

A gentle and healthy way - Judo 55+ Vlaamse Judofederatie

Title of the initiative:

The Gentle Way, Judo for 55+

Who is the initiator and/or provider of the activity?

The Vlaamse Judofederatie (VJF - Flemish Judo Federation) started the program in 2011. A project group was formed to stimulate the development of the initiative and to create the content and the method.



To which type can the initiative be assigned?

Health Enhancing Activities (HESA) for special population groups.

Who is the target group?

1° Lifelong judoka's, often high black belt degree holders, who want to keep practicing judo.
2° People who did judo in their younger years and want to start judo again. 3° Starters who never did judo before. 4° All the active 55+ who never practiced or will ever practice judo. For them, the VJF developed a fall initiation program: Vallen Zonder Zorgen.

What kind of sport/physical activity is included?

Judo: a wide range of techniques and training forms, self-defence (for instance with the use of a walking stick), exercises for all the basic physical qualities, a special strength training program.

What are the aims of the initiative?

Give lifelong judoka and restarters the possibility to continue the practice of judo with all its benefits, but without the risks of judo as a combat sport.

Create the possibility to start judo at an older age.

Empower the participants to live a healthy and independent life as long as possible.

Give more confidence to non-judokas in daily life through the fall initiation program.

What is the content and method?

Content: all kinds of judo exercises and judo techniques (not the possibly dangerous ones), mainly soft fall techniques without hard impact. Stimuli for qualities that need special attention when aging (memory, eye-hand coordination, awareness of time and space, ...) are incorporated into the exercises in a way that the participants, while doing judo, practice also for tasks in daily life.

Method: the group 55+ on the judo mat is so heterogenic regarding judo years and judo experience, physical possibilities and personal ambitions that a method is needed that allows all those different people to practice together in a contact sport. To make the participants more equal and to create an inclusive training environment, the principles of Universal Design

for Learning are used. Some parts of judo are practiced with materials like a gym ball or thick mats.

What is the organizational structure of the initiative?

Clubs organize training sessions for 55+ judoka using the program. Organisations can ask the VJF a free fall initiation session for their members. For the moment Vallen Zonder Zorgen is sponsored by KBC insurances. The VJF organizes federal training sessions for 55+ judoka. The VJF organizes clinics for 55+ teachers and coaches. The program is described in a series of four brochures and in guidelines for Vallen Zonder Zorgen.

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What kind of precondition is requested for the instructor/coach?

Basic qualification as an instructor in judo (minimum level Initiator) and a certificate of the VJF delivered after attending a clinic for 55+ teachers and coaches.