



Kyoshin Ryu Karate Academy

More than just Punching and Kicking, We Help You Grow

12 Things You Must Know Before You Join A Karate School

Thank you for requesting our free report. I hope you find it educational and useful. Once you have reviewed it please feel free to call our school if you have any further questions.

As an added bonus, and thank you for taking time to read it, I am offering a free introductory course for anyone in your family. Just call our school and set up an appointment.

1. Cost

Most people know how to shop and ask questions but they know very little about the martial arts themselves – or the protocols and etiquette of a martial arts school. They do not know what to look for or even how to ask what they should be looking for when they pick up the phone and inquire about lessons. As a result, they typically ask the cost and when classes are available. It is important to know what your financial commitment will be, but in truth, most schools in your area all know what everyone is charging and they are all, generally, within the same price range. So cost should play only a small role in choosing a school.

2. Sport vs. Self Defense

Does the school offer, recommend, or require competition? This is a very important point. If you are looking for a sport-based system and they do not offer competition training you will be disappointed. On the other hand, if they are sport-based and you are not interested in this you may find it hard to advance in rank as some schools require a certain amount of tournament activity to be promoted.

Another concern with sport-based systems is that training for the tournament can, and often does, distract from the self-defense aspect of training. Outcomes dictate training methods. In other words, in a tournament it is generally not allowed to kick to the groin, bear hug, choke, etc. so the sport-based school may not teach how to defend against these attacks. On the street, there are no such rules.

At Kyoshin Ryu Karate Academy (KKA) we have chosen the path of self-defense based training. This includes activities such as defending against bullies, grappling, ground work, defense against street attacks, etc.

3. Single System

Karate is a Japanese word that refers only to a unique martial art of Okinawan origin. Tae kwon do and kung-fu are totally different arts. As are judo, aikido, jujutsu, and tai chi. Each has a long

history of honing their techniques under real attack situations. A school that takes a little from this system and a little from that system dismisses all systems as a complete set.

Generally, the instructor has taken only what works for him and drops those that are too difficult for him or those that he does not understand. This may work for him, as an individual, but each of us has our own unique way of seeing things. By dropping most of a specific art and taking only a few items from each he misses out on many items that others - his students - might find useful.

There is also a trend to call everything karate or karate based. Legitimate tae kwon do and kung-fu experts are proud of their art and would never refer to it by another name, in this case karate. If a school teaches tae kwon do or kung-fu and calls their art or school karate, be very leery. Ask yourself why a school would attempt to misrepresent the art they teach.

4. Style

Style refers to a way of teaching a specific art – not to a differentiation between arts. Karate, tae kwon do, and kung-fu are different martial arts, not different styles. In the same way, the Japanese/Okinawan arts of judo, jujitsu, aikido, sumo, kendo, iado, etc. are different martial arts, not different styles of karate.

A martial art style is more of a way of teaching a specific art. There are many styles - or ways of teaching - karate. At KKA we teach with an emphasis on defense and getting out of a situation safely. While this seems logical, there are styles that believe you should stand your ground, firmly attack or counter attack and devastate your opponent or attacker. This might work well for someone who is in their prime at the age of 21, has speed, well developed muscles, etc. but may not work well for children being attacked by an adult or for a person in their 40's being attacked by someone in their prime. Not to mention the legal ramifications.

There are many beliefs, and thus many styles, in all martial arts. Both karate and tae kwon do have two very distinct sub-styles under them. They are traditional and sport. In traditional they focus on the art and all of its aspects. In sport they focus on what works in the ring. For example, in sport tae kwon do they award 1 point for a punch, 2 points for a body kick and 5 points for a kick to the head. They stop the match for any body grab – such as a bear hug. So a sport based style would focus on high kicking most, punching some, but little or no defense for body grabs. If a style claims to be traditional but also teaches sport tae kwon do you should check them out thoroughly as it is very rare to find a school that can successfully teach both. Most tend to lean towards what works in the ring vs. a true focus on self-defense.

5. Rank System

Most schools associate the kyu ranks with colored belts – starting with a white belt and ending in brown belt just below black belt. The ranks in between are signified by several other colors – orange, yellow (or “gold”) green, blue, etc. and each art and even style can have their own color system.

Black Belt ranks are also style specific to a point. Most arts have Black Belt levels ranging from 1 through 5 (In karate this would be Shodan through Godan.) and as high as 10. Tenth level

Black Belt is generally reserved for the founder of the system, the one person at the top of an organization of an art, or a life long practitioner of the art. There are only a handful of true 10th Degree Black Belts in each martial art through out the entire world.

Testing for Promotions

Testing involves three aspects – location of the test, cost of the test, and if the fee is a test fee or a promotion fee.

6. Location

Some schools allow the lower ranks (below black belt) to test at the school and during the regular class time - as we do at Kyoshin Ryu Karate Academy. Others allow you to test at the school but set up specific test days. Some schools only allow testing at the home or main school – which may be in another part of the city or even in another state or for Black Belts in another country.

7. Cost

Some schools do not charge extra for testing. Some charge one fee for lower ranks and another for higher ranks. The most typical is for a school to charge a small amount for beginners and increase the fee up through the black belt ranks. Some schools charge a significantly higher amount for black belt ranks than lower ranks – as much as \$3000!

8. Test Fee or Promotion Fee

The other issue involving testing is whether the test fees are for taking the test or for being promoted. Some schools charge for the test regardless of whether you pass the test or not. Others offer a partial refund if you do not pass the test. Others charge only if you pass the test.

At KKA we do not charge for testing or promotions – all testing is included as part of your program.

9. National Organizations

Many schools are members of a larger organization. This may be just a group of schools all run by the same instructor or a national organization for that specific art or even an international organization. Typically, national and international organizations require a membership fee from all the students in the school. The benefits to the student have a large range which could be as simple as having a place for the instructor to gain ideas and get additional training. Other benefits might include offering insurance for the students and school or offering workshops for the students with guest instructors. Some also have tournament offerings which may or may not be required for promotion.

Also, if the school is a member of a large national or international organization that is style specific the organization may require testing to be done at the national headquarters.

At KKA we belong to the United States National Karate Association (USNKA) as well as the International Ryu Kyu Karate Research Society (IRKKRS). Chief Instructor, Chuck Phillips has

received his rank accreditation through the USNKA as well as special recognition through the IRKKRS.

10. Instructor Credentials

Some questions you might ask include:

Where did they get their rank? Did he/she promote them self? (This is not good.) or did it come from someone in their organization but of a higher rank? (This is proper within traditional arts.) Does the instructor belong to the same organization that the rank came from? (They should.) Do the credentials seem to make sense? Ones that may not are a 25-year-old instructor claiming a high black belt rank in several different arts. Does the instructor have any teaching certification beyond their rank certification?

11. Program Options

Many schools require a year or longer commitment. However, do not be bullied into a situation you feel uncomfortable with. (Though this may be more costly.) Many schools require a commitment because it helps both the student and the school. It helps you, or your children, in learning to make commitments and follow through on them. It also helps develop stick-to-itiveness. It helps the school run in a more business like fashion. They can better spread out their costs and overhead with a predictable student count. This benefits the student with lower costs as well.

12. Make A Commitment

Once you've decided to join a school you are making a commitment. This is not just to the school in the form of a student agreement where you agree to attend for a certain number of lessons or months of the year. This is a commitment to yourself – to grow and improve your health, mental and physical capabilities, and lifestyle through the study of martial arts. It will make an enormous positive change in your life.

THANK YOU!

Again, thank you for requesting this report. Call now to set up your free introductory course.



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