



long road. Have perseverance... (Parents please help your child when they hit a "valley", by encouraging them to continue)... **together we shall reinforce yet another lesson valued in life: commitment!**

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## **Dojo Rules of Etiquette**

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The Dojo is any room, hall or space where you go to train in karate. The following rules should be observed when you are in the Dojo:

1. Try not to be late for class (allow enough time to get changed and pay fees).
2. Always bow every time you enter or leave the Dojo.
3. Keep the Dojo clean, by immediately removing outdoor shoes when entering the Dojo. It is polite to walk around the edge of the training area.
4. Keep finger and toe nails short and clean.
5. Jewelry or watches should not be worn. If it is not possible to remove rings or earrings, they must be safely covered.
6. Never eat or chew in the Dojo.
7. Instructors should be referred to as *Sensei*.
8. Junior grades should acknowledge that respect should be shown for seniority.
9. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure that their Gi fits correctly and is kept clean and in a good state of repair. The appropriate belt must be worn with the Gi at all times.
10. Visitors to the Dojo should sit quietly at the back of the Dojo.

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## **New Beginning Karate Class Program Description**

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**Three key elements of the Karate training provide the core elements of our Beginning Karate curriculum:**

**Mind:** Learn control, respect, discipline, determination and self awareness. The concentration, commitment and dedication required to reach a high level of skill in Karate help build a strong, confident and determined character.

**Body:** Improve stamina and strength throughout the body. The physical training required to reach a high level of skill in Karate promotes overall good health, body fitness and well being.

**Spirit:** Develop confidence, pride, a positive mental attitude and a sense of accomplishment.

Each student ("Karate-ka") will be taught the flexibility, speed, power, and timing required to develop dynamic Karate. Students will have the opportunity to develop overall core body strength through isometric, plyometric, aerobic and anaerobic conditioning as practiced by world class karate-ka.

***Each class will be build and reinforce the key components and application*** ("bunkai") of stances ("dachi"), punches ("zuki"), kicks ("geri"), strikes ("uchi"), blocks ("uki"), sweeps ("ashi harai"), takedowns ("gari") and joint locks ("kensetsuwaza").

As students develop enhanced capability and understanding, techniques shall be taught with more advanced combinations and strategy ***as practiced by senior members of the current United States National Karate Team.***

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## **Background**

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The Samurai Dojo is a sanctioned Karate "dojo" (Karate training center) under the strict guidelines of both the Amateur Athletic Union and the **USA National Karate Federation (the permanent National Governing Body of Karate under the United States Olympic Committee).**

Samurai Dojo was formed by Sensei (teacher) Jack Pressman originally as the Wilmette Martial Arts Club in 1984 at the Highcrest Community Center. At that time, the Wilmette Martial Arts Club had 12 members. Since then, Sensei Pressman has taught over 2,000 athletes, of all ages, from Chicago's North Shore.

In 1998, the Samurai Dojo moved into the newly renovated facility located at 1211 Washington Avenue and joined the Athletic Training Center of Wilmette ([www.atcwilmette.com](http://www.atcwilmette.com)) to create one of the premier Karate and multi-sport elite training centers in the United States.

Samurai Dojo currently has over 150 active participants in the Traditional Japanese Karate (ages 5 – 65), Little Olympians Karate (ages 3- 4), and Japanese Ju-Jitsu and Judo programs.

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## **Sensei Jack Pressman**

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Sensei Jack Pressman has been a practitioner of traditional Japanese and Korean Martial Arts since 1976. Sensei Pressman has achieved senior Black Belt Rank in both Japanese Karate and Korean Tae Kwon Do. In addition, Sensei Pressman has trained continuously in Ju-Jitsu, Judo and Thai kick Boxing for the past 24 years.

In 1984, Sensei Pressman was first selected to the United States National Karate Team. Over the past twenty years, Sensei Pressman has medaled 20 times in the United States National Karate Championships winning 8 United States National Karate Championship titles and medaling 13 times in international competition.

In 1996, Sensei Pressman was selected as Captain of the United States National Karate Team and in 1997 was selected to join the National Team Coaching Staff (as sanctioned under the US Olympic Committee).

In 2002, Sensei Pressman won his 20<sup>th</sup> National Championship medal, winning the Bronze Medal at the United States National Karate Team Trials in the Men's Heavyweight Division. This marked his 19<sup>th</sup> year as a qualifying member of the United States National Karate Team (as sanctioned under the United States Olympic Committee).

In 2005, Sensei Pressman was selected as Head Coach for the United States National Karate Team for the 2005 World Maccabiah Games held in Israel. The Team won 21 medals (8 Gold, 7 Silver, 6 Bronze) including the Men's Team Kumite Gold Medal. This marked the first time in United States Olympic Karate history that a Men's Kumite Team has won the Gold Medal in an International Olympic sanctioned event outside the Pan Americas.

***Sensei Pressman is the most senior member of the United States National Team and has become the longest active Team member in United States Karate history.***

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## Belt Promotion and the quest to become a BLACK BELT

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In the early days of modern Karate, the *Karate-ka* (student) donned a white belt (*obe*) as part of the traditional karate uniform (*gi*). As each Karate-ka became strong, powerful and proficient, their belts became darker with the accumulation of the toil from hard training. The Black Belt became the personification of hard work, sacrifice, loyalty and commitment. Today, achievement of each Belt Promotion provides the Karate-ka the ability to demonstrate individual development toward achieving a Black belt.

The Promotion Exam provides the Exam Committee (*shinsa iin kai*) the opportunity to judge both the individual Karate-Ka in conjunction with the overall development of the Dojo. The promotion structure is split into two categories. These are the *Kyu* grades and the *Dan* grades. *Kyu* grades are student grades rising from the lowest 10th *Kyu* to 1st *Kyu*. Various colored belts denote these grades. *Dan* grades denoted by a Black belt progress from 1st *Dan* upwards. This structure is to assist in evaluating the ability and progress of a student, or *Karateka*, and help create an incentive to learning.

Basically, it is a question of whether the student has the determination for the diligent practice required to improve. The amount of time it takes to become proficient varies and is largely dependent upon dedication to training. In addition, grading examinations are invariably nervous times and therefore they will be a test of your mental approach as well as your technical ability. The grading examination is divided into four sections as follows:

### 1. Kihon Waza

Kihon Waza, or basic techniques, are the foundations of all Karate technique. It is impossible to make progress in true Karate-Do without first acquiring these foundations. It is essential that all Karate students repeat the same basic technique again and again. It is no exaggeration to say that it is impossible to repeat the basic techniques too often. There is infinite meaning to be gained from their repetition. On the mental side, we can build up our character for through them we learn patience and concentration. On the physical side, we acquire bodily powers and control of our bodies, learning how to relax our shoulders in action, how to concentrate our energy on a single point or on a movement, how to twist our waist or our fist, and how to preserve perfect balance at all times.

Basic techniques involve such profundity of skill, and are so fundamental to good karate, that one may say that not even a lifetime would be enough to acquire perfection, or even near perfection.

### 2. Renraku Waza

Renraku Waza, or combination techniques, are where the basic blocking and attacking techniques of karate are combined into a sequence of moves in a rational and realistic sequence, whereby each preceding technique is a preparatory move to the following technique so that all the moves are connected. Since karate includes various blocking and attacking techniques using both hands and feet, the number of these combinations is almost infinite.

### 3. Kata

The word Kata is a Japanese word for which there is no literal translation into English. Its nearest translation is "form". Kata is a prearranged set of techniques, performed in a certain sequence and in a prescribed manner. The Karateka defends himself or herself against a series of imaginary attacks from one or more opponents approaching from different directions. It is a practical device for teaching and passing on the techniques of karate. The techniques themselves are common to all styles but the manner in which they are performed will clearly identify the style, such as Shito-Ryu, Wado, Shotokan, Goju, etc. The Kime (focus and power) in these four styles are of different duration and they place different emphasis on breathing. The variation in stances adopted whilst performing Kata will also identify a style, in much the same way that a school of art can be identified; the school providing the structure and format together with the clear reason for each technique.

Kata is a fundamental part of karate. It is impossible to understand Kata from just talking or reading about it; you must physically study it and you will discover that the old masters had a profound knowledge of the human body. The construction of a Kata is not just a haphazard collection of techniques drawn together on a whim because it looks pretty. It is a vast storehouse of knowledge that only continuous practice will reveal a little at a time. Kata is the thesaurus of techniques as well as method of preserving techniques. In addition, it is the study of physics, in particular the study of dynamics of the human body and the methods of producing kinetic energy by specific and quite unique use of the body, through rotation, acceleration, momentum, velocity, moment, action and reaction. This also involves the study of balance, timing, focus, tension, relaxation, breathing and meditation. With a long period of study, Kata will show all of these component parts.

However, even if we accept all of this, it is evident that an important ingredient is missing. The vital component that makes Kata come alive is the individual spirit, the expression of will or spirit that the performer himself or herself brings to that Kata. Without this will, or without soul, the Kata is just mechanical, it does not live. Kata is your way of expressing your will in karate. It is where you blend your spirit and karate together.

### 4. Kumite "Sparring"

Kumite is the term used for a form of training in which two opponents confront each other. There are a number of types of Kumite, all-different:

- Ippon Kumite - one step sparring
- Nihon Kumite - two step sparring
- Kihon Kumite - basic sparring
- Kumite Kata - sparring form

All of these types of Kumite the attacks are predetermined. By this method the students develop defensive technique, and gain experience in distancing and timing, which cannot be practiced in individual training. After this predetermined sparring is somewhat mastered, the students learns Jiyu Kumite "free sparring" in which there is a free exchange of blows, blocks and counterattacks, none of which is predetermined.