



Andy Wright

Until the age of 8 years Andy was reliant upon a wheelchair due to athetoid cerebral palsy. When in the house he would crawl around on all fours. Only when he joined the local Scout group and saw the other children running around and playing did he decide to get himself out of the wheelchair and start to walk.

He attended special schools in Henleaze, Bristol and Tonbridge, Kent (where he was educated to GCE O Level standard).

At the age of 17, once he had left the "Spastic Society" boarding school he learnt to drive a car, and this obviously helped getting around. But he spent the 1980's unemployed because he was unable to secure a job. His Job Centre Advisor told him to go home and claim benefits!

During that time he ran a mobile disco but was so determined to get a proper job he set his sights on working as a computer programmer, for which his only experience was self taught on a ZX Spectrum. Yet, despite this lack of knowledge started full time work in 1989. This was the start of an IT career spanning 15 years during which time he worked as an IT technician, field engineer, college course tutor and self-employed home computer repairer.

Following a mugging in 1985 that involved being dragged from his vehicle in broad daylight (and a year of mostly isolation and fear of going out) he took up karate. After 3 years of regular training at a local club he took and passed his 1st Dan Black Belt, with the only modification of syllabus being the exclusion of the stuff he couldn't do. The following year, 1990, he started his own club teaching able-bodied children and adults. For the next 18 years he continued to teach, travel round the world (Russia, USA, Malta, Australia) and grade students – his current level being 5th Dan (2004).

During the late 1990's he trained in holistic health and chi kung (tai chi) and now uses those skills to teach people and groups who fall into the "unhealthy" category, including the clients who use the services provided by his day-job, that of a drug-addiction advisor. As a result of the day job he won the *Tackling Drugs and Changing Lives Award* 2006 for the South West, and subsequently was involved in the making of a DVD video that was shown at the prestigious awards ceremony in London.