



**GKR**  
KARATE



## SECTION 1: Dealing with new students

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## 1.1 Pre-Class Preparation

It is every teacher's/instructor's goal to run a great class. It is no different in teaching people karate. The first major key to achieving this is to always be prepared for your class.

***“Prior preparation prevents poor performance”***

### Pre-class preparation consists of:

- It is a good idea to have a shower before going to class so you feel fresh and look sharp.
- Wear a clean and ironed gi.
- Make sure you have everything (eg. keys, attendance sheets, certificates, float etc). Having a 'karate folder/kit' with everything in it will almost guarantee that you won't miss anything.
- Arrive at the dojo 30 minutes before class. This will allow you to set up, do a hall check and be available for any students who arrive early. This goes especially for any 'new' students who are asked to arrive 20 minutes before their first class for an introductory talk.
- Put up your Instructor board. It is important to develop and create a dojo atmosphere. A cork board is an excellent way of promoting up-coming events such as special seminars and gradings, recognising student performances (eg. grading and tournament results), and in general giving your dojo an identity.
- Have a plan for your class. A planned class comes across as more organised, therefore more enjoyable to the students and more relevant to what they need to work on.
- Always talk with your sempai (assistant instructor) about the class and what your individual roles will be.
- Set up your sign-in desk. This includes your float, flyers for upcoming events, your current Shimbun and any equipment you have to hand out.

## 1.2 Beginner's Introductory Talk

All new students are prone to being a little nervous before their first class. These nerves come from:

- Not knowing what's going to happen at the class.
- Not knowing anybody at the class.
- General fear of the 'unknown'...



We have put together the beginner's introductory talk to address these issues. Our goal is to make a new student's first class as comfortable as possible.

*This talk should take about 10 minutes.*

Here's an example of what you might cover in an introductory talk.

### Step 1

Introduce yourself and your sempai. Welcome them and let them know they are going to have a great time.

***“A smile and friendly voice goes down well with people”***

### Step 2

Ask them what they have done before in the way of exercise. Regardless of how much they have done, emphasise that they can go at their own pace.

### Step 3

Give them a brief run down of the hall and karate etiquette, such as:

- Where the toilets are and that they only need to put up their hand and ask.
- Show them how to bow, including the formal bow at the start and end of class.
- Language - the class will be in Japanese and English so they will always understand.
- The response (Hai) and the Kiai (shout) and why we use them.

### Step 4

Let them know how the class will run from beginning to end. For example:

- When the class is asked to line up, let them know where they will be standing. This is so they are always standing amongst others their own grade and experience level.
- The class will then bow in (as you've already shown them).
- There will be a short warm up to get them ready to train.
- You will be going through the punches and blocks. Brief them on the basics and let them know they need not worry if they don't pick them up immediately as they will only take a few lessons to become confident with them.
- Some light stretching, some stances and the kicks will follow.
- The class will then have a quick break for a drink.
- After this the class may vary from week to week. It may consist of partner work, self defence or kata. If it is an early class it will finish with a game or two.

***“People always feel more comfortable when they know what they will be doing”***

### Step 5

Let them know they will find some things easy and other things perhaps a bit more difficult. The main

thing is to not expect too much from themselves and to have fun. Remind them that karate training is a personal journey, and they will progress at their own pace. There should be no stage where any pressure is put on students to learn or 'keep up'.

***“Your primary goal when talking to new students is to make them feel comfortable with you, themselves and the dojo environment.”***

## 1.3 End of Class Talk With New Students

*“I used to find that when a group of new students came into my classes, the next week only half or so came back. One occasion a new group came in and I thought it would be a shame if they all didn't come back as they had done so well. I called them all over after the class and asked them how they went.*

*I let them know what they could expect tomorrow: things like sore muscles, and that they may not remember much of what they had learnt. I told them they had all done particularly well and better than I had done on my first class.*

*I can't put it all down to that conversation but I was over the moon when they all came back the next week!”*

-GKR instructor

It's normal for people to doubt themselves. It's also normal for people to avoid things they don't feel they are good at. These are by no means healthy attitudes. Two of the goals in martial arts training are to help people believe in themselves and also to teach them that with effort they can turn their weaknesses into strengths.

All new students should have a great time at their first class. However, when they wake up the next day and can't co-ordinate or even remember the things that they learnt just the day before, they can start to feel a little insecure and frustrated with themselves. When they top this off with being sore all over they may decide that they are not suitable for karate after all. So they go back to watching TV on their training night. What a shame! We all know that all this could have been avoided with a 30 second conversation at class.

While this may not be accurate in all cases, hundreds of phone calls to students find it to be the most common.

GKR has come up with a handout for new students. While we are sure that this handout will help, personal contact and encouragement from their instructor is the most effective way to help a person achieve their goals.

### **The end of class talk with new students simply consists of:**

#### **Step 1**

Gather all new students in and ask them how they went.

#### **Step 2**

Let them know they did great and, as you said earlier, it takes a few lessons to become confident with the techniques. Perhaps give them a comparison. eg. you weren't totally coordinated and remembered everything when you started!

#### **Step 3**

Let them know that the next morning they may be sore, or forget a lot of what was taught in the class. They need to understand that this is completely normal!

#### **Step 4**

Give them the 'First Class Handout' and let them know what's in it.

#### **Step 5**

See if they have any questions.

#### **Step 6**

Let them know they are welcome to train in the later/earlier class. They are also welcome to train on other days if they wish.

#### **Step 7**

Remind them they did great and that you look forward to seeing them next week.

*Note: Your end of class chat should only take a few minutes.*

## **1.4 First Class Coupons**

All new members receive a 'white training card' with their membership.

One side of these cards has a perforated section.

It is known as a 'first class coupon'. It will have the name of the student and a code for our offices.

Every time a new member walks into class with a white membership card, please tear off the perforated section and hand it in with the class training fees. At the end of each month, all first class coupons are placed into a draw and winners are drawn out to receive various prizes from GKR Karate.

When signing in a new student, place an asterisk "\*" next to their name (on the attendance form) to denote that they are attending their first class.

Please double check your attendance form to make sure the number of asterisk marked equals the number of first class coupons.

## **1.5 Registering New Students**

All instructors aim to build bigger and better classes. Most martial arts clubs/schools rely on talking to their students to build the class numbers up. As GKR has a unique marketing system, many instructors often ignore this area. There is no reason why GKR instructors cannot increase their own student base.

### **Students may come from ...**

#### **Students walking in off the street**

People often may walk in off the street for a look. When greeted in a friendly manner and allowed to watch from the back they often wish to join in afterwards.

#### **Encouraging students to bring along their family and friends**

The advantage of this method is it allows the students to pick the people they will be training with.

#### **Encouraging parents who watch to join in**

Considering they are there and have driven their children down to class anyway, why not involve them as well? This allows them to make their time productive, more enjoyable and gives them a hobby that they can participate in with their children.

All GKR accredited instructors are allowed to enroll new members into their classes. While they are unable to offer students a trial membership, they are permitted to offer students a 'GKR Gold

Registration' at a discount of up to 50%.

**A GKR Gold Registration entitles a student to:**

- Train at any of our locations (throughout the world).
- Participate in GKR tournaments and attend various GKR training seminars and camps.
- Transfer their membership if they wish to take a break from training.

**Method for enrolling students:**

- Explain membership and training fees and what they cover.
- Fill out the new members details in a GKR enrolment book.
- Fill in a Gold membership card with their details and explain how it works.
- Collect the registration fee.
- Pass the copy from the enrolment book or receipt in with the training fees.

**Note:** *Do not allow anyone to train without membership. There may be insurance implications in the event of an injury related to negligence.*

## 1.6 Helping New Students 'Fit In'

Apart from providing a positive, friendly training environment, there are a few important things that all instructors should make certain are being done. New students need to feel welcome, and as quickly as possible they should be made to feel comfortable and confident that they can do karate.

**Club training equipment and merchandise**

GKR offers a full range of training equipment. One of the best and most effective ways to help a new student feel like the rest of the class is to get them into a karate uniform (Gi). Students not only look the part, but also feel like 'one of the group'. This lifts their self-esteem and confidence, which in turn will help them enjoy their training more.

Please be sure to promote all of GKR's available club merchandise and training equipment to your students. As people get more involved and their loyalty to their club increases, they want to be able to wear and promote their clubs merchandise.

**Yellow Tip (9th Kyu) Gradings**

As part of a new students development, we need to ensure they receive encouragement and positive feedback on their progress. Yellow tip gradings are a simple and effective way of letting our new students know that they are on track and progressing well.

Please be sure to conduct all yellow tip gradings on the student's sixth lesson, and give them clear direction on when they will/should be attempting their yellow belt grading.