore Thomas Reuther in a kicking exercise (right). Taekwondo classes practice on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



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