



# Go Karting Tips

---

**Release the Champion within you.**

By James Cressey

The information in this document is true to the best knowledge of the author. All recommendations made are without the guarantee of the author, who also disclaims any liability incurred in connection with the use of the information provided in this document.

[www.gokartinglondon.co.uk](http://www.gokartinglondon.co.uk)

# **Contents**

**Introduction**

**The Basics**

**The No1 most important Driving Secret**

**Go Kart Cornering Guide**

**The Basics of Go Kart Cornering**

**Go Kart Passing**

**Achieving a successful race start**

**Assessing the Track pre-race**

**Race Strategy**

**Staying Focused**

**Racing in the Wet**

**Qualifying Tips**

**Strengthening Neck Muscles**

**Building Stamina**

**What to wear**

**Race Day food and Drink**

**Gaining Sponsorship**

**Conclusion**

## Introduction

Welcome and thanks for purchasing my guide to being a better go karting racer. The book is split into four sections starting with basic tips and techniques in section one, progressing to advanced techniques in section three. Finally we take a look at the subject of sponsorship.

There is a lot of information to take on in this book and trying to put everything into action might not work in your favour. I'd recommend taking two or three subjects and concentrating on getting those right in your next karting session. Then once you're happy with those techniques pick another two to three subjects to master in your next session.

Some of the advanced techniques will require some time and dedication to see results, so don't give up too quickly, give them the time and dedication that they require and you will be amazed with the results as long as you've first nailed down all the fundamentals.

## THE BASICS

### **How to grip the wheel for optimum advantage.**

Have a look using your karting magazines and look for the quick drivers holding the wheel. Now, nearly all quick drivers hold the wheel pretty near to the 10 to two position. From the motorists perspective this provides you a sense of strength within the kart.

But more to the point, holding the wheel within the 10 to two position helps provide the correct weight transfer out of your body towards the front of the kart, using your arms. Actually, holding the wheel properly like this makes the front-end stick better. When you master the strategy you'll sense the main difference.



### **The way you should sit inside your kart, good posture.**

Again, this really is nice and simple but lots of drivers do not understand how vitally important this really is. If you sit correctly within the kart you'll assist the weight transfer over the kart (which remember is mega-vital for your handling).

Let me explain:-

Sit inside your kart with their hands on the wheel in the 10 to two position. Sit upright in your chair and puff your chest out a little. Push against your wheel together with your arms after which relax your arms. Now you ought to have a great strong posture within the kart, additionally, you will look much more intimidating with other drivers! You feel like you mean business, and seem like you mean business too.

### **Configuring your kart. Fixing the chair in the best place.**

If you would like your kart to operate correctly, ask the maker of the chassis exactly where your chair should be. After that you can start moving the pedals and steering column to suit. If you're small, you may want to achieve a compromise, but remember the logistics of where the chair is placed is far more important than comfort.

### **Sort out your basic skills before tinkering with kart setup.**

After you have these your primary priority ought to be to practice honing your driving abilities, because that's the easiest method to get faster that's what will enable you to become a great driver. If you don't sort out your basic skills first then changing the kart setup will not help you!

## **The No1 Most Important Driving Secret Out There.**

I think of it as searching ahead, sounds daft because you already do that, so to explain, let's think of it as searching further ahead than you must do already. The implications to mastering this are huge, and so i will briefly explain the way it works, the in detail will reveal how to make it happen, step-by-step.

Perhaps you have observed this effect, a kart has spun off a corner, you're searching ahead and see it well in advance. You look at the incident as you drive closer you notice you are getting closer to the driver that has spun off, almost as if you are magnetically attracted. It is because your movement naturally follows what your head is looking at, it's just something us humans do. It's also why sometimes you instinctively mimic the kart you are following, you just follow them naturally.

What you should do is use this mental effect to your advantage, here's how:-

Simply focus on the path you should be taking not the object you want to avoid. For example, if an individual spins in front of you, concentrate on the gap you need to drive-through, and overlook the spinning kart.

Now we could take this even further. If you focus your attention where you want your kart to go at all times, ( the perfect turn in point, perfect apex and corner exit points ) you will find yourself naturally hitting perfect lines.

AND HERE'S THE IMPORTANT BIT the further ahead you focus your attention the better you will drive. If you are focusing on where you need to be on the circuit way ahead of time you will force your subconscious mind to deal with whatever is going on right now, like small steering adjustments or releasing braking pressure because you're sliding too much. And when you leave your subconscious mind to do your driving something special happens. You start to drive on autopilot, and you drive much quicker because your subconscious thought process is thousands of times faster than conscious thought, you will be making faster adjustments to steering and throttle and braking, and that translates to faster lap times.

This super sensitivity will make it possible for you to brake later and accelerate early, because you will be able to easily cope with trail braking. It also makes you feel fantastic, and you will be asking yourself questions like; 'how the hell did I catch that over steer so fast?' or you may feel like the world is in slow motion and that you can handle any situation. Your confidence will skyrocket.

Another great benefit is that you will see overtaking opportunities almost before they happen, spotting where a driver is about to leave a gap for you, so that you are aiming for it even before he knows he is going to leave it! You really will start flying through the pack in heats and your starts are going to get a hell of a lot better.

Here is the technique and step by step how to learn it.

1. Before you start driving make sure you have the right posture, sitting upright with your head held relatively high.
2. Keep your head upright whilst driving, Nigel Mansell used to have a dirty great sticker across the top of his visor to force himself to keep his head upright. Keeping your head upright makes sure you are looking ahead.
3. Look where you want you and the kart to go. You should notice yourself looking further around a corner than usual.
4. Just before you start braking you should force yourself to focus on the apex, not your braking point (this is difficult but you can handle it, trust your subconscious inner race driver to know when to brake!)
5. Once you have turned in, the exit of the corner should take your focus, not the apex anymore (again, trust yourself to hit the apex using subconscious processing)
6. At the exit of the corner you should be preparing for the next braking zone
7. Always be telling yourself not to worry where you are on the circuit, just keep focussing way ahead

When you first practice looking further ahead you may feel like it's unnatural or you find yourself bouncing off kerbs because you cut corners. One driver told me that trying to look further ahead was 'doing his head in'. Well that's OK because you are having to consciously train yourself to look further ahead down the track or even around a corner, and that can be hard work.

But after a few sessions of say 10 laps you will train yourself to look further ahead than you thought possible, it will become second nature and that's when you will start experiencing a super-performance phenomenon called 'flow'.

## Go Kart Cornering Guide



Sure, Go Kart Cornering sounds like it would be pretty simple. Most people you might ask would tell you the best way to drive a go kart is put the pedal to the metal and get off that brake!! There's more to it though, obviously, and everyone could use a few pointers on how to drive the perfect line.

What's "the line" you might be wondering? The line is simply the safest and fastest way around the track. It may not always be the shortest, but it is the most efficient way for braking and acceleration. If you can drive this line smoothly and quickly you will definitely dominate the track.

## **The Basics of Go Kart Cornering:**

Before you start, try and keep one thing in mind. Getting fast quick depends totally on your ability to be smooth! Any sudden movements on the brake, throttle or steering causes resistance and slows you down through the corners. It takes practice, and seat time in your kart is important! But the smoother you get, the faster you'll be. And going fast is the point right?!

- As your approaching a corner, it's recommended you place your kart on the outside of the track, staying on the gas.
- At the right moment, ease onto the brake firmly staying in a straight line
- Come off the break and ease back onto the throttle as you turn into the corner
- Maintain your power and aim for the inside edge of the track as your turn the corner. Maintaining the power is crucial to ensure you have plenty of speed coming out of the turn.

Again, staying smooth through the corners, and maintaining your speed through them is crucial. You'll find that until you get smooth at your go kart cornering, you'll be coming out slower than those who are and it will frustrate you! Just turn that frustration into focus. The moment you get sloppy you'll be spinning off the track wondering why those killer lap times flew out the window. Practice up!

## **Go Kart Passing - How to pass like a pro**

Overtaking or go kart passing is a very important part of go kart racing. There will be countless numbers of opportunities to pass and be passed every time you head out to the track. Whether it's during a practice, or during the final points race of the season, passing needs to be smooth and efficient.

Preparing Before Hand:

During a practice or qualifying session on the track, it is a good idea to consciously look for places on the track that you might be able to pass on. Consider the line you would drive in a situation you might pass and practice it a few times. This way, when you start the race you already have a plan of how your going to get up to the front in the least time possible.

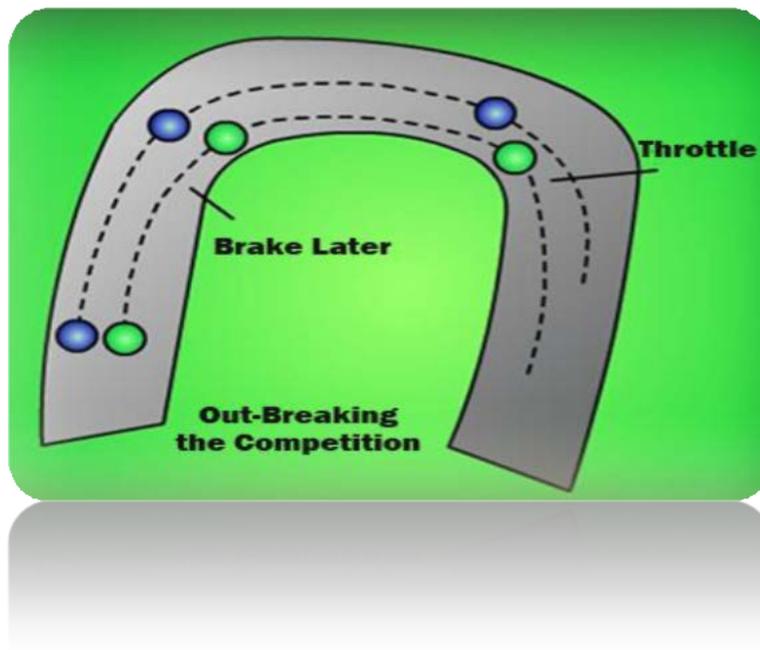
The Basics:

The most likely way you are going to be able to pass someone on the track is if you are able to out-brake, or out-accelerate you opponent. Here is an example of how one might go about passing an opponent into a turn:

### 1. Out Braking into a Corner:

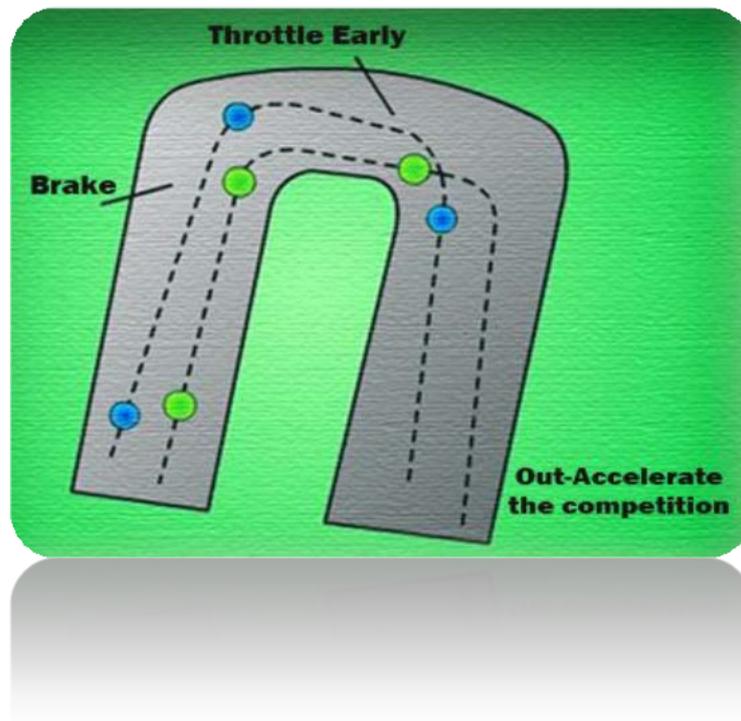
The title is pretty much self-explanatory. You have to be able to out-brake your opponent into the corner so that you have the advantage on the inside. You will have a tighter line and will be able to pull away with your speed coming out of the corner.

**\*Important\*** - Avoid "Diving" into the corner to avoid an accident. As a general rule, make sure that the person you plan on overtaking has seen you and knows not to turn into you overtake them. If you are not at least level with the other go karter before they start turning in, back off. Otherwise, you may cause an accident and be disqualified.



### 2. Out-Accelerating out of the Corner:

Your goal when using this method of overtaking is to use a wider line going into the corner so that you may start to accelerate before your opponent. The goal is to be heading straight forward on the throttle as your opponent is just coming out of the corner.



## Achieving a Successful Race Start

Whilst a kart driver may be adept at making quick laps, may train rigorously and maintain impressive levels of personal fitness, a poor race start can spell disaster for a race outcome from the word go. So how do winning drivers achieve successful starts? Karting experts highlight confidence and self assurance as vital when it comes to setting off at speed.

### The Race Start: The Perils of Sensory Overload

Many drivers report experiencing sensory overload at the start of a race. Anticipation, adrenaline, race strategy and technical factors all jostle for space in the driver's mind. It can be difficult to overcome this feeling of overload. Whilst the principles of 'practice makes perfect' can be applied to a variety of karting techniques, such as driving in wet weather, the number of authentic race starts experienced by an individual driver is obviously limited. So how can the sensory overload often experienced at the start of a race be tackled? For many, visualisation is the key to a successful race start.

### **Visualising Your Successful Race Start**

To make the most of visualisation techniques, try to find a relatively quiet place where you can relax both physically and mentally. Make a note of the position in which you are starting and who is preceding and following you. Think carefully about precisely how you want your start to go. Visualise yourself speeding across the line. Imagine yourself overtaking the driver in front of you and making the most of the first corner, or whatever the details of your race start strategy may be. In order for your plan to take shape and be of benefit to you in the race, it is important to visualise each ideal detail of your start. This will help you to make your projections a reality when seated in your kart. Be sure to imagine the rest of your first lap, too. Visualising the perfect lap in which you fly at breathtaking speed and overtake karts with ease will consolidate your race plan and invest you with pure confidence.

### **The Race Start From Your Kart**

When sitting in your kart, play over your plan in your mind. Tell yourself that you are the most confident and prepared driver in the race. Concentrate on this advantage. Use the rolling lap as a chance to focus upon your plan and how you will put it into action. Stay as close as possible to the kart in front of you. When it comes to the actual start, experts highlight being sure to go first as the most important practical move to make: it is vital to accelerate before the kart in front of you. Experts advise that you try to touch the bumper of that kart, with no space between the two karts. This will minimise the risk of a crash whilst giving you the advantage you need to make a successful race start. Once your kart has crossed the line, your plan kicks in. Aim to make the ideal lap you visualised become a reality.

Visualisation, self-confidence and mental preparation might seem far removed from the high speed world of karting but many experts stress their importance when it comes to making a great race start. Practice visualisation techniques so that they become second nature on race day.

### **Assessing the Track Pre-race**

Pre-race routines vary widely from driver to driver, from secret, superstitious rituals to visualisation and concentration techniques. It is important to devise a pre-race routine that works for you, leaving you feeling prepared, confident and focused. Assessing the track pre-race is something that can benefit all drivers. This is a particularly important pre-race step if you are new to a track. Surveying and analysing the track needn't take long, and the pay off can be huge when it comes to your race performance. Whether you choose to get hold of and study a track map or walk around the track yourself, be sure to incorporate an analysis of the track into your pre-race routine.



### **Get hold of a track map**

A track map is a fairly simple document, offering a bird's eye view of the race track and documenting the shape and details of the track, including its straights, corners, start and the direction of travel. Many track maps also give a short description of the track's defining qualities and difficulty level. Average lap time, track length and track capacity are also usually noted. If you can, be sure to get hold of a track map. Do this as far in advance of the race as possible. Take a look at the racing centre's website, as many companies post track maps online. Some even host videos, taken from a kart, of a driver completing a lap of the track. If such a video is available, make sure to view it several times until you get a feel for the track. Studying a track map will enable you to make strategic decisions in advance of the race. Take a look at the map and ask yourself, where will I break? How much will I break there? Where will I change gears? Are there any prime opportunities for overtaking or passing? Which parts of the track look especially tricky? Where can I play on my strengths? What will my start strategy be?

### **Survey the track in person**

Depending upon the track in question, you may be able to walk the track or get a close look at it before getting into the driver's seat. If you have the opportunity to do so, take the time to ask yourself the same questions that you would call upon when assessing a track map. Ideally, consult both a map and take a look at the track itself.

### **Make the most of practice and qualifying sessions**

During a qualifying or practice session on the track, be sure to concentrate fully and be as conscious of your actions as possible. Where are you breaking? Where are you changing gears? What will you do differently when it comes to the big race? What have you learnt about the track? Practice and qualifying sessions are also ideal for staking out the best spots to pass other karts. Where are the areas of opportunity? Imagine the line you would drive in an overtaking situation and practice it a few times.

When it comes to racing, the time you put into preparation is sure to pay off when it comes to your race performance. Take the time to assess the track pre-race and, in this way, you will begin the race equipped and with a plan of attack.

## **Race Strategy**

A sense of race strategy comes quickly and naturally to some go kart drivers. For others, however, it is a skill that requires constant, conscious improvement. Many drivers find mocking up racing scenarios with other go karting friends particularly useful when seeking to work on their strategy. Imaging and visualising various racing situations can also be helpful. But what do you need to consider when it comes to devising a race strategy? When should you listen to your head and when should you allow instinct to kick in?

### **Consider important skills and race stages**

Part of the difficulty of getting to grips with racing strategy is the fact that it requires the driver to multitask, keeping several things in mind at once. In the course of one race, you will need to think about how to prepare for and carry out an effective start, how to tackle and time the track's corners, which points to break at and how hard and who to overtake, when and how. You will also have to think about how to modify your driving style and strategy to suit the track's surface and to make allowance for the current weather conditions.

### **Devise and practise a strategic race plan**

Race strategy is not simply a matter of tackling each hurdle as you come to it. For this reason, it can be particularly helpful to create and note down a strategic race plan. How can you best achieve an effective start? At which points on a track are you most skilled at overtaking others? These are the sorts of questions that can help you to formulate a successful plan. This generic plan should be relatively flexible, enabling you to modify it for a variety of race scenarios. Be sure to practise your strategic plan as frequently as possible. This is a sure-fire way to minimise race day stress. If you arrive at the track in the pouring rain, for example, it need not spell disaster for your nerves. Simply adapt your plan to accommodate the wet track surface. You will also be able to fine tune your strategic plan on race day, when it comes to assessing the track. Have your plan clearly in mind when analysing the track map and tailor it to your needs.

### **Get a feel for it**

Whilst a well-practiced race plan can prove invaluable, it is important to use your intuition too. Visualisation can be a go kart driver's best friend. Before hitting the tarmac, it is important to have a critical overview of the track in question and to imagine and feel yourself racing it, deciding on and carrying out all necessary manoeuvres. Take every opportunity to drive or race in different conditions and to experience a variety of race situations. Familiarise yourself with the process of thinking ahead, making decisions and implementing them. For example, learn what it feels like to drive on a wet surface, until wet driving becomes almost instinctive.

Those who achieve the most success as a result of race strategy usually call upon their brain and their gut in equal measure. Always be prepared to race and have a clear idea of how to tackle the track but do not be afraid to deviate from your plans now and then.

### **Staying Focused During Racing**

It doesn't matter whether you are a seasoned driver or are just starting out on the road towards achieving excellence in karting, you are never going to be first across the line if you don't concentrate on what you are doing and what is happening around you every second of every lap.

Such is the amount of time and money invested in both man and machine, and preparing both for the next race, that it is dispiriting, to say the least, when one moment of indiscipline or absent mindedness blows any chance of taking first place.



### **Which Line to Take**

This is not to say that a driver should go into the race feeling under any pressure because of that aforementioned investment. Rather their mind should be free to concentrate on the challenge ahead. There is always the chance that pressure can begin to build because of the knowledge that

the efforts and hopes of a number of people are riding on how well you perform. But this pressure must be relieved, and the way to relieve it is simple: remember that every moment worrying about other people is a moment spent neglecting which line to take into the next corner, whether your wheel handling is up to scratch, and whether you could have handled that last gear-change a little better. Pressure should not be confused with pre-race nerves. The latter are natural; indeed many competitors will tell that without those nerves, they wouldn't be geared up to competing effectively and successfully.

Indeed, a lack of nerves can point to another fatal flaw: over confidence. On no account ever think that you are simply too good for the competition, or that you should now be graduating to the next category. The result will be that your driving becomes sloppy, and rather than looking like the king of the track, you will have observers wondering why you were ever allowed behind the wheel in the first place.

### **Pre-Race Checks**

So use those nerves in a positive way. Go through your pre-race checks, so that your mind is satisfied your machine is geared up to the challenge. Now that you have complete confidence in the kart, next comes your side of the bargain: steering it to victory.

You know where you want to be at the end of the race, so focus on that goal and don't be sidetracked by any in-race incidents. Your competitors are there to beat you, so don't let individual incidents result in a red mist that clouds your judgment. If another driver's manoeuvre angers you, simply put it to the back of your mind, otherwise that anger will mean you will lose focus which, in turn, will mean you no longer have the finishing line in your sights.

Once the race is over, continue focusing: that means analysing your performance and the reasons for it. If you lost, why did it happen, and what can be done to iron out the rough edges of your driving? More to the point, if you won, ask yourself why and build on the victory. On no account sit back on those winner's laurels. Every driver should strive to improve. Most importantly, keep that focus. It is the mental edge that can make all the difference during those final few laps.

## Racing in the wet

Is driving in the wet a complete mystery to you? Do you find that some drivers seem to literally sail off into the distance while you are left slipping and sliding trying to keep the kart on the black stuff? Well once you have read this article you will be praying for rain and itching to get out there.

Driving a kart in the wet isn't all about being super-smooth and being frightened that the kart will bite you for pushing it hard. In fact, I will say when driving in the wet you have to be much more physical, much more forceful and drive with flair. Wet karting gives you even more opportunity to let yourself go- more than the dry even!!



So before we start, forget about being ultra-delicate on the brakes and turning the steering wheel tentatively (save that for when you get into F3)...we are going to talk about stamping on the brakes to make tyres bite into the track, and snapping the steering wheel round like you want to bend the track rods!

### The Wet Line

Is the fastest line around the track in the wet the same as in the dry? 99% of the time the answer is no. I can't tell you the exact wet line for every track here, but I can give you a pretty good place to start.

### Stay off the Rubber

In the dry the best grip is normally found on the normal racing line, and that is where all the tyre rubber gets laid down giving even more grip. But when it rains, rubber is super slippery- so you have to go and find a new line where there is no rubber. Normally its round the outside of the corner.

Take a look at your circuit before you drive and you can easily see the darker racing line covered in rubber, and where you can see a lighter colour there isn't so much rubber....and in the wet that's where you want your kart to be! Keep those observations in mind when driving in the wet. You will find you need to experiment using the wet line, and there will be more than one way round on a wet line. You have to go out there and feel where that grip is

That's pretty much it with the wet line...not so mysterious really

Wet Driving Techniques- It Just Doesn't Seem Right but it Works!!

Ok, for a kart to work and get you around a corner it needs to lift the rear wheel on the inside of the kart, and to do that it needs a certain amount of grip to get the chassis to roll over toward the outside front wheel.

Now, in the wet you find there just isn't enough grip around to get a kart to do that easily.....so we have to force the kart to tip!

Here's how we go about forcing the kart to work in the wet.

Lets say you are approaching a tight 90 degree left bend,

1. When you brake hit the pedal in a short sharp motion, enough to get the rear tyres to lock almost and bite into the track. A nice gentle push on the brake just won't do because it kills the kart. We want the kart to feel quite lively, and you need to get it working and biting so you can get a feel for what grip is available. Also, you want to reduce the amount of time on the brakes and braking needs to be out of the way before you turn in.

2. Remember we are taking a wet line away from the rubber. So we turn into the boot very very late. And when you turn the wheel you snap it into full lock...hard and fast.

Now, the kart doesn't turn and spin....you turned the wheel so fast and it's like you shocked it into a huge understeer. But, you are also getting maximum jacking effect from the front end and when the kart finds a bit of grip it will turn....and it will turn very sharp.

Also, since the front end is sliding, it is slowing you down too- acting like front brakes.

3. When you snap that steering wheel round, you will naturally need to lean forward a little because turning the wheel will extend your reach. That's a good thing and you should lean forward and towards the outside of the kart. In doing that you are taking weight from the rear and putting it over the front, which helps the kart to lift that rear inside wheel.

4. When you get the timing right, you will find the kart turns quite hard and sharp, that's when you need to get your weight back over the rear wheels, get the steering straight as possible and accelerate away, introduce the power gradually feeling for traction...always being careful to get as much traction as possible.

So, next time you see a forecast for rain get the van loaded up and rush over to your local circuit, get out there and try all this out. That's what Ayrton Senna used to do!

At first you will find it very difficult to put all these new ideas together, but stick at it because I promise you it will put you at the front when you work it out

## Qualifying Tips for Karting Competitions

Qualifying is a crucial part of a karting race weekend, and one slip-up can result in a bad grid position that makes the race difficult. However, qualifying well can be an Achilles' Heel for many karters (and racing drivers as a whole), especially if you're not quite sure how to get the best out of your kart for just one or two laps as opposed to a whole race.

### Use Your Session Wisely

As qualifying won't usually be a one lap shoot-out, you have the opportunity to spend most of the session familiarising yourself with the track before you set off on your 'hot' lap to try to claim the pole position. Unless you already know the track well, it's unlikely that you'll be able to set your best lap on one of your first laps.

Don't leave it too late though or you may not get chance to actually put in your 'hot' lap, especially if your lap is compromised by other competitors who are out on track at the same time. If you do encounter 'traffic', it's best to step off the pace to put some added distance between you and kart in front as flat out racing against each other is likely to compromise both of your 'hot' laps.

### Driving Styles

Contrary to popular opinion, an aggressive karting style isn't always the best tactic for improving your qualifying times. The 'right' driving style will vary depending on the layout of the track, but you can often achieve the optimum lap times if you vary aggression with smooth handling of the kart to strike the perfect balance. This can be extremely difficult to do, and it's a skill that will probably require a considerable amount of trial and error to get it right.

Karting experts suggest that if you make a point of paying close attention to the various elements that contribute to making a go kart travel fast (for example, the load that you're putting through the kart), you will become a 'smoother' driver as a direct result. An aggressive karting style will often involve literally throwing the kart into and around corners but this can easily lose you valuable time and affect your overall grid position. Because of this, a 'smooth' karting style is more preferable but this also has its disadvantages as time can be lost by concentrating too much on this, especially when taking corners. Instead, try combining a predominantly 'smooth' karting style with an aggressive braking style to avoid losing time when cornering.

A 'smooth' karting style won't necessarily be the same for everyone. Some karters may achieve it by steering predominantly with their shoulders instead of their arms, while others may get the same effect by braking more aggressively but backing off more quickly. In many cases, finding your 'smooth' driving style will take some practice to see what works best for you. Contrary to popular opinion, while your karting style may appear smooth to other people, it doesn't automatically mean being very gentle on the steering wheel. Indeed, many 'smooth' karters are actually quite aggressive when steering.



## Strengthening Neck Muscles

A combination of high speeds and tight corners means that go karting tends to put your neck muscles under a lot of pressure. Because of the G-forces that affect your body when you take corners, you will often find that your neck muscles ache after even a fairly short go karting session. Fortunately, doing exercises to strengthen your neck muscles can help with this. As a word of caution, it is best to seek advice from a qualified trainer before embarking on strengthening your neck muscles, as it is easy to do significant damage to your body if you are not really sure what you are doing.

### Why Spend Time Strengthening Your Neck Muscles?

There are several benefits to strengthening your neck muscles as part of your fitness work for go karting. Firstly, it will go a long way towards reducing the discomfort that most novice go karters experience when first getting involved in the sport. This discomfort is mostly the result of G-forces.

If you intend to move into the higher echelons of motor sport, you will need to be able to withstand high G-forces. For example, the average Formula One driver contends with around 5g under braking, 2 g under acceleration and 4-6 g during overtaking manoeuvres.

### What Type of Exercises Will Strengthen Your Neck Muscles?

Isometric neck exercises are a good way to work your neck muscles without injuring yourself. These neck exercises are best done every other day so that you do not strain your neck muscles. This is particularly important if your neck muscles are not used to be exercised regularly. To do simple isometric neck exercises, you can follow these steps:

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Gently push your head backwards and use your neck muscles to keep your head still. After around ten seconds, relax your neck muscles. Put your hands on the back or side of your head, and gently push your head forwards. As before, use your neck muscles to keep your head still. Relax after ten seconds. Repeat the steps several times.

For side isometric neck exercises, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and put your right palm against the right side of your face so that it is just above your right ear. Gently push your head to the left as if you are trying to connect your ear and shoulder. While doing this, contract your neck muscles to keep both your head and neck in the right position. Do the same with your left side, and repeat the steps several times.

Strengthening your neck muscles is recommended for helping your body to cope with the G-forces that can cause a lot of discomfort later on. While the G-forces that affect you in go karting are nowhere near as big as the G-forces that affect Formula One drivers, you can still end up with a very sore neck in the hours following your go karting session. Before you start any neck strengthening exercises, it is best to consult a trainer to make sure that you are not going to cause any damage to your neck or spinal cord as a result of your intended fitness work.

## **Building stamina**

Building up your general stamina is a good idea for go karting, as it can give you a physical and mental advantage over your rivals. Building up your general stamina means that you are less likely to fade both physically and mentally during a go karting race. Not all go kart racers spend as much time as they should on the fitness side of things, which can result in them becoming physically and mentally tired during go kart races.

### Exercises to Build Your General Stamina

Walking is an easy way to improve your general stamina. As it is a low-impact exercise, it is kinder on your joints than running or jogging. Swimming is another activity that is ideal for building up your

general stamina, as it works your whole body. Another good option is aerobic cardiovascular exercise such as cycling or running. See our article on “Cardiovascular Fitness” for more advice on these types of exercises.

If you prefer to exercise in the gym, you could try spinning classes. This involves indoor cycling on a stationary bike, although the bikes in question are more specialised than your average stationary exercise bike. Although it takes place indoors, it is designed to mimic outdoor cycling (for example, by cranking up the resistance on your bike and standing on the pedals at various intervals). An instructor will head the class in similar style to an aerobics class. Upbeat music is usually played to encourage you to continue "spinning" at a fairly rapid pace. There is also the added motivation of being surrounded by other people. Because of this, spinning classes are a good way to increase your general fitness as it gets the blood pumping. As it is a high intensity cardiovascular exercise, spinning classes are not advisable if you do not already have a respectable level of fitness in the first place. They are intended to build on decent fitness levels, rather than build up your stamina from scratch.

### **How Long Does It Take To Build Up General Stamina?**

If you draw up a fitness plan and stick to it, you can build up your general stamina in a matter of months. Generally speaking, the more effort you put into your fitness, the greater the rewards. However, it is important to be realistic when creating a fitness plan. If your goals are too challenging, it is easy to lose motivation, which means that you are unlikely to see any significant results quickly. Building up your fitness slowly but surely is better for your body as you are less likely to injure yourself by pushing your body far beyond what it is used to.

Building up your general stamina is essential if you want to compete at a high level in go karting. By increasing your fitness levels, you can gain an edge on any of your rivals who have skimped on the fitness side of things, as you are less likely to become mentally or physically tired. There are various different cardiovascular exercises that you can do to build your general stamina, including activities such as running, walking, spinning and swimming.

### **What To Wear When Racing**

Knowing what to wear during your karting sessions can be tricky. A lot of the time it will depend on whether you are karting purely for fun, or whether you are much more serious about your karting. This also determines how likely you are to be caught out by an unexpected change in the weather.



### **Getting Started**

If you're just getting started in karting, or if you only plan to go karting a few times a year, you won't need to splash out on lots of expensive karting gear.

The basic outfit consists of:

A protective helmet that covers all of your face, or as much of your face as possible. Protective overalls. These are usually fireproof, but some people choose to have waterproof ones as well.

### **Protective gloves and sensible footwear.**

Most of the time, these will be provided as part of the cost of the karting package. The only thing that you will need to bring is the sensible footwear. Trainers are usually the best option, but many experts frown upon the idea of wearing trainers with a thick sole. Wearing trainers with thick soles can mean that you can't feel how much pressure you are putting on the pedals. This can be potentially quite dangerous, as you often only need to apply minimal pressure to the pedals in order to brake or accelerate, and applying too much pressure can result in your steering and handling being a lot different from what you anticipated.

It's not uncommon for new karters to either brake far too suddenly or accelerate far more quickly than they should because of this problem. To avoid a situation like this, it is recommended that you wear a pair of trainers with a thin sole.

### **Getting Serious**

As soon as you start getting more involved in karting, you will have to start providing your own protective outfits. This can be quite expensive, and it's best not to buy clothes and helmets second-

hand, as they won't necessarily be as safe as brand new items once they've already been worn several times by someone else.

There are many shops around the country that sell all the protective clothing you need, from protective overalls, to gloves and boots. When you first start karting, you aren't expected to buy your own protective clothes. If you decide to join a karting club and take up karting on a regular basis, you will have to find your own outfits to compete in. As well as the necessary fire-resistant overalls, some drivers also like to buy waterproof ones to protect against the elements during races, but this is purely optional. As you can't change clothes during a race, it does mean wearing them during every race just in case it happens to rain.

## **Race Day Food and Drink**

When it comes to race day food and drink, it can be difficult to get the balance right. Too little food and drink and you may lose concentration and become dehydrated, too much and you may begin to feel sleepy, bloated or heavy as your body sets to work digesting your meal. Getting the right balance of carbohydrates, protein and fruit vegetables is key.

### Wise up on race day nutrition

On race day, aim to consume a healthy meal that is rich in both carbohydrates and protein. Opt for wholegrain or brown versions of starchy foods such as bread, pasta and rice. These complex carbohydrates will provide you with slow release energy, helping you to stay alert for longer and minimising dips in your blood sugar levels. Be sure to eat a portion of protein such as fish, meat, nuts, seeds, eggs, tofu or soy at each meal.

Fruit and vegetables are a must, too. Avoid sugary fruits such as grapes and bananas as these may lead to spikes and dips in your blood sugar levels, attacking your concentration. Dried fruits are very high in sugar, so steer clear of them. Raspberries, strawberries, peaches, apples, apricots and grapefruits are all relatively low in sugar. Opt for these if you can. If you reach to fruit as a pre-race snack, be sure to combine it with some protein to keep your energy levels steady. Eat a handful of blueberries and almonds, for example. Sugary and fatty junk foods should be avoided at all costs. Aim to eat something every three to four hours. Here are some examples of great race-day meals:

### **Ideal Pre-Race Breakfasts**

Poached eggs on toast with fresh spinach No-

sugar granola with seeds, nuts and fruits

A Spanish potato omelette with roasted vegetables

A small fried egg and bacon sandwich

A grapefruit with two slices of wholemeal toast

### **Ideal Pre-Race Lunches**

Wholemeal pasta with chicken, tomatoes and vegetables

Salmon, salad and brown rice

A bacon, avocado and lettuce sandwich on wholemeal bread

A tofu and cashew nut stir fry with vegetables

### **Ideal Pre-Race Snacks**

Oatcakes with apple and peanut butter

Hummus and brown pitta bread

A peach and a handful of spiced sunflower seeds

A low sugar cereal bar and a strawberry milkshake

### **Stay hydrated**

A well hydrated body is a must when it comes to performing well physically and mentally. Go karting is taxing on both the mind and the body and requires high levels of concentration and motivation. As such, keeping topped up with water is a must. Aim to drink at least eight glasses, or two litres, over the course of the day. You should drink more than this on particularly hot days. Steer clear of sugary drinks such as cola, lemonade and fruit juices. These will play havoc with your blood sugar.

### **Approach energy drinks with caution**

The jury is still out as to whether energy and concentration drinks are a useful source of race day fuel. Their sugary formulas are dehydrating, so they should generally be avoided. If you are keen to test them out, try experimenting on a regular, non-race day and monitor your body and mind's reactions. Do the drinks help you to feel more alert? Do they make you jittery? Do they give you increased stamina? Do they cause you to experience an energy dip after half an hour? Ask yourself these questions and only use energy drinks on race day if you feel they really work for you.

When it comes to performing well in go karting races, it isn't just the fuel you put in your kart tank that counts. Wise up to race day nutrition and hydration and you are sure to see an improvement in your performance on the track.

### **Gaining Sponsorship**

If you're hoping to use Go-karting as a stepping stone to the higher levels of motor sport (such as Formula 3 or Formula 1) gaining sponsorship is a must. Without it, it is very unlikely that you will be able to afford the costs of buying a competitive enough Go-kart, compete in races and ultimately work your way up the motor sports ladder unless you have lots of financial backing from your family.

Unfortunately, getting sponsorship is not that easy, and many talented drivers struggle to progress without financial backing. How can you make sure that this doesn't happen to you?

### **Be Persistent**

Persistence is key when it comes to attracting sponsors. Getting sponsorship is not an easy process. For many drivers, it can take several years to get the right amount of financial backing, and some never do.

The average amount of correspondence that is sent out before replies come back is around fifty. If you send out enough letters or emails, you'll probably get a reply from a few people.

### **Strike A Bargain**

Sponsors are not going to be interested in backing you if you can't offer them something in return. The most obvious thing that you can offer them is promotion. The more prestigious Go-karting

championships are starting to get more television coverage (and media coverage in general), which means that if you are one of the more successful competitors, you can guarantee press coverage for the sponsor.



The more potential benefits you can offer sponsors, the more inclined they will be to back you. Of course, one sponsor's idea of a benefit won't be the same as another sponsor's idea, so your best bet is to tailor your proposed benefits to each individual sponsor that you target.

### **Deciding Who To Target**

It makes sense to target the big companies, as they are the ones with the most cash to spare. However, you might be surprised to know that the majority of Go-karters get sponsorship from their family and friends, rather than from big companies.

Obviously, if you want to move into car racing, you will undoubtedly need to get much more financial backing from other sources, but many Go-karters find that being backed by the people around them is enough to be successful.

## **Timing**

Timing your sponsorship request is crucial if you plan to target the big companies. Most of them will plan their budgets in advance - some as much as eighteen months in advance. If that is simply too long to wait, some businesses have to spend so much per year on extras so that they don't get taxed on the additional income.

You basically take pot luck as to which companies do this, as it's something that they will not make known to the general public, but it's worth targeting as many companies as possible in case they do this.

It isn't necessarily the most talented drivers that secure sponsorship - drive and determination to succeed is one of the most important qualities that you can display. Not only will it help you to secure sponsorship, but it will also help you in your Go-karting career in general.

## **Conclusion**

As with anything in life practise and determination will help you succeed, but hopefully you now have the karting skills too. What you do with these skills and techniques is up to you but remember that karting is fun and you should make that your main priority.