

Busy women wear hats galore, juggling multiple roles: mom, coworker, spouse, boss, friend, churchgoer, daughter, student, and more. Adding a dobok and a belt to the mix may seem unthinkable. But finding time for Tae Kwon Do is worth the effort.

Just ask Stacie Moultrie, 38, who began training in 1999. "I was looking for a way to get some exercise, and had a free certificate," she explains, chuckling while she changes clothes, fixes dinner-to-go, and gets ready to pick up her two sons from school. "I started going to class, added running, lost 65 pounds, and found so much energy!"

Moultrie, a third-degree black belt, is a single parent and computer analyst at the University of Arkansas. "I just found that I liked it so much, I simply made the time to do it."

Also certified in ground fighting and kickboxing, Moultrie has been among the top ten in her division at the ATA (American Taekwondo Association) World Championships for the last four years – and she's the secretary of the Real Rock Ryders of Little Rock motorcycle club as well as choir director for her church. Plus, she opened her own school,

Stacie Moultrie with staff.



Moultrie's ATA Black Belt Academy, in November 2006. "It's just something I wanted to do, so I did it!"

Many women dread exercising, thinking of it as one more chore on the "to do" list. But Moultrie offers a different view. "Realize that working out is something GOOD! Become inspired – it makes you live longer and feel better."



Milton Brown - Tiny Tiger

And Tae Kwon Do

has advantages over other forms of exercise. "I really encourage women to get into it," Moultrie says, "because this is something we can take with us. If a big burly guy comes up on you, you can get away." How does she fit it all in? Like a skilled martial artist, she's tactical, strategic, and she goes with the flow. Keeping a regular schedule and using a date book is vital. "The boys are in bed every night by 8:00 – that gives me some 'me' time to prepare for the next day," she explains, "and I'm asleep by 11:00." Up at 5:45 A.M. to start her workday an hour later, Moultrie says that she gets her "third wind" from her evening Tae Kwon Do routines. "Since it's a complete workout, both physical and mental," she says, "it's a great stress reliever (and) it gives me energy!"

As long as she's getting her work done, Moultrie's employer doesn't mind if she flexes her schedule. "I live five minutes from work, so I come home for lunch, take care of chores, and prepare meals; I like us to eat healthy." She and her sons, a ten year-old brown belt and a

six year-old white belt, eat their home-cooked dinner at the dojang. "Tae Kwon Do is a family affair for us. We all pitch in, and that helps, too."



Stacie Moultrie during testing and on the cover of High Kick.

Kelli Shoup is a testament to Tae Kwon Do as a family affair. Watching her mom punch and kick when she was two years old, Shoup joined her at the dojang at age five. Now a fifth-degree black belt, Shoup, 30, is the busy mother of a one year-old son who already knows how to bow. Her mom, a sixth-degree master, owns two schools near Chicago, and Shoup is a full-time Tae Kwon Do instructor, teaching in Darien and Homewood, Illinois.

Your choice of school can make a big difference in how you fit training into your life. "It's important to select one that is close by, especially one with morning and evening classes, that will allow you some flexibility," Shoup explains.

Shoup's students include a flight attendant, a doctor, and a CEO, who are sometimes on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. If they couldn't keep in contact with work, they wouldn't be able to come to class. So, Shoup makes allowances for them. "I don't mind if they bring their pagers and cell phones to class; I'm just happy they're there!"

Shoup advises that if you are a parent, be sure your academy welcomes children so that you can train together and meet other moms wearing a dobok and a belt along with their many hats. To encourage this, Shoup allows kids to come and play while their parents are in class.

Shoup stresses that "Tae Kwon Do is all a matter of priorities: If you can find the time to do another exercise, you can find the time to do this." Often, women

don't start training because they think they don't have time. But once they're reaping the benefits, it's rare for a woman to quit. "I have a group right now who've all joined in the last six months, they all have kids who were taking Tae Kwon Do ... they all encourage and support each other." Plus, their in-class camaraderie extends beyond the dojang. Actively enjoying each other's company, they practice together, helping one another make up missed classes, work on techniques, and have fun in the process.

In Tae Kwon Do, social life, family life, and fitness complement rather than compete – creating harmony, balance and flow. As Stacie Moultrie says, "I have a very busy life, but I love it."

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Striking a pose Kelli Shoup (Right) and Patti ?? (Left)

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 By Susan T. Lennon