

To AJKA-International
AJKA-I of PA
Instructor Trainee's Report #15

Subject: **“Punching Techniques”**

To AJKA-International
AJKA-I of PA
Instructor's Trainee Report #15
Subject: "Punching Techniques"

Punching is one of the most effective and most often used karate technique. One of the reasons for this is that karate attempts to capitalize upon the natural reactions of a body in fight-or-flight mode. Chief among these reactions is an attempt to push danger (in the form of an attacker) away from oneself. It is this natural thrusting action which the technique of punching builds upon.

Punching is a thrusting motion that directs the force generated by the body's action directly along the line that connects the puncher and the target. Punching techniques in Karate are called *tsuki* or *zuki*.¹ Contact is usually made with the first two knuckles (*seiken*).² However, punching techniques can also make use of the fore-fist, one knuckle fist, and fore-knuckle fist.

Since it is the thrusting rather than striking that defines a punch as a punch, it should be noted that a punch does not require a fist. Many punching technique do employ fists: hook punches (*kagi zuki*), short punches (*kizami zuki*), straight punches (*choku zuki*), reverse punches (*gyaku zuki*), and step-in punches (*oi zuki*); many do not such as: Bear hand (*kumade*), eagle hand (*washide*), palm heel punch (*teisho zuki*), and tiger mouth (*koko*) are all examples of punches in which no fist is used.

Before punching the karate-ka must property form their fist. Forming a fist is done by flexing the tips of the fingers inward tightly until pressing against the upper part of the palm, at the base of the fingers. Then squeezing tightly inwards, until the fist is made. The side of the thumb is then press tightly against the side of the flexed index finger. This is followed by sliding the thumb until it rests tightly against the two first flexed fingers. As the little finger tends to eventually relax, it is important to keep it tight at all times.³

¹ Oyama, Masutatsu (2004). *Mas Oyama's Classic Karate*. Translated by Tomoko Murakami. New York: London: Sterling; Chrysalis (distributor). p. 13.



2



3

Another requirement of a punch is that it starts from a moving hip. That hip movement can be generated by body Vibration, Body Rotation, or Body Shifting. Another requirement of a punch is that it employs Expansion and Contraction. A punch itself is an extension of one or more limbs and the connection of that extended technique to the body and through the legs to the surface beneath requires a reactionary force dense body core (Contraction) at the moment of impact.

There are both one handed and two handed punches:

One Handed

Name	Target	Description
Straight Punch (choku-zuki)	Face, solar plexus, lower abdomen	Straight outward thrust of fist from the hip
Reverse Punch (gyaku-zuki)	Face, solar plexus, lower abdomen	Punching with the hand which is the same side as the rear foot
Lunge Punch (oi-zuki)	Face, solar plexus, lower abdomen	Fore-fist straight punching which the punching hand is on the same side as the leg moving forward
One Knuckle Punch (ippon-ken-zuki)	Temple, upper jaw below nose, between eyes	Index or middle finger is bent to protrude beyond the rest of the fist to form a striking point
Roundhouse punch (mawashi-zuki)	Face, side of face, side of body	Rotate the hand almost a three quarter turn from hip to target
Close Punch (ura-zuki)	Face, solar plexus side of body	Twist forearm a quarter turn outward, back of fist faces down
Hook Punch (kagi-zuki)	Side of opponents body or solar plexus	Punch with the elbow bent at 90 degrees

The Choku-zuki is the most widely used technique in all of karate and is extremely strong and quick when the distance is short. It is a straight outward thrust of the fist which is twisted inward 180 degrees simultaneously as it moves from the hip the target. The twisting will create a powerful shock to the target. When attacking face it is called jodan-choku-zuki, solar plexus chudan-choku-zuki and lower abdomen gedan-choku-zuki. The punch is powerful enough to incapacitate the opponent. It is important to concentrate on the route to the target, speed and concentration of power.

Two Handed

Name	Target	Description
Double fist Punch (morote-zuki)	Same targets as a single punch	Fore-fist straight punch using both hands striking same target at the same time
U-Punch (yama-zuki)	Face with the upper fist and the solar plexus with the lower – hitting targets simultaneously	Upper arm is a reverse punch and the lower arm acts as a close in punch
Parallel Punch (Heiko-zuki)	Ribs	Double fist punch. Punching directly with both hands
Scissors Punch (Hasami-zuki)	Both sides of body	Half circle from the hips, first outward and then inward to the target – used in Chinte

Important points in punching techniques:

- The feet remain flat on the floor
- The front knee remains bent; the back leg is straight
- The hips are rotated and pressed forward through tensing the buttocks and pressing the heel of the back foot against the floor in order to generate reactionary force.
- The inside of the punching arm slides closely to the side of the body as the fist is directed in a straight line towards the target.
- The elbow is kept close to the body. Only after the elbow moves past the body side should the forearm rotate smoothly so that the fist ends in the correct position.
- The power of the attack is increased by simultaneously drawing the opposite hand speedily backward to rest above the hip.
- The head and body should remain balanced and upright.
- As the impact point is reached, so should the muscles of the shoulders be tensed downward (without leaning forward). This will form a powerful connection with the chest, back, stomach, hips and the rest of the body. In this way the combined strength and force of the entire body is transmitted from the back heel through the tensed body toward the striking surface of the fist.

AJKA-I of PA
Instructor Trainee #E027
Andrew Spivack