

# 9 Things Everyone Ought To Know Before Joining Any Martial Arts School

*(Spoiler: Many students quit because they  
never knew about these before joining.)*



**MKG International Martial Arts**  
Madison

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# Why I Created This Resource For You



Ever been in a car accident?

I was about 3 years. It wasn't too bad or stressful... at least not as much as the process to buy a new car was. You see, my wife and I had different (or should I say opposing) opinions as to what we thought we needed and wanted in our next car.

I certainly loved the idea of owning a car that would turn heads and make me feel good, but of course, that wasn't realistic. She, as well, had some not-so-practical ideas for our vehicle. But to avoid more arguments, and to make our car-buying experience easier, we realized we just need to answer some important questions before we end up with a car we didn't want or need. And after HONESTLY answering those questions, we ended up with a vehicle that was perfect!

And that's exactly why I put this resource together. Because, like with a buying a car, choosing a martial arts school can be stressful, and it can cause a lot of arguments, because they both require you to make a commitment that you just may not be ready for. But with these questions, my goal is to help you avoid as much of the stress and frustration that comes with all that.

The overall lesson here is that once you determine what you will not compromise on, and what you're okay with not having, your decision can be so much easier, less stressful, and you end up with the right martial arts school.

# STOP! Before You Start Your Search...

## Goals



1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. What are your goals?

Finding the right school isn't about finding the best school in town, it's about finding the best school for YOU, and why you want (or want for your loved one) to learn martial arts?

Try to narrow down your primary reasons, by writing them down in order of priority. Here are some examples...

- Fitness
- Cultural Awareness
- Challenge
- Job skills
- Confidence
- Community
- Life skills
- Health reasons
- Self Defense
- Competition
- It's looks cool
- Flexibility



Certain styles of martial arts can help you achieve your goal better than others, so keep an eye out for specific benefits as you search martial art schools.

### 2. Am I truly ready to commit to my goals?

Of course, this is easier said than done. But if you answer this honestly, you will not only have an easier time with the rest of the questions, but it can prevent you from going through any of it if you're simply not ready.

So... if you've said "yes" to this question, you're ready to move on to the next phase, searching for your martial arts schools.

# Searching For Your Martial Arts School



Most of the time you can get these answered online or with a simple phone call. Once you've squared them away, narrow down your selection to just a 2-3 schools.

## 4. Where is the school located?

The time you spend driving, combined with today's changing fuel costs may quickly make a good school difficult to get to. Consider the location of the school and its distance in terms of your work, your child's school, you running late, any other unforeseen delays, and the unpredictable Wisconsin weather.

Keep in mind, you'll be making this commute several times a week.

The other part of the school's location that you may not think about is, it's surroundings. In other words, is it in a safe area? Are the businesses around it kept up as well, or are they run-down? This may be a minor issue, but sometimes this can be a deal-breaker. But it's definitely worthy to consider.

## 5. What days and times work best?

What hours do they run classes? This will be important to know if you can fit this into your schedule. In addition to when the class you're interested in happens, you'll also want to know if there are other times available for make-up classes in the event you have to travel.

# Making The Most of Your Visits

## 6. How's the look & smell of the school?

**Appearance** - Your first impression of the school's appearance can give you a sense of the quality of training and atmosphere they provide. At the same time, it's important that you not analyze too critically, because some of the greatest schools in the world don't look all that fancy.

**Smell** - You may not consider this very important at first, but believe me, it can make a big difference to how well you can focus while training, or even when you're there just to watch your child/loved one.



Make sure you visit the school when the class you're looking into is in session. Expect to spend 15 minutes to 1 hour talking with staff and instructors.

## 7. What are the classes like?

**Classes** - This will help you gauge your comfort level with the school for you. Are you okay with the gender ratio? Do the classes move too quickly? What is the pace of regular classes, and what is the normal level of physical contact? (High intensity physical-contact may be inappropriate or uncomfortable for some students.)

**Curriculum** - A school that is well-structured will have a good level of systematic plans for their students' progress. While a sign that good teaching systems may not be in place is that school has a lot of beginners, but very few people reaching higher levels of achievement.

**Extra Homework:** If you're up for it, you can even ask to talk to some of the students. You learn a lot about why a person stays with an instructor. (This is a good chance also for you to potentially make a friend and a partner to practice in in the future.)

## 8. What about the Staff & Instructors?

**Staff** - The martial arts school you choose should have staff that you are comfortable with. Is the staff friendly and do they have a great attitude? Do you feel welcome? Of course, these are very obvious questions, but if they're overlooked, the wrong attitude of one staff member, can make a difference to the rest of the school's atmosphere.

**Instructor(s)** - The style(s) a school teaches should come second to who is teaching, and how they teach. A good instructor will help their students to feel good about what they're doing. They will encourage their students to continue to develop their skills and knowledge. A good instructor will empower you to keep you on track when you lose focus of your goals.

Simply put, an instructor should have 3 main qualities...

1. Caring: They should care for you and the goals you're looking to achieve.
2. Committed: They need to be committed to the success of the students they are teaching.
3. Communication: They should be able to communicate what they teach in a way that's easy to understand.



**Rank & Awards Matters Less Than You Think:** The instructor may be a 10th degree black belt or a world champ, but that doesn't make them a good teacher for you, or for your 6 year old. The only way you are going to know if they are the right teacher, is to try some classes with them.



# Making Your Final Decisions

## 9. What about the Cost & Commitments?



**Cost** - If you were to shop for a new car, you have a lot of options out there. You can get an old pickup truck for next to nothing... or you could get a new car with all the bells and whistles, but it's going to cost much more.

Each school can differ significantly in its prices. Be sure you understand all costs, so there are no hidden surprises. Here are some key questions worth asking:

- Can you pay monthly? Are you required at any time to sign a long term contract?
- What are the costs of equipment? Can you buy from the school? Can you buy elsewhere?
- Are there any additional fees? Testing fees? Membership fees? Any charges not previously mentioned?

It goes without saying, but... if a school charges 2 times more than everyone else, it better be able to explain exactly how they make good on all the claims you're paying them for.

**Commitment** - Some schools will require a commitment between 6 months to 1 year of training. Most schools consider these commitments to be 2-sided (meaning that the instructors are committed to your growth & advancement for the duration). By taking advantage of their trial period, you can make sure you are 100%

comfortable with your decision before you lock into a contract. Here are some questions to consider:

- Is a contract required? If so, how long is the contract for?
- Does the school offer membership options?
- What kind of options?
- Do you have a punch card option?
- Do the options meet your personal situation?

Be sure to read and understand everything before you sign. If need be, always ask for something in writing.



If a school is unwilling to allow you a trial period or work with contract verbiage to make you comfortable, it's mostly like not what you're looking for.

# Is Now The Time?

## (Bonus Questions)

**Am I ready to make a financial investment?** Contrary to popular belief, martial arts training and instruction cost money. The question you have to ask yourself is if it's worth the value. How much do you value your health and wellness? Sure, we can tell you that it is absolutely worth it (which it is, or else we wouldn't have dedicated our lives to it), but some people are a little more apprehensive. Before writing it off as expensive, consider what you are getting: expert instruction, daily structured classes, and a community of like-minded individuals where you can actually start to visualize your goals a lot easier. This means you are guaranteed to see results.

**Do I have time to spare?** This ties into the first question, because in order to achieve your goals you have to MAKE time. However, if you have already over-committed yourself to various activities and still want to train martial arts, you may need to reevaluate your commitments. This is usually the biggest deal breaker for most people, as they are so caught up with the everyday hustle and bustle of life, that they literally have no time for themselves. Something we have also seen is people who truly want to train will train regardless of how much time they have available.

# Final Thoughts

Lastly, there are many great instructors and schools in our area, and I wish them and their students nothing but success.

But please know, during your search, if you have any other questions before, or after joining a martial arts school, feel free to [contact us](#). Even if you don't live in or near the Madison, WI area, I am truly happy to help anyone who is pursuing the martial arts and all the wonderful benefits that come from building a foundation on the greatest art of all - LOVE. That is why I do what I do.



*Jesh Puer*