

Kihon Waza - 基本技

Kihon - 基本 means 'fundamentals' or 'basics' and is derived from the words **Ki** - 基, which means 'foundation' or 'root' and **Hon** - 本, which means 'basics' or 'at the foot of'. A repetition of the same underlying meaning. This redundancy is an indication of the importance that the Japanese attach to mastering basic knowledge and skills in a Martial Arts discipline.

In Mas Oyama's *Kyokushin* style of *Karate*, **Kihon** is an important part of the training. By performing *Kihon* with the right commitment you also show respect and discipline, both important characteristics for a *Karateka*. A lot of attention is therefore paid to the basic techniques and the execution of these techniques in a certain form. A large part of the training for beginners consists of the *Warm-up* and then *Kihon*. Also advanced and masters continue to practice and complete *Kihon*. This approach is in line with the Japanese philosophy of **Kaizen** - 改善, or continuous improvement. By frequent repetition of a technique in the *Kihon* one acquires a certain automatism. As a result **Kata** - 型, ('shapes' or 'patterns') and **Kumite** - 組手 ('sparring') no longer needs to be considered about the proper execution of these techniques.

Mas Oyama stated that one should see *Kyokushin Karate* as a *Martial Arts* language that can be learned, in which **Kihon** are the letters of the alphabet, **Kata** the words and the sentences, and **Kumite** form the conversations. Together they form one; on these three rest all technique, speed, strength and progress in *Karate*. They should be studied as a whole: without the *Kihon*, basic techniques, there can be neither **Kata** nor **Kumite**.

To build a strong base for our *Karate* we need to constantly work on it. The *Kihon* of *Karate* has been worked out with different stances **Dachi** - 技 and techniques **Waza** - 技, such as arm, hand and foot techniques. These come back to punches, kicks and blocks. To become a *Karate* master, you first and foremost have to learn these techniques and practice frequently. It teaches us how to develop an efficient, effective and powerful technique, by harnessing and pulling together the right muscle groups. It also trains us to stay connected to the floor, emphasizing correct use of the whole body in terms of posture **Kamae** - 構え, range and movement balance.

Kihon is also practiced as floor exercises, where the same technique or combination is repeated several times and the students move back and forth, **Idō** - 移動 ('movement'), across the floor. Continuous repetition **Keiko** - 稽古 (with the aim to improve in relation to the *Kaizen* concept) teaches our body to move automatically, effortlessly and efficiently. Over time, the techniques become unconscious, rather than intentional mechanical movements. You do them without thinking, which frees your mind to be relaxed and experience the dynamics of that moment.

Therefore, whether it is the course of movement, the speed of movement, the strength of the movement, the required posture, the right musculature to use, the right form of breathing, all of these factors are included in *Kihon's* practice.

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Dachi Waza - 立技 ('stances') and **Ashi Sabaki - 足さばき** ('footwork'), along with the use of hips, pelvis and abdomen, form the basics of the *Kihon* training. Only from a strong, stable posture, powerful, fast, pure and smoothly executed techniques can be possible. The ability, under all circumstances, to respond to an attack therefore depends on a good position.

Uke Waza - 打技 ('block techniques') are another, important step of techniques within *Kyokushin Karate*. The result of a well-executed *Karate block* is that the defender comes into a good position to move to the attack. It is often said that a good attack is the best defense, but in *Kyokushin Karate* a good defense can also be the best attack.

Te Waza - 手技 ('hand techniques') form in addition to *Geri Waza*, the most commonly used finishing techniques within the *Kihon*, and can be divided into **Tsuki Waza - 突技** ('punching techniques') and **Uchi Waza - 打ち技** ('stroke techniques') the most commonly used finishing techniques. *Karate* techniques draw their strength mainly from the hip insertion. Punching techniques can be considered as the basics for learning the hip insertion.

Geri Waza - 蹴り技 ('kicking techniques'), in addition to *Te Waza*, form the most commonly used finishing techniques within the *Kihon*, contain a large number of leg and foot techniques, meant to take out the opponent. The kicking techniques have a number of advantages compared to hand techniques: they have a longer range, because the legs are longer than the arms, and they are generally more powerful because the legs contain more muscle mass compared to the arms.

Kihon forms the basis for learning to move in both *Kata* and *Kumite*.

- The first step towards *Kata* is called **Renzoku Waza - 連続技**, or follow-up techniques linked to a logical way of moving. These combinations of techniques are, in different positions, in *Kyokushin Karate* also called **Idō geiko - 移動稽古**, or practice of basic movement. In this way, the *Karateka* refines its positions and balance, gaining insight into the use of the learned techniques in a more realistic context.
- The step towards *Kumite* is called **Renraku Waza - 連盟技** and are combination techniques in *Kumite no Kamae* ('combat posture').
- When *Kihon's* techniques are used and practiced in concrete, practical situations in self-defense, we speak of **Goshindo - 護身道**.

Within *Kyokushin Karate*, the synergy of the right position, the footwork, blocking and the final technique is essential, as well as:

- de **Kokyū - 呼吸** ('breathing'),
- **Hyōshi - 拍子** ('timing'),
- **Zanshin - 残心** ('alertness'),
- **Kime - 極め** ('focus') en
- **Kiai - 気合** ('battle cry').

In almost all *Dojos* in the world, lessons are given in their own language, but with the use of the Japanese terms. Every *Karateka* has to make these Japanese words and expressions their own, to perform, after hearing a term or a combination of terms, the correct position, punch or kick. An extensive '*Budo Dictionary*' (Japanese-Kanji-English) can be found at: www.jaapkooman.nl/budo_dictionary.html