



The Okinawan Karate Do Academy Newsletter  
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## Why Study Martial Arts?

Martial Arts is a practice that develops: character, humility, gratitude, charity, confidence, self-esteem, self control, determination, patience, temperance, and a sense of obligation to pass on what is learned. No other physical discipline offers so much.

Spiritual organizations and religions strive to impart these qualities on their members and students as well. But, the art of Karate also develops and enhances physical abilities that would take a multitude of sports to develop. Students improve balance, coordination, muscle tone, cardiovascular conditioning, timing, rhythm, hand-eye coordination, and flexibility. Complex neural pathways are developed through the study of Karate that also give students an advantage in every other physical activities. All that, and self defense as well.

Boxing and wrestling may provide self defense and conditioning, but they don't stress humility, respect, and gratitude. Soccer and basketball stress agility and teamwork, but will they develop and desire to help someone in need? You definitely won't learn any of this lifting weights or running on a treadmill.

A martial artist may, at one time or another, be doing something completely different with each hand while carrying out complex combinations with his/her feet and maneuvering their body like a master contortionist. Karate is, above all, education in the body mechanics, and students find their abilities in other sports improve greatly through this practice. Whether it is golf, soccer, tennis, or gymnastics, understanding how to use the entire body to create force is the core of all athletic endeavors, and nowhere is this going more dramatically revealed than when learning the proper technique to throw a punch or kick. Anyone can fight, but fighting efficiently is the groundwork on which martial arts is based. As students learn how to use their body with this efficiency and understand the importance of self-control, they have gained invaluable knowledge that can be applied to every aspect of their lives. Karate is something that takes a lifetime to master. It is a discipline that keeps teaching and developing forever.

the preceding article was based on the writings of Gavin Armstrong (shukokai Karate)