

## 3 Simple Exercises Guaranteed to Improve Your Karate

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Ever heard this old Chinese proverb?

*Tell me – I forget.*

*Show me – I remember.*

*Involve me – I understand.*

**The wisdom of it can be applied to anything in life.**

*Like Karate.*

Because, although you can certainly understand a lot by *watching* and *listening* to your sensei, the oomph of being *actively involved* (rather than being a passive observer) in the process of learning stuff is unequalled when it comes to improving.

And that's what we want, isn't it?

**Improving.**

*Steadily.*

So...

Allow me help you with that.

**Today I'll show you three simple yet effective exercises that are perfect for learning some important principles in Karate.**

*Principles that could take forever to understand by merely watching or hearing about them!*

Needless to say, this is my personal favorite way of teaching – by showing a quick and practical exercise, and then having everyone try it out in pairs. The important part is to remind everyone to use both their analytical part of the brain as well as their senses and feelings to *really* understand the core message of the lesson in a 360 degree fashion.

But enough chit-chat.

*On with the frickin' knowledge.*

**Here are three simple exercises guaranteed to improve your Karate – today!**



One of the greatest honors in Karate is to be the "uke", or receiver, of your sensei's techniques (also known as "human punching bag"). It's a unique learning opportunity that should never be passed up.

## #1: The Egyptian Mummy Zombie

The first exercise I call 'The Egyptian Mummy Zombie'.

*Why?*

Because you kinda look like one of those ancient pyramid wall painting mummy hieroglyph-type dudes when you perform it. And to make it even cooler, you're a zombie version. Obviously.



Thanks to my loyal slave... uhm... *black belts* Stephen and Sebastian for demonstrating.

(Or, here's another explanation: I just have weird imagination.)

### **What you do:**

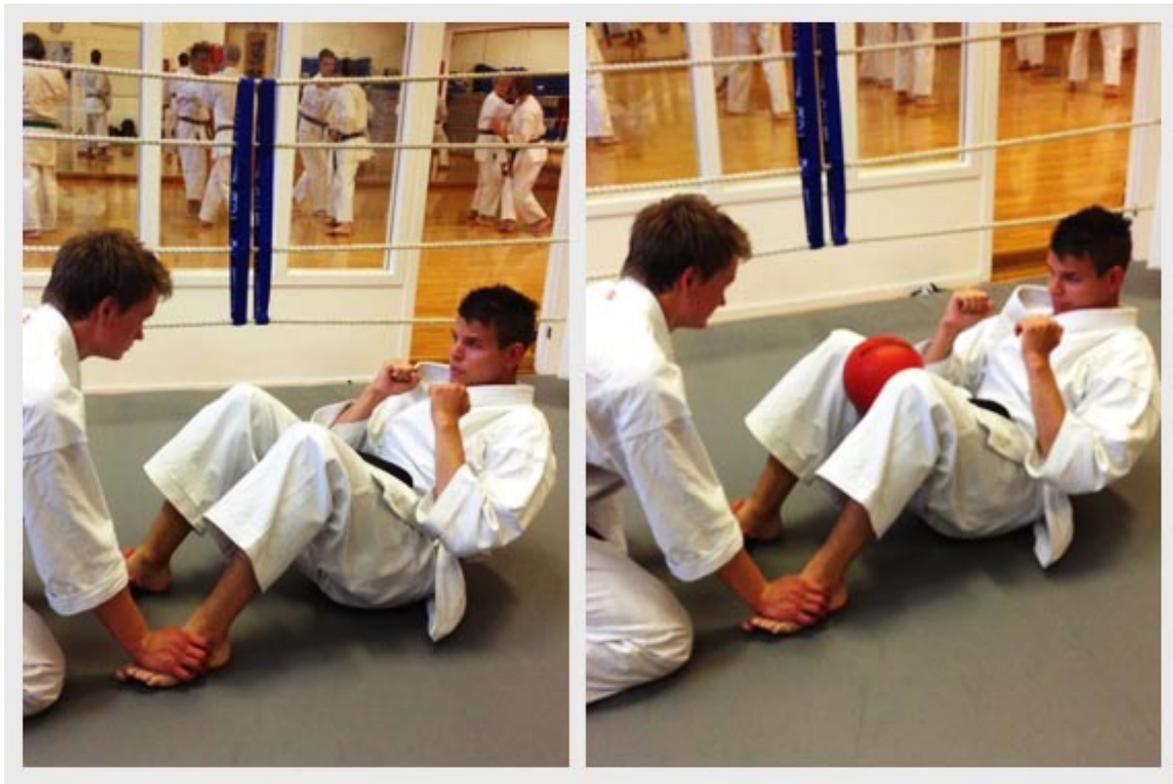
1. Stand with legs shoulder-width apart, arms out straight to the sides.
2. Have a partner push one of your arms down.
3. Resist the push. Notice the feeling.
4. Now, put one of your feet on an object.
5. Have your partner push your arm down again, notice the bizarre difference.

### **What you learn:**

The importance of structural alignment and correct spinal posture for maintaining optimum functionality in your muscles – which, of course, applies not only to standing still, but in all movements and techniques that you perform in Karate.

(Read more: [The Karate 4-Point Principle](#)).

## #2: The Pregnant Panda



On to the next one.

In this exercise we will be lying down. But don't be fooled – this lesson should be applied to all movements in Karate, not just groundwork.

*(Want me to explain the name? Trust me. You'll get it.)*

### **What you do:**

1. Lie on your back, legs bent, knees apart.
2. Do a situp.
3. Notice the lack of ease, most likely caused by too many hours in front of the TV with a bucket of deep-fried chicken and 6-pack of beer.
4. *(What, that's just me?)*
5. Squeeze a sturdy object, like a medicine ball, intensely between your knees.
6. Do another situp, and pay attention to the ridiculous difference.
7. Crack open another beer.

### **What you learn:**

The value of proper Karate stances – through experiencing the importance of active tension in your lower body for enhancing the functionality of your core muscles (through a phenomenon known as *irradiation*), which directly affects your power output in upper body techniques.

Also, I don't really drink beer.

*(Pro tip: Try this exercise standing up, when you've mastered the lying version.)*

## **#3: Fist of Awesomeness**



Lastly, we have the 'Fist of Awesomeness'.

*The name is pretty self-explanatory.*

But don't be fooled: This exercise is not about your fist. It's about your whole body.

### **What you do:**

1. Stand in a front stance (zenkutsu-dachi) and do a punch (tsuki).
2. Have your partner standing in front of you, gently applying pressure on your fist towards you.
3. Resist the pressure, and try to keep your posture intact.
4. Notice what body part/joint fails first.

### **What you learn:**

The importance of correctly aligning your joints in unison behind your technique's line of power, and what muscles to relax/tense in the process – along with the discovery of your weakest structural link(s).

(Note: Can be performed with *any* technique (block, punch, kick, strike etc.) in *any* stance (neko ashi-dachi, kokutsu-dachi, sanchin-dachi etc.) as long as your partner understands the right force vector when applying pressure.)

### **And that's it.**

Three super quick exercises that are *guaranteed* to give you more "bang for the buck" than merely *watching* or *hearing* your sensei speak about the important lessons that these exercises are designed to impart.

Now...

### **Whaddya say?**

*Ready to try them out for yourself?*

At the end of the day, if you are *anything* like me, you can hear



or watch some important detail explained over and over by your sensei (sometimes for years!) before it finally clicks.

That sucks.

*Let's save some time.*

**Get involved in the process and take charge of your own learning.**

It's all about discovering *principles*.

Once those universal principles are fully understood and embraced, you'll open up new doors for even more awesome Karate knowledge.

**And that's when you'll understand what the old Chinese knew all along.**

*Tell me – I forget.*

*Show me – I remember.*

*Involve me – I understand.*



**PS.** *Congrats to Danny Le Rose from Switzerland, who won last week's [GSP book contest](#). Send me your address dude! Thanks to everyone who participated – you made my week!*

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