

# Martial arts more than just kicks for Dojang Kid

the back page  
with Michael Kissinger

UNLESS I'M DRUNK or watching *Three Little Ninjas* on DVD, the thought of kicking an 11-year-old's ass rarely crosses my mind. That was until I met Aidan Lynds.

The four-foot-something brown belt and Grade 7 French immersion student at General Gordon elementary has been studying martial arts for nearly eight years. He's also taught classes at his parents' Dojang studio on West Fourth for the past two. Dojang, incidentally, is not a tempura-laced sushi combo like I first suspected, but a mixed form of martial arts combining hapkido, self-defence, ground work and sword training. You can see why, as I waited for young grasshopper to gel his hair and meet me on the mat, my chubby, undisciplined mind began to wander.

"It depends," says Aidan when asked how I could best open a can of whupass on him. "If you sat on me, maybe."

Nicely done. Attack my self-esteem and poor body image, then sweep the leg.

Aidan doesn't mince words when it comes to fighting strategy, particularly how he'd defend himself against a torrent of raw, Grade 7 Kissinger fury.

"Probably a nice hard kick to the sternum," he says. "That or something to scare you, like a fake move to make you jump back." He then proceeds to do a fake move, which scares me and makes me jump back.

His suggestion for my own ap-

proach, besides sitting on him, is a little more vague, but it at least makes me feel better about myself. "You could probably pack a pretty hard punch."

Aidan started teaching classes to give something back to his parents, Robert and Emma, two third degree black belt masters and instructors, who built the martial arts studio for him. His classes number between eight and 12 students—the youngest being four years old, the oldest being 13.

"I don't mean to brag or anything, but I think I'm pretty fun," he says. "And as a teacher, if someone does something right, I give them a high-five and say, 'Good job, good job.'"

But it's not all fun and high-fives. Aidan once made two students do 1,000 push-ups for fighting. "A thousand push-ups takes me about an hour," he says coolly. "It takes someone else two or three hours, so they had to do them over a couple classes."

Aidan's discipline isn't just reserved for the dojo. Besides adhering to a strict no-cable TV diet, he also abstains from many a barbecued delight.

"I'm a very healthy person," he says. "I'm a pescetarian. I eat fish and chicken, but I won't eat any red meat or pork. So I eat vegetables, fish and chicken, and fruits—since I was like five."

And don't even get him started on the refreshing goodness of energy drinks like Glacier Freeze Gatorade. "Those are so bad for you it isn't funny."

Still, there are times when no amount of self-control or fruit leather can completely defeat the lure of sugar. "I rarely have candy,"

he says. "But every time you have a piece of candy you have to do 100 pushups. I do pushups after every single piece of candy. It burns calories away, so it's not unhealthy. After 100 pushups, you're good to go."

Suddenly the thought of a Werther's Original makes the flab in my arms hurt.

Not surprisingly, when Aidan isn't teaching classes, taking classes or doing Twix-induced pushups, he likes to sleep. But he still finds time for other interests, namely drawing, baseball and soccer.

His favourite movies are *Kill Bill* and *The Matrix*, for their martial arts, and he even owns a copy of *The Karate Kid*, which he found "inspiring" and taught him about respect. In addition to respect, there's another thing he was able to glean from Ralph Macchio's star-making performance, and it has nothing to do with preventing your acting career from taking a nosedive into obscurity.

"I've caught a fly with a pair of chopsticks," he says. "It was my first try. It was beginner's luck."

Unfortunately, I soon learn that Aidan's superhuman hand-eye-coordination isn't the only thing working against me in a *Courier*/Dojang death match. Apparently my would-be opponent regularly places in the top three in North America when competing in tournaments. "We have a saying, 'If you don't come home with a medal, you don't come home at all,'" says Aidan. "That's why I'm still here."

Of course, being lord of the ring has its down side. Aidan says his friends regularly bug him to show off his skills, though he always declines, telling them Dojang is only



Eleven-year-old Dojang instructor and pushup enthusiast Aidan Lynds demonstrates how he would kick wily *Courier* writer Michael Kissinger in the belly.

photo Dan Toulgoet

for demonstrations, tournaments and self-defence.

When I press him further on the topic of self-defence, particularly against bullies and sugar-addicted *Courier* writers, a determined look that could best be described as "blue steel" falls across his face.

"I've had a couple kids bully me—they've regretted that."

To learn more about Dojang and classes offered, go to [www.dojang.ca](http://www.dojang.ca) or call 604-603-4388.

Do you have an interesting or unusual job you'd like to share with the *Courier*? If so, email [mkissinger@vancourier.com](mailto:mkissinger@vancourier.com).



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