

Control—What Does It Really Mean?

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In Isshin-ryu Karate when we talk about control, we are talking about three different things: self-control, control of an opponent, and control of techniques.

Self-control

If you cannot control your emotions; anger, fear, pride, words and actions, you are setting yourself up for disaster. Lack of self-control will cause you to make mistakes. Mistakes will make you lose - pure and simple. Self control takes effort. No one can do this for you.

Control of an Opponent

This means to re-direct or immobilize an opponent. This is achieved through striking, the use of leverage, momentum, timing, body positioning, technique and the use of proper distance. It is also done through psychological means, such as intimidation or mental un-balancing (i.e., creating a sense of doubt or fear in an opponent.)

Control of Techniques

Safety in training is the first priority. Keep in mind that Isshin-ryu Karate is about hitting the other person. Understand that you will hit and you will get hit. It has been said that there are very few techniques in Isshin-ryu Karate that if carried through to completion will not injure someone. Therefore, in training it is important to use a certain amount of restraint when working with partners. In real world self-defense, it is full contact. Remember this: Good control means being able to drive through a target when you need to or stopping short of injury when you want to. It is simply a matter of adjusting the targets.

In Isshinryu Karate, we do not pull punches. When we pull punches, all we are doing is getting good at missing targets! When training with a partner we simply strike (with power and speed) to a target just short of full penetration. In self-defense, if we need to, we adjust to full penetration to do maximum damage. Either way, we never miss our target. THAT is control.