



How Can Beginners Start Learning Real Kung Fu?

[Real Kung Fu](#) is more than just a martial art, it is a culture rooted in centuries of tradition. For beginners, starting to learn real Kung Fu can be daunting because it is complex and profound. However, by focusing on key foundational techniques and understanding the essence of this art, learners can gradually build their skills and confidence. The following is a detailed guide on how beginners can start learning real Kung Fu and which basic techniques should be mastered first.

Step 1: Understand the Philosophy of Real Kung Fu

Kung Fu is more than physical combat; it embodies philosophical principles like balance, patience, respect, and perseverance. Before diving into physical training, it's important to learn the core values that guide practitioners:

- **Discipline:** Consistent practice is essential for improvement.
- **Mind-Body Connection:** Real Kung Fu emphasizes harmony between the mind and body, which improves focus and reaction time.
- **Respect:** Respect for instructors, fellow students, and even opponents is a fundamental part of training.

Step 2: Choose the Right Kung Fu Style

Kung Fu offers a broad spectrum of styles, each with its own distinct philosophy, techniques, and training methods, catering to different skill sets and personal goals:

1. **Shaolin Kung Fu:** Renowned for its rigorous training and explosive power, Shaolin Kung Fu emphasizes both physical strength and mental discipline. It features dynamic movements, high jumps, and precise strikes, making it an ideal style for developing overall fitness and martial prowess.
2. **Wing Chun:** Wing Chun is a close-combat style known for its efficiency, economy of movement, and focus on straight-line attacks. Designed to use an opponent's force against them, this style is perfect for self-defense and reflex training.
3. **Tai Chi:** Tai Chi is a soft, internal style focusing on slow, deliberate movements that enhance balance, flexibility, and internal energy (Qi). Though gentle in appearance, Tai Chi offers effective martial applications and is widely practiced for its health benefits.
4. **Animal Fist:** This style mimics the movements and spirit of various animals, such as the tiger, crane, snake, and monkey. Each animal form emphasizes different combat strategies—strength,

agility, or precision—providing practitioners with a versatile skill set.

5. **Soft Qigong**: Soft Qigong focuses on cultivating internal energy through gentle, flowing movements combined with deep breathing techniques. This style promotes relaxation, improves flexibility, and enhances overall health, making it suitable for all age groups.

6. **Hard Qigong**: Unlike Soft Qigong, Hard Qigong trains the body to withstand extreme physical stress and develop exceptional strength. Practitioners often demonstrate their skills by breaking bricks or withstanding strikes, showcasing the high level of toughness achievable.

7. **Sanda & Qin Na**: Sanda, also known as Chinese kickboxing, focuses on practical combat techniques, combining punches, kicks, and throws. Qin Na involves joint locks and grappling techniques used to control or immobilize opponents, making it an essential skill for real-world self-defense.

8. **Ba Ji Quan**: Ba Ji Quan is famous for its explosive power and close-range fighting techniques. It emphasizes strong elbow strikes, body checks, and low stances. Known for its effectiveness, Ba Ji Quan was historically used by bodyguards of Chinese emperors.

Step 3: Master Basic Stances

Stances form the foundation of all Kung Fu movements. A strong stance provides balance, stability, and power. Key stances to learn include:

1. **Horse Stance (Mǎ Bù)**: A low, wide stance that builds leg strength and stability.

a. Feet are parallel and shoulder-width apart.

b. Knees are bent deeply, and the back remains straight.

1. **Bow Stance (Gōng Bù)**: Used for transitioning between strikes and blocks.

a. One leg is bent forward, while the rear leg remains straight.

1. **Cat Stance (Xū Bù)**: A light, agile stance useful for quick movements.

1. The weight is mostly on the back leg, with the front foot lightly touching the ground.

Practicing these stances daily will improve strength, endurance, and balance.

Step 4: Learn Basic Strikes and Blocks

Kung Fu strikes are precise and powerful, designed to disable an opponent quickly. Beginners should focus on the following techniques:

- **Straight Punch (Zhí Quán)**: A direct punch aimed at the opponent's centerline.

- **Palm Strike (Zhǎng Tīng):** A versatile strike that uses the base of the palm to hit sensitive areas.
- **Low Block (Dī Gé):** A defensive move to block kicks or low attacks.
- **High Block (Shàng Gé):** Used to defend against strikes to the head or upper body.

Start by practicing these strikes and blocks slowly, focusing on proper form before increasing speed and power.

Step 5: Focus on Footwork

Footwork is crucial in real Kung Fu for maintaining balance, positioning, and evading attacks. Beginners should practice moving smoothly and efficiently in all directions. Drills to improve footwork include:

- **Step-and-Punch Drill:** Step forward with one foot while delivering a punch, then step back into a defensive stance.
- **Sidestep Drill:** Practice moving sideways to evade imaginary attacks while keeping your stance intact.

Good footwork allows practitioners to stay mobile, creating opportunities for counterattacks and defense.

Step 6: Build Flexibility and Strength

Real Kung Fu demands flexibility and strength to execute techniques effectively. Beginners should incorporate stretching exercises to improve flexibility, especially in the hips, legs, and shoulders. Strength training should focus on bodyweight exercises such as:

- **Squats:** To strengthen the legs for stances.
- **Push-ups:** To develop upper body strength for strikes.
- **Planks:** To build core stability.

Improved flexibility and strength will enhance overall performance and reduce the risk of injury.

Step 7: Practice Breathing and Meditation

Breathing techniques are a vital part of real Kung Fu, helping practitioners stay calm and focused. Controlled breathing also enhances endurance during training. A common practice is **Diaphragmatic Breathing**, where one breathes deeply into the abdomen rather than the chest.

Additionally, meditation is often practiced to develop mental clarity and internal energy (Qi). Beginners can start with 5-10 minutes of quiet meditation daily to center their thoughts and improve concentration.

Step 8: Join a Kung Fu School or Find a Mentor

While self-training is possible, having an experienced instructor or mentor can greatly accelerate learning. A good instructor can correct mistakes, provide personalized guidance, and introduce advanced techniques when ready.

When selecting a school or instructor:

- Look for those with verifiable credentials in real Kung Fu.
- Visit the school to observe classes and teaching methods.
- Choose a school that emphasizes both the physical and philosophical aspects of Kung Fu.

[Xinglin Traditional Shaolin Kung Fu Academy](#) is an authentic Chinese martial arts academy where you can learn real Kung Fu under the guidance of Shaolin monks.

Step 9: Set Realistic Goals

Progress in Kung Fu takes time and dedication. Beginners should set achievable short-term and long-term goals. Examples include:

- Mastering basic stances and strikes within the first month.
- Increasing flexibility by practicing daily stretches.
- Learning a simple form or sequence by the end of the first three months.

By setting realistic goals, learners can stay motivated and track their progress.

Conclusion

Beginning to learn [real kung fu](#) is both exciting and challenging. By understanding the philosophy, choosing the right style, mastering basic postures and techniques, and incorporating strength, flexibility, and breathing exercises, beginners can build a solid foundation for long-term success.

With consistent practice, patience, and guidance, real kung fu can become not only a powerful martial art, but also a lifelong discipline for physical and personal development.

So, fasten your belt, find your posture, and take the first step toward mastering real kung fu!