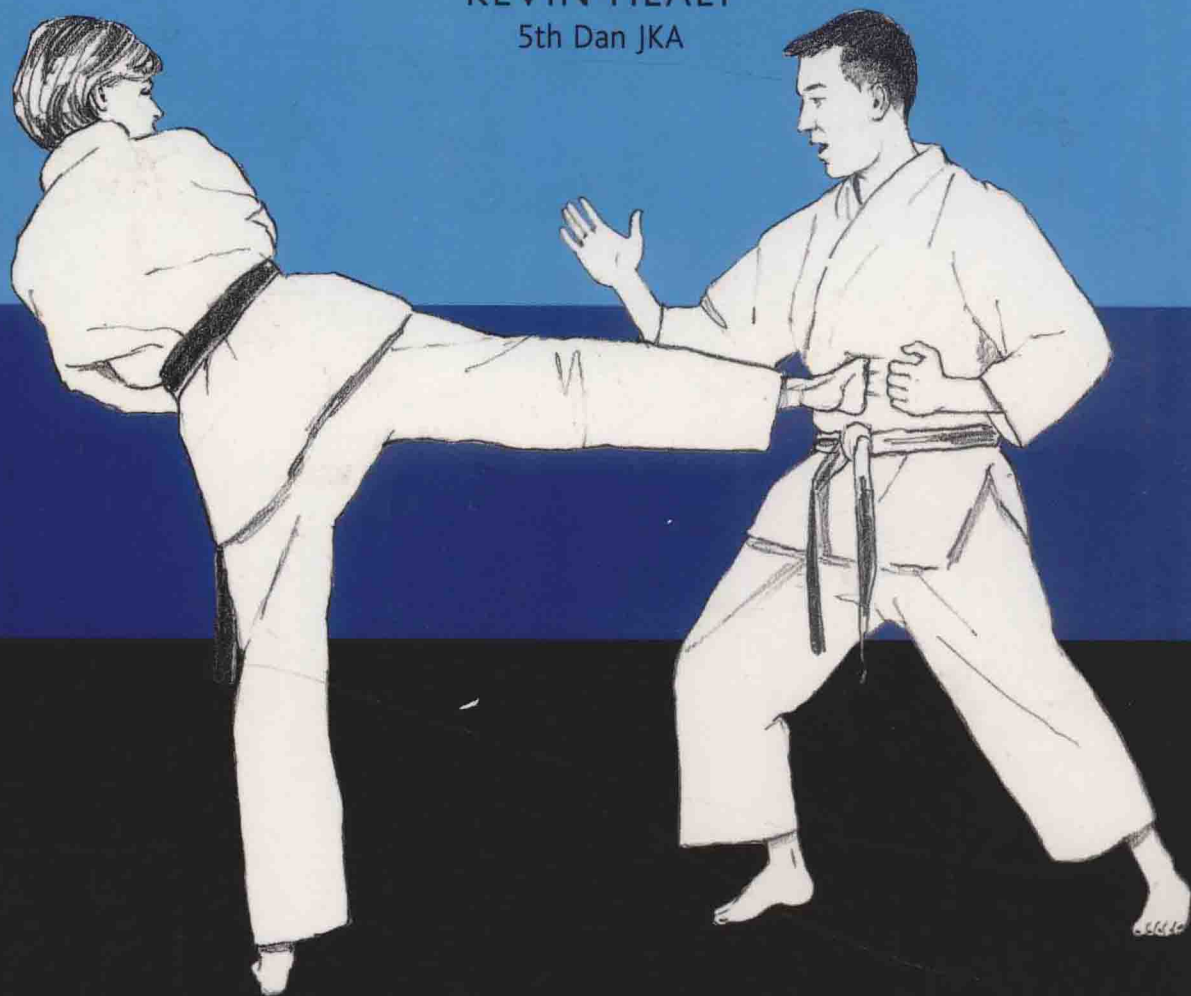


MARTIAL ART BASICS

karate

KEVIN HEALY

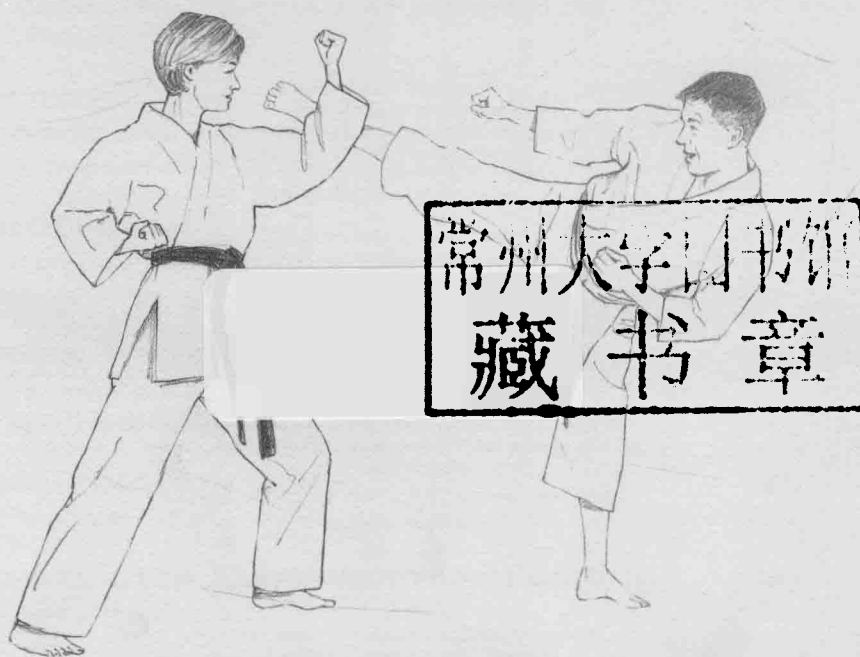
5th Dan JKA



OVER 40 SHOTOKAN KARATE TECHNIQUES & EXERCISES

MARTIAL ART BASICS

karate



KEVIN HEALY
5th Dan JKA

CONNECTIONS
BOOK PUBLISHING

PLEASE NOTE:

The author, packager and publisher cannot accept any responsibility for injury resulting from the practice of any of the principles and techniques set out in this book. If you are in any doubt about your fitness or ability, please refer to a medical professional before trying any of these techniques.

A CONNECTIONS EDITION

This edition published in Great Britain in 2011 by
Connections Book Publishing Limited
St Chad's House, 148 King's Cross Road
London WC1X 9DH
www.connections-publishing.com

Text copyright © Kevin Healy 2005
Illustrations copyright © Sheilagh Noble 2005
This edition copyright © Eddison Sadd Editions 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

The right of Kevin Healy to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication data available on request.

ISBN 978-1-85906-331-6

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

The text and illustrations in *Martial Art Basics: Karate* were previously published in card deck form in 2005 by Connections Book Publishing (UK), Barnes & Noble Books (US) and Gary Allen (Aus), and first published in book form in 2008 by Grange Books (UK).

Phototypeset in Zurich using QuarkXPress on Apple Macintosh

Printed in China

MARTIAL ART BASICS

karate

CONTENTS

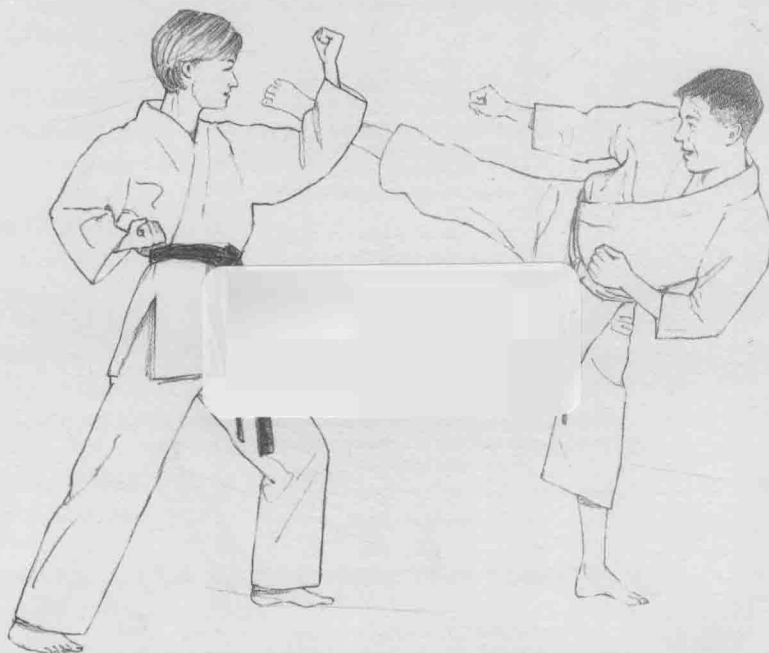
INTRODUCTION	6
WARMING UP	10
STANCES	16
• Front stance • Back stance • Horse stance	
PUNCHES	24
• Straight punch • Stepping punch • Reverse punch	
• Leading-hand punch	
STRIKES	34
• Back fist strike • Palm-heel strike • Knife-hand strike	
• Roundhouse elbow strike • Rising elbow strike	
BLOCKS	46
• Downward-sweeping block • Rising block	
• Outside block • Inside block • Knife-hand block	
KICKS	58
• Front kick • Side thrust kick • Roundhouse kick	
• Spinning back kick	
COMBINATION WORK	68
• Sequences 1-5	
THREE-STEP AND ONE-STEP SPARRING	80
• Head and body attacks	
PRACTICE SPARRING	90
• Front kicks • Side thrust kicks • Roundhouse kicks	
• Back kicks	
TRAINING DIARY	108
INDEX OF TECHNIQUES	111
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	112

MARTIAL ART BASICS

karate

MARTIAL ART BASICS

karate



KEVIN HEALY
5th Dan JKA

CONNECTIONS
BOOK PUBLISHING

PLEASE NOTE:

The author, packager and publisher cannot accept any responsibility for injury resulting from the practice of any of the principles and techniques set out in this book. If you are in any doubt about your fitness or ability, please refer to a medical professional before trying any of these techniques.

A CONNECTIONS EDITION

This edition published in Great Britain in 2011 by
Connections Book Publishing Limited
St Chad's House, 148 King's Cross Road
London WC1X 9DH
www.connections-publishing.com

Text copyright © Kevin Healy 2005
Illustrations copyright © Sheilagh Noble 2005
This edition copyright © Eddison Sadd Editions 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

The right of Kevin Healy to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication data available on request.

ISBN 978-1-85906-331-6

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

The text and illustrations in *Martial Art Basics: Karate* were previously published in card deck form in 2005 by Connections Book Publishing (UK), Barnes & Noble Books (US) and Gary Allen (Aus), and first published in book form in 2008 by Grange Books (UK).

Phototypeset in Zurich using QuarkXPress on Apple Macintosh

Printed in China

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	6
WARMING UP	10
STANCES	16
• Front stance • Back stance • Horse stance	
PUNCHES	24
• Straight punch • Stepping punch • Reverse punch • Leading-hand punch	
STRIKES	34
• Back fist strike • Palm-heel strike • Knife-hand strike • Roundhouse elbow strike • Rising elbow strike	
BLOCKS	46
• Downward-sweeping block • Rising block • Outside block • Inside block • Knife-hand block	
KICKS	58
• Front kick • Side thrust kick • Roundhouse kick • Spinning back kick	
COMBINATION WORK	68
• Sequences 1–5	
THREE-STEP AND ONE-STEP SPARRING	80
• Head and body attacks	
PRACTICE SPARRING	90
• Front kicks • Side thrust kicks • Roundhouse kicks • Back kicks	
TRAINING DIARY	108
INDEX OF TECHNIQUES	111
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	112

INTRODUCTION

Why Karate?

Karate is a dynamic, explosive and highly rewarding martial art that combines physical fitness with mental and spiritual training. Ideal for all ages and abilities, it has something to offer everyone.

If you want sport and competition, Karate can offer this. If you want to know what it feels like to break a stack of tiles, Karate can offer this. But above all, when you begin your Karate journey, you are throwing down a challenge to your mind, body and spirit – a challenge that will build strength of character and help you to overcome your fears. It is a challenge that will ultimately prove to shape your life.

This book is the perfect way to supplement your training, whether you are taking up Karate for the first time or already have some training under your belt. All the basics are presented step by step with clear instructions, and there are hints and tips throughout, to help you make sure you're getting it right. The book is an ideal training aid, and can be used any time and anywhere – so now there's no excuse for not practising your technique!

In the beginning

'Karate' is, literally, the 'art of the empty hand' (*kara* meaning 'empty', and *te* meaning 'hand'). But why did the need for empty-hand fighting arise?

The islands of Okinawa in the North Pacific became a prefecture of Japan in 1879, after which a law was passed banning the possession of all weapons, in an attempt to reduce the threat of revolt. The Okinawans turned this to their advantage, adapting their own indigenous arts to combine them with those that had filtered through from China. These were the beginnings of the art we know today.

In 1922, Gichin Funakoshi, the founder of modern Karate, was invited to Japan to give a demonstration.

His display was so well received by the public that he decided to remain in Japan and teach his art. A training hall (*dojo*) was built, and the building became known as the *Shotokan* (*Shoto* was Funakoshi's pen name, and *kan* means 'training place').

This, for me, sums up the beauty of Shotokan Karate: nothing is superfluous, from its name, which is direct and to the point, to the type of training, which is hard, demanding and also to the point. It is the most widespread style of Karate practised around the world today. I have been practising it now for more than twenty-five years, and it continues to be both challenging and rewarding, as I hope it will be for you.

What to expect from a class

Firstly, don't be surprised by the mix of grades. Most clubs are not large enough to run classes solely for beginners, so you could find yourself lining up alongside black belts. This shouldn't be a problem because a good instructor will be able to cater for you as well as for the senior students. And don't worry if you feel nervous to start off with – it will help to keep you on your toes.

Each class will start with a formal bow to the instructor, followed by a general warm-up to prepare you for what will come next. Classes are roughly one to two hours in duration and usually run as follows.

• Basics

This involves the practice of stances, blocks, punches, strikes and kicks. Depending on grade and ability, these will either be done individually or in combination. Movements are done slowly to begin with, allowing the student to pay attention to detail, and then power and speed are increased so that the final repetitions can be performed with full force.

• Kata

These are set sequences of moves, best compared to a gymnast's floor display, and part of the class time will be devoted to them. *Kata* practice would be a book in its own right, so we will only touch on it briefly here. There are twenty-seven *kata* in the Shotokan style, each designed to develop a particular area of training, be it agility, balance, coordination ... and the list goes on. In the *kata*, the student (*karate-ka*) blocks, kicks and punches imaginary opponents, and the order and direction of each move is set.

The initial *kata* a student will learn are compulsory, and closely linked with the grading system, but as your standard improves you will find that there are also more advanced *kata* that are optional. There are many to choose from, according to your preference: some are designed to build strength and stamina; others, speed and dexterity.

• Kumite

After the *kata* you will move on to sparring, in which students pair off and put into practice the basics learned earlier in class, to hone their fighting skills. There are several types of sparring, the first two of which are covered in this book: *sanbon kumite* (three-step sparring), *ippon kumite* (one-step sparring), *jiyu ippon kumite* (semi-free one-step sparring) and *jiyu kumite* (freestyle sparring). Three-step sparring introduces beginners to pairing-up work. The attacker announces the area he intends to attack, then delivers three consecutive attacks to that target; the defender blocks these, then counter-attacks after the third block. Attacker and defender then swap roles and start again. One-step sparring is the next stage. Here, the attacker announces the target area but only delivers one attack, and the defender blocks and counters immediately. By this stage, the defender will have numerous blocks and counters at hand, making his *kumite* highly inventive.

Regardless of the type of sparring, certain factors

remain constant, and should always be borne in mind: spirit (never give in!), distance (too close, and you will have little or no time to react; too far away, and your counter will be ineffective) and timing.

The class will finish with some stretches to warm down – vital to help prevent stiff muscles from wreaking havoc! – followed by a bow to your partner and, finally, a formal bow to the instructor. Please bear in mind that this format isn't set in stone, as methods will vary from teacher to teacher. However, I always think that a good *karate-ka* can think on their feet, so it always pays to expect the unexpected.

Finding a dojo

Today there are numerous clubs in existence, thanks to the explosion in martial arts interest in recent years, but the drawback of this is that these clubs are not subject to regulation. So how can you tell the good from the bad? As a general rule, avoid flashy instructors who make outlandish claims! But aside from this, there are several things you can do.

First, when trying to find a dojo, look around and investigate as many clubs as possible. Always sit and watch a class first; if the instructor won't allow you to do this, ask yourself why. Look at the way the class is run. Is it well organized? Does the class seem well disciplined? Ask questions of both the students and the instructor. How often should you train? What is the grading system? Is the club affiliated to a national governing body? What are the fees? Are you insured? A club secretary will be more than willing to answer these questions.

The most important thing is to find a good teacher – and, when you do, stick with them. *Sensei* means 'teacher', but this is not just restricted to the physical movements of Karate. The *Sensei* should also lead by example in their manner, their spirit and in the way they conduct themselves. Karate is all about training the body in unison with the mind. Find a teacher who offers this; they do exist.

Stick with it

Once you have joined a dojo, you may find that everything you are taught feels totally alien to you. Don't let this put you off – almost everyone who dons a Karate *gi* (suit) for the first time feels like a fish out of water for a while. To begin with, much of what you are taught will feel far removed from reality, but these early stages are the building blocks, so don't neglect them. Take time to study them properly: only through hard training and constant repetition will you have any chance of mastering the basics. It's also important to stick with one style of Karate; flitting around between clubs can only harm your progress. Don't become a jack of all trades, master of none; focus on your Karate, develop it, refine it. The Japanese have a saying: 'He who hunts two rabbits rarely eats rabbit pie.' Sensible advice indeed.

Remember also that as a white belt you are – in Karate terms – the lowest of the low. Showing respect to your seniors and correct etiquette in the dojo are vital in your development as a karate-ka. Each dojo has its own rules, and these will be explained to you. Don't start off with the attitude that these rules are only for when you're wearing your *gi*: always conduct yourself in a calm, mature way. Training in the dojo is preparation for the real world.

Dojo etiquette

First things first: make sure your clothing is clean, presentable and well maintained at all times, whether it's a *gi* or not. Karate is all about self-discipline, so if you can't manage this, you're in trouble!

If it's your first time, let the instructor know (although they will probably have already guessed!) They will tell you where to stand, and give you a few words of advice. Always address the instructor as 'Sensei' in the dojo, and bow whenever you enter or leave the hall. You must also bow when you face a partner for pairing-up work. Never raise your voice in the dojo and, if you have questions, ask them at the end of the class. Listen closely, and copy what's

going on. And don't be put off if you're partnered with a senior-grade student – they will have better control, so you'll actually be less likely to get hurt.

And here are some more pointers ... You will be expected to train at least twice a week if you wish to graduate. Always show respect to your seniors, and use the word *oss* to show you understand if they offer you advice. Never wear a belt for a grade you have not attained, and never leave the class without permission from the instructor. Also, if you are unable to attend a training session, you should let your instructor know.

Grading

Probably the most common question new students ask is, 'How long does it take to get a black belt?' The answer is always the same: it's up to you. If you train regularly and reach the required standard for each grade, it generally takes most people roughly three to four years. The route to black belt in the Shotokan system involves ten gradings under a senior examiner. The levels below black belt are called *kyu* grades, and the belt colours work as follows:

10th	white	5th	purple
9th	orange	4th	purple/white stripe
8th	red	3rd	brown
7th	yellow	2nd	brown/white stripe
6th	green	1st	brown/double white stripe

You must wait at least three months between *kyu* gradings, and a minimum of six months between 1st *kyu* and black belt, to allow for preparation time. Each examination tests your knowledge of basics, kata and *kumite*, and will be progressively longer and more physically demanding. You will also be tested on elements from previous gradings to make sure you're still working on your basic techniques. Once you pass black belt you become a *Sho Dan*, first black belt, and will no longer grade at your parent club. But that is a long way off; for now, stay focused on your next challenge, and keep your black-belt dreams in check!

Training regime

Success lies in regular training, and establishing a realistic training regime is the only way that you will advance. Ultimately it comes down to the simple truth that, if you want to train, you will. Of course, if you're married with three kids, it's unlikely that you'll be able to train five times a week, so just set yourself a realistic schedule and stick with it. Even if you're only able to train once a week, just make sure you give 100 per cent every time you put on your gi.

Push yourself in your training sessions – and, when you think you've had enough, push yourself some more. Your body can do more than you think it can. Above all, spirit is the key. Inspiration can come from a few simple words of encouragement from your instructor, so listen and learn.

You also need to accept that development often comes in fits and starts. We all go through stages where our training doesn't go as well as it should. My advice is just to put it behind you. Always maintain a positive attitude – just put it down to a bad day at the office. Karate is hard; it's meant to be. The quicker you set your mind to accepting this fact, the happier you will be. Just give it your all in each class, and you won't go far wrong.

Maximizing your potential

When training, it's not enough just to know the moves, getting from point A to B without falling over. A karate-ka must understand how to make the body work to its maximum potential, so here are some things to take into consideration:

• Kime

Prior to every move, be it a kick, punch or block, the body should be in a relaxed state to allow you to react in the quickest possible time. At the point of impact, the whole body should tense as strongly as possible. This focus of power is called *kime*. Techniques without kime, no matter how much they may look like Karate, are imposters.

• Zanshin

You also need to remain alert prior to movement. This state of mind is called *zanshin* – the state of mental readiness. You may just be standing in *yoi* (ready stance), or pausing between clashes in kumite, but the mind must never switch off.

• Speed

A technique without speed will have little effect, but work on your technique first; as your Karate improves, so should the speed of delivery. Basic moves often fail as a result of a karate-ka telegraphing their intentions by adding extra movements. Train to give nothing away, and this will greatly enhance the speed of your attack.

• Kiai

This is the Karate shout, used at certain points in basic training, focal points in the kata, and upon striking an opponent in kumite. It is the link between the mind and the body, and should come from the stomach, not the throat. It should be short, aggressive and embody your total commitment, being used only at the point of greatest focus.

• Breathing

Breathe out sharply at the moment of focus (don't make it too vocal!), emptying the body of air. This state lasts for only a moment, but is vital. Make sure your stomach is tensed to absorb a blow.

About this book

Use the book as and when you need to, to supplement your training. Don't feel that you have to work through it in order; you'll know what aspects of your technique you need to work on at any given time, so choose sections as appropriate. Always read the hints and tips provided – they'll help you to turn a good technique into a great one – and pay attention to the foot diagrams, so that your footwork doesn't let you down. Practice is the key.

WARMING UP



Warming up

Before you begin, it is important to warm up thoroughly. When doing the following stretches, start slowly and gently increase the stretch. If at any time you feel pain, release the stretch and relax. Before every class, inform your instructor of any injuries you have. It is equally important to warm down at the end of a Karate session. A bit of effort now, and you'll avoid a lot of pain later.

It is a good idea to supplement your Karate with other forms of exercise, to build up your strength. The fitter you are, the quicker you'll recover after exercise and the less tired you will become during training.



▲ **SIDE BEND** This stretch loosens the muscles down the side of the body. Take the left hand and place it on your hip, then stretch your right arm above your head and lean over. Keep your knees bent and your back straight. Repeat on both sides. Don't reach too far to start with; as you get warmer, reach further.



▲ **FRONT BEND** Here we stretch the main muscle groups in the backs of the legs, and you will feel the stretch in your shoulders too. Start by placing your feet apart at a comfortable distance. Keep your knees straight and slowly bend forward, placing your hands on the floor. If you aren't supple enough to reach the floor, don't worry – just go as far as you can without too much discomfort. You will feel the stretch down the back of the legs. Hold the position for a few seconds, then slowly release and come up.