

My Karate Journey, Part 28 -- My Continued Battle for

Relevance!

Remember the words to Dusty Springfield's oldie 'Wishin' and hopin'? It goes, "Wishin' and hopin' and thinkin' and prayin'." These words give you hope that something good MAY happen, but YOU have to be the catalyst for this change! YOU must put in the time and effort to ensure that this change WILL happen!

I have long considered myself a realist. "Accept what you cannot change, and make the best of the situation!" So, you will VERY rarely find me wishing, or hoping, or praying, or dreaming ... or even holding my breath with fingers crossed, to guarantee my presence in the dojo!!

BEFORE my commitment to the Senpais was made, I made a promise to MYSELF a few years ago. Knowing I wanted to continue teaching and training for as long as possible, I promised myself to exercise and work on strengthening my legs on the days we did NOT train. In my younger days, karate was MORE than enough exercise for me. IT WAS PERFECT!!! I actually NEEDED the off days to rest and recuperate.

When COVID hit and our Zoom classes began, I was more convinced than ever that I was NOT getting the intense workouts necessary for me to maintain my current teaching and performing abilities. I devised an exercise routine for myself that targeted stretching and balance, leg and core strengthening, and some resistance training to fill the gaps I felt existed in our workouts. My schedule now includes teaching and training on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and exercising and leg work on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I have been diligently sticking to this schedule since starting almost three years ago — unless some unexpected event gets in the way!

Many people start an exercise program that may be too optimistic for their ability or drive. They start with the ferocity of a tiger. However, within a month or two, they find that the tiger has suddenly morphed into a pussy cat! They realize that the routine was too difficult to maintain, or too

boring. Too many home exercise gyms or machines start off in the middle of the living room, get pushed into the corner, and eventually end up in a back room for storage. Sound familiar?

When I designed MY exercise routine, I was mindful of the many pitfalls that came with it. So I made it VERY doable! Although challenging, it was NOT overwhelming, and the weights that I use are light. My exercise routine is in three parts, with a short break between each part. First, I do stretching, leg-work, and neck and shoulders with light weights. Secondly, I do leg flexibility, core, and upper body resistance with weights. Thirdly, I lift weights for shoulders and biceps. Here is what my routine looks like:

- Part 1: Step-ups (with high knee) — 10 left and right leg
 - Arm circles (10 each) — back, front, and side
 - Step-ups (set 2)
 - Body Twists (10 sets) — left and right
 - Step-ups (set 3)
 - Legs apart/lean forward (legs straight); stretch backward (legs bent)/hold for
 - 30 seconds (5 sets)
 - Leg lunges (10 sets) — left and right
 - Side bends (10 sets) — left and right
 - Leg lunges (set 2)
 - Push-ups (20)
 - Leg lunges (set 3)
- Part 2: On your back (3 full sets)
 - Knee to chest (hold for 10 seconds)— left, both, and right
 - Core (knee/upper body up) — hold for 12 sec (5 reps)
 - Bench press (15 reps)
- Part 3: Shoulder shrug with weight (set of 5)
 - Dumbbell curls (13 each)
 - Complete 3 full sets

We had a Senpai meeting yesterday after training to discuss next year's calendar of events. It was great to hear the words "picnic," "party," "beach training," and "camp" again, words that we haven't spoken for almost three years! I see HSK picking up speed in 2023, with much promise and many more opportunities for the Senpais and members to gather socially and for FUN — as we did pre-COVID!!

Thus far, I have been doing well, still excited and eager to teach and train. Next year will be truly SPECIAL for HSK! January marks my 75th birthday, AND June brings with it HSK's 40th anniversary!!! WOW!! What a ride it has been, and I am NOT ready to get off this roller coaster yet!!

My battle to remain relevant in my role as Sensei continues, and I happily and willingly accept the challenge to keep myself and my Ohana healthy and fit!!!

2023 —HERE WE COME!!!
