

# Karate

Karate translates, as is generally accepted, to *Empty Hand* in Japanese. Karate is a martial art that uses weaponless techniques such as punching and kicking to overcome the opponent. Typically, fighters wear a white [Karate Uniform \(Gi\)](#) and a [belt](#) that indicates their skill level and rank.

The development of Karate began in [Okinawa](#), an island south of Japan. Okinawans travelled to China, where they learnt the Chinese martial arts. On their return to Okinawa they set about blending their own martial arts (initially simply called Te, “Hands”) with what they had learnt in China and called it [To-De](#), Chinese Hands.

From this, 4 main styles of Karate developed - [Goju Ryu](#), [Shorin Ryu](#), [Uechi Ryu](#) and Shorei Ryu. Gichin Funakoshi, who trained under several Okinawan Karate masters, developed his own style of Karate that he named Shotokan.

Funakoshi introduced [Shotokan](#) to Japan in the early 20th century. Other Okinawan masters soon followed him - Chojun Miyagi with [Goju Ryu](#) and Kenwa Mabuni with [Shito Ryu](#). From these masters many new styles were soon developed. For example [Kyokushinkai](#) by Mas Oyama, [Goju Kai](#) by Gogen Yamaguchi, [Wado Ryu](#) by Hinonori Ohtsuka.

There are now hundreds of different styles of karate across the world, but all can be traced back to the original four from Okinawa.

Origin of Karate: Okinawa

Karate was founded in the 16th century and formalised into different styles in the early 20th century.

Karate is currently popularised by:

- Masatoshi Nakayama, Keinosuke Enoeda: [Shotokan Karate](#)
- [Morio Higaonna](#): [Goju Ryu Karate](#)
- Gogen and Gosei Yamaguchi: [Goju Kai Karate](#)
- Mas Oyama: [Kyokushinkai Karate](#)
- Fumio Demura: [Shito Ryu Karate](#)
- Richard Kim: [Shorin Ryu Karate](#)

All-Karate.com has more detailed information on the following styles:

- [Goju Ryu Karate](#)
- [Shito Ryu Karate](#)
- [Wado Ryu Karate](#)
- [Shotokan Karate](#)
- [Kenpo Karate](#)

