

Free-fighting Rules

Welcome to Seichou Karate® training, which includes the practice of free-fighting (jiyu kumite).

Free-fighting is the supervised practice of unarmed, unscripted combat among students that includes (1) Stand-up Fighting (tachi-waza), (2) Throwing (nage-waza), (3) Falling and Rolling (ukemi) and (4) Ground Fighting (ne-waza).

In Stand-up Fighting, students punch, kick and strike, and are punched, kicked, and struck. In Throwing, students throw, trip or sweep, and are thrown, tripped and swept to the mat. In Falling and Rolling students fall to the mat. Throws and sweeps are executed with the arms, back, shoulders, hips and legs. In Ground Fighting, students grasp and lock each other's head and limbs.

The purpose of Free-fighting is to help students actualize the techniques that they learn in the abstract in our martial arts training. Free-fighting enhances self-confidence but is not a "sport." It is a give-and-take exercise that requires the full attention of both participants. When free-fighting, all of our students must adhere to the following guidelines.

1. During free-fighting sessions students will often wear Seichou Karate®-approved headgear, mouthpieces, padded foot and hand gear, and groin cups (for males). Chest protectors are recommended for girls and for women. Students will sometimes engage in Free-fighting without protective equipment in order to experience fighting without such equipment.
2. Students will only engage in free-fighting under the supervision of the instructor.
3. Students will begin free-fighting only when told to do so by the instructor.
4. Students will cease free-fighting immediately when told to do so by the instructor.
5. The following techniques are absolutely prohibited:
 - a. striking the face or head area of another student with the hands
 - b. striking the groin area of another student
 - c. striking another student after he/she has fallen
 - d. using one's head to strike another student
 - e. use of any submission hold to the extent that a limb or joint could be injured.

Finally, students are asked to consider that Seichou Karate® ("karatedo") is a traditional Japanese martial art, such as "judo" and "aikido." You will note that these words all end with the suffix "-do" (pronounced "doh"), which roughly translates to "path" or "way." Other forms of traditional Japanese culture, such as "sado" (tea ceremony) and "kado" (flower arranging) also end with this suffix. Thus, all elements of traditional Japanese culture have the same purpose: to follow a common path that leads to civility. Consistent with this ethic, the goal of our training is to teach our students to become productive members of a peaceful society.

In practicing Seichou Karate®, self-defense, or other martial art program our students become physically stronger and better able to defend themselves. Although in free-fighting students will strike and be struck, etc., as described above, its purpose is to teach us greater self-control to enable us to get along better with our fellow human beings. Therefore, especially during free-fighting sessions, students in all of our martial art programs must employ notions of fair play and sportsmanship. Most importantly, our students must forever refrain from using our fighting techniques in a violent or criminal manner.

Without exception, by enrolling in Seichou Karate® programs, participants agree to abide by all parameters set out above.