



The Roundhouse: Headlines from Around the Do-jang.

Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe said, "God is in the details." Another variant of the proverb states, "The devil is in the details." It all depends on whether you believe that attention to detail improves your success in the long run -- or just makes it more difficult and time-consuming to achieve.

As instructors, we love to sweat the small stuff. Literally. We think helping students fine-tune their techniques is the key to perfection. Here's why:

"Practice doesn't make perfect. It makes permanent."

-- Anonymous

If you keep hearing the same comments from your instructors week in and week out, listen up.

Telling you to "straighten your wrist" or "tighten your fist" over and over again is our way of helping you develop good techniques rather than bad habits. The problem with habitually doing something incorrectly is that once it gets ingrained in muscle memory, it becomes very difficult to change. A perfect example is my own bad habit of adding a little hop before I jump up to perform my 360° spin in Choong-Moo. Intellectually, I know I'm not supposed to hop before the jump, but my legs have been hopping for so many years that they just can't seem to stop doing it! The sooner you make corrections, the better off you'll be.

So the next time you hear Mr. Werner, Mrs. Pinto, Mr. Barclay, or me tell you for the umpteenth time to "push out that back heel," really commit yourself to becoming aware of what your body is doing. Look in the mirror and catch yourself in the act. Or, videotape yourself doing hyungs, so you can "see" what we're talking about. Most importantly, be vigilant each and every time you practice your patterns, so you can self-correct before it becomes a permanent problem.

“I can tell you what to do, but you have to do it.”

-- Ed Bailey

There's a story about a young kid whose football coach rode him hard during practices. One afternoon, the offensive coordinator approached the kid and said, "Coach was really rough on you today, wasn't he?" The kid sighed and nodded. "That's a good thing," assured the coordinator. "When your critics stop paying attention, it means they've given up on you."

The point is, don't look at nitpicking as being picked on. We're here to help you become the best you can be -- both inside and outside the do-jang. We all need to fine-tune our techniques, no matter how many years or how many degrees of black we have under our belts.

So if you want to stop hearing us tell you to "pivot more on your side kicks", just pivot more on your side kicks. And then we can start telling you to fine-tune something else. Because the road to perfection is a never-ending journey.