

What Makes Kyushindo Karate Different?

Although Karate is Japanese in origin, Kyushindo Karate is taught using English terms (e.g. front kick instead of 'mae geri'). A lot of emphasis is put on the use of control, speed and performing techniques **without** muscle tension, aggression and continuous shouting (Kiai). A lot of the techniques are similar to those practiced in other Karate styles, but there is a lot of influence from Kyushindo Judo and the Chinese internal martial arts Pa Kua and Tai Chi. It is these influences that make Kyushindo Karate a 'flowing' style rather than being 'robotic' as many other Karate styles are.

Natural Movement and Control

Natural movement allows the full power of the body (using legs & torso) to be involved in techniques rather than the power just generated from the muscles in the limbs. Control is essential so that deflections and strikes are accurately timed and placed, also that training partners are not hurt. It is important to be able to control whether you stop short of hitting an opponent in training, or whether you hit through a target when up against an attacker or training aid.

Deflection and Avoidance

Kyushindo Karate emphasizes deflection and avoidance, rather than the concept of force meeting force. By meeting strikes 'head on' with blocks the strongest person will always win, but no matter how strong you try to be you are always going to meet someone who is stronger than you!!. Using force against force makes it more likely that you are going to sustain an injury while performing the block. By using deflection, the amount of force required to move a strike out of the line of attack is considerably reduced. Kyushindo also highlights body movement to further avoid the attack, while at the same time employing simultaneous attacks.

Power without Tension

Kyushindo aims for speed in its movements, this is why the stances are higher than in traditional Karate styles. Fast movement and striking is restricted when the muscles are working against each other, such as happens under tension. This is why Kyushindo aims to perform relaxed strikes, only tensing the limb at the moment of impact, however as one becomes more proficient with striking the amount of momentary tension can be reduced. A relaxed technique is **not** the same as lazy or sloppy, which most people think of when the words 'soft' and 'relaxed' are mentioned. Having 'controlled pliability' enables quicker reactions to be made if circumstances dictate (such as the opponent striking back!)

Kata

The distinctive property of all Kyushindo Katas is that they are performed in a flowing manner, and there are no real pauses between the techniques. The Kyushindo Katas were designed as exercises in coordination and movement rather than the study and analysis of fighting moves contained in the Katas (Bunkai).

Learning from Others

Kyushindo has incorporated techniques from outside Karate so it is different from a standard Karate syllabus. Because Kyushindo Karate has its roots in Kyushindo Judo, breakfalls are taught at White belt, however the throws and groundholds are usually introduced later on. Kyushindo Karate also teaches basic releases, takedowns, groundfighting awareness and locking/restraining techniques.

Rejecting the Path of Others

Kyushindo practiced at Romsey does not promote the unnecessary training methods of body hardening (striking objects until calluses form) or object breaking, and it does not promote training methods that may cause injury to oneself, both in the short and long term. Kyushindo Karate is not taught as a sport however students who have applied their Kyushindo training have been successful in past AMA competitions.

A lot of the differences highlighted are not fully achieved until black belt is reached whilst a few are not mastered until 3rd or 4th Dan. Kyushindo Karate takes a long time for a student to realise its fundamentals and concepts, as to an external eye it can appear to go against the Western idealised concepts of loud aggressive movements with muscular tension.

Without going into the history of Karate - Most of the comparisons made here are against the mainstream styles found in clubs in the UK, and in particular those that came out of Japan after the 1930's.