



Karate

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About the tutorial

Karate is a form of self-defence technique that requires a good balance between body and mind. The word "Karate" means playing "empty handed". So, apart from physical power, one needs to learn various playing tactics to have a cutting edge over others. Through this tutorial, one can learn the basic way of playing karate and the rules governing it.

Though the "how to play" section does not cover a comprehensive research on Karate tactics but is sufficient enough to make you understand the basic moves.

Audience

This tutorial is aimed at giving an overall knowledge to a person who does not know how to play karate. Step by step illustration and guidance will help the beginner to build his fundamental pillars about this game successfully.

Prerequisites

You can have a good grasp upon karate from this small article, if you have the passion and eagerness to actually learn this game.

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1. Karate – Overview

Karate is a Japanese martial arts technique that needs development of defensive attack and counter attacking body movements. Although this game teaches an individual the art of attacking and self-defence, the sole motive is the self-improvement. Discipline, persistent effort, mind balance are some key words that defines best a Karate practitioner. The word "Kara" means Empty and "Te" means Hand. A suffix "Do" (Karate-do) adds meaning of defending himself empty handed.

Winning a battle is not the only aim in karate. It is the best efficient way of using the human body to learn self-defence through blocking, punching, blocking and kicking techniques. It balances both the body and mind as well. It also teaches an individual to possess gratitude of restraining himself from any violent attack before the start of any actual fight.

History of Karate

The origin of karate is in midway between Japan and China. So it's becomes obvious that Karate is a mixture of both Japanese Jujutsu and China's Kung Fu. In 15th century there was a kingdom called **Ryuk Yuan**. Being one of the wealthiest kingdoms in Asia, it was trading with many foreign countries.

Most of its business was with China relating to textiles, arms and ships but they didn't just trade textiles. They were also trading various parts of martial arts like Kung fu. Then it was the combination of Chinese art Kung fu and Japanese art Tae that gave birth to Karate.

Participating Countries

Although the origin of Karate was in between Japan and China but soon it started to spread its wings throughout the globe due to its immense feature and art of self-defense. Today nearly 180 countries are actively involved in exploring this game under World Karate Federation.

In total about 39 countries in Asia take active participation in this game. Asian Karate Do Federation (AKF) is the governing body, a non-profitable organization recognized by World Karate Federation. Apart from China and Japan, the list of countries includes India, Bangladesh, UAE, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Cambodia, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and many more.

Apart from Asia, the game do has its popularity in many non-Asian continents like Europe, Africa, Pan America and Oceania. Every individual has its own federation to govern and run the Game successfully.

2. Karate – Terms

Although, Japanese's Tae and Chinese's Kung Fu are the parents of Karate, but it is the Japanese, who gave a great contribution in making this art popular worldwide. So it is quite a natural to observe some Japanese words in this game. A good beginner must learn the meanings of these words first to understand this game. So below are some of the common abbreviations with their usual meanings.

Terms	Meanings
Kazu	Numbers
Tachikata	Stances
Utekata	Blocking methods
Semekata	Attacking methods
Kerikaka	Kicking methods
Kata	Forms
Atemi	Strike
Barai	Sweep
Bunkai	Application of Kata techniques
Dai Ichi	The first
Deshi	The pupil or students
Dojo	Place to practice
Hai	Yes
Hidari	Left
Iya	No
Kokyo-Ho	Breathing methods
Obi	Karate belt

These are the minimum number of terms that one should know initially. However, the list is big if we differentiate each individual. As one initially starts practicing, with the passage of time, every day he will learn new words. A good pupil should understand the deeper meanings of each word and should know very well how to master these words before the end of the training session.

3. Karate – How to Play?

Choice of Right Style and Institution

Karate in itself has many forms like Goju Kai, Shotokan, Shito Ryu, Wado Ryu and Kyokushin Kai etc. It is not like one style is better than other. Every style has its own charm but it is the pupils who will decide that what style fascinate them the most. This can be judged by getting an over the depth idea about each style.

The second important thing is the choice of right school that goes in line with your philosophy. It is because some schools follow the path of spiritual learning having less contact on the other hand some are there with a lot of expertise in broken bones and excitement, with having a lots of contacts.

Some schools have a restrictive contract. Try not to join them as it may lead to any unavoidable situation in future. A good method will be to just watch a video of the style that you are going to learn the very next day. Weight loss and toning are the initial factors of this learning. Don't worry about that. The instructor will take care of that.

Fitting into the Pot

The harder you work the luckier you will get on the battle. It is easy to handle a toughest karate master on the stage if you just know better how to defend yourself. A harder and committed daily practice schedule over a day, week, month, and year can assure you that. You should not fear from the initial failures as learning from them is a part of your training schedule.



Learning Deeper Meaning

Once the master of karate **Kanazawa** told that "After breaking my elbow on the block of ice, I understand Ki much more than before." Advice of such legendary persons sometimes fuels the fighting spirit inside a beginner. So try to learn as much as you can about karate. Read the autobiography of prominent karate masters, watch documentaries, and talk to the seniors –that will keep you motivated and will assist you even better.

Warm up before Starting

Karate is good to practice when it begins with warm up. It brings flexibility to your muscles. The masters plan out a vigorous warm up schedule of 10-15 minutes before starting.

Moving your hands up and down while jumping in the air with your foot-wide open is a good start. The faster you do the faster your muscles get warmed up. Next you can do is swinging your hands from one side to another by clutching them together.

Tilt your body from left side to right side with hands in the air. It gives a quick boost to your lazy hip muscles. To make your lower part of body below your waist for use, stretch your legs to the fullest.

How to do a Basic Punch?

Choku Zuki is the Japanese word that means direct punch in karate. It is the most common form of punching because this does not need much movement of your body part to generate power. It is just made to release the tension and to make a proper connection.

It involves just punching in the air slowly with both your hands periodically but a bit slowly. Initially keep the face of your grip towards up but as you gradually move towards punching, at the last moment turn your wrist along with elbow such that the face of the grip will now face downward. Repeat the same with the other hand too.

Blocking

Blocking teaches us how to do a fore arm block. From your normal position either step in or step back. Raise your blocked arm. It should shoot out towards the attacker. Then move the arm to the back and towards the reverse direction of the body. In this very moment connect your attacking arm with your fore arm. Pull the arm back and repeat the same thing again with another hand.

Upper Rising block (Age Uke)

In upper rising block one hand should be above your head and another just by the side of your waist. Then you have to switch your position just opposite with a lightning fast speed. The aim is to block any sudden thrust towards you from your opponent.

Middle Block (Yoko Uke)

The initial body posture will be just like keeping your own arm straight vertically upward with the ground and another at your waist level facing forward. In the next step you have to move your horizontal hand towards vertical one with a 135-degree angle, with lightning speed. Repeat the same with other hand too.

Practicing Kicks

Sometimes your upper body may not be able to move as it may be blocked by your opponent. So to make yourself free and to set a score you have to use your legs. Although karate teaches us the practise of open hand, different kick methods are also a part of its curriculum to maintain a distance between you and your opponent and to best defend yourself at awkward situations. Let's have a quick look on different types of kick methods.

Front Kick (Mae Geri)

Mae Geri teaches you to attack a person with the balls of your foot. Strengths can be centralised at the balls of the foot while raising it up in the air and can be focused upon the joint parts of your opponent with a quick kinematic force, resulting in high impulsive strike.

Side Kick (Yoko Geri)

Here we use the side or blade of our foot. The attack is done side wise upon the lower part of the opponent. The wider you take back the foot in air gathering potential energy, the stronger will be the impulse due to high kinetic energy.

Round House Kick (Mawashi Geri)

In this we have to hit the opponent with the ball of our foot like Mae geri but the process is slightly different. We have to curl our toes up and after that we should make the movement of our foot sideways.

Hook Kick (Ura mawashi Geri)

First step is to keep your feet apart. Keep your right foot forward and left foot backward. Now take the right foot upward. The higher you take the stronger will be the impulse. Now instead of attacking on the left side of the opponent, attack on the right side with your right foot without leaning back.

Back Attack (Ushiro Geri)

Here one will focus on how to attack his opponent from the backside. The principle of attack remains the same as that of Hook kick. But with a slight difference that instead of attacking from the front end we have to move our leg towards back.

4. Karate – Scoring Techniques

Bouts point system is widely used to determine the points in traditional karate. The methods of scoring in Karate are numerous. Depending upon the style of hitting with having proper balance of body within the specified perimeter can award an ippon (one full point). If the balance and hit is not so strong then either half point or no point can also be awarded.

There is also full style karate and American style kick boxing karate. The point system in both is different. For example, in American style kick boxing the score is made by hitting the opponent with punches and kick whereas, in full style karate the scores count for defending yourself or to get yourself away from the opponent's touch.

Be Smart and Fast

We inherit all the universal knowledge through our five senses-sight, smell, touch, sound and smell. They all leads pathway towards our brain. However, a possible choice of combination of various senses to grasp new information varies from person to person. For example, some use touch, sight and sound as their first preferable combination of sense to grasp a new technique.



A good master knows very well how to train his pupils by playing with their senses. For example, some instructors prefer demonstration(visual), discussion(auditory) and practice(kinesthetic) to teach a new method to their students whereas, some do agree upon the fact that learning from a pain is a good way to memorize the techniques till longer times.

Keep Yourself Motivated

Practicing karate is not an easy task. It requires the hard spirit to withstand all the pain. Keeping your mind cool and balancing your body is another important factor as well but most of the people often leave the practice in between. When asked they reply that they haven't got any motivation. So in short we can say you should have a strong reason for answering why and what questions that will pop up in your head.

Some people learn for the sake of self-defense. Some crave for black belt whereas, some want to dedicate their whole life in karate just to be able to teach others. Find yourself a strong reason. It will keep you motivated. Watch the videos of many fighters to get to know what level of hard work does it requires actually and where exactly you stand on that point.

Most teachers often suggest that every day you should feed your mind that you will learn something new style in karate today. Some moves and styles that you have not tried earlier, in short keep- stay hungry, stay foolish type attitude. Pen down every day on a blank paper

5. Karate – Belt Colours and Meaning

From the colors of the belt one can easily judge about the rank and the level of expertise about any person doing karate. The more common color that we come across is white and black. Where white represents the starting level, Black represents the true expert having highest rank. Yellow, orange, red, green, blue are some other colors of belt.



The order of the karate belts also differs in different schools. Some of the correct orders of the colors of belt are given below:

- White, yellow, orange, green, blue, purple, red, brown, black
- White, red, yellow, orange, green, blue, purple, brown, black
- White, yellow, green, orange, red, blue, purple, brown, black

During the time of Second World War, only darker shades of colors were used to signify the move ahead agenda in karate. Dying the belts further was a symbol that the person had moved ahead with one extra level of expertise. Soon different colors were introduced for the level of expertise.

White Belt - The birth of a new light is indicated by white. In karate it usually depicts for a person who starts to learn karate keeping in mind about the different challenges that he is going to face.

Yellow Belt - It symbolizes the first ray of sun light. In karate its meaning is that now the student's mind is open to accept more possible techniques and methods.

Orange Belt - This light is an indication of spreading of light on the earth. So it shows how the student is expanding its knowledge in the field.



Green Belt - It depicts the penetration of stems and roots of the plant to get the sun light. In turn this means the student is developing new skills and learning new techniques to master the game.

Blue Belt - The plant is growing up towards the sky which is blue in color. That means student is going deeper to understand each move in karate and differentiating each to gain more knowledge.

Purple Belt - It indicates that the student is very serious about acquiring new belts that is coming across next.

Brown Belt - This shows that the plant is full grown and it is ready for the harvesting. Similarly in karate it indicates that the student has gained adequate knowledge about the skills and now he is ready for the combat.

Red Belt - It signifies the depth of the knowledge that a student possesses and ability to give those a successful direction.

Black belt - Every glowing object has a dark shadow behind it and that is what this color is all about. This belt shows that the person wearing it has mastered all the skills and he poses a great ability within him to enlighten others with his knowledge.

6. Karate – Tournaments

There are different organizers all over the world that run various tournaments in Karate. Some of the popular organizations are:

- SKI (Sport karate international)
- NBL (National Black belt League)
- UMMA (Universal martial arts association)
- PPKF (Professional point karate federation)
- NASKA (North American sports karate association)

Some of the popular tournaments are:

- Commonwealth karate championship
- Kai senior national karate championship
- International karate tournaments
- Indo- Sri Lanka Karate open championship
- Japanese karate tournaments