

## Warming up

**By Dr Jean-Maurice HUARD (3rd Dan)  
President of the non-profit association  
ASBL Wado-Ryu Kamigaito Belgium VZW**

In all Karate clubs a visitor is always amazed at the duration of the warm-up. Very often the Karate class begins with a solid gymnastics that fills him with admiration: it is very complete, consistent; it gives muscle, flexibility, good physical condition, it makes all the joints work; and it often hurts, which flatters the old masochistic Jansenist who sleeps in our Western consciences.

There's a lot to oppose in this way of doing things. Warming up is an alert for the whole body; it also aims to reduce the risk of an accident and to prepare for a particular exercise.

Therefore, the following ideas can be put forward:

(1) The warm-up should not be too long. This is not very justifiable, in clubs where affiliates pay a hefty fee, that half of the training takes place in exercises that can be learned or performed at home.

Except for the particular purpose, it is not normal either that the karatekas are exhausted at the end of the warm-up: the goal is to prepare them for Karate, not to bring them there in a state of almost total exhaustion

The specific karate exercises are well enough to do so. The only occasion when the warm-up seems to me to last longer than usual is the birth period of a group of karatekas or any period when practitioners need to get seriously back on the train (after the holidays or any period of prolonged inactivity).

(2) The warm-up should be oriented: three organs or groups of organs must be prepared for stress: the heart, lungs and musculoskeletal system, i.e. bones, muscles and joints. Heart and lungs are prepared for stress by small repetitive exercises performed at a slow pace and then faster and faster like running, jumping, rope jumping but also Keri's or Kihon slow etc.... Joints and muscles: the only quality needed at the beginning of a workout is flexibility; it alone prevents muscle tearing, slamming, elongation, tendon rupture, sprains, etc. After the global warm-up exercises (race, jumps, etc.) it is necessary to work all the joints (arms, legs, neck and backbone and lumbar) throughout their path, and stretch all muscle groups without violence and even without insistence

(3) If you want to lengthen the warm-up, you will be able to add coordination exercises. Coordination is the quality that allows us to do an action with precision thanks to the perfect collaboration of several muscles (think for example, the difficulty we have in passing an electrified ring over a twisted rod also electrified without ringing the bell: it's a coordination problem).

One last word: this terminology "warming up, training, returning to calm" is that of the sport; it is the one we use for want of better, although, as Master KAMIGAITO says, Karate has nothing to do with sport.

In my opinion the warm-up as it is presented here is not strictly necessary; we might as well do without general exercises and start immediately with the Kihon but in a very flexible, loose, relaxed, slow, with higher positions and very soft shots to move insensitively to a more consistent and harder Kihon as soon as one feels better warmed up.

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**(Jean-Maurice Huard is now 5th Dan)**

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