

## *Power And Speed*

Every human being has the potential for tremendous speed and power. However, the civilized world we live in can make us rather lazy; it can stiffen our bodies and freeze our minds, so we don't realize the potential we have.

Karate does not attempt to build power and speed, but tries to find the potential you already possess by relaxing your body and freeing your mind. You can find yourself through training in karate.

Power is necessary to excel in Karate but it must be combined with the single most important element which is speed. Speed occurs from the momentum generated by the movements of various parts of the body. Power is the tensing of certain muscle groups and kime at the end of the technique. Power alone without speed is only partly effective. Basic Karate fundamentals (kihon) must first be learned slowly and correctly, then repetition of fast techniques must be practiced.

Power will follow after fast techniques are developed. The slow movements involved when lifting or pushing heavy weights is not as effective as the power developed by speed punching drills. To increase power in your kime punch, the correct muscles must be tensed as quickly and strongly as possible a split second before the end of the punch. This "force kime" depends greatly upon the speed with which the techniques are executed; to increase the speed of your punch, rotate your hips quickly and retract the opposite arm. This will develop the "snapping technique" which is so important for fast combinations in tournament kumite. The muscles must also relax as quickly as possible after each technique. Then, after much practice, the developed muscles will tense and relax faster, enabling faster movements which in turn result in greater power.

Speed is an important element in the application of power but speed and power cannot achieve its greatest effect without good control or accuracy. A rule of thumb to remember is that if you double the power, you double the impact, but if you double the speed, you quadruple the impact. Converting energy utilization from speed to power is accomplished by forcefully and rapidly tensing the entire body just as contact is made and by continuing to exert a powerful muscular effort for the split second after contact is made with the target. Too often, one "lets up" upon contact or just before it is made.

Concentration, repetition, and an understanding of the dynamics of body movements through practice will help you in your Karate-Do training. To shorten reaction time, it is necessary to practice responding to sudden unrehearsed attacks as in jiyu kumite.

*"Karate is like boiling water.  
If you do not heat it constantly, it will cool."*

*-Gichin Funakoshi*