

Kumite

In the past our society fighting was considered not a nice thing to do. It can be looked down on as being a bullying tactic, a way of getting attention. To others it is viewed as something one does when he or she belongs to a gang. We all have heard someone say "It's not nice to Fight" or "One shouldn't fight." Ah! Before I forget there's the one that always makes me smile that states "Boys shouldn't hit girls." Well in our present era a change in the way fighting has come to be viewed, has changed. Fighting has become more acceptable!

Over the years we have been bombarded by the entertainment media. The movies with choreographed fight scenes can go on for an exaggerated amount of time. Television and, the early VHS tapes, DVDs, and now Blu-ray have done wonders to soften the "Fighting is not good attitude of the public." Let us not forget the computer games and the "Got to have one" Nintendo device they also have played a part in melting the negative thoughts towards fighting.

The advent of the MMA Mixed Martial Arts and the sometimes brutal Extreme Cage Fighting events on Pay-Per-View has brought these brawls into our homes. This type of fighting has become a form of sport entertainment and is beginning to draw big audiences and while accumulating a large fan base.

In still another form we are all fighting in some way or another. We fight to get both good grades in school and a first rate education. We fight to get a good job so that we are able to provide for our families, giving them a nice home, clothes, food for the table and a multitude of other things some essential and some not so essential. To do all of these things it takes heart and a strong will. So it is with Karate and its *Kumite* aspect.

Karate is not for the faint of heart, for if for nothing else; *Kumite* will show you what you are made of. Your instructor can give you all he knows but he can not give you heart and intestinal fortitude (GUTS!)

In the world of traditional martial arts such as karate, *Kumite* fighting is a necessity a part of the whole. In some styles fighting can play a large part of how one moves up the ranks on their way to earning a black belt. So fighting is what it is an art, a sport, a form of entertainment.

In order to become proficient at your art you must practice both your fighting as well as your kata. It has been said "That if one can perform kata well they can fight."

Remember on the street there is no such thing as a "dirty fighter," everything goes. In the dojo as well as in competition everything goes *as long as it stays within the rules!* So you have to do the little things which will give you a possible edge on your opponent.

And so to help you to gain some insight to *Kumite*, as well as to possibly help you polish your existing skills the following is but a small portion of the things which are a part of *Kumite*.

Personal Equipment Suggested for Kumite

1. Mouthpiece and holder (a must). Get a black mouthpiece it seems to intimidate!
2. Groin guard a must for males, optional for females (recommended)
3. Shin pads -optional(should be form type)
4. Forearm pads- optional(these are usually all cloth worn under gi)
5. Chest protectors (padded under garments)for females
6. An equipment bag big enough to hold all of the above
6. Other optional but recommended items such as, an extra mouth piece a water bottle, sports drinks, energy bars, towels, snacks, a roll of white tape (for equipment repairs), personal insurance information (in case of injury requiring medical attention)

Things to practice

1. If right handed practice fighting from your left side. This will confuse your right handed opponents
2. Practice front leg kicks, short *Mawashi Geri*, hook kicks to the mid section or groin. Front leg kicks are quicker and closer to the target
3. Execute inverted *Seiken* (Knuckles up) by scooting into the opponent, bring your rear with you
4. Practice jumping in on your opponent and throwing a front hand *Riken Zuki*
5. Perform a different variety of 3 strike combinations
6. Remember to execute at least 3 striking combinations when attacking
7. Practice moving using crossovers, never bring your feet together unless you are going to kick with the front leg and are closing the distance
8. Try dropping to one knee and executing a *Seiken* or a ridge hand to your opponents' groin area
9. Practice your front leg sweeps. When practicing with a partner be careful so as not to injure them

Arrive at class early so you can spar before class if your instructor permits it. Also try to spar with someone who is better than you (an advance student) this will make you better. Mix your partners up fighting people who are either taller or shorter than you. If allowed, don't forget to spar with some of the females in class, higher ranked and older than you.

Preparing for a Tournament

1. Eat well the night before a tournament, get a good nights rest
2. Have a substantial breakfast the morning of a tournament
3. Drink plenty of fluids, water, juice, sports drinks (Power Aid, Propel)
4. Always wear your groin guard, male students and any female students who wear one. Consider you groin guard as part of your gi. Put it on first always!
5. Always check your fighting gear for breaks, loose straps, etc.
6. Always have your mouth piece at hand

Pre- Tournament Kumite

- 1. Once you are registered for your events and know where your group will be located try and find a place to stretch and warmed up. Most tournaments will have an area set aside just for that purpose.**
- 2. Sit and observe. Try to pick out the people who you might have to compete against(the one's in your division)**
- 3. When your division is called report to your ring immediately**
- 4. Sit and observe the fighters in your division, watch as many of them fight as possible. This way you can observe their strengths and their weaknesses, also who really came to fight**
- 5. Watch the referees see what they are calling points for (strikes), see if any of them favor a particular technique**
- 6. Again check your fighting gear making sure everything is where it is supposed to be; all straps and fasteners are in working order, your mouthpiece is in, your belt is tied tight etc.**

Kumite Tactics

- 1. After your bow in, and in the ring assume a Kamae posture**
- 2. When the command is given to fight come forward and execute your attack. Remember you can not fight or score backing up.**
- 3. Watch your opponents' shoulders and chest area to pickup on his movements**
- 4. Always circle away from your opponents rear hand**
- 5. Execute 3 striking techniques when initiating an offensive attack, then step back and set up for a counter-attack**
- 6. Keep your blocking hand closed(lead hand) to prevent dislocated fingers**
- 7. If you score a point with a technique use it again immediately when you commence fighting again**
- 8. When blocking a kick try to strike the opponents shin with a *Hammer Fist***
- 9. Try to knock your opponents lead hand down (again using a *Hammer Fist*), then move in with a *Seiken Zuki* over his lowered arm to the chest area**
- 10. Remember to attack both high(*Chest area*) and low(*groin area*)**
- 11. Use distracting tactics such as these;**
 - (a) swing the rear hand back and forth like a pendulum**
 - (b) moving your front foot up and down, like tapping your toes**
 - (c) faking a *Riken Zuki* (backhand thrown as if a jab)**
 - (d) fake a *Riken Zuki* twice then come immediately with a strike**
 - (e) use head fakes to mislead your opponent**
 - (f) *Kiai* loud to startle your opponent when initiating an attack**
 - (g) Sifting your weight from one foot to the other (bouncing back and forth (remember this maneuver uses entergy!))**
 - (h) Switch your stance from left to right and then back again right to left. Doing this will make your opponent want to do the same. Try to time his movement, when he starts to switch his stance attack before he gets settled hopefully catching him of guard**
- 12. If fighting in the dojo try to grab your opponents lead hand and come over the top with a *Seiken Zuki***
- 13. If your opponent has good kicking techniques(or is taller than you) you must get inside of his guard in order to score**

Bear in mind you are going to get hit the idea is to strike first at all times. Remember what works for one person doesn't mean it will work for everyone. When fighting do so with your heart! It is not about winning, it is about surviving!

In time you will learn all the advanced techniques of your karate. You will learn to execute *Ashi waza, Harai waza* both front and rear. Advanced *Geri waza, Uchi waza, Uke waza, Atemi waza, Ukemi waza, Tsukami waza*. Take downs and throws will also be added to your arsenal as you move up in rank. So that in time you will have all of these things at hand for when you hear the command to

KUMITE!

Remember Focus, Control, Respect, and Honor!

Domo Arigato Gozaimashita

John S. Soltis 9th Dan Sensei