



# Hursley Shotokan Karate Club

## Beginners Guide

Welcome to the Hursley Shotokan Karate Club. This guide is intended to give you some background information and help you start your journey towards achieving your 1<sup>st</sup> Dan Black Belt and beyond. The club is very welcoming and supportive. Everyone will help you as you progress through the grades.

## History

Karate (translated as 'empty hand') is an ancient method of unarmed fighting with a moral warrior code emphasising punching, striking and kicking. It was developed on the Island of Okinawa (now part of Japan) by fusing local fighting skills with techniques from near-by China. It was practised as an art of self-defence by a small elite group who closely guarded their methods, only passing them on to a few trusted students.

But in the early 1900s karate was introduced into Okinawan schools and masters, like the founder of the Shotokan style, Gichin Funakoshi, later took it to mainland Japan where it quickly became established alongside traditional Japanese martial arts such as Judo and Kendo (sword-fighting).



The art spread as a strict, disciplined way of life. Later a new type of sparring was developed to allow safe competitive fighting where blows were pulled short of contact to avoid injury. This new sporting side greatly enhanced karate's appeal and from the 1950s it spread rapidly around the world as the main Japanese karate organisations sent senior instructors abroad to teach. Millions of men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds now practice Karate and clubs compete in national and international tournaments. But many karate styles like Shotokan still emphasise the traditional moral codes, ways of training and self-defence techniques developed by the masters of past centuries.

## Hursley Shotokan Karate Club

### What can you expect?

As a traditional Karate Club, the traditions and ethos of the discipline are important. As you progress through your training, you will be expected to learn these traditions and follow the principles of the Dojo Kun.

### JKA England Membership

The club is regulated by JKA England (<https://www.jka-england.org/>). You must be a member of JKA England and must apply for a licence from them. This can be done online by using the following link:

<https://www.jka-england.org/shop/membership/>

You must have a current licence in order to be able to train, grade and attend national and regional training sessions.

## Classes

Training in Shotokan karate is based around three essential elements: kihon (basics), kata (combinations of movements) and kumite (sparring). Most lessons consist of all three elements.

### Kihon

or basics are the building block techniques of how to punch, strike and kick; how to block or parry attacks and how to put different combinations of all these together. These central techniques are continually practiced until they are second nature.

### Kata

These are set combinations of movements, lasting around a minute each, which are sequences of fighting techniques done with an imagined opponent or opponents in mind. They were developed by past karate masters to record their methods and principles and most are hundreds of years old and hold the 'secrets' of the ancient art of karate, like a living textbook.

There are 25 different kata in the Shotokan style which are progressively taught to students as they become more experienced. The different fighting skills within the kata are also practiced separately with an opponent for self-defence.

### Kumite

or sparring, is practising to fight an opponent, either in a sporting tournament with set rules and a referee or in a self-defence situation. Students learn the skills and principles through structured exercises using training partners as opponents.

A typical training session will nearly always begin with warm up exercises and stretching to get the body ready for training. Body strengthening and breathing exercises are also taught.

## Training Times

The Hursley Club trains three times a week at the Sports and Social Club sports hall at IBM Hursley.

Tuesday 7pm – 8.45pm – Knightwood Leisure Centre, Chandlers Ford (£5 per session)

Thursday 5.30pm – 7pm – IBM Hursley (£2 per session)

You can attend as many training sessions as you wish but to progress through the grades, the JKAE recommend you train twice a week. It is also possible to attend training sessions at other local clubs such as Chandlers Ford and Winchester.

## Grades

There are 10 “student” grades known as “Kyu” (pronounced “queue”) grades. Everyone starts as a 10<sup>th</sup> kyu (white belt) and steadily works through to 1<sup>st</sup> Kyu before progressing to “Shodan” 1<sup>st</sup> Dan (black belt). The Dan grades then go from 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Dan. To progress through the grades, you will need to attend a grading. These are held roughly 4 times a year and are often held at the Hursley Club when you will have a chance to train with other similar grades from other clubs and with visiting instructors. The formal part of a grading involves a short assessment of the three key elements for

Kihon (Basics)

Kata (form)










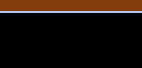
Kumite (sparring)

On successful completion of a grading you will be “promoted” to the next grade and will receive a certificate and new belt.

As you go through the kyu grades, you will learn at least one new kata for each grade. There are 25 kata in Shotokan Karate and you will learn 11 of them before you take your Shodan (1<sup>st</sup> Dan Black Belt) grading. The table below lists the kata you will learn in order and shows the number of moves and the “kiai” points (a spirited shout) which also form part of the kata.

<b>Kata Name</b>	<b>No of moves</b>	<b>Kiai on moves</b>
<b>Kihon Kata</b>	20	8 & 16
<b>Heian Shodan</b>	21	9 & 17
<b>Heian Nidan</b>	26	11 & 26
<b>Heian Sandan</b>	20	10 & 20
<b>Heian Yondan</b>	27	13 & 25
<b>Heian Godan</b>	23	12 & 19
<b>Tekki-Shodan</b>	29	15 & 29
<b>Bassai-Dai</b>	42	19 & 42
<b>Kanku-Dai</b>	65	15 & 65
<b>Jion</b>	47	17 & 47
<b>Enpi</b>	37	15 & 36

When you pass a grading, you will receive a new belt to show the level you have reached. The table below shows the belt order for student grades together with the kata which must be learnt at each grade.

Grade	Grading Kata	Belt
10 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Kihon	
9 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Heian Shodan	
8 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Heian Nidan	
7 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Heian Sandan	
6 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Heian Yondan	
5 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Heian Godan	
4 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Tekki-Shodan	
3 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Bassai-Dai	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Kyu	Bassai-Dai	
1 <sup>st</sup> Kyu	Bassai-Dai / Kanku Dai / Empi / Jion	
1 <sup>st</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup> Dan		

## Dojo Etiquette in Brief

One of the main principles of karate is respect. It is important to follow these rules as they will apply wherever you train.

- Karate students must be prompt and on time for all sessions. Try to arrive to class 10-15 minutes early so you have time to stretch and practice. If you arrive after training has started, kneel at the side of the dojo level with the instructor and wait to be invited to join the class.
- Karate students must remove all jewellery, watches, earrings, rings prior to training as these items can cause injury to you and others. If a piece of jewellery cannot be removed, then tape must be wrapped around it for protection.
- Karate students should bow when entering or leaving the dojo, at the beginning and the end of class, before and after sparring with a partner, before and after performing a kata, and when greeting the instructor.
- Karate students must not chew gum or have sweets or food in the mouth while training.
- Karate students must follow the instructions of their seniors and instructors, quickly and respectfully.
- Karate students must not engage in idle talk while training is in session.
- Karate students must remain quiet and attentive when not exercising.
- Karate students must have the instructor's permission to leave class before it has ended.
- Karate students must be courteous and helpful to each other.
- When sitting on the floor, it is considered disrespectful to show the soles of your feet to the Sensei.
- Karate suits should be kept clean and worn correctly and finger and toe nails to be kept short

## Start of lesson

Most club sessions start and end informally with a “standing rei” (bow) but sometimes there will be a formal start and end to a lesson, especially at a national training session. The format for a formal start of lesson is as follows:

The Sensei will kneel first and the Sempai will call Seiza (everyone to kneel)

The Sempai will call Mokuso (meditation). After a short pause, the Sempai will call Mokuso Yama (stop)

The Sempai will call Shomani rei (bow to the spirit of the dojo), Sensei rei (bow to the instructor), Otagani rei (bow to each other)

The Sempai will then call Kirei Tu (stand up)

## Dojo Kun - Principles of Shotokan Karate

*Dōjō kun* is a Japanese martial arts term literally meaning (*training hall*) rules. They are generally posted at the entrance to a *dōjō* or at the "front" of the dojo (*shomen*) and outline behaviour expected and disallowed. In some styles of martial arts they are recited at the end of a class.

### 1. Seek Perfection of Character

This means that the art of karate is more than just physical. All beginners, especially the young, should be taught the importance of character building through discipline and rigorous training. For the beginner, the character building process begins with perfecting techniques through repetition. The spirit to fight will be achieved as one gains more confidence through development of stronger techniques. Train to bring out the spirit, not only to fight but to overcome personal problems especially in times of sickness, domestic crisis or business problems. It is a long path to develop these spiritual values but once the concept is understood and experienced it will provide a lifetime benefit of inner strength and peace.

### 2. Be Faithful (Loyalty)

To be faithful is a strong samurai tradition and an extension of the Confucius influence on the family and martial arts. The faith to be shown is in your sensei and dojo. The student must always be faithful to his sensei and follow in much the same way as a medieval samurai was bound to follow his feudal lord to the death without hesitation. While this may seem unusual in the present day, it is unreasonable to expect a sensei to teach all he knows to a student who is likely to leave for the slightest reason. The student must prove his loyalty over the years. The faith and loyalty extended to the sensei will be rewarded, in that a greater amount of knowledge and wisdom will be passed on to the student and this bond between sensei and student is extremely valuable and is the basis of the learning relationship.

### 3. Endeavour (Effort)

To endeavour means complete dedication and commitment necessary to achieve mastery of the art. In no case is mastery possible without strenuous effort and sacrifice on the part of the practitioner. The endeavour must be of a sincere nature and not just superficial. Serious effort on the part of the student will be recognized by the sensei who will in turn spend more time with him or her.

#### 4. Respect Others (Etiquette)

Respect for others is an important part of the Japanese and Okinawan culture therefore common to the martial arts. Gichin Funakoshi stressed that karate begins and ends with etiquette. He also stated that without courtesy there is no dojo. This is a reflection of the formal nature of the Japanese people and may be observed bowing during training as well as at home or office. Dojo etiquette is well defined. You bow correctly and show respect in everything you do and everywhere you go. Respect is extended to all...senseis, parents, educators, law, deceased, nature, etc.

#### 5. Refrain From Violent Behaviour (Control)

A trained fighter is a person with a fierce competitive spirit and great strength so it is unfair to use it against an untrained person. The karate-ka's spirit is unbeatable and must use his knowledge only for the sake of justice. A person of character can walk away from a fight because he is in control of his emotions and is at peace with himself. He does not have to test his abilities on the street. He wins without fighting and he will have no regrets because no one will be injured. Refraining from violent behaviour is hard to explain to many Westerners because of their environment, or the attitude of winning tournaments, and they want to do it as quickly as possible which is against the principles of karate-do and dojo kun. It is therefore necessary for instructors to constantly remind the students of the importance of the dojo kun.

### Useful Links

There is a wealth of useful information on the internet if you search for "Shotokan Karate". Here are some useful links:

Hursley Karate Club:

website - [www.hursleyshotokankarate.com](http://www.hursleyshotokankarate.com)

Membership system - <https://membermojo.co.uk/hursleykarate/yourmembership>

Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/HursleyJKA/>

JKA England - <https://www.jka-england.org/>



## Karate Glossary

Some of the basic terms you will hear during a class are listed here. Don't worry, you will start to pick them up very quickly and the Sensei will always help you.

English	Japanese
Front stance	zenkutsu-dachi
Back stance	kokutsu-dachi
Straddle/horse stance	kiba-dachi
Reverse punch	Gyaku zuki
Stepping punch	oi-zuki
Knife hand strike	shuto
Front kick	mae-geri
Side snap kick	yoko-geri-keage
Side thrust kick	yoko-geri-kekomi
Roundhouse kick	mawashi-geri
Lower level sweep, downward block	gedan-barai
Knife hand block	shuto-uke
High-level (head area)	joudan
Middle level (torso)	chuudan
Lower level (below belt)	gedan
Ready	yoi
Begin	hajime
Finish	yame
Kneel	seiza
Meditate	mokusou
Rest	Yasume

Bow	rei
Respectful acknowledgement	Oss
Instructor	sensei
Senior	sempai
One	ichi
Two	ni
Three	san
Four	shi
Five	go
Six	roku
Seven	shichi
Eight	hachi
Nine	ku
Ten	Ju