ERASMUS+ PROJECT

B.E.S.T.

Boosting Excercise in Schools through Taekwondo

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Boosting Exercise in Schools through Taekwondo (BEST)

A Project to Promote Physical Activity among Young People

The BEST project (Boosting Exercise in Schools through Taekwondo) represents an innovative and ambitious initiative aimed at promoting physical activity among students, using Taekwondo as an educational tool to improve the physical, mental, and social well-being of young people.

Who are the creators of the project?
The project is led by the Italian Taekwondo Federation (FITA), with the support of the Malta Taekwondo Association (MTA) and the European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI), two significant organizations that contribute with their experience in the field of martial arts and in the development of innovative sports policies at the European level.

BEST is funded by the Erasmus+ Sport program, an initiative of the European Union aimed at encouraging social inclusion and sports practice among young people.

This funding underlines the importance of the project within European strategies for the well-being of new generations, in an era in which sedentary lifestyles represent an increasingly widespread problem.

Project Objectives

The main objective of the BEST project is to counteract sedentary lifestyles and promote more active ways of life among students, in line with the recommendations of the European Union regarding youth health and well-being.

Taekwondo, with its characteristics of dynamism, discipline, and harmonious development of body and mind, has been chosen as the ideal sport to stimulate young people to embark on a path of personal growth through physical activity.

In particular, BEST aims to:

- Encourage movement and physical well-being, countering the growing problem of inactivity among young people.
- Develop cognitive skills and decision-making abilities through the practice of Taekwondo, which requires strategy, concentration, and quick thinking.
- Encourage socialization and inclusion, allowing students to interact and collaborate in a stimulating environment free from discrimination.
- Promote educational and social values, such as respect, discipline, tolerance, and gender equality, using sport as a vehicle for transmitting positive messages.

Experimentation and Implementation in Schools

A fundamental aspect of the BEST project is the creation of a structured educational program, based on best practices in the field of sport and school teaching. This program will initially be tested in two pilot classes, selected in two schools:

- A school in Palermo, Italy
- A school located in Malta

This experimentation phase will serve to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, collect data on the impact of physical activity on young people, and identify any aspects to be improved before implementation on a larger scale.

Inclusivity and Educational Values

One of the key principles of the project is inclusion, ensuring that access to the program is not limited only to those with particular physical or economic predispositions.

BEST is committed to:

- Involving young people with disabilities, adapting activities so that everyone can participate and benefit from the experience.
- Providing opportunities to students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, breaking down the economic barriers that often prevent young people from practicing sports.
- Promoting gender equality, encouraging participation of both boys and girls in a fair and inclusive sporting environment.
- Spreading the values of tolerance and mutual acceptance, using Taekwondo as a tool to teach respect for others, regardless of cultural or physical differences.

Transnational Collaboration and Exchange of Experiences

BEST stands out for its international approach, involving partners from different European countries, including Italy, Malta, and Belgium. This transnational collaboration makes it possible to share experiences, methodologies, and pedagogical approaches, in order to develop a teaching model of Taekwondo that can be applied in different school contexts at the European level.

To ensure effective coordination between partners and constant improvement of the project, three transnational meetings are planned, during which the following will be discussed:

- The progress of the project and the results of the pilot classes.
- Possible changes to the educational program to improve its effectiveness.
- Strategies to disseminate the BEST model to a larger number of schools and European countries.

These meetings will be fundamental to foster the exchange of ideas, improve teaching practices, and strengthen ties between the organizations involved.

The Expected Impact of the BEST Project

Through the planned activities, BEST aims to generate a positive and lasting impact on the health and well-being of young people, demonstrating that sport, and in particular Taekwondo, can be a valid ally in education and personal development.

The main expected results include:

- *Increase in the level of physical activity among students, contributing to the reduction of risks related to sedentary lifestyles, such as obesity and postural disorders.*
- *Improvement in concentration and cognitive abilities, thanks to the discipline and strategy techniques characteristic of Taekwondo.*
- *• Strengthening of social skills, through group sports practice and respect for rules of coexistence.*
- *Creation of a replicable educational model, which can be adopted by other schools in Europe to expand the benefits of Taekwondo among young people.*

In conclusion, the BEST – Boosting Exercise in Schools through Taekwondo project represents a significant step towards a more dynamic, inclusive, and youth-focused school system. Thanks to collaboration between sports experts and educational institutions, BEST not only aims to integrate Taekwondo into educational programs but also to demonstrate how physical activity can be a powerful tool for individual and collective growth.

The initiative, supported by the European Union, has the potential to become a reference model in the field of sports education, with a positive impact extending far beyond the schools involved in the initial phase of the project.

Future Perspectives and Possible Developments of the BEST Project

The BEST – Boosting Exercise in Schools through Taekwondo project is not limited to a temporary initiative but aims to become a replicable educational and sports model on a large scale, with the ambition of expanding to an increasing number of schools and European countries.

After the experimentation phase in the pilot classes, the data collected and the experiences of students, teachers, and Taekwondo instructors involved in the program will be analyzed. This data will serve to refine the teaching method and optimize the program, making it even more effective and accessible.

Thanks to the results obtained, the project could:

- Be extended to other schools in Italy, Malta, and Belgium, involving a growing number of students and teachers.
- Be proposed to other European countries, expanding the network of international collaboration and making

BEST an example of best practice in sports education.
• Influence educational policies, suggesting new ways to integrate sport into the school curriculum in a more structured and innovative manner.

Another key aspect will be the training of teachers and instructors so that Taekwondo can be taught with an effective pedagogical approach, adaptable to students of all ages and physical conditions.

Training could include:

- Training courses for teachers, enabling them to integrate Taekwondo elements into their physical education lessons.
- Workshops and seminars for Taekwondo instructors, to develop specific teaching skills for school environments.
- Digital platforms and interactive teaching materials to support both teachers and students in learning the basic techniques and educational values of Taekwondo.

The BEST – Boosting Exercise in Schools through Taekwondo project represents much more than a simple sports initiative: it is an innovative vision of physical education that places the well-being of students and the educational value of sport at the center.

Through Taekwondo, BEST aims to:

- Transform physical activity into a complete formative experience, developing not only the body but also the mind and character.
- Create a more dynamic, inclusive, and stimulating school environment where sport becomes a means to break down barriers and promote positive values.
- Influence how sport is integrated into the education system, demonstrating that disciplines like Taekwondo can play a key role in youth development.

Thanks to collaboration between schools, sports institutions, and local communities, the BEST project has the potential to leave a lasting mark in the world of education and sport, improving the quality of life of hundreds of students and contributing to the creation of a more active, healthy, and aware society.

Project Partners

FITA

The Italian Taekwondo Federation, in addition to the important competitive activity of the national teams, has also dealt with social activities. It has always promoted initiatives where, for example, Taekwondo was brought into problematic neighborhoods to keep young people away from crime, or to use Taekwondo as an instrument of integration, as in the project "Taekwondo Migrant" and later in the publication of the book "Fighting – a story of freedom and integration through Taekwondo," which tells the story of one of the boys who took part in the project and had a second chance thanks to his determination and to Taekwondo.

In May 2021, THF Italia, the Italian Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation, was born. Created as a spin-off of the Taekwondo Humanitarian Foundation to promote its principles and mission in Italy and in the European Union. In the last three years, THF Italia has stood out thanks to virtuous initiatives.

Following the outbreak of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, FITA worked to express solidarity and provide concrete help to the Ukrainian population. After contributing, together with 13 other Sports Federations, to the collection and subsequent shipment of 120 boxes of clothing, FITA welcomed – from March 2022 – 7 athletes of the Ukrainian national Taekwondo team, providing them with food, lodging, technical, psychological and health support, also assisting them in their participation in Olympic, World, and European competitions, and guaranteeing them the opportunity to take part in all federal activities.

Also in May 2022, FITA welcomed the Afghan athlete Mahdia Sharifi, while in October 2022 it responded to the call for help from Iranian athlete Hadi Tiranvalipour, world and Asian Taekwondo champion with years of experience in the Iranian national team and a TV presenter in Iran, who, after refusing to kiss the hand of Supreme Leader Khamenei in order to remain faithful to his principles, was blocked by the regime with consequent threat of arrest.

In addition, after refusing the order not to compete against Israeli athletes, an act that cost him expulsion from the national team, Hadi fled to Italy to avoid persecution, with the regime continuing to put pressure on his family, even arresting his brother to intimidate him.

After his arrival in Italy, Hadi joined the Italian National Team at the Olympic Preparation Center "Giulio Onesti" in Rome, together with other hosted athletes. FITA immediately took steps to request the Olympic Solidarity Refugee Athlete Scholarship – a scholarship provided by the IOC for situations like this – thanks to which Hadi was able to continue his preparation for the Paris 2024 Games.

Project Partners

Malta Taekwondo Association

The Malta Taekwondo Association was established in 2021 after the previous administration was suspended due to serious irregularities. Since its founding, the MTA's working group has consisted of 5 people working tirelessly to grow the sport. The committee works on a voluntary basis.

President Anna Vassallo, together with the committee, has successfully placed athletes on the world Taekwondo map, with junior athletes now ranked among the top 10 in Europe. Taekwondo in Malta is gradually becoming popular, with several events held every year, including in schools, colleges, and universities. The MTA also has a THF team with the support of World Taekwondo. With a presence in ETU and WT, the association maintains excellent relations with the Maltese Olympic Committee and the Ministry of Sport.

Project Partners

European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI)

TThe European Platform for Sport Innovation (EPSI) is a non-profit organization based in Brussels that represents 186 members in 31 countries, including universities, SMEs, clusters, research institutes, and sports bodies. EPSI is committed to promoting innovation in sport, physical activity, health, sustainability, and vitality, connecting actors from the public, private, academic, and civil society sectors.

EPSI boasts extensive experience in EU-funded initiatives, with over 40 past and ongoing projects, many focused on promoting physical activity and engaging young people.

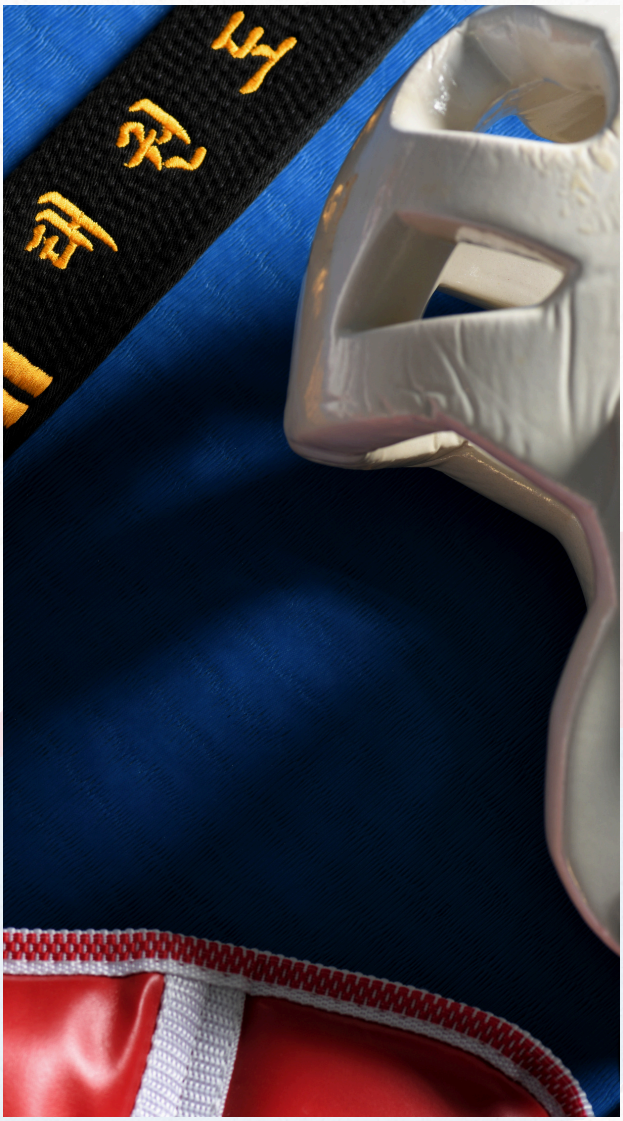
Notable examples include:

- PROGRESS, which encouraged outdoor physical activity among parents and children by using technology and gamification tools in Southeast Europe.
- SPOKI and SPEX, which helped children identify the most suitable sports using exergaming, improving motivation and inclusion.

In BEST, EPSI leads the communication and dissemination strategy. Leveraging its vast network and expertise, EPSI will ensure that the project reaches stakeholders across Europe, promotes long-term visibility, and supports the replicability and sustainability of results both locally and at the European level.

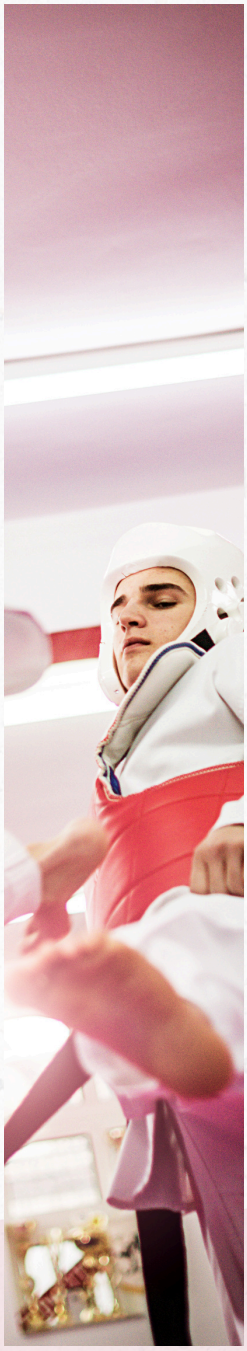
General Psychomotor Objectives in Primary School Children

The proposed pathway is based on the idea of involving primary school children in play through Taekwondo, focusing on psychomotor development. Within the school environment, Taekwondo offers ample opportunities for intervention. The activities proposed in this manual can be integrated both in curricular and extracurricular hours. Since the concept of Game-Taekwondo, thanks to competent technical staff in the sector, integrates perfectly into the school program, it complies with the guidelines indicated by the Ministry of Education.



One of the main motor objectives for children in the first grades of primary school is the improvement of basic motor patterns: walking, running, rolling, jumping, climbing, throwing, and catching. The basic motor patterns develop in parallel with basic coordinative skills (motor learning, motor control, motor adaptation and transformation) and, thanks to the specialization over time of these motor mechanisms, children will also be able to benefit in actual competitive activity. These concepts must be a cornerstone in the development of training programs to be administered to young athletes, especially from the first to the third grade.

Scientific journals on the subject highlight how movement and specific motor stimuli, favoring the refinement of motor patterns, can offer benefits not only in sport but also in other contexts, such as school. Through movement and acquisition of basic technical gestures, children develop greater attention capacity, useful both during school and extracurricular activities. At this stage of development, another important objective is to encourage a balanced development of the different dimensions of children's personalities (cognitive, socio-affective, motor, and physical) through Taekwondo. It is essential to recognize the importance of movement in young people: in this context, Taekwondo becomes an essential tool to channel their energies during Game-Taekwondo lessons, helping them to be more focused both in subsequent school activities and in managing homework.



Now we will provide practical guidelines for coaches for each school year.

In the first year of primary school, the focus should be mainly on knowledge of one's body parts and on coordination and combination of basic motor patterns, trying to create continuity between lessons and between the proposed exercises

In this way, step by step over the following months, a fundamental preparation can be developed to achieve the set objectives. This may include, for example, group games where individual competition is not emphasized, but cooperation is valued in order to reach a common goal and complete the game. The emphasis should be placed on interaction among participants and on respect for rules. In this initial phase, it is essential that the coach acts as a capable mediator, promoting active and positive participation of the entire class right from the start.

In the second and third grades, the above concepts can continue, but a more competitive, game-like approach may be introduced. Thus, group games can be developed where there are winners and losers. Increasing importance will always be placed on cooperation, solidarity, and sharing of a common goal.

This will be a significant stimulus for the development of children's interpersonal skills, pushing them to deal with their own emotions, such as anger, frustration, sadness, or anxiety in case of defeat, and euphoria, joy, or excitement in case of victory. This process of emotional confrontation is fundamental to help children recognize, understand, and manage their emotions in a balanced way. Through the support of the coach, who acts as a guide and facilitator, children learn to transform both victories and defeats into opportunities for personal growth.

In the fourth and fifth grades, specific technical gestures of Taekwondo will begin to be increasingly specialized. Competition and sport practice are essential to encourage comparison and imitation, but their main goal should be to stimulate, on the one hand, the students' commitment, and on the other, reflection on rivalry, solidarity, and respect for the opponent. Through this approach, students not only improve their technical and physical abilities but also develop fundamental values such as loyalty, empathy, and self-control.

The combination of motor and postural patterns in dynamic and constantly evolving situations, such as the specific motor pathways proposed during lessons, allows for increasingly conscious and targeted use of one's movements.

This process favors not only improvement of motor abilities but also the development of greater coordination, balance, and body awareness. Through structured and progressive exercises, students learn to optimize their movements, adapting them to different situations, thus contributing to their physical development and to the strengthening of cognitive and relational abilities.

Recognizing good habits deriving from healthy sports practice can bring significant benefits in children's lives, such as adopting a balanced diet or overcoming sedentariness.

Preparing young people to face the challenges of contemporary society is not simple and also requires introducing them to the world of sport, which is constantly evolving. However, it is necessary to address certain social issues such as bullying, violence, and discrimination. Schools and Taekwondo must constantly work to fight, prevent, and analyze these phenomena, using all educational tools at their disposal. Planning group games or team activities regularly contributes significantly to developing and improving children's socio-affective skills, fundamental aspects for their harmonious growth and well-being.

Another benefit of sport, in particular Taekwondo, which is a dynamic and complete sport, concerns the development of children's general cognitive abilities, in addition to the already mentioned advantages such as improved spatial perception and coordination.

Motor activity stimulates neuroplasticity, that is, the brain's ability to create new synapses and adapt. To better explain this concept, let's refer to a practical example common in many European countries. Until a few decades ago, children spent several hours a day playing in neighborhoods, courtyards, or parks. This type of outdoor play provided continuous motor stimuli, accompanied by feedback from the external environment, such as noises, passersby, pets, uneven pavements, walls, or other obstacles.

The need to manage these stimuli during play created a wide range of experiences that favored increased synaptic connections and adaptation of the central nervous system.

This motor and experiential background was a distinctive feature of young people of that time. Today, instead, many children prefer to spend time at home playing video games or doing low-effort recreational activities, often giving up hours outdoors with peers

This difference highlights how a rich and varied experiential background, including multifactorial stimuli, can guarantee global benefits to children, especially during their growth phase. Taekwondo, thanks to its dynamic and multifunctional nature, can help fill this gap, offering children a stimulating environment that partly reproduces those rich and diverse motor experiences.

During lessons, young athletes must face constantly changing situations, requiring concentration, rapid adaptation, coordination, and interaction with others. This not only improves their motor skills but also stimulates their brain to respond to new stimuli, fostering cognitive development and problem-solving abilities.

Moreover, Taekwondo practice can help children regain some of the skills once developed through free outdoor play, such as space management, body control in relation to obstacles, and adaptation to unforeseen situations. Integrating sport into their daily routine not only helps them develop a broader motor background but also prepares them to better face life's challenges, fostering balanced physical and mental growth.

To achieve these results, it is essential that the proposed activities are designed to constantly stimulate children, keeping their interest alive and encouraging them to overcome their limits. This approach allows the creation of an effective learning context, where children can grow in a safe, fun, and at the same time educational environment.

The coach will have to adopt a global approach different from the method traditionally used in gyms. This is because the school environment has different dynamics: while in the gym children voluntarily choose to practice Taekwondo, in the school context lessons may be included during curricular hours. As a result, not all students may be predisposed or attracted to the martial discipline of Taekwondo. It is therefore essential that the coach is prepared to manage this situation, adapting his or her communication, both verbal and non-verbal, effectively to involve the entire class group in a homogeneous and constant way. This aspect becomes particularly relevant in the fourth and fifth grades, where children may already have consolidated preferences for certain sports disciplines.

To keep students' interest alive during lessons, it is essential to adopt engaging strategies. An effective solution is the use of motor pathways with multisensory stimuli, which not only capture children's attention but also stimulate their senses – sight, touch, hearing, smell, and taste

. For example, circuits can be created with cones of different colors, assigning each color a specific movement or speed. Balls of different materials and sizes can be used, or the intensity of exercises varied through signals such as whistles. These activities, in addition to being fun, help develop motor skills and make lessons more dynamic and engaging for all participants. Such an approach allows children to experience each lesson as a new and stimulating experience, strengthening not only their physical abilities but also their ability to listen, observe, and respond promptly to stimuli. Furthermore, introducing multisensory elements promotes the development of concentration and memory, fundamental aspects for their cognitive and personal growth.It is important that the coach serves as a reference point during activities, maintaining a positive and encouraging attitude. He or she must know how to adjust the pace of lessons to the needs of the group and ensure that every child, regardless of inclinations or abilities, feels actively part of the experience.

Another crucial aspect is the coach's ability to turn any difficulties or disinterest into opportunities. For example, children less inclined to sports activity can be motivated through collaborative games that prioritize teamwork and the achievement of common goals. At the same time, individual exercises can be proposed to stimulate autonomy and personal achievement. Finally, the coach must be able to transmit to children not only the basics of Taekwondo but also its fundamental values, such as respect for themselves and others, discipline, and perseverance. These principles, integrated into a playful and accessible context, can have a positive impact on children's personal growth, providing them with useful tools not only in sport but also in everyday life.

Benefits of Taekwondo for Children

Taekwondo offers multiple benefits for children, not only from the point of view of physical development but also from the cognitive and socio-emotional point of view. The discipline, in fact, contributes significantly to the formation of the personality of the little ones, guiding them in their growth path in a balanced and constructive way.

From the physical point of view, Taekwondo represents an activity capable of stimulating all motor areas: strength, speed, endurance, coordination, balance, and flexibility. Its dynamic exercises, which combine kicks, jumps, rapid displacements, and defensive actions, allow children to develop greater awareness of their own bodies and improve their overall fitness. Unlike other sports that focus on limited muscle groups or repetitive movements, Taekwondo ensures balanced and harmonious development.

From the cognitive point of view, practicing Taekwondo requires concentration, attention to detail, and the ability to learn increasingly complex motor sequences. Through forms (Poomsae) and technical exercises, children are stimulated to memorize precise sequences of movements, to coordinate them with breathing, rhythm, and spatial orientation. This constant cognitive activation has positive repercussions also in the school environment, improving memory, problem-solving capacity, and attention in carrying out tasks.

Equally important are the socio-emotional benefits. Taekwondo teaches children fundamental values such as respect, discipline, perseverance, and self-control. During lessons, they learn to listen to the instructor, to respect the rules, and to collaborate with peers. Group activities and pair exercises promote interaction, communication, and the development of empathy. In addition, by practicing combat (Kyorugi) in a controlled and safe context, children have the opportunity to experience and manage emotions such as fear, anxiety, and competition, learning to transform them into positive energy.

Another crucial aspect is the ability of Taekwondo to channel children's energy. Many children, especially in the developmental age, manifest a strong need for movement and activity. Taekwondo, thanks to its structured and stimulating nature, offers them the opportunity to express this energy in a positive and constructive way, reducing hyperactivity and improving behavior even outside the sporting context.

Finally, Taekwondo contributes to increasing children's self-esteem and self-confidence. Achieving new goals, such as learning a new technique or obtaining a higher belt, strengthens the sense of self-efficacy and motivates them to commit themselves further. This sense of achievement is reflected positively in other aspects of their lives, such as school and social relationships.

In summary, Taekwondo is not just a martial art or a sport, but a complete educational path that accompanies children in their physical, mental, and relational growth. Through its practice, children can develop not only a healthy and agile body but also an alert mind and a strong, balanced character.

Technical and Motor Characteristics of Taekwondo: Poomsae, Kyorugi, and Freestyle

Poomsae

Poomsae represent one of the fundamental elements of Taekwondo. They are sequences of codified movements that reproduce fighting situations against imaginary opponents, combining offensive and defensive techniques in precise order. Practicing Poomsae allows students to improve not only their technique but also their concentration, memory, and discipline. Each Poomsae has a symbolic meaning and conveys moral values and philosophical concepts linked to Korean tradition, such as harmony, balance, and respect.

From the motor point of view, Poomsae develop coordination, rhythm, spatial orientation, and the ability to control the body in space. The execution requires precision, fluidity, and awareness of movements, thus helping to refine motor patterns and improve posture. At the educational level, Poomsae represent a tool to stimulate patience and perseverance, as they require constant repetition and continuous refinement.

Kyorugi

Kyorugi, or combat, is the sporting expression of Taekwondo and represents the competitive aspect of the discipline. It consists of a confrontation between two athletes who, following codified rules, try to score points by hitting specific areas of the opponent's body with kicks and, to a lesser extent, punches. Kyorugi requires a high level of physical fitness, speed, reactivity, and the ability to make quick tactical decisions. The athlete must be able to evaluate the opponent's movements, anticipate their actions, and react effectively in a very short time.

From the motor point of view, Kyorugi stimulates agility, balance, coordination, and muscular strength, especially in the lower limbs. At the same time, it develops cognitive abilities such as attention, anticipation, and problem-solving, since each combat situation requires rapid and effective decisions. From the educational point of view, combat teaches respect for the opponent, the ability to manage emotions, and acceptance of rules.

Freestyle

Freestyle is the most modern and creative expression of Taekwondo. It consists of the execution of free forms accompanied by music, in which athletes combine traditional techniques with acrobatic movements, jumps, and rotations of high spectacular impact. Freestyle represents an evolution of the discipline that enhances the artistic and expressive aspect, allowing practitioners to demonstrate not only technical skills but also creativity and originality.

From the motor point of view, Freestyle develops explosive strength, agility, coordination, and spatial awareness. At the same time, it stimulates artistic and expressive abilities, since the athlete must interpret music and synchronize movements with rhythm. From the educational point of view, Freestyle encourages innovation, personal expression, and the courage to experiment, values of great importance especially for young people.

The Benefits of Taekwondo on Posture in Young People

Posture can be defined as the position of the body in space, the result of the interaction between skeletal structures, muscles, and the nervous system. Correct posture is essential to ensure balance, prevent overloads, and allow efficient movement. In developmental age, when bones, joints, and muscles are still forming, the adoption of incorrect postural habits can have negative consequences in adulthood.

The sedentary lifestyle, prolonged use of electronic devices, and insufficient physical activity are among the main causes of postural problems in children and adolescents. Taekwondo, thanks to its dynamic and complete nature, represents an effective tool to counteract these problems and to promote the development of correct postural habits.

The practice of Taekwondo involves a wide variety of movements that engage the whole body: kicks, rotations, jumps, combat positions, and sequences of forms. These movements require constant postural control, coordination, and balance. Training strengthens postural muscles, improves flexibility, and promotes joint mobility. Furthermore, the barefoot practice stimulates proprioceptive sensitivity, that is, the ability to perceive and control the position of the body in space.

Numerous studies highlight how the practice of martial arts, and Taekwondo in particular, contributes to preventing and correcting common postural defects in young people, such as scoliosis, hyperlordosis, or kyphosis. The exercises proposed during lessons, if guided by competent instructors, can help restore muscle balance and encourage correct alignment of the spine.

In addition to the physical benefits, Taekwondo promotes awareness of one's own body and correct posture, educating children and adolescents to adopt healthier habits also in daily life, such as sitting correctly at school desks, using backpacks properly, or maintaining correct posture while studying and playing.

In summary, Taekwondo represents a complete and effective method not only for the development of motor skills but also for the prevention and improvement of postural problems, offering young people the opportunity to grow healthier, stronger, and more aware of their own bodies.

Taekwondo in the Classroom

In many European countries, the teaching of physical activity within compulsory schooling has always played a central role. Unfortunately, in Italy the situation has historically been very different. For decades, physical education has been limited to only two hours per week, often considered a moment of leisure rather than an integral part of the educational path. This approach has penalized generations of students, depriving them of the benefits that motor activity can bring to the cognitive and physical level.

Only in recent years, thanks to the introduction of projects and pilot programs, has the importance of integrating physical activity into the school curriculum begun to be recognized.

Taekwondo, with its wealth of techniques, values, and teaching methods, represents an extraordinary opportunity to innovate physical education in schools. Through the BEST project, Taekwondo is proposed as a real educational tool, capable of combining physical activity with cognitive and social development.

The introduction of Taekwondo in schools allows not only to improve students' motor skills but also to create more cohesive, respectful, and inclusive classes. Lessons can be structured in such a way as to encourage cooperation, respect for rules, and mutual support, thus combating phenomena such as bullying, marginalization, and discrimination. In addition, Taekwondo offers the possibility of educating young people about self-control, stress management, and positive channeling of emotions, skills of fundamental importance in contemporary society.

From the cognitive point of view, numerous studies have shown that children who practice regular physical activity present better attention, memory, and learning ability. Taekwondo, in particular, thanks to the need to memorize sequences, concentrate during combat, and control movements, stimulates mental faculties that are directly reflected in school performance.

Another key aspect is the possibility of adapting Taekwondo programs to the needs of different age groups and abilities. Thanks to its versatility, the discipline lends itself to being practiced both by very young children and by adolescents, as well as by students with disabilities, ensuring an inclusive and stimulating approach for everyone.
In conclusion, the introduction of Taekwondo in schools does not only mean offering students a new sport but also enriching their educational path with values, skills, and experiences destined to positively influence their personal and academic growth.

Game-Taekwondo

Game-Taekwondo represents an innovative methodology that uses play as the main tool for teaching and learning Taekwondo, especially in the school environment. The concept is based on the idea that children learn better when they are involved in playful, fun, and engaging activities, which allow them to experiment and grow in a natural and spontaneous way.

Through specially designed games, children can acquire the basic techniques of Taekwondo while at the same time developing motor, cognitive, and relational skills. Games can involve individual exercises, pair activities, or group competitions, always carried out in a controlled and safe context. The goal is not victory or defeat but participation, collaboration, and personal improvement.

The methodology of Game-Taekwondo allows adapting activities to the different ages and abilities of students, ensuring inclusion and active involvement of all. Children with greater difficulties can be supported through simplified exercises, while more advanced ones can be stimulated with more complex challenges. In this way, each student can experience success and feel motivated to continue.

From the educational point of view, Game-Taekwondo promotes values such as respect, discipline, and cooperation, transmitting them in a playful and immediate way. The game thus becomes a powerful tool not only for teaching Taekwondo techniques but also for forming responsible, respectful, and self-confident citizens.

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