

# The Isshinryu Way Everything Karate & Kobudo

#### Isshinryu Worldwide

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#### Make it work

Isshinryu was, is and should remain an effective martial art. When Tatsuo Shimabuku created it, he introduced a fighting system that in a minimal amount of time allowed people to develop physically and mentally to advanced knowledge of Karate.

Continuing this tradition is important, and we continue it in the Dojo by teaching and expanding his methods and remembering that hard training, self defense practice & fighting develops the body and mind.

These are different times though, if we are limited by physical contact and proximity rules, how do we train as hard as we used to? How do we make sure our Karate works? How do we keep it interesting?

We make it work.

This can mean lots of things, if you are a student, focus on what you can do. If you are young, practice with your parents for the contact (but be kind and don't hurt them). Do contact training with pads or a

heavy bag or makiwara, or a tree.

If you are an instructor, get creative. I've had the pleasure of watching Sensei Susan do dozen of different drills in her classes, always making them exciting and new for her students. She's also adapted empty hand drills to use various weapons to create distance and motivation.

Lastly, all of us can keep it alive by actively thinking. Don't just do, think about the why and the how of each movement. Make sure you've thought about it and ask and question. That's the path to truly understanding. It may be hard to actually try it, but your seniors & instructors will be able to give you feedback on if it would work if you are off track, but the simplest test is usually to just hit something.

Keep training, keep improving and keep Isshinryu effective.

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### **Upcoming Events**

## May 2022—Isshinryu Expo July 2022—Isshinryu Hall of Fame

Essential Isshinryu is available!

For more information on the first Canadian Isshinryu book, visit www.essentialisshinryu.com!

## Focus on what matters



## New Additions to the Isshinryu Family

Our Isshinryu Family has been growing lately, by a lot. Please join me in welcoming the new additions.



Adaline, Daughter of Maegen Lavallee and Dylan, Chibushi Dojo Thunder Bay



Jasper, Son of Alana Jung and Cian Brinker, Grandson of Dinah Jung, Satori Dojo, now in Golden, BC





Raymond, Son of Jesse and Brenley Hill, Chitora Dojo, now in BC





### Promotions at Chitora Dojo, Thunder Bay

On Sept 6th, the Chitora Dojo conducted an outdoor, family contact only promotion. After a thorough (and chilly) testing, the following well deserved promotions were awarded.

Julia Fenton—Yonkyu—Green Belt Kaelyn Fenton—Yonkyu—Green Belt Wilder Ostap—Yonkyu—Green Belt











## **Thunder Bay Dojos Unite**

With the ongoing Pandemic limiting space, and the Chitora Dojo and Chowa temporarily being unable to access their spaces, the always welcoming Thunder Bay Dojos have taken them in. Chitora Dojo and Chowa Dojo members are training and teaching at Sensei Susan's Toshikai Dojo and Sensei Dinah's Satori Dojo. Thanks for hosting us and all the great training!







## Why Every Woman Should Practice Karate By Rachel Rubin

My name is Rachel Rubin, I am 21 years old and I am a female karate student and teacher in my hometown of Thunder Bay, Ontario. At the age of 2, my father began to introduce me to the martial arts and the discipline it involves. I officially started learning Isshinryu karate by taking classes when I was 4 years old. My dad believed it was very important, especially for young females, to learn how to defend themselves. I started by learning the basic movements of Isshinryu and their application to a self-defense situation. I was taught from Shihan Susan Baldassi (the most inspiring female karateka I know) and with her expertise, I noticed improvements not only inside the dojo, but outside of it as well. I was more aware, centered, and conscious of the decisions I made in life concerning my safety. When I started, I thought karate was only a way to stay active while learning a traditional martial art. What I did not know was how much more of a confident, aware and strong woman, both physically and mentally I would become. Isshinryu Karate has many benefits, especially for women: it keeps you physically fit, gives you confidence, allows you to become more mindful, and teaches you how to defend yourself against larger threats. Karate and its elements are something you can practice every day, without even realizing it.

I believe every woman should practice karate because of the many health benefits that come along with it. Firstly, it is a very good way to keep yourself physically active. For each testing, you are required to do a certain number of push-ups and sit-ups as well as a run. Movements that help build physical strength and keep up endurance are also incorporated into every class, which helps increase cardio as well as build muscle. It takes a lot of cardio to be able to spar while receiving attacks at the same time and it takes a lot of physical strength to punch and kick effectively. There are also certain Sensei that incorporate physical conditioning into their classes, for example, medicine balls and makiwara boards (a striking post), to encourage a level of conditioning designed for self-defense. There is a specific focus on the importance of physical fitness in karate because the more fit you are, the easier it will be to fend off an attacker in a real-life situation if necessary. You will already have experience with receiving a punch or kick and be able to follow up or get yourself to safety, which is especially important for women who will most likely face an opponent a lot bigger and stronger than they are. In addition, this conditioning prepares your mind as well as your body, so you are not only physically able to take a punch, but mentally able to react to a possibly dangerous situation. In my personal experience, I have had many periods of hard-core training at least 5 times a week, as well as periods in my life where I did not have the opportunity to focus solely on training and I can notice a difference in my level of fitness between the two. This level of fitness has helped me, as a woman, during training where I could use my cardio and ability to take a punch in sparring and keep up with karateka not only bigger than me but also a lot stronger. Overall, Isshinryu is an amazing full-body workout which I think will benefit everyone but can have many more advantages for

Practicing karate is a great way to improve your overall confidence. When most people think about what karate is and what it is about, they picture men fighting and making loud screaming noises as they take out opponents with one punch. Knowing this, karate isn't always easy for women to get into, but it is worth the effort. Confidence can be gained in the many different aspects of training. First, we have kata which makes you feel very fulfilled after you have memorized each intricate move and can to perform these movements with ease. Next, you have the aspect of performing these katas in front of higher ranks and at tournaments

and testing's which also give you feelings of gratification; receiving medals and recognition for all your hard work. In a more practical situation, training helps increase muscle memory which allows the body to react without thinking. This can also give you more confidence because you now have a "textbook" of movements to use automatically if you ever find yourself in a situation where you are in danger. Women can gain confidence from proving that they can participate in a male-dominated sport and be successful. Personally, when I began to move up in the belt ranks and got a little older, I started training in a more advanced, adultonly class taught by Sensei Joe Rigato. This was not only intimidating because my sister and I were much younger than the other students, but we were also some of the only girls in the class. I am a naturally shy person so it took some time to get used to, but as time went on, I began to feel more and more comfortable with each class and before I knew it, I was sparring and partnering with not only boys my age but also men a lot older and stronger than me and I wasn't afraid. I could spar with them and hold my own, which was a major accomplishment. This made me feel more and more confident knowing that even though we were completely different in size and gender, we were both karate students practicing what we love, we were equals. Both genders working alongside each other makes us, as women, feel more capable and confident in ourselves. Finally, karateka come in all different shapes and sizes which can be very important for women because they often have body image issues. By being able to see that karate can be adapted to every shape and size, it allows women to feel more confident during practice. As the training continues, women will be able to notice how powerful they have become which is also a major confidence booster. In general, training and practicing karate allows confidence to grow, which many women lack in their everyday lives, making it an essential activity.

Another reason I highly encourage women to try karate is that it helps you become more mindful. Women are innately more likely to focus on the well-being of others around them whether that be their children, partners, family or friends. Training gives women the opportunity to take time for themselves, through breathing and reflection. The breath and control of the breath are used a lot during practice. In fact, one whole kata, Sanchin, is based around the breath and your ability to breath in and out while performing each movement. Being aware of your breath can help you not only inside the dojo but outside as well, helping you through stressful or difficult situations in your personal life. Breathing aids in calming your mind which allows you to stay focused and calm in a stressful situation; self-defense wise where you may have to react to an attack, as well as in your everyday life where you have to do a presentation for work or drive during rush-hour for example. It is also very important to reflect on your journey and how you feel after each class. Personally, when I help Shihan Susan teach self-defense courses to women, she often asks them how it felt to hit something for the first time. Being able to reflect on your power, how it makes you feel, and how your training is going adds to your confidence and allows everyone, especially women to excel in not only the belt ranks but also your personal life. As you put together the mind and body, it increases your power both physically and mentally. For example, when facing a larger opponent, you will be able to keep more level-headed and confident in yourself. Overall being mindful of your personal experiences and reflecting on how it impacts your life, is a very important skill Isshinryu can help you develop.

The final and most important advantage of training is learning self-





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defense. Self-defense is not only about learning techniques; it also teaches you how to be aware and make smarter decisions in your everyday life. This is especially important for women, who are biologically smaller and less powerful than men. This may seem like a major disadvantage, but with only a few lessons, you can use technique, speed and the element of surprise to defeat your opponent and get to safety. Many people believe they will be able to throw a punch or kick and harm their opponent if something ever happened. What they don't know is that there are many other aspects such as how to identify potential threats, the importance of recognizing gut-instincts, the importance of using your voice and that the most simple moves can be the most effective. As women especially, there are things we are told never to do if we want to stay safe: never walk alone, never talk to strangers, etc. But this is not always feasible, altering your life because "you are a woman" may not allow you to experience life to the fullest. We must be careful and think about our actions. For example: think about locking your car doors as soon as you get into it or not using earbuds when running outside alone. Currently, one in three women worldwide will be assaulted at least once in their lives. Karate won't stop you from being assaulted but it can certainly help change the expected outcome of the assault or allow you to avoid the situation in the first place. If you do find yourself in a situation where you will need to defend yourself, the repetition that comes from training increases your muscle memory which makes you more likely to survive, validating that only advantages come from learning karate. Awareness and confidence learned through karate, will allow you to avoid situations that might occur. Although it is possible to experi-

ence violence on the street, many women have experienced violence in their personal relationships. In fact, 67% of all Canadians say they personally know at least one woman who has been sexually or physically assaulted and on average, every six days a woman in Canada is killed by her intimate partner. In 2009, 67 women were murdered by a current or former spouse or boyfriend, and over half of Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence since the age of 16. Self-defense is a key part in changing these statistics and I strongly believe that karate gives you not only the tools, but the inner strength to defend and hopefully get out of any difficult situation you face in life.

In conclusion, I believe every woman should take at least one karate class in their life because it allows you to feel more aware of your surroundings as well and your feelings. The skills learned in class allow you to become more confident in your everyday life which brings many advantages. I highly encourage women specifically because I, myself have participated in martial arts for my whole life and have experienced the many rewards first-hand. Over the years, I have seen a major increase in the number of women participating in Isshinryu classes: from being the only girl in a class to being in a female dominant class run by a very inspiring woman. It is amazing to see such a big change and I hope that in the future, this continues. So, next time you see an advertisement for a self-defence course or a karate lesson and think it isn't the right thing for you, I highly suggest you rethink passing it by.

## Karate Training After a Heart Attack

### By Shane Hale

#### Introduction

The afternoon of November I, 2015 I was diagnosed with a myocardial infarction, commonly known as a heart attack. I was 40 years old and this was roughly 6 month after I'd been promoted to 4th degree. The story of what happened leading up to, during and after the event is worth sharing in the hopes that fellow martial artists might learn the signs to watch out for and more importantly how to reduce the chances of this happening to you.

#### "Code STEMI" and "The Widowmaker"

"Code STEMI" and "The Widowmaker" are words you hope to never hear in relation to yourself or a loved one. More on that in a bit. In the years, months and weeks leading up to my heart attack I thought I was a reasonably healthy person. I trained Karate twice a week and was somewhat active, running around with my 2 small children, working on renovations, and generally busy. But I had a stressful office job where I sat at a desk many hours a day. What I didn't realize was that I was eating far too much red meat and fast food, drinking too much beer, and gradually becoming less and less active. I equated this to generally being run down and tired from work. I would often fall asleep on the couch around suppertime which previously would not have been the case.

They say the first symptom of a heart-attack is denial. Keep that in mind as you read the next few paragraphs. My diagnosis came on a Sunday. In the week before, I taught my usual Karate class Wednesday evening. Thursday afternoon I had a physio treatment on my arm. Thursday

evening I had to drive about 40 minutes out of town. My left arm was aching so badly that I actually drove while keeping my arm on a pillow with heat. Looking back this is most likely the onset of my heart attack. I got home Thursday evening and went to bed still in pain. Friday morning I woke up with pain across my upper back and a general numbness in both my hands. I got up and put out the garbage as usual but was really not feeling well so I decided to take a sick day. This was very unlike me. I stayed home alone all day watching TV and generally not feeling well. The pain in my back was in the middle between my shoulders and would fluctuate from mild to very strong. I tried a hot shower, Advil, heating pad, Tylenol, etc. but the pain was always there and at times very intense. Friday evening we had company come over. My wife suggested canceling but I said we could still have them over even if I couldn't participate fully. So our guests came for a visit and I managed to be sociable for the evening. Saturday morning I woke up and the pain in my back and hands was back. Up until this point I thought the back pain was most likely related to the physio treatment I'd had on Thursday. Perhaps something had gotten triggered or tweaked? So I contacted my physiotherapist and was able to see her for another visit on Saturday afternoon. As we drove past the hospital on the way to physio I recall saying, "If this treatment doesn't work let's go to the hospital." Thinking I had a pulled muscle in my back and that the hospital might give me muscle relaxants. Physio had me lying down on a table and generally relaxing so my pain was less. At the end of my treatment my physiotherapist famously said, "That treatment should help but there might be something internal going on too." Indeed there was. Saturday evening was Hallow

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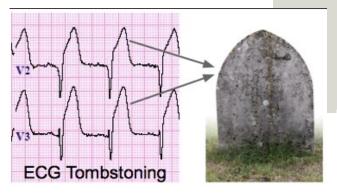
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een so we went to visit some more friends. While my family was out Trick-or-Treating I stayed at my friends' house and tried to relax. I was up and down the stairs a few times and handed out some candy but was generally lethargic and in pain. That evening we came home and watched a movie while I put the heating pad on my back again.

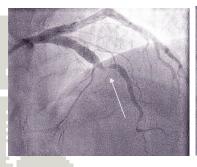
Sunday morning I woke up and the pain was very bad. I woke up my wife and told her I needed to do something about it. I was in a lot of discomfort, at times sweating from the pain. I wanted to go to Emergency. As we were getting ourselves organized and the kids were getting their clothes on my wife famously said to me, "At least we know it's not a heart attack" and generally encouraged me to remain calm. I agreed with her and honestly the thought of a heart attack had never crossed my mind. I was 40 years old and healthy, right? Guys like me don't get heart attacks I thought. We drove to the hospital and my wife dropped me off at the front door of Emergency. She had to get the kids home and arrange for their care before she could join me at the hospital. We thought it was probably just a pulled muscle so I'd be fine.

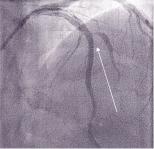
Getting admitted to the hospital they noted that my heartbeat and blood pressure were quite high. I said "Yeah sometimes it's a bit high." and they wrote it off as what's called "White Coat Hypertension" i.e. people often get stressed when they're around doctors and hospitals so their blood pressure is high. We waited at the hospital for about 3 hours before anyone looked at me. During this time I could not get comfortable. It hurt to stand, to sit, to lean forward, to lean back. Finally they moved me into a private room where we waited some more. I laid down on the bed and gradually started to feel better. We got some lunch from Tim Hortons and I managed to sit up and eat it. By the time the doctor came in to see me I was feeling fairly good and relaxed. They asked a few questions and said that they wanted to do an ECG. I assumed it was to rule out a heart attack before getting to the real problem so I said sure. The nurse came in and attached the electrodes and ran the machine for 30 seconds or so then left. Within seconds the nurse and doctor came back into the room and the doctor told me that I was having a heart attack. I did not believe her. I assumed it was a misdiagnosis and that soon enough they would run a better test and realize their error. But of course I wanted help with my back pain so I did as they asked. They told me they'd be moving me to another area across the hall where they could start treating me. Still in full-on denial I got up and started walking across the waiting room. They stopped me and told me to lie down on the bed like a proper heart-attack person. This is the point where things finally started to get real. They were now

wheeling me across the waiting room that I'd been pacing back-and-forth in for the past 3 hours. This is also the first time I heard the term "Code STEMI" on the PA system. STEMI stands for ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction and in laymen's terms it means a really bad heart attack, one in which one of the 3 main arteries that feed your heart muscle is fully blocked. It is seen on an ECG as what the doctors call "Tombstones..."



I'm very lucky to live in the City of Ottawa which has an excellent Heart Institute. The first hospital I went to gave me Nitroglycerine, Oxygen, Aspirin, IVs, etc. then loaded me in the ambulance to get me to the Heart Institute. Upon arrival at the Heart Institute I was quickly taken to the "Cath Lab." There a team of doctors were able to go in through my wrist, all the way into my heart and insert a small metal tube called a stent into my blocked artery. I was awake for the entire procedure and was asked to lie still. At the end of the procedure the doctor told me that they had achieved a good result and that my particular heart attack was what they referred to as the "Widowmaker." It's fatal to roughly 50% of the people who experience it. I had a 100% blockage of my Left Anterior Descending artery. This is the largest of 3 arteries in the heart and it feeds the largest amount of heart muscle. The two photos on the show before and after the stent was placed. Note the complete lack of blood flow down the center which is later restored once the stent has been placed to hold the artery open.





I spent 5 days at the hospital in recovery being closely monitored. During this period and the weeks that followed my heart health education began. On the 2nd day they performed an Echo Cardiogram to assess what kind of damage my heart muscle had suffered after many days without oxygen. To everyone's shock there was "no detectable damage." It's not at all clear how I was able to walk around for 3 or 4 days with a condition that is usually fatal yet have no damage to the heart muscle. I believe that my I 5 years of Karate training including many workouts, sparring, etc. may have created enough additional pathways for blood to minimally get to my heart muscle despite the main artery being blocked.

A few weeks later I happened to be speaking with a former paramedic. I related my story to him and his first comment was, "You must be a fighter." He went on to say that as a paramedic when they would pick up people suffering a heart attack he could often see in their eyes if they would survive or not. Some people, he said, had given up whereas others were digging in and holding on. My years of Karate training very well may have given me the ability to stay calm through the waves of pain and keep my breathing under control while not panicking and making the whole situation worse. I do recall maintaining a very relaxed body as we rode in the ambulance to the heart institute. I was later told that my pulse was as high as 200 beats per minute during that time.

#### Recovery

Recovery began in the hospital and is ongoing to this day. Heart Disease is a leading cause of death in Canada for both men and women. Plaque grows in everybody's arteries from the moment we're born. However it

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collects at different rates in different people for various reasons. One very important factor is heredity. I have a history of heart problems on both sides of my family. My mother had a "silent" heart attack in her 30s or 40s and later in life has had stents and a bypass surgery. Both my grandfathers died of heart attacks, the one on my father's side in his mid-50s. I had dismissed all of this because these people were all heavy smokers. Once again we see denial. I now know that your chances of heart attack are doubled if it runs in your family. Prior to my heart attack I was a little overweight (225 Lbs), my blood pressure was a little high (140/90), my cholesterol was a little high, my diet was less than ideal, my exercise wasn't as much as it should be and so on. There was no smoking gun. No one thing that you could point to and say "THAT's why this happened." It was a perfect storm of many smaller contributing factors

#### Recommendations

As martial artists we are certainly not immune from heart disease. In addition to my story I'm aware of others who've had similar experiences, some of whom are no longer with us. Unlike some diseases, heart disease can be slowed, possibly stopped and (just maybe) even

reversed a bit. If you have a history of heart disease, are a bit overweight, smoke, drink excessively, have shortness of breath when exercising or doing physical work, etc. you should contact your doctor and discuss your concerns with them. Don't let denial get the best of you. I am telling my story in the hopes that someone else might avoid a similar fate. In closing here is a bullet-form list of the things that I've learned in the past few years. I encourage my fellow martial artists to read through. This can largely be summarized as "Follow the Canada Food Guide and exercise" but further details are below. If you are able to implement even one or two of the suggested changes it could allow you to stay healthy and keep training for a much longer time.

## Karate Training Do it. Do lots of it. It could save your life in more ways than one.

Go through your kata frequently. As we get older, and if you are considered at risk of heart attack, consider reducing the intensity of activities such as sparring. The sudden spikes in heart rate, combined with anaerobic breathing could lead to trouble.

#### **Exercise**

Your goal should be 40 minutes of medium intensity (cardio) 5 times a week. Karate can certainly play a major role in this. Activities such as bicycling, swimming or cross-country skiing are excellent as well.

#### Diets

If you consume less calories than you burn you will lose weight. Your diet, not exercise, controls your weight. You can't outrun your mouth. An intense hour-long bicycle ride or run might consume 600 calories. Consuming one cheeseburger can be as many calories. What you burn in an hour of intense exercise can be eaten in just a couple of minutes.

Avoid fad diets. The only reason these work is because people reduce their overall caloric intake by eliminating certain foods. Often they promote very unhealthy eating habits. You can accomplish the same thing with portion control. Similarly there is no need to do a cleanse. Our Liver and Kidneys do this job for us automatically.

#### **S**moking

Don't smoke. It's the largest contributing factor to heart disease after heredity

#### **Drinking**

One shot of hard liquor is the same alcohol as one glass of wine or one pint of beer. It is recommended that you limit alcohol consumption to one drink per day. And no, you can't save them all up and have them all at once on the weekend.

#### Salt

Most Canadians consume 2 to 3 times more daily salt (sodium) than is recommended. Sodium increases your blood pressure. High blood pressure causes plaque to build up which leads to heart attacks. Look for opportunities to reduce your baseline salt intake. Eating at home rather than in restaurants or fast food is a great start. Salt can be entirely removed from nearly all recipes and you won't notice. Baking with yeast is the exception but in these cases the salt can often be reduced. I no longer add salt to water when boiling or on top of vegetables. Your taste buds also become desensitized to salt so as you age you will add more and more to your food.

#### Fats

There are 3 kinds of fats. Trans Fats are generally bad for you and appear in deep fried foods for example. Saturated Fats are better for you than Trans Fats but still not good for you in large quantities. Unsaturated Fats are generally good for you. One thing to remember is that fats that are liquid at room temperature are generally better for you than those that are solid at room temperature. E.g. Olive Oil is better for you thanbutter. Butter Margarine is better for you. In baking one can often substitute a similar quantity of Canola Oil when the recipe calls for butter.

#### Sugar

All sugars are the same. Whether you get your sugars from white or brown sugar or honey, maple syrup or (gasp!) corn syrup your body treats it all as sugar. Avoid ingesting large amounts of sugar as in drinking sugary drinks.

#### Fish

Fish (including seafood) is generally good for you and most Canadians could eat more than they do. Fattier (tastier) fish such as salmon and trout contain more Omega-3 which can reduce LDL cholesterol. Note that humans will not absorb Omega-3 if taken in pill form.

#### **Meats**

Red meat should be reduced in favour of white meats or vegetarian options. Note that all land mammals are considered red meat. This includes pork and game animals such as deer or moose. White meats such as poultry are generally healthier than red meat.

Processed meat products such as salami, pepperoni, bacon and sausage contain large amounts of salt and nitrates / nitrites. These have been linked with heart disease and cancer.

#### Beans

Beans and legumes are good for you. Try eating more chick peas and beans. If using canned beans some of the salt can be rinsed off.

Vegetables Vegetables are very good for you. On any given day, roughly 50% of the food you consume should be vegetables. Try to eat a good variety of different vegetables.

#### Fruits

Fruits are also very good for you but should not be consumed in large quantities.

**Nuts & seeds** Items such as Chia or Flax seeds are good for removing LDL cholesterol from your body. A good serving of unsalted nuts would be about the size of a golf ball.





#### **About The Newsletter**

Just as in our dojo training, the newsletter is about sharing and improving as a group. We regularly have contributions and updates from Quebec to British Columbia in Canada, as well as from Germany, New York and the Southern United States. Everyone is always welcome in my Dojo or to share via the newsletter.

Articles are welcome from anyone and everyone. They can be about anything related to the Martial Arts, a technique you think is just great; A better way to do a technique; History of a Karate Master; a tournament trick that works well; ANY-

All articles are appreciated as e-mail. You can send it to your instructor to proof read and send in, or directly to me. (sensei@isshinryu.ca)

You can even include pictures if it helps your article!

#### **Karate Terms**

Barai Sweeping Block

Dachi Stance

**Dojo** Training Hall

Hai Yes

Hajime Begin

Kenko Health

Keri Kick

Kihon Exercises

Kumae Guard Positin

Kumite Free Hand/Fight

Kvu Level or Grade

Mo Ichi Do One more Time

Mokuso Meditate

**Nukite** Spear Fingers

Rei Bow

Rvu Way

Sanchin Three Battles

Sempai Senior Student

Seretsu line up

Shin Mind/Spirit

Shuto Knife Hand

Suwate kneel down

Tatte stand up

Tatsui Hammer fist

Tsuki Punch / Thrust

Uchi Strike

Uke Block

