

AASU Karate  
Q and A

**Can I train with the club if I have no experience in karate?**

Yes, beginners are welcome. A senior belt will be assigned to help you or we will do techniques simple enough for you to follow along as we practice. We do expect you to come consistently and take your training seriously.

**What can I wear to training?**

You may wear loose fitting clothes such as sweat pants and a T-shirt. If you wish to be a club member, you should purchase a white top, white belt, black bottom and the Shotokan tiger deluxe patch (black/gold) and the shotokan tiger/moon patch. This should cost you around \$50 total. Some popular sites are [www.karatedepot.com](http://www.karatedepot.com), [www.karatesupply.com](http://www.karatesupply.com) and [www.centurymartialarts.com](http://www.centurymartialarts.com).

**Am I too old to train?**

Never, many shotokan practitioners have continued to train well into their 80's and beyond.

**I am a female and I notice that most of the students are male, is shotokan helpful to women?**

Size does matter in combat, however most of the techniques are effective for women, sometimes with slight modification. If you ever have to defend yourself, statistics overwhelmingly indicate that your attacker will be male, it is therefore an advantage to be able to test your techniques on the various males in class.

**How is Shotokan different from Tae-kwondo?**

Shotokan places more emphasis on using the hands in combat, most leg techniques are low and mid section. Techniques are mostly linear and expected with both feet firmly on the ground. There are a few jumping techniques but to a much less extent than in Tae-kwondo. Shotokan has a strong Japanese/Okinawan influence while Tae-kwon-do is associated with the Korean culture.

**Do we get to grapple and do chokes on the ground as in MMA?**

We will look at a few ground situations, however Shotokan emphasizes stand up defense for combat. There are numerous strikes, neck cranks, joint locks, throws and other lethal techniques you may use at close range to prevent a ground fight. These locks can be modified for ground use and we will practice some of these situations. Short and long range techniques will be practiced.

**How often and when do we spar?**

We will spar at least once a week when you have demonstrated that you have the mental and physical control necessary to maintain a safe, injury free environment and that you have respect for your fellow karatekas skill level. This may take anywhere from 2 weeks to 6 months. We will do two types of sparring, *combat* and *sport*. We typically spar 2-3 rounds of 2 minutes, however you should be prepared physically and mentally to spar 5-6 rounds. Leading up to a tournament, we may emphasize sport sparring and increase the duration and frequency.

**Do we spar full contact?**

NO. Sparring will be light contact most times. Upper belts may go medium contact with permission of the instructor.

**What sparring equipment do I need?**

Often, we will spar (lightly) without pads, so you do not need to purchase equipment immediately. You will need forearm and shin pads, karate boots, karate gloves, mouthpiece, cup, headgear (green belts and up), bra cup (ladies). These can be purchased at the websites previously listed for about \$100 total.

**Is there a fee?**

No. But if you wish to be an official club member and test for a new rank in Shotokan you are asked to pay club dues. The club dues are \$30 per semester. The dues will help cover club activities (tournaments, seminars) and the testing costs. If you are not a member you will have to pay more when participating in club activities.

**Will we practice any other styles?**

At times, we will practice elements from other styles (tae-kwondo, Shuai jiao, jujitsu) in order to appreciate different perspectives and become well rounded martial artists.

**Will we do weapons?**

Shotokan is a weaponless art, however its Okinawan roots indicate that the original practioners may have also practiced weapons. There is no current expertise to teach weapons however if we have enough people (brown belts and above) willing to learn, we may incorporate some practical weapons in the near future by getting outside instruction.

**Where can I find more information about Shotokan?**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shotokan>

<http://www.shotokan-arts.com/katavid.htm>

<http://www.i-clps.com/karate/kata.html>