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## Hapkido martial art teaches self-defense

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During his lunch hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Craig Drotzmann takes off his work tie and puts on a black belt.

Instead of spending time eating, Drotzmann, a business analyst for Principal Financial Group, teaches hapkido to other adults looking for a workout at the Riverfront YMCA, 101 Locust St.

Hapkido is a soft-style Korean martial art, meaning it focuses more on defensive moves against would-be attackers than striking head-to-head against them.

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Drotzmann said students learn falling techniques that reduce injuries, and they learn to use joint locks, pressure points and throws to stave off attacks.

"We're trying to lock people down and control them without hurting them," he said. "Some of the things can be quite devastating, and other defenses or techniques are to control the attacker."

The hour-long class typically begins with breathing exercises and independent falling practice. Then it moves into one-on-one and sometimes two-on-one attack simulations. Tuesday, participants mocked a knife fight - using a real knife about 4 inches long with a dulled blade - where two men attempted to take a knife away from a third man.

Drotzmann said doing such exercises helps

students in the class get the most out of their time.

"A lot of times we'll do some ground fighting because people are coming in from their jobs and they're kind of cold," he said. "Whatever it is about ground fighting, it gets people competitive and moving."

He also said the repeated simulations during each class help people decide what they would do in case of a real attack. If that time ever came, they would be able to react without hesitating.

Doug Miller, a social worker with Community Support Advocates, started the class during his lunch hour about three months ago. He said he enjoys the sport because it's a good cardiovascular workout that also involves strategy.

- Amber Bryant-Tapper

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AMBER BRYANT-TAPPER/THE REGISTER

Craig Drotzmann of Clive mocks an attack on Wesley Gee of Des Moines' north side. Drotzmann said the Hapkido class usually attracts about six participants, but new members are always encouraged.



AMBER BRYANT-TAPPER/THE REGISTER

Craig Drotzmann of Clive takes down Wesley Gee of Des Moines' north side during a Hapkido class at the Riverfront YMCA on Tuesday. Hapkido is a soft-style martial art that teaches self-defense.



Wesley Gee of Des Moines' north side practices a breathing technique in class. Gee is an architect with Architects Smith Metzger and attends the Hapkido class during his lunch hour.

(AMBER BRYANT-TAPPER/THE REGISTER)

#### JUMP INTO HAPKIDO

Hapkido is a self-defense martial art. Classes are offered at the Riverfront YMCA, 101 Locust St.  
COST: \$30 for YMCA members and \$50 for others.  
CLASSES: The next session will be April 15 to May 29.  
Beginner classes are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Advanced classes are on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 to 10 a.m.

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