



Hartlepool Wadokai

More than just a Karate Club

Information for beginners

This information was created to give you, the potential new Karate student an insight into what you can expect to find in your average Karate lesson.

Because let's face it, most people have no idea of what to expect, some have seen movies and expect the 'masters' to be defeating an army of students without breaking a sweat, while others expect to encounter endless hours of marching up and down the hall punching and kicking. Well needless to say, both these assumptions are somewhat dated and inaccurate.

It is true that in the early 1960's when Modern Karate was still in its infancy, a 'newbie' could expect to spend months if not years simply marching up and down the hall, moving up the grading ladder only to repeat the marching process all over again. This approach was mainly due to the language and cultural barrier that existed between the English and their Japanese counterparts at the time.

Thankfully, today's Karate is a little bit different to days gone by. Today's Karate focuses on a number of Government targets, and it enables participants to concentrate on a holistic approach to life such as:

- i. Healthy/active movement patterns
- ii. Positive Attitude
- iii. Increased Confidence
- iv. Self-Belief
- v. Lifelong Learning
- vi. Character Development
- vii. Increased Attention Span
- viii. Increased Social behaviour
- x. Social Acceptance
- xi. Personal Skill Development

All these targets are achieved through a combination of fun, discipline and hard work which creates a unique learning environment.

Discipline / Respect

Each session begins and ends with a bow, this etiquette at its most basic level is a sign of respect to the instructors (Sensei) and to fellow students, the bow is much more though, it is an oath to train hard and seriously (start of class) and to show gratitude (end of class). The bow is a fundamental part of Japanese culture and therefore of the Martial Arts.

"Karate begins and ends with courtesy"

The bow allows a student to let go of the ego and focus entirely on their training.



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All students are expected to show respect to each other, their parents, instructors, and themselves. Any student who cannot show respect, will not be welcome in the Dojo. We have high expectations for our students, and we also see students as the club's ambassadors outside, so, any reports of misbehaviour at school or at home, will be treated as if in the Dojo.

What to expect

A beginner can still expect to do some 'line-work', these basic drills allow a student to develop their co-ordination, flexibility, and basic knowledge in Karate. Even advanced students continue this type of training because the 'basics' are the essential building blocks from which a student can develop. Students can also expect to use training aids such as air shields and kick bags in their first few lessons. This is where a student will learn to apply their line-work to making contact on something, rather than using people as dummies, we use shields and pads instead - at least at first.

After a few lessons, a student can expect to have a working knowledge of the basic commands, basic techniques (Kihon Waza), kicking techniques (Keri Waza) and possibly some combination techniques (Ren Raku Waza). It is usually at this point that a student really begins to learn the basics, from this point on there is a very steep learning curve. Students will learn all sorts of techniques, punches; kicks; elbow strikes; sweeps etc... they will also begin to study more advanced aspects such as partner work, Kata (pre-arranged form) and Kumite (controlled fighting) disciplines.

Who can train?

The simple answer is anyone! The Martial Arts are so varied, that everyone can find something to suit their own personal needs, no matter the age! Anyone over the age of 3 can train with us. If a person is reasonably fit (can walk up a flight of stairs without getting out of breath), they should have no problems with our classes.

Our youngest students (3-7yrs) will join through our specially designed Little Ninjas classes. These 30-minute classes cover the FUNdamentals of movement such as agility, balance and coordination and of course, Martial Arts skills.

What to wear

For your first few lessons, you should wear comfortable clothes such as Track suit bottoms and a T shirt. Most students usually purchase a Karate Suit (Gi) after a few lessons. There is no requirement to wear a Gi until a student takes their first grade. A Karate suit can be purchased from most local sports shops, the internet, or directly from the club; For safety reasons, students can't wear any jewellery and any metal hair clips will need to be removed before training.

Beginner Classes

Primary age beginners from 5 years to 11 years have their own classes. These classes are specifically tailored to beginners and covers a lot of the basics, including the requirement for the first grade.



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Secondary age beginners usually start in our intermediate classes.

Adult beginners (16 yrs +) train with the adult class. We may on occasion invite teenagers into the Adult classes or Advanced Children's classes.

After 6 Lessons

After six weeks or six lessons (whichever is sooner), A student is expected to have become a member of Hartlepool Wadokai (a small fee is payable to the club each year). **Note:** Club membership is currently on hold.

After 10 Lessons

After 10 weeks or 10 Lessons (whichever is sooner), a student is expected to have become a member of our association. This gives each student direct access to English Karate Federation, the sport's governing body, national and international courses and competitions and the chance to train with and be selected for the Wado Kai England Karate Team.

What is a Licence

The licence is a student's grading record and third-party insurance cover. There is an annual fee associated with this licence. Once a student has a licence, they can attend skill development courses, grade, and enter competitions.

A student is expected to have applied for their Licence within 10 lessons, and it is then the student's responsibility to keep this licence up to date (renewable annually).

Grading / Examinations

A beginner who trains once a week, could expect to take their first grade after 12 weeks continuous training, depending on ability. Parents should be mindful that every child is an individual and is treated as such in the club, it's a simple fact that some children learn things faster than others and may on occasion grade faster than your child. We will only put a student forward for examination to the next grade if the student has mastered the necessary skills to progress, we do not automatically grade all students.

A club instructor will inform students if they have been selected to grade, then those who have been selected can choose whether to grade or not. There is a fee to grade, set annually by the club committee.

Student Development

The club invests heavily in student development, this could be through subsidising travelling costs to events, or through running free or heavily subsidised technical courses in town. Once a student has been training for a few weeks, and achieved their first grade, they are able to attend most of the events on our club calendar. Some events, due to their nature are only open to selected students.

Please note: It is advisable to consult your GP before beginning any form of exercise or fitness program.