

# Karate Overview

<https://simple.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Karate>

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**Karate** (空手) is a Japanese martial art. It was developed in the former Ryūkyū Kingdom in what is now Okinawa Prefecture.

Karate uses all parts of the human body as a weapon such as the hand, fist, elbow, leg and knee. Karate training has three main parts:

- **kihon** (基本) is learning the basic techniques or fundamentals
- **kata** (形) is the training of form, the specific order and way of using techniques
- **kumite** (組手) is to learn how to fight using those techniques



## History of Karate

Gichin Funakoshi, a school teacher from the island of Okinawa, introduced karate to mainland Japan in the early 1900s. Traditional karate is different from boxing, wrestling and kickboxing: in karate, there is just as much importance on the strength of the mind and good manners as there is on strength of the body.

Karate became more known around the world because of karate movies in the 1960s and 1970s. Now people all over the world learn karate. After World War II, karate also became popular in Korea, where a local variation appeared, it is called "tangsudo". The full name of karate is "Karate-do" which means "the way of the empty hand" in English.

There are many schools or styles of karate, including

- Gōjū-ryū
- Sankukai
- Shitō-ryū
- Shōtōkan
- Wadō-ryū



A person who does Karate is called a *karateka*. Notable karateka include: Gichin Funakoshi, Yoshitaka Funakoshi, Shigeru Egami, Masutatsu Oyama, and Fumio Demura. Gichin Funakoshi wrote, "The ultimate aim of Karate lies not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of the character of the participant."

## Karate Clothing

When people practice karate, they wear special clothes called a *karategi*. The karategi is made up of a white jacket and white pants. People who practice karate also wear a colored belt, which tells other people the rank you have in karate, not how good you are. Two people wearing different colored belts means not how long they have been doing karate but which tests they have taken and passed.

Different schools of karate have different colors of belts for their ranks. You cannot know precisely how good they are without either asking them or knowing how their school arranges the belt colors in ranks. Usually, black belt is for the top-ranked practitioners. Even within black belt, there are many ranks; the lowest is first-degree, followed by second-degree, and so on.

# Shotokan

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shotokan>

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Shotokan (松濤館) is a style of karate, developed from various martial arts by Gichin Funakoshi (1868–1957) and his son Gigo (Yoshitaka) Funakoshi (1906–1945). Gichin was born in Okinawa and is widely credited with popularizing "karate do" through a series of public demonstrations, and by promoting the development of university karate clubs, including those at Keio, Waseda, Hitotsubashi (Shodai), Takushoku, Chuo, Gakushuin, and Hosei.

Funakoshi had many students at the university clubs and outside dojos, who continued to teach karate after his death in 1957. However, internal disagreements (in particular the notion that competition is contrary to the essence of karate) led to the creation of different organizations—including an initial split between the Japan Karate Association (headed by Masatoshi Nakayama) and the Shotokai (headed by Motonobu Hironishi and Shigeru Egami), followed by many others—so that today there is no single "Shotokan school", although they all bear Funakoshi's influence.

As the most widely practiced style, Shotokan is a traditional and influential form of karate do.

## Characteristics

Shotokan training is usually divided into three parts: kihon (basics), kata (forms or patterns of moves), and kumite (sparring). Techniques in kihon and kata are characterized by deep, long stances that provide stability, enable powerful movements, and strengthen the legs. Shotokan is regarded as a dynamic martial art as it develops anaerobic, powerful techniques as well as developing speed. Initially strength and power are demonstrated instead of slower, more flowing motions. Those who progress to brown and black belt level develop a much more fluid style that incorporates grappling, throwing and some aikido-like techniques, which can be found even in basic kata. Kumite (fighting) techniques are practiced in the kihon and kata and developed from basic to advanced levels with an opponent



## Philosophy

Gichin Funakoshi laid out the Twenty Precepts of Karate, (or Niju kun) which form the foundations of the art, before some of his students established the JKA. Within these twenty principles, based heavily on Bushido and Zen, lies the philosophy of Shotokan. The principles allude to notions of humility, respect, compassion, patience, and both an inward and outward calmness. It was Funakoshi's belief that through karate practice and observation of these 20 principles, the karateka would improve their person.

The Dojo kun lists five philosophical rules for training: seek perfection of character, be faithful, endeavor to excel, respect others, refrain from violent behavior. These rules are called the Five Maxims of Karate. The maxims are usually posted on a wall in the dojo, and some shotokan clubs recite them at the beginning or end of each class to provide motivation and context for training.

- 一、人格 完成に 努める こと
- 一、誠の道を守る こと
- 一、努力の精神を養う こと
- 一、礼儀を重んずる こと
- 一、血気の勇を戒むる こと