



JUST FOR KICKS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF AMERICAN KARATE-DO SHOTOKAI



Message from the Presidency



Recently, I was given a balance board as a gift. It has been a great source of entertainment for the whole family. My kids, in particular, have found that it is not a stable platform from which to jump nor is it a good place to land a leap! Here are a few things I have learned from it so far:

1. Static doesn't mean being without movement. In order to keep the board balanced, the feet might remain in place but core, hips, and legs (including ankles and calves) must all be adjusting constantly.
2. Relaxation doesn't mean muscles are not working. Whether standing or performing squats on the board, many muscles have to be engaged without becoming rigid or tense. When tension manifests in the body, balancing on the board becomes frantic as you try to react to its ever-increasing chaotic motion.

The above lessons have planted a seed in my mind about balance existing along three dimensions or axes. While on the board, a person can balance front to back and side to side. Those are two dimensions. The third dimension is the up and down balance of the body. This is being 'settled.' In order to stay on the board effectively one must find balance from left to right, front to back, and bottom to top. Consider these three axes of balance in your Karate next time you find yourself in a particular stance. Experiment with what imbalance feels like along the three dimensions: left/right, front/back, and up/down. Then look at what muscles help restore balance and how to use them without rigidity.

This year let's look to better steady our bodies and minds while we ride on the balance board of life.

Sincerely,
 Jared Greenwald, 2nd Dan
 Vice President, American KDS



Meditations



Over the years, I have often returned to something Marie taught at one of the first courses I attended at BYU. She stated that we are all beginners, just at different levels of beginning.

There is a mindset I frequently come across as I practice and teach. It is the expectation within ourselves of immediate improvement and "getting there" quickly in our practice. This can bring about frustration and often harsh criticism of ourselves because we are looking toward an end state of being. We need to let go of the concept of an endpoint in karate. Karate is a process of continual improvement that takes time. Each time we make a breakthrough, there is more space for work and improvement. And as we improve in our practice, we reach a new level of beginning. Remembering we are always beginners helps us be more patient with ourselves and the time needed to reach new levels of beginning.

The idea of always being beginners also applies to how we approach each exercise. Karate exercises contain a lot of repetition, which can lead us into a mindset of "just going through the motions." The problem with this is that in behaving as though we have mastered the exercise, we stop our progress. Every exercise, no matter how many times we have worked on it or the belt rank we have achieved, should be approached with patience, focus, and dedication, just as though we were still beginners. There is always more we can learn with each exercise. Approaching each exercise as beginners allows us to glean the most out of each exercise and helps us keep an open mind to what it can teach us.

We are all beginners, just at different levels of beginning. Karate is meant to be a lifelong pursuit of improving and challenging ourselves to be better. Part of that challenge is to remain flexible and open to achieving new levels of beginning.

Gina Cooley, 1st Dan
 Administrative Director, American KDS

Updated Membership Options at Shotokai.org

We would like to remind AKDS members to stay up to date on membership dues! These dues are crucial for enabling us to maintain our non-profit designation, for purchasing insurance, and for bringing in visiting instructors for courses. On the bottom of each page at Shotokai.org, you will find updated options for paying dues, for course fees, and for donations to the organization.

2021 Course Calendar

Date*	Course Type	Location	Instructor/Assistant**	Host
Sat, Feb 6	VIP (Virtual Instructor Practice)		Debbie Prince/Gina Cooley	AKDS Leadership
Sat, Mar 27	Weekend	East Coast—Virtual	Kyle Brunner/Fei Han	Jared Greenwald
Sat, Apr 17	VIP (Virtual Instructor Practice)		Jared Greenwald/David Gillis	AKDS Leadership
Sat, May 22	Weekend	San Francisco—Virtual	Gina Cooley/Aisha Huston	Peter Enyeart
Sat, Jun 19	VIP (Virtual Instructor Practice)		Rebekah Call/Andy Thompson	AKDS Leadership
Mon-Fri, July 26-30	Week	Utah	Marie Kellett/Simon Prince	Aisha Huston
Sun-Sat, Aug 14-21	Week	Kent, England	Summer School	KDS Technical Group
Sat, Aug 28	VIP (Virtual Instructor Practice)		Anna Reid/Martin Pardue	AKDS Leadership
Fri-Sat, Sep 17-18	Weekend	Oregon	Debbie Prince/Rebekah Call	Jeremy Crook
Fri-Sat, Oct 11-15	Week	San Diego <i>AKDS Annual Leadership Meeting</i>	Mark Hallam/Jeremy Crook	Simon Prince
Sat, Nov 12-13	Weekend	Louisiana	Jared Greenwald/Stan Ponomarev	Kyle Brunner
Sat, Dec 11	VIP (Virtual Instructor Practice)		Lorin Hendricks/Robert Anderson	AKDS Leadership

*If in-person practice is not yet safe, weekend and week-long courses will be converted to single-day virtual courses.

**VIP sessions will feature instructors who will lead demos on teaching ideas. These sessions are for all instructors and assistant instructors of green belt rank and above; other kyu grades attend by invitation only.

Quotes

“If you are ignorant of your enemy AND yourself, you are certain to be in peril in every battle. If you are ignorant of the enemy, but DO know yourself, then your chances of winning or losing are equal. However, if you know BOTH your enemy AND yourself, then in a hundred battles, you will never be in peril.”

(Master Gichin Funakoshi, *Karate-Do Kyohan*, p. 248; quoting Sun Tzu, *Art of War*, ca. 500 B.C.E.)

“Concentrate your practice on this synchronization, harmonization, of YOUR body first, at slow as well as at high speed—Remember: you must ‘know yourself first’!—BEFORE you start learning to synchronize your own body actions with those of the partner—‘know your opponent’ is the SECOND stage.”

(Bernard Mathieu, *Voice of the Mountain Dragon*, p. 84)

“Now I understand that kata is everything. All of the elements we practice come from kata. The young do the kata and never think about what it means and do not apply it. I did not know why O Sensei only ever wanted to practice kata. Now that I am old, I understand. Kata is everything. Now we have to apply it....Kata is so important, so that the muscles learn to be used properly.”

(Mitsusuke Harada Sensei, in *KDS Summer School 2019*, by Kyle Brunner, 2nd Dan)

Online Practice

We invite you to join for any (or all) of the following weekly virtual practices. Please contact the lead instructors with the emails provided for the Zoom codes.

- Tues. 6:30pm Pacific (AKDSpresident@shotokai.org)
- Wed. 7:00pm Mountain (gcoolkarate@gmail.com)
- Thur. or Fri. 7:00pm Mountain (miss.ayo42@gmail.com)
- Fri. 7:00am Eastern (AKDSvicepres@shotokai.org)
- Sat. 8:00am Pacific (AKDStechnical@shotokai.org)

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Questions or comments about the newsletter? Contact Rebekah Call (editor) at AKDSsecretary@shotokai.org.