

Integral Fitness

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During the last two cycles, the Mastery Group has been working with the evolving concept of Integral Fitness. As we worked with the core practices embracing body, mind, heart and soul, we found that a larger concept of fitness was presenting itself. When founding ITPI, George Leonard and Michael Murphy emphasized the importance of integral practice. To quote them “the ITP practice was integral in that it dealt with body (diet, exercise, yoga), mind (reading and discussions of articles and books on relevant subjects), heart (group process, community activities) and soul (meditation, imaging, sense of wonder).



Photo by Robert Stewart

George and Michael emphasized how important it is to have our bodies in good physical condition as part of the nine commitments. This includes performing the Kata on a regular basis, exercise and healthy eating. When we started working with the concept of fitness we focused on the health of the body as well as bringing our body into the balance. Through our LET practices we have learned to be in touch with the feelings in our body and recognize how we respond in different situations. This work shows us how to bring ourselves back into balance when we experience a hit and allows us to respond rather than react.

When we look at integral fitness, it is clear that it is a larger concept than just physical fitness. If we look at integral health as we would a physical organ, we realize that we need all areas to function well. If we leave one part out, the results are less than if they are all working harmoniously together. We know that there are many things that are happening simultaneously. When our body, mind, heart and soul are all healthy and in balance, we have true Integral Fitness. Of course, we will call on different parts in different situations, but having fitness on all levels results in better decision-making and an improved ability to navigate life whether in balance or out of balance. Through the “simultaneous embrace of body, mind, heart and soul,” we can create true fitness in our practice.