



Samurai course in Cape Coral heals, builds

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(Photo: Ricardo Rolon / The News-Press)

Eight years ago, doctors diagnosed Ron Kerlin with stage 4, inoperable prostate cancer. The cancer had metastasized to nearby bone. He also had osteoporosis. [Fullscreen](#)

He turned to disciplines he tried in Ashland, Ohio, and University of Nevada, Las Vegas. [The Art of Samurai in Cape Coral](#) martial arts.

Kerlin took courses in tai chi and kobudo or samurai with Marlene and Hilmar Fuchs after reading an ad in The News-Press.

In a year, he eliminated osteoporosis. His visits with oncologists, radiologists and urologists went from two weeks to quarterly to every six months. His PSA is zero.

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(Photo: Ricardo Rolon / The News-Press)

"My oncologist said, 'It's unbelievable,'" Kerlin said. "He said, 'We just don't see this happen with stage 4 patients.' I asked my longterm prognosis and they said, 'You are it.' They say jokingly I'm the poster child."

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Kerlin, 75, thought he'd live three years tops. Now, the [North Fort Myers](#) resident also has taken self-defense courses with wife, Carolyn, for the past two years. He attributes much of his health to martial arts, as well as a good attitude and a healthy respect for his foe.

"I consider and still do consider cancer to be a worthy opponent," Kerlin said. "And if I am stronger than my opponent, I will win."

"That's a motivating force for me."

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(Photo: Ricardo Rolon / The News-Press)

Kerlin is part of a four-person class participating in the Fuchs' Art of the Samurai course at Cape Coral's Rotary Park recently.

Two of the other members — 81-year-old Jack Saxe and Bob Wnukowski, 71, both of Fort Myers — joined about the same time as Kerlin and have kept

coming.

"We're all groupies," Wnukowski said with a sly grin. "Just a little bit older."

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(<http://www.news-press.com/story/life/wellness/angie-ferguson/2015/06/15/tennis-social-benefits-angie-ferguson-fitness-living/28764773/>)

Saxe added, "If he taught anything else I'd be there. Hilmar is a true master of the martial arts. He ties these three things together. It's all about the chi, the feelings. When you're doing something right, you feel it and it's euphoric in a way."



(Photo: Ricardo Rolon / The News-Press)

Hilmar Fuchs, 66, is celebrating his 50th year in the martial arts. He is an eighth-degree black belt, which is about as high as one can go without being Japanese, he said. They often invite him to teach the course and he's been asked to work with employees from different companies. He also is a former German national champion in karate.

"My teacher is French and he's a 9," Fuchs said. "My teacher in Japan is a 9. But it's just a number."

Marlene, 65, is a fourth-degree black belt. When she competed, her weapon of choice? A fan during kata or form competition.

In their Art of the Samurai course, discipline, character and ethics are more important than strength, speed or skill.

"Respect, respect, respect," Hilmar Fuchs repeats during warm-ups.

Bowing is done before and after each exercise. Even though a bokken replaces a real sword, it is holstered regularly.

"I've never seen a partner hit another with their weapon," Saxe said. "You see? You just stop before the neck."

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(<http://www.news-press.com/story/life/wellness/2015/06/15/dr-sal-lacagnina-health-family-touch-friends-faith-lee-memorial/28764785/>)

Hilmar Fuchs, who never has used his skills to fight, jokes it's much better to invite a foe for tea.

"There is a radar system in our head, zanshin," Fuchs said. "This is important.

"One of our students, Otis, went to a gas station in Fort Myers. He wears lot of jewelry, it sparkles. He was filling his gas tank when two young guys asked, 'What would you do if we take all your jewelry?' He said, 'If I wanted, I could've sprayed them with gas.' But I said, 'I assume you have a problem. Could I invite you for a cup of tea?' They said, 'What's wrong with you man? And they left.'"

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(Photo: Ricardo Rolon / The News-Press)

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Cape Coral's Sakura Roldan, 32, born in Japan to military parents, always has wanted to learn about different cultures. When she saw the ad for classes, she was intrigued.

"I got a lot of inner peace, calmness," she said. "You expand your movements through the sword. It is your soul."

Wnukowski said it's helped his coordination, balance, wellness. Saxe said friends and family are amazed he can balance on one leg.

"Before I started the classes, I used to be a very heavy smoker with a mild case of COPD," he said. "Tai chi helps my breathing and balance.

"I'll do this forever and ever, until I can't stand up. In case I didn't make it clear, I just love this."

Fuchs said he continues to learn and evolve despite his age. In his teachings, he uses a spiral as a metaphor.

"At the lowest part of the spiral, we must become strong," he said. "Then you're mastering your technique. The next step is mastering your mind. That's where you evolve into spirituality, awareness.

"That keeps life interesting, moving up the spiral."

More information

•To learn more about Marlene and Hilmar Fuchs' classes, go to: <http://www.mh-health.com/Schedule.htm> (<http://www.mh-health.com/Schedule.htm>). They also schedule private lessons in tai chi ch'uan, karate and kobudo (samurai). For more information, call 542-7603.

•**Note:** The Fuchs will be in Europe from June 24-Aug. 4

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