

Kenpo Karate: Masters over themselves

The Corona pandemic has brought many sports clubs to the brink of extinction. Many members have left the clubs altogether. This is not the case with the Kenpo Karate club "empty hands e.V." in Mönchengladbach. They were even able to gain new members. The first chairman and founder of the club, Frank Pfennig, sees one reason for this success in the attractive alternative programme that the club offers online several times a week. Another reason is the uniqueness of Kenpo martial arts. It is an effective form of self-defence that also promotes body awareness, concentration, patience and endurance. These criteria are particularly important in times of Corona. Because the training unites body and mind and thus not only ensures more physical fitness, but also harmony and balance.

The term Kenpo originally stands for Chinese fist fighting. Emigrants brought this type of martial art to Hawaii in 1937. There, William Chow mixed Kenpo techniques with Kung Fu techniques. From this, Ed Parker, a student of Chow, developed his own martial art, integrating techniques from boxing, wrestling and Kali, a Filipino martial art, and supplementing them with scientific knowledge. American Kenpo Karate" was born. The Kenpo-Karate club "empty hands e.V." Mönchengladbach practices Kenpo-Karate, which was originally developed by Ed Parker and further developed by, among others, Senior Professor Matt Snell with his "Flaming Fist Kenpo". The club is a member of the International Kenpo Karate Association Europe (IKKA) as well as the German Karate Association, the North Rhine-Westphalia State Sports Association and the Mönchengladbach City Sports Association. He also represents the "Flaming Fist Kenpo Martial Arts Academy" in Germany. Its owner is the English senior professor Matt Snell from Exeter in England.

Kenpo Karate is not a martial art, but a martial art that focuses on the whole person. It trains body and mind equally, combining balance and harmony. A Kenpo martial artist should first and foremost become "master of himself", as Kenpo Karate founder Ed Parker once explained. The training teaches effective defence techniques for the most common types of attack in natural sequences of movement. Through the interaction of sensory organs, limbs and brain, the body's overall motor skills are improved, self-confidence strengthened and well-being and health promoted.

Once a year, high-ranking Kenpoists from all over the world meet in Mönchengladbach for the "International Friendship Kenpo-Camp" (IKFC). "empty hands e.V." created this event in 2018 to bring the elite of Kenpo martial arts to the Lower Rhine. "We want to learn from the best", Frank Pfennig explains the commitment of "empty hands Flaming Fist Kenpo Germany". Last but not least, this event is also intended to make the Kenpo martial art better known. This year, the international friendship meeting had to be cancelled due to Corona.

Due to the numerous international connections, among others as a base of the "Flaming Fist Kenpo Germany", the club is able to offer its members an attractive online training. Two to three times a week, the carefully structured online training takes place with changing international instructors. "We also experience valuable

support from our head coach, Matt Snell," emphasises Frank Pfennig. Senior Professor Matt Snell regularly organises training for coaches. In the meantime, more than 300 technique videos have been recorded. These videos are available to all members. Also after the end of the pandemic, the association wants to offer the online training with international Kenpo masters. "Then again with the members on the mat and instructors connected on a big screen," says the club president. Frank Pfennig and the certified team of trainers see the club well positioned for the future, not least thanks to the international connections. And that future will include video conferences in conjunction with technical videos every now and then, even after the pandemic is over. They have proven to be a real success model for the association during the months of the lockdown.

Interested parties can contact the association at <https://empty-hands.de/kontakt-kenpo-moenchengladbach/>.

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