

## Martial Arts- Karate Essay by Tom Mutton

Martial arts are extensive systems of practices and traditions of combat. They all have similar objectives: to physically defeat and defend yourself against others opposing a physical threat. Martial arts are considered as both an art and a science. Many of these arts are also practiced competitively, most commonly as combat sports for both young and highly trained Martial Artists. The earliest evidence of martial arts training in specific martial arts traditions is seen from drawings done in the late 1st millennium BC in both Asia and Europe. In Europe, the earliest sources of martial arts traditions are sports such as Boxing, Wrestling and were represented in the Ancient Olympic Games. The Romans even produced arena's in which Gladiators fought in combat as public entertainment.

The mid to late 19th century marked the beginning of the history of martial arts as modern sports developed out of earlier traditional fighting styles and techniques. In Europe, this concerned the developments of boxing and fencing as sports and in Japan, the same period marked the formation of the modern forms of judo, jujitsu, karate, and kendo and others. Western interest in Asian martial arts arises towards the end of the 19th century, due to the increase in trade between the United States with China and Japan. Very few Westerners actually practiced the arts, and simply considered it to be mere performance and entertainment. As Western influence grew in Asia a greater number of military personnel worked in China, Japan, and South Korea during World War II and the Korean War and were shown and learned local fighting styles. Jujutsu, judo and karate first became popular among the main forms of martial arts from the 1950s-60s.

Testing or evaluation is important to martial artists of many disciplines who wish to determine their progression or own level of skill in specific styles and techniques. Students within individual martial art systems often undergo testing and grading by their own teacher in order to advance to a higher level of recognized achievement, such as a different belt colour or title. The type of testing used varies from system to system but may include forms or sparring, kata and/or combination of techniques. Various forms and sparring are commonly used in martial art tournaments and competitions. Rules for sparring vary between art and organization but can generally be divided into light-contact, medium-contact, and full-contact fighting, reflecting the amount of force that should be used on an opponent.

Training in martial arts has many benefits to the trainee, physically, mentally and spiritually. Through practice in the martial arts a person's physical fitness may be boosted (strength, stamina, flexibility, movement coordination, etc.,) as the whole

body is exercised and the entire muscular system is used and worked to its limits. Not only does martial art training contribute to physical fitness, it also has benefits for mental health, improving your, self-control, emotional and spiritual well-being. Many organisations practice martial arts for this reason alone.

Martial art since the 1970s has become a significant industry. Hundreds of millions of people worldwide practice some form of martial art. Japanese's ministries of foreign affairs even claim there are around 50 million karate practitioners worldwide.

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