



North York Wado Ryu Karate Club Newsletter

Vol. 1, Issue 1, Mar. 2016

Important Dates

March 5th

Megathon Fund Raiser

February 27th & March 8th-11th

Sensei Alex Waith Course

April 10th

Karate Ontario Grand Prix 1 Tournament

Winter Karate

Welcome back to our dojo newsletter! This issue is jam-packed with interesting articles and wonderful interviews. Sensei Alex Waith continues his series where he answers our questions and Dr. Ian Watson returns with his Health Kicks column keeping us up to date and fit. We have a Black Belt Interview with our very own Daniel Manalang and an exclusive interview with visiting Japanese Kata Champion and 2020 Olympic Ambassador, Juri Iwata. Enjoy and train hard.

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Questions for Sensei: *What advice do you have for people practicing kata as mature adults and how can they stay fit and increase their performance and understanding of Karate?*

By Sensei Alex Waith, 7th Dan

Kata utilizes most of the muscles and joints of the body as the movements encompass many of the techniques of karate practiced together. Along with this, there are many position and direction changes. Since kata can be practiced in a slow, rhythmic and flowing fashion, it can be an excellent exercise for mature or even older people.

My wife began some Tai Chi practice for her health awhile ago. Tai Chi is supposed to be very good for the health of mature or older people. As I observed the practices of her class, I tried to draw some analogy of this method and the practice of kata, particularly our Wado Ryu movement.

Balance is very important for older people. I could see the benefit of practicing our kata movements in a slow and slow hold position in this regard also for exercising the joints through a full range of motion and the contraction and expansion of the body. However, I was of course already practicing and also teaching kata slowly at times as well as very fast or at normal speed and rhythm for obvious reasons. Younger people, in fact all ages and of course kata competitors, are hopefully aware of the benefits of slow kata practice.

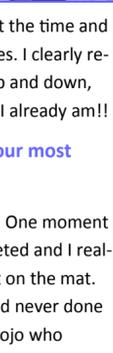
I would like to refer our readers to my previous article in this newsletter and do not want to repeat any of this information or views as such here, however, in considering the question of kata for mature or even older people, there is another important benefit in my opinion and that is the mind/body connection. If the mature person keeps in mind the meaning or self defense and combat application of the moves while executing the kata, this connection should serve to keep the mind active in a dynamic way. The slow practice method makes this easier.

For the physical reasons mentioned above, the practice of kata at various speeds is good fitness training. Consider also to repeat a kata say about 20 times, particularly a long one such as Kushanku. This is a good way to keep fit. As the body begins to get tired, repeating the same action continuously, performance will improve as the movements become more relaxed, smooth and natural.

For myself, as a mature and active karateka, I still believe in physical cross training as well which I try to include in my training routine.

Finally, in addressing this multi-faceted question of kata, fitness, and karate in general for mature people, I would like to make some reference to Okinawa, the so-called birth place of karate.

I understand that Okinawa is one of the regions in the world noted for longevity. While there are various factors that attribute to this, I know there are many karate masters and I think also practitioners in that region who live a long and active life. Kata practice I believe is an important part of their training routine and may well be a positive contributing factor to their well-being and longevity.



Black Belt Interview with Daniel Manalang

By Dom Capilongo

When and why did you start practicing karate?

I started practicing karate in 2003. My father had signed me up for karate at the Toronto-Sheppard YMCA. I started practicing karate for reasons a majority of people go into martial arts for: to learn self-defence and get some exercise (along with looking cool!).

What was karate like for you when you were a white belt?

When I was a white belt, I really didn't think at all how far I would get. I just wanted to learn things and try something new. I was young at the time and I felt very intimidated by many of the black belts teaching the kids' classes. I clearly remember my first day when I stepped in the dojo and started running up and down, Sempai Ali was yelling at me to run faster and I was thinking to myself: I already am!!

You competed several times at the provincial level, what was your most memorable competition moment?

I don't have just one single best moment, there were a lot of fun times. One moment that sticks out to me in particular was my first and second time I competed and I really felt like I competed using all that was taught to me and I put it all out on the mat. Plus it really felt like a new experience in my life and it's something I had never done before: sparring in a ring facing someone from a completely different dojo who doesn't care about you and only cares about how they will defeat you. Another moment is my second time I competed in the elite division, and I got to see how it was like fighting one of the best fighters in Ontario. Yes I lost, but it was a great experience because I finally felt what it was like to be competing with the best.

You are both a children's instructor and competition coach. What is your main focus when teaching younger students?

My main focus on teaching the younger generations coming up is to develop not only their karate skills, but also develop them as an individual and help them as they grow older. I'm not that close with the junior and senior classes (although I have started to make some connections) however I am very close with many of the kids from the youth section, not to mention our competitors as well. I try to show them that it's alright to be themselves around me and I don't want to be looked at just as an instructor/coach, but also as a friend as well. I'm always asking how they all are and if anything is bothering them out of karate, to never hesitate to ask me about it, because I've been there, and I know how it felt to be at that age and the other challenges that come while training in karate.

Which kata is your favourite and why?

My favourite kata at the moment is Chinto. I really like the stances and combinations in it along with the multiple applications that come with the moves. Plus, it feels really awesome to perform it even if I am still trying to improve it.

You are currently a university student. Has karate helped you at all in your studies?

Yes, in fact it has helped a lot. What Sensei Alex and the rest of my sempais have taught me about Wado-Ryu karate and martial arts in general is that there are multiple bad habits we carry along with ourselves and these stick with us as we get older and can even worsen. I realize that this is the same with my study habits as well, which I learned the hard way in my second year of university. In my third year of university, I completely changed the way I studied and stopped procrastinating and leaving things until last minute and I started asking about stuff I didn't understand instead of being shy about it. The little things really do matter and bad habits won't go away unless you work at removing them every day.

What advice do you have for people trying to improve their karate?

I would tell people trying to improve their karate that it requires patience. Yes, there will be days where you have just had a long day and you don't want to do anything but I think it's at that moment where you push yourself to train harder where you actually get better at it. I think a lot of the new people who start training think they expect to learn something extremely flashy in the next 2-3 weeks that they attend classes, when in reality they might spend months practicing basics. Karate is a process and it takes a long time and you can't expect short term results. It really is something that will stick with you for the rest of your life, and deciding if that person is willing to put their time into that is what really matters.

Health Kicks: Sports Drinks

By: Dr. Ian Watson

At the Y, I often see young men mixing pre/post recovery drinks, and empty Gatorade bottles and various other forms of rehydration beverages overflowing from the recycle bins. With so many people using these products they must be beneficial. Right? The \$6 dollars per serving must be justified by in-depth research. Right? How about the chocolate milk craze and now the magical coconut juice?

Firstly, let's look at hydration and those salty/sweet drinks. Hydration is very important because dehydration can lead to cramps, decreased performance, decreased cognition and painful illnesses such as kidney stones. Looking at the colour of your urine after a workout is a simple way to determine if you have hydrated appropriately. Overhydrated and the urine will be clear or dehydrated and the urine will be dark yellow to brown. Your urine should be in between these colours. Any other colours and you should talk to your family doctor or nurse practitioner. Next, should we have sweetened drinks during our workouts? If you are running a marathon or doing an endurance type workout this important. Interestingly some endurance athletes will report smelling ammonia after one to two hours of intensive exercise. I have experienced this when I run for more than 90 minutes. Basically this is due to a lack of carbs in the blood forcing the body to burn proteins resulting in the release of ammonia, hence the ammonia smell. This is not good. Therefore, carbs are recommended in endurance sports.

Now how about during a karate class? To determine my caloric expenditure I wore a heart monitor during a very intense 2.5 hour class (thanks Sempai Victor). I burned 1200 kcal. During a 2.5 hour run I burn roughly twice as much. During a regular 2 hour class I only burn 400 calories per hour. Do I need to refuel during class? Probably not as long as I am not hungry before class starts. So why do we drink sports drinks other than for fuel? Gut absorption of water is greatly enhanced by sodium and glucose. Basically, the sodium and glucose are actively absorbed into the gut lining cells and the water passively moves from the low osmotic gut to the now higher osmotic cell. An interesting study (1) looked at the urine of endurance athletes in order to design a better sports drink. Interestingly the resulting sports drink worked so well the athletes hydration actually went up during their activity. Apparently this observation was due to the fact the athletes do not hydrate to milliliters prior to their sport. The study's authors conclusion was to recommend drinking 250 to 500 millilitres of water for activities up to 90 minutes and consider a sports drink for intense activities greater than 90 minutes and hydrate before your sport. The key word is intense. Only you can judge your level of activity. After training it is generally recommended that we should drink 1 litre per 1 kilogram of body weight lost (1). Remember by the time you feel thirsty you are already dehydrated. Now, how about those expensive post workout drinks or coconut water at the end of class or after your workout. Research suggests that refueling within 30 minutes of finishing an intensive workout with carbohydrates and proteins reduces inflammation, soreness, provides the building blocks for muscle synthesis and replenishes fuel stores (2,3). Again the key word here is intensive. If you are barely sweating at the end of your activity and you are not really that tired you probably do not need to refuel very much because you are really just expanding your waistline by over refueling.

Interestingly study after study has shown that exercise does not lead to weight loss but infact may cause weight gain (no it is not due to all that new muscle) for a number of reasons, including an overestimate of how many calories they have burned and some other very complex factors (4). Ok, let's say you really did workout hard and your muscles feel weak. You can go for the expensive designer post workout drink with all its vitamins, proteins, phyto-protectins, or a fancy (roughly 200-600 kcal). Or go natural and save some money and drink some good old tap water and a eat (bottle of coconut milk) (5). These foods have unprocessed protein, healthy fats, unrefined sugars and natural unprocessed vitamins. I have a pet peeve with "natural foods" coming in a pill or powder form. The Mexican tribe of superathletes, the Tarahumara, who run 100 to 160 km per day keep themselves fueled with a pinole receipt (a combination of cornmeal, cinnamon, and two agave nectar and chia seeds)(6). They seem to do very well without the designer post workout drinks. Two years ago chocolate milk was recommended as a good post workout drink. Due to its elevated sugar content it has fallen out of favour with nutritionists. Coconut water has become the new super drink. Again, it really has no benefit over drinking water and eating one of the snacks I have recommended above (7). An inexpensive way to make your own portable post workout drink is to add a scoop of protein to your favourite sugar and salt containing sports drink in a ratio of 1 to 4 (5).

With all this evidence why then would someone choose to use an expensive post recovery drink? Well psychologically someone getting into a new exercise regime may find buying new expensive shoes and drinking expensive recovery drinks encourages them to stay with their program. Also, some may find it is easier to digest a powder drink at the end of a workout instead of unprocessed foods. I would like to mention that diabetics and those with digestive issues, such as diverticulosis and inflammatory bowel disease, other illnesses, and those on medications should pay very close attention to hydration, dietary restrictions and recommended exercise regimes. Again, talk to your family doctor, nurse practitioner or nutritionist about these issues. Just be aware that you do not have to spend a lot of money to be hydrated, refueled and ready for your next workout. See you at the Y and don't forget your water bottle.

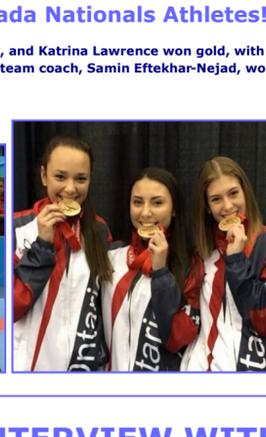
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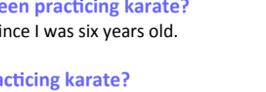
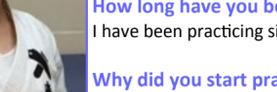
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Congratulations to our Karate Canada Nationals Athletes!

The Kata team of Celine Della-Quericia, Renata Husnudinov, and Katrina Lawrence won gold, with Husnudinov also capturing bronze in kumite. Also our dojo team coach, Samin Eftekhar-Nejad, won silver in kumite.



AN INTERVIEW WITH

Ms. Juri Iwata 4th Dan

By Dom Capilongo



Ms. Juri Iwata had the opportunity to study medicine at the University of Toronto for one month and was encouraged by Kazutaka Otsuka Sensei, 3rd Grandmaster of Wado-Ryu Karate, to practice at the Canadian Wado-Ryu Karate Do Headquarters dojo.

How long have you been practicing karate?

I have been practicing since I was six years old.

Why did you start practicing karate?

My mother likes martial arts and recommended that I start practicing karate. It was lucky for me there was a dojo near my house.

What is your favourite Wado-Ryu kata?

I like Chinto. I practiced it the most. When I won first prize in the Yokohama city competition for the first time I was ten years old. I preformed Chinto and so, I like it very much.

You recently won the Paris All Wado Kata Championship, how was this experience?

It was a nice experience for me, because it was the first time I showed kata in a foreign country. But it was hard for me because I couldn't understand French. I appreciate Kazutaka Otsuka Sensei because he invited me to the competition.

What are your other recent kata competition achievements?

I won 1st Place in 2008, and this was the latest Wado Ryu Championship I took part in. I also won 1st Place in 2003 and 2005. I won 5th Place in the All Japan Athletic Meet in 2013. The All Japan Athletic Meet is very hard to win. I represented Kanto region. I took part in it 3 years in a row. I want to try doing better this year.

How do you prepare your kata for high level competition?

I practice karate every day for 2-3 hours. I often run or train inner muscles. I also imagine my performance when I compete.

What do you keep in mind when you are performing your kata?

I keep in mind kata is a real fight such as attacks or protections. So, I tell myself to concentrate severely.

How do you think practicing karate has helped you in your personal life?

It helps me make stronger the ability of concentration, fortitude, and physical strength. Also, I think competition makes players compassionate by losing or winning.

Has practicing kata helped you understand karate more deeply?

Yes, I think so. The techniques of kata are meaningful.

How do you find time to prepare for competitions and attend medical school?

There is our dojo on the campus of the school of medicine. So, I can practice kata during my rest time and after school. It is very lucky for me. On weekends, I can practice at my dojo near my house. It's not easy to practice karate and study medicine at the same time, but after I study, karate is my good exercise to change moods. Also, after I practice karate hard, studying is a good rest for my body to change moods. I need both of them.

You are one of the Japan Karate Federation's 2020 Olympic Karate ambassadors, why do you think karate should become an Olympic sport?

I think there are merits and demerits when karate is in the Olympics. When players are conscious of competition too much, they might forget traditional techniques. But, once karate is in the Olympics, karate players can have a big motivation to be an Olympic player. Also, because the 2020 Olympics will be held in Tokyo, I think it helps the Japanese Olympics be more unique. I'd like everyone in the world to know what a Japanese martial art is; especially karate.

Why did you come to visit Toronto, Canada?

Dr. Kohei Hashimoto, who graduated from my school Keio University, is working in Thoracic Surgery at the Toronto General Hospital. This is the first reason why I choose Toronto. I met him for the first time after I arrived in Toronto, but he is one of the doctors who I respect the most. In Toronto, there are many famous doctors from around the world. I wanted to see the difference between medicine in Japan and in a foreign country. I heard Toronto is safe and comfortable for students studying abroad, too, so that's why I choose Toronto.

What is your favourite place in Toronto?

I love Toronto so much. There are many places I like, but especially I like the view from The CN tower when it is sunny.

Did you enjoy practicing karate in Canada?

Yes, I really enjoyed it. I appreciated all of your welcome.

What advice do you have for young people practicing karate and also young people competing in kata competitions?

Please enjoy karate competition, karate itself, and friends you can make from karate. Kata is something like an art, so you should practice kata not only basically but also to express being yourself.

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