



Eric Kenyon, Ron Jones, & Evan Strong
Restorative Arts Workshop-Form is Function Group, Nevada City, CA

My name is Eric Kenyon. I've competed in athletics for over 45 years and coached professionally for 16 years.

I train athletes and non-athletes at all levels including professional actors, acrobats and dancers, nationally ranked fighters, martial arts instructors, and for the last two years, Paralympic gold medalist Evan Strong. I have also trained many people at the other end of the spectrum you might say.

I have trained permanently disabled people who cannot stand, or can barely move, are almost blind, and cannot speak. All of these people were able to



benefit from well designed physical activity.

I've known Ron Jones since 2009. We met at a flexibility workshop taught by StrongFirst Chairman Pavel Tsatsouline. Ron and I see eye to eye on a number of important principles.

I consider Ron one of my most important teachers. His depth of knowledge and involvement in physical education are impressive.

I am very excited about the work Ron is doing around the Circular Arts system he is developing. You might say resurrecting. My students and I have already benefitted from the classical methods of exercise Ron has uncovered in his researches. The 19th century, Western wand movements for instance, are used by my athlete, pro snowboard racer and Paralympic Gold Medalist Evan Strong. Even uses them almost daily to restore and injury-proof his shoulders. He only spends a few minutes a day.

The drills are simple to learn and quick to use. The ratio of benefit to time commitment is kind of mind-blowing for these. Basically almost everyone who learns these uses them regularly now.

I have a very athletic female client who has been in a wheelchair for 23 years due to a car wreck and



severed spinal cord. Her shoulders have always been painful, fragile or both since her accident. This is an issue effecting her participation in sports and just getting through life. Shoulders are often the weak link in the physical lives of wheelchair bound persons. The Western wand practices have had a profound effect on her pain levels, and her confidence. She is making different decisions now and more ambitious plans. She now has a simple thing she can do any time, anywhere, that will make her shoulders feel better, and build resilience.

The recent Circular Arts workshop taught by Ron in Nevada City California was a real treat. We had participants of all ages and with many different goals. Ages ranged from three to sixty-eight.

Ron Jones has way of making exercise entirely unintimidating. Part of it is Ron's careful selection and application of ancient and modern equipment. The lightweight sticks are just sticks. Everyone has handled a stick. It has no mystery or emotional baggage with it. An Indian club is obviously an "exercise tool." As such, handling it brings expectations the stick does not. After doing basic movement with a stick, the Indian Club seems more approachable, The SandBells are soft, light, easy to throw, catch and manipulate. Soon bodies are moving in fluid graceful synchronies. There are smiles and



laughter.

Ron's beautiful leather kettlebells are totally safe, and handing them quite ambitiously carries no fear with it. I hit myself in the knee and the foot while twirling the 18 pounders quite fast, without a tingle. The same hit from an iron 'bell might have been crippling. The fear of such a thing can cause many people to dread learning new exercise. Others will grit their teeth and stumble haltingly through their first sessions, fear truncating the natural flow of adept movement.

This elimination of fear in Ron's instruction accelerates the progress of his students in a way few coaches appreciate.

I am also a combat veteran with over ten years service in combat arms. I have served all over the world in the most physically demanding jobs and primitive conditions. As such I have seen the many failures and precious few successes, of our military to prepare its members physically for their duties. I see Ron's work bringing back the wisdom of our athletic past, as an important part of our country's survival. Ron and I have been impressed by the physical standards of our military as seen in manuals, films and other material from the 1940's and 1890's. The contrast with the modern soldier's lack of physical readiness is shocking. Ron's Restorative Arts material



and his work with the La Sierra PE archives has me looking to the future with a particle of optimism in the area of Military physical readiness. We know what to do; we've done it before. We must find the courage and will to it again. Ron and his colleagues are not waiting for various institutions or committees to give their stamp of approval. We are working with current field commanders and with people just entering the military in confidence that they will lead from the bottom.

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