

Building Explosive Karate Athletes

Sample Workouts for Karate
Strength, Speed & Conditioning



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<https://CSPKarate.Coach>



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For more information on training for speed, strength, power, and conditioning for Karate athletes, please contact:

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Important Attributes That Karate Athletes Must Measure, Track & Train

Karate athletes – particularly at the Elite level – must be able to demonstrate several athletic traits and abilities in order to compete at their best and win against the best in the world. These athletic traits and abilities include:

- **Explosive Power for forward movement** – The athlete must be able to generate explosive power to rapidly accelerate towards their opponent.
- **Change of Direction for Forward, Lateral, and Backwards movement** – The athlete must be capable of dynamic change of direction allowing them to efficiently accelerate, decelerate, change directions and re-accelerate in the new direction. They must be able to apply this speed while moving forwards, backwards, and to the sides.
- **Endurance** – The athlete must be able to sustain exertions at maximum effort - and be able to repeatedly do so throughout the course of each bout and for multiple bouts as they move deeper into the competition chart or pool play. Karate athletes do not require long, steady pace endurance, so training modalities such as long, steady runs are not the most helpful approach for building the ability to sustain the efforts encountered in Karate competition. Instead, sprints with varied durations and recovery periods are a closer replication of the conditions Karate athletes encounter in competition.
- **Recovery** – The athlete must be able to rapidly and efficiently recover between each exertion (combination or exchange) as well as between each bout and after each day of training and competition.
- **Rotational Power** – The athlete must be able to generate and apply significant rotational power to achieve strong, fast, properly-executed punches and kicks.
- **Pushing Power** – Like rotational power, the athlete must be able to generate and apply significant pushing power to perform strong, fast, properly-executed punches and strikes.
- **Mobility/Movement Patterns** – The athlete must be able to demonstrate sufficient mobility and coordination to move into athletic positions and movements. This is vital not only to technical execution but also to facilitate their athletic training.



Safety Considerations

Before starting any new exercise or training program, you should be examined by your physician. This is especially important if you have any known heart or blood pressure concerns, any metabolic disorders, or have not previously participated in an active lifestyle.

The advice and training guides presented in this document are not intended to be medical guidance or as a substitute for medical counsel. Not all exercises or training approaches are appropriate for all people.

Start at an easy level and then work up to more challenging progressions as you develop your control, technique, conditioning and experience with training.

Strength and Speed Training Overview

This guide contains examples of effective strength and speed workouts for Karate athletes. These are provided as an example, not a prescription. Since some athletes may not have experience with strength training, those athletes would be better off with regressed modifications of the exercises listed but hopefully this resource can provide a template and springboard for training ideas that are relevant to your performance on the tatami. Of course, the best program for you will be developed in coordination with an experienced, qualified Sports Performance coach.



Example Strength Workouts

Below you will find 3 distinct strength training day examples for you to work with. The first day focuses primarily on Lower Body and Core. The second day focuses primarily on Upper Body. And the third day is a Full Body workout.

Each day is structured into 3 Supersets which each consist of 2 exercises. When following the workout, you should perform one set of the first exercise in the Superset, then proceed to the second exercise in the Superset. Continue alternating between those two exercises until you've performed 3 sets of each of them. Then move on to the next Superset.

If an exercise is performed one side at a time, perform the prescribed number of repetitions on each side. In these example workouts, some of the selected exercises and rep ranges are intended to develop strength, others speed, and other power.

Day 1: Lower Body & Core

Superset A	
A1: Max Effort Broad Jump	3x5
<i>Lower Resistance, High Speeds</i>	
A2: Band Pallof Press	3x5
<i>High-Resistance, Low-Velocity</i>	
Superset B	
B1: KB Front Rack Lateral Lunge	3x5
<i>High-Resistance, Low-Velocity</i>	
B2: Starfish Crunches	3x5
<i>High-Resistance, Low-Velocity</i>	
Superset C	
C1: Rear Foot Elevated Split Squat	3x5
<i>High-Resistance, Low-Velocity</i>	
C2: Sled Push	3x15yd
<i>Moderate Resistance, Moderate Speed</i>	



Day 2: Upper Body Emphasis

Superset A	
A1: Dumbbell Bench Press	3x8 <i>Moderate Resistance, Moderate Speed</i>
A2: Triceps Cable Pushdown	3x8 <i>High-Resistance, Low-Velocity</i>
Superset B	
B1: Single Arm Band Row w/ Exit	3x5 <i>Lower Resistance, High Speeds</i>
B2: Dumbbell Biceps Curl	3x8 <i>High-Resistance, Low-Velocity</i>
Superset C	
C1: Medicine Ball Chest Pass	3x8 <i>Lower Resistance, High Speeds</i>
C2: Band Resisted Inverted Row	3x5 <i>Moderate Resistance, Moderate Speed</i>

Day 3: Full Body

Superset A	
A1: Skater Jumps	3x5 <i>Lower Resistance, High Speeds</i>
A2: Slow Motion Lateral Bear Crawl	3x10 <i>Low-Velocity</i>
Superset B	
B1: Walking Lunges	3x8 <i>Moderate Resistance, Moderate Speed</i>
B2: Single Arm Band Row	3x8 <i>Lower Resistance, High Speeds</i>
Superset C	
C1: Band Resisted Push-Ups	3x8 <i>High-Resistance, Low-Velocity</i>
C2: Medicine Ball Chest Pass	3x8 <i>Lower Resistance, High Speeds</i>



Example Speed & Conditioning Workouts

Speed and Conditioning training can range from emphasizing short burst acceleration to longer bouts of high intensity effort (such as 200m sprints). Below are a few examples of speed training sessions:

Session 1: Quick Burst Speed & Acceleration

This workout consists of short (~10m) sprints, focusing on explosive acceleration. Think about driving back against the ground for every step through the finish line. Make sure you are not "reaching" your foot out in front of you, drive back hard!

For each of the starting positions listed, perform 2-3 starts with each foot in front. You'll perform 2-3 starts with Left in front and 2-3 starts with Right in front for each position:

Athletic (normal) Stance

Neutral (off the line) Stance

Busy Feet (fast feet at the start line then exploding into a sprint)

Fighting Stance (static – no movement)

Fighting Stance w/Movement

Session 2: Repeated Speed with Limited Recovery

2 sets of five 100m sprints with 1 minute active recovery (jog back to the start) between sprints. 5 minute rest between the first and second set .

In this workout you'll sprint 100m, then take 1 minute to jog back. Repeat for 5 sprints. Then take a 5 minute break before performing another set of 5 sprints.

On each sprint, focus on driving force back against the ground at the start to accelerate explosively. Especially your first 10 steps, focus on pushing back against the ground. As you get up to top speed, try to maintain that top speed all the way through the finish line. Do NOT "reach" for the finish line. Just maintain your speed and sprint through the line.



Session 3: Extended Effort with Moderate Recovery

Sprint 100m, 4 minutes recovery
Sprint 150m, 4 minutes recovery
Sprint 200m, 4 minutes recovery
Sprint 150m, 4 minutes recovery
Sprint 100m

These sprints, with varying durations, begin to tax your speed endurance by requiring maximum exertion for an extended period. By maintaining a consistent recovery time between sprints, athletes can gain an indication of their ability to recover between bouts of high exertion.

Session 4: Conditioning with Descending Recovery

1. Sprint 200m, 2 minutes recovery
2. Sprint 200m, 1 minute 45 seconds recovery
3. Sprint 200m, 1 minute 30 seconds recovery
4. Sprint 200m, 1 minute 15 seconds recovery
5. Sprint 200m, 1 minute recovery
6. Sprint 200m, 45 seconds recovery
7. Sprint 200m, 30 seconds recovery

This is a very challenging session and should only be used when a sufficient foundation of strength, speed, and stamina is in place. These sprints require maximum exertion for an extended period. By manipulating recovery time between sprints, athletes are required to focus on intentional recovery (big breaths) while preparing themselves for the next sprint. The athlete should aim to have as little degradation of their sprint times throughout the workout as possible.

As an alternative for earlier in the training process, this same structure can be used with a sprint distance of 100m.



About Coach Chris Stratis

Coach Chris Stratis is the founder of Champion Sports Performance, where he works with athletes of all ages to help them become stronger, faster, and more athletic. Coach Stratis has a proven track record of helping Karate athletes reach their potential and improve their performance in the sport they love.

With over 25 years of coaching experience, Coach Stratis is highly respected and sought after by coaches and athletes from around the state, across the country, and around the world. Over that time he has continued to expand his own education and growth as a coach while helping athletes to develop the speed, strength, and athleticism to perform at their best while competing at the highest levels.



Has helped develop athletes from across the country who have made the Junior and Senior National Teams and earned podium finishes at Youth Leagues, Pan American Championships, Series A, Premier League, World Championships and Pan American Games.

Coach Stratis is USA Karate's Head Coach for Sports Performance. As the sole Sports Performance coach for Olympians Tom Scott and Brian Iir, he became the only Sports Performance coach in the USA to ever coach Olympic Karate Kumite athletes through the qualification process and competition in the Olympic Games. His work with them as an expert Sports Performance Coach has been featured in Mens Health as well as ABC and NBC News coverage.

He is a five-time USA Karate National Champion, seven-time member of the USA National Karate Team, and Pan American Championships Gold and Silver medalist. In 2015 he was inducted into the United States Karate Federation Hall of Fame for his accomplishments as a Karate athlete during the 1990s. He was also an accomplished sprinter as a High School and Collegiate Track & Field athlete (60m, 100m, 200m, 400m, Long Jump) in addition to competing in soccer and wrestling at the high school level, earning the title of County Champion as a first-year wrestler.

Coach Chris is a Certified Speed & Agility Coach (CSAC) and Certified Sports Nutrition Coach (CSNC) through the National Sports Performance Association (NSPA). He also holds Youth Fitness Specialist (YFS1) and Athletic Assessment Specialist (YAAS) certifications through the International Youth Conditioning Association (IYCA). Coach Chris is certified through the Positive Coaching Alliance and the SafeSport program, as well as the Coach Accelerator Program with the United States Olympic Committee. He holds a B.S. in Information & Decision Systems and Master of Business Administration, both from Carnegie Mellon University.