

# Andy Gibney

**1. Andy, Which of the Filipino systems incorporate the nunchaku into their system? - David (via email)**

As far as I know the nunchaku is indigenous to all systems of the Filipino arts. The Tagalog (the national language of the Philippines) term for the nunchaku is the 'tabak-toyok' and it comes under the category of flexible weapons. Also included in this are the 'stingray tail' and the handkerchief.

I've never seen the 'stingray tail' taught although Dan Inosanto has mentioned it. It was Inosanto, and his students, that I have seen teach handkerchief techniques. Often a small stone will be added to the end of the handkerchief to add weight which also helps with accuracy.

Guro Inosanto can also claim to have influenced Bruce Lee's use and, therefore, worldwide popularity of the nunchaku. It was Inosanto who introduced Bruce to the nunchaku in the late 1960s and taught him the basics (I confirmed this with Richard Bustillo). Of course, Bruce then went off and made the weapon his own. After 'Way of the Dragon' and then 'Enter the Dragon' the popularity of this weapon really took off. Indirectly, it also paved the way for the popularity of the Filipino Martial Arts; because of the way Bruce used the nunchaku, people became more interested in the weapons arts.

If you want to know just how popular nunchakus are these days, take a look at the Nintendo Wii. The hand held control is called a 'nunchuk'.

**2. Does the sport of Eskrima in any way detract from the art? - Colin Taylor (Hull)**

Hi, Colin. This is going to be contentious, because there are those who think it does. I don't. If all a student does is practice sport Eskrima then he doesn't know the art in the first place. Most people I know do the art first, then become involved in the sport. A problem can occur if the student then switches exclusively to sport Eskrima in the pursuit of shiny medals.

When I was the coach at Unified Fighting Systems, I wouldn't allow anyone to drop the art. These days Glynn and Paul Daniels are in charge and they have carried on that tradition.

The point is that the sport isn't realistic, in a self defence way at least. All the padding protects you and makes you forget that you would get cleaved in half from a good shot without the padding. If you only train in the sport then it does detract, but that should come down to the club instructor.

I think it's one of the reasons that the 'Black Eagle' days and the 'Call to Arms' has come about. When competitors want to find out if their art works they strip the armour right back and go at each other 'Dog Brothers' fashion. This is an acquired taste, in much the same way that 'Cage fighting' is.

As long as you keep the traditional side of your training going as well as doing the sport sparring, there is no way that your art can suffer.