

The history of Taekwon-do dates back to the Middle Ages, but it began to be recognized as a martial art since the end of World War II (1945). For centuries there have been different types of martial arts, depending on the needs of the area of origin, being Shotokan Karate and Taekkyon (ancestral martial art where fluid movements of feet and hands are used) the bases for the creation of Taekwon-do. It all begins with the birth of Choi Hong Hi, who began his training in Taekkyon at a young age during the Japanese occupation of Korea, and when he turned 20, he was transferred to Japan, where he began training Karate in the Shotokan style, graduating to Second Dan. During World War II, he was forced to enlist in the Japanese army, and traveled to his hometown in Korea. During his stay he was captured by the Japanese army and was imprisoned for treason upon returning to his home country. During 8 months of preventive detention, he spent his time giving rise to what we know today as Taekwon-do, combining the best of the two martial arts he previously mastered. At the end of World War II, and with the defeat of Japan, Korea became independent again, and Choi was appointed as a second lieutenant in the new Korean army. During his new military career, he promoted and developed his fighting style as well as his rank, until he became a General. Now called General Choi, he continued to develop his craft while gaining recognition in the military and the general public, until everyone accepted the so-called Oh Doh Kwan (Translation: My Own Style) as a new martial art.

Until this point in General Choi's life, his martial art was being a success in Korea, so much so that he began to be cited in meetings with teachers, historians and leaders of the country to give a definitive name to his martial art, since 'Oh Doh Kwan' was only the name of his school. Thanks to these meetings it was that the name of this martial art as we now know it was confirmed: Taekwon-do, since philosophically it is described as "The way of feet and fists" (Tae: Feet, Kwon: Hands, Do: Path / Way). From 1950, General Choi dedicated himself to further perfecting Taekwon-do, while creating the forms; body movements that represent different techniques and movements, for their practice and analysis, thus reaching a better understanding of these, and continued to expand their martial art to the world, giving demonstrations, while the most influential masters of their time and General Choi met under the name of 'KTA' (Korean Taekwon-do Association), and consequently the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF) was created. In 1972, General Choi and other masters traveled to Canada to give a martial demonstration of Taekwon-do, demonstrating its effectiveness in the art of war and self-defense. The demonstration was a success, and Canada was satisfied, accepting that Taekwon-do be taught in their country.

General Choi had planned to move the headquarters of Taekwon-do to Canada to open a new chapter in the history of Taekwon-do, now an international martial art. A group of teachers did not see this action as correct, as it was considered disrespectful to their country of origin, so they joined their schools creating the Kukkiwon, the Taekwon-do organization that would be faithful to Korea and that aimed to bring the martial art to the Olympics. From here, the Kukkiwon would administer and certify the ribbon grades of students in schools under the Kukkiwon and their competencies. Thanks to this organization, a year later the World Taekwon-Do Federation (WT) was created, while celebrating its first world championship. Despite being formed by

teachers who came from the ITF, the WT had its own reforms in terms of competitive and disciplinary rules, being individual to the ITF. At present, since the beginning of the XXI century, Taekwon-do is a world sport and martial art, a member of the sports that participate in the Olympics. The organization that is responsible for representing Taekwon-do in the Olympics is the WT, currently the WT is the most representative organization worldwide, even with the existence of the ITF. The ITF still represents traditional Taekwon-do as a sport, but it does not have much presence as a sport, being from October 3 to 10, 2022 the first ITF Taekwon-do World Cup.

But then, what is the difference between the two organizations? At first glance, you could say that they are essentially the same, but the reality is that it is quite the opposite. Currently, WT's rules of engagement have notoriously limited the spectacularity of battles between athletes, as they focus entirely on sports optimization as a contact sport under the rules of the Olympics, while the ITF continues to promote a more effective martial and focused on self-defense.

The most common questions being "Which is better?", "Which serves more?" have generated some controversy about the effectiveness of Taekwon-do for self-defense, creating separate sides between the two schools, when the reality is that they are not the same, nor do they focus on equal things. Both are representative schools of Taekwon-do, but their objectives are different, so to answer these questions, you have to think about the goals of yourself as a person; Do you want to do aerobic exercise in a different way? Do you want to build a competitive sports career? Or, do you want to learn how to stand up for yourself and be a "strong" person?

The WT focuses more on training Taekwon-do in a sporting way, considering students as athletes, and encouraging their participation in gold medal competitions, while the ITF concentrates on building and refining the body and strengthening the spirit and mind, while teaching self-defense techniques for use in self-defense or for loved ones.