

Online Karate Training: Safe Practice

Referencer for Club Instructors

During the current period of national crisis the ability to continue or even begin karate training using modern technology from the home is tremendous. Keeping connected, active and engaged through the practice of karate brings many positive physical and psychological benefits. If you are delivering online classes, or are considering doing so, these guidelines should be carefully followed.

You owe a duty of care to those you teach whether online or in a physical dojo. If you fall below a reasonable standard in this regard and a student is injured because of it, you will be held personally responsible if a claim is made against you. You should be mindful that the physical safety and well-being of all those you teach is paramount.

There are many safety considerations that you will be familiar with and will practice routinely in any event. Some of these will simply require particular emphasis in the current circumstances whilst others are perhaps unique to the process of online teaching and learning.

Insurance

- As a current licenced member of the KUGB your public liability insurance only covers you to teach current KUGB licence holders online when doing so in a safe and appropriate manner.
- You are therefore **NOT** insured to teach anyone without a current KUGB licence. This includes:
 - i. unlicensed beginners beyond the third session;
 - ii. members of other karate organisations;
 - iii. anyone whose KUGB licence has expired.
- Enhanced public liability insurance cover is available and you should consider purchasing it if you are at risk of teaching anyone not holding a current KUGB licence.
- Current KUGB licence holders training in your online class do **NOT** have personal accident cover.

Safe Training Space

- Training in the home or garden presents risks of injury due to hazards you may not even be able to see but nonetheless you should assume to be present. Accordingly, you should take reasonable steps to assess the risks by actively encouraging your students to inspect the space they are using.
- You should bring to the attention of your students full and complete safe practice guidance before they train in the first class with you (this could be emailed to them or posted on your website or Facebook page. A safe practice referencer for club members is also available on the KUGB's website) and you should reinforce its importance by reminding them of the key messages at the start of each class.
- The following are all obvious issues for you and your students to consider but the list should not be considered exhaustive:
 - i. footwear or lack of it should be appropriate according to the circumstances;
 - ii. clothing worn should be suitable and ideally a gi;
 - iii. the area should be checked for slip hazards and any other potential dangers;

- iv. assume the surface not to be ideal;
- v. the size of the area being used may compromise safety (as a guide an area at least 2m x 2m is required);
- vi. a safe margin of error should surround the training space to ensure that there are no hard objects or other hazards which could be collided with (corners of tables, chairs, furniture, windows, doors etc);
- vii. glass objects (eg drinking glasses), sharp or pointed objects, or similar items should not be within the training space or in close proximity to it;
- viii. headroom must be sufficient to train safely (low ceilings, beams and light fittings are all potential risks);
- ix. adequate lighting, heating and ventilation are all necessary;
- x. other householders (and pets) could pose risks of collision injury or be at risk of injury themselves.

Use of Your Technical Equipment

- Be sufficiently competent with the technology to be able to use it in a safe manner. For example it may be necessary to quickly unmute a student's audio connection because you have concerns about their safety or well-being. This requires some practise in advance of your first online class.
- Make sure that you can see all of your students clearly on your device throughout the class. This may require you to regularly move between screens on your device if you are unable to see all your students on one screen.
- The number of students in your online class should be reasonably manageable allowing you to monitor the safety of all your students on your screens. The ability to do this must not be compromised by having too many students in your class.
- Make sure that all your students can hear your commands clearly at all times throughout the class. If their audio is muted ask your students to indicate physically that they can hear and have understood your instruction.
- Position your camera so that your students can see you clearly at all times throughout the session.

Teach Sensibly

- Plan your classes in light of the fact that you are supervising remotely and could not come to the aid of a student if they became unwell or injured themselves.
- Think carefully about the content of your class. Techniques that are reasonably safe in a physical dojo may not be safe to practise at all in an online class or they may need considerable modification.
- You may determine that the risk of injury in the circumstances outweighs the benefit of including a particular technique, exercise or drill in your class.
- Don't encourage students to train to exhaustion. Pitch the intensity of the class such that it is well within their capabilities. Err on the side of caution because little immediate feedback is available to you to assess how hard students are working.
- Ensure that all students have warmed up adequately even late arrivals.
- Emphasise technical detail, reasonable physical challenge and mental stimulation.
- Remind students that if they feel light headed or dizzy they should stop.
- Make sure that students are hydrated at the start of the session and encourage them to maintain good hydration throughout.

- Students may be training alone so in the event they need assistance you should be in a position to take action. This means that you should have their names, addresses and telephone numbers so that help could be summoned for them if they needed it. Accordingly you should also have ready access to a mobile phone. You should also have important numbers to hand including the emergency number 999.
- Do not attempt to teach any technique, exercise or drill which is beyond the current skill level, range of movement or ability of those in attendance.
- Place emphasis on the clarity of your instruction in terms of volume, pace and repetition.
- Continually monitor the safety of your students reminding them generally to take care highlighting any specific issues to be aware of.

Children and Young People

- Children or young people under 18 years of age should not participate in your online classes without the express written consent of a parent or guardian.
- The parent or guardian must undertake to ensure a safe environment and an appropriate level of supervision commensurate with the child or young person's age whenever they participate in your online class.
- A parent, guardian or other responsible adult must be present in or near the training space whenever a child or young person under 18 years of age participates in your online class.
- The parent, guardian or responsible adult should follow full and complete safe practice guidelines on behalf of the child or young person in their care.