

Working Hard in Class

When first beginning karate classes, you will need to concentrate carefully on the proper execution of each stance, kick and strike. Emphasis is on consciously putting the parts of the body in the proper positions through every element of each technique and on leaning to breathe and relax while doing so. Once the body has been trained in the mechanics of the stances, kicks and strikes less conscious effort is required to do each technique. We still work on developing good technique but don't need to think as hard about putting all the elements together. More energy can then be put into combining techniques and working more dynamically through the entire class.

From beginner through advanced levels of karate we are constantly reminded to breathe and relax. This relaxation is not a total lack of muscle tension and certainly is not a lack of attention to focus, but is a balance of tension and relaxation so that our muscles are tense only when they need to be, for maximally efficient performance. Each student is expected to pay attention and to put forth the energy to properly do the exercise in class. There is a difference between working hard enough to benefit from the class and straining so hard you injure yourself. It may take some experience to find the line between working hard and straining, but if you concentrate on what you are doing and breathe and relax at the same time, you will be following the right guidelines.

Karate is a physical and dynamic activity. It is therefore imperative that the students execute the movements with speed and power, but stiff under control. The only way to learn to move quickly and powerfully is to practice. Karate is also a precision activity. A front kick is different from a round-house kick, which is different from a side kick. It is important to pay attention to which technique is being practiced and to practice it properly. Each student at Casa de Karate is expected to put forth enough effort to practice each technique with precision, speed and power.