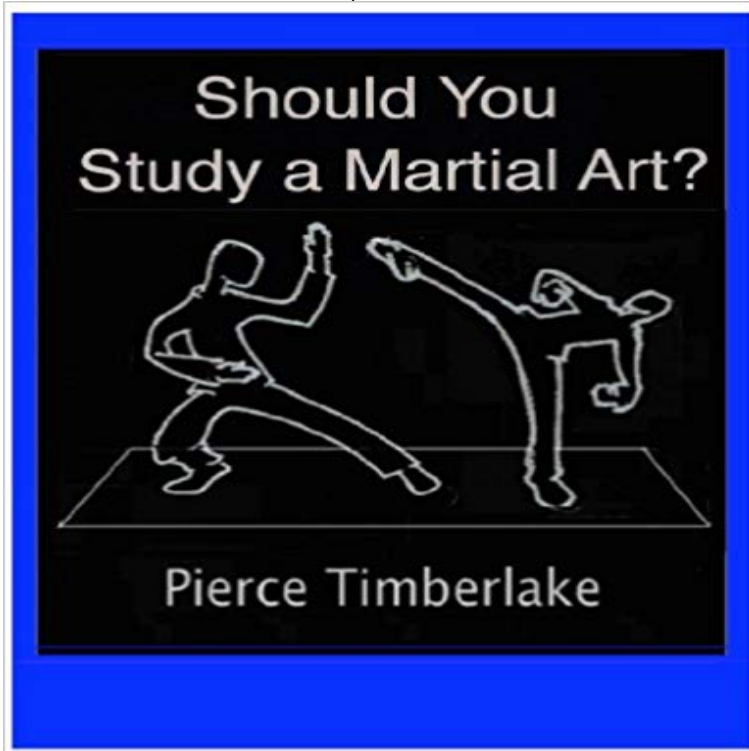


Should You Study a Martial Art?



Kindle short feature. 12,860 words.
NOTE: This article has previously been published as Why Study a Martial Art? Should You Study a Martial Art? provides a quick overview of Asian martial arts. Their self-defense effectiveness is compared with various alternatives, and the usefulness of martial arts for both men and women, whether size really doesn't matter, and a variety of related issues, are discussed. Martial arts are also assessed philosophically, not from the usual Zen perspective, but from a pragmatic, western point of view. A primary focus is on whether there is really any point in studying a fighting art: can we justify the time and effort? Working from the premise that martial arts are almost always written about by advocates, the author provides a balancing view: an objective evaluation by someone who is enough of an enthusiast to know what he is talking about, but enough of a skeptic to be critical. In order to give readers a sense of the larger world of martial arts, the latter part of the article describes the author's experiences fighting in a full-contact tournament in Taiwan. Should You Study a Martial Art? should be useful both to individuals who are considering going into martial arts training, and to those who have already trained and wish to reflect on their experience. It should also be of interest to anyone curious about the sometimes perplexing attitudes found in the martial arts world. The author: Pierce Timberlake has studied various Asian martial arts. He is a former instructor and full-contact tournament fighter, and holds the rank of black belt.

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